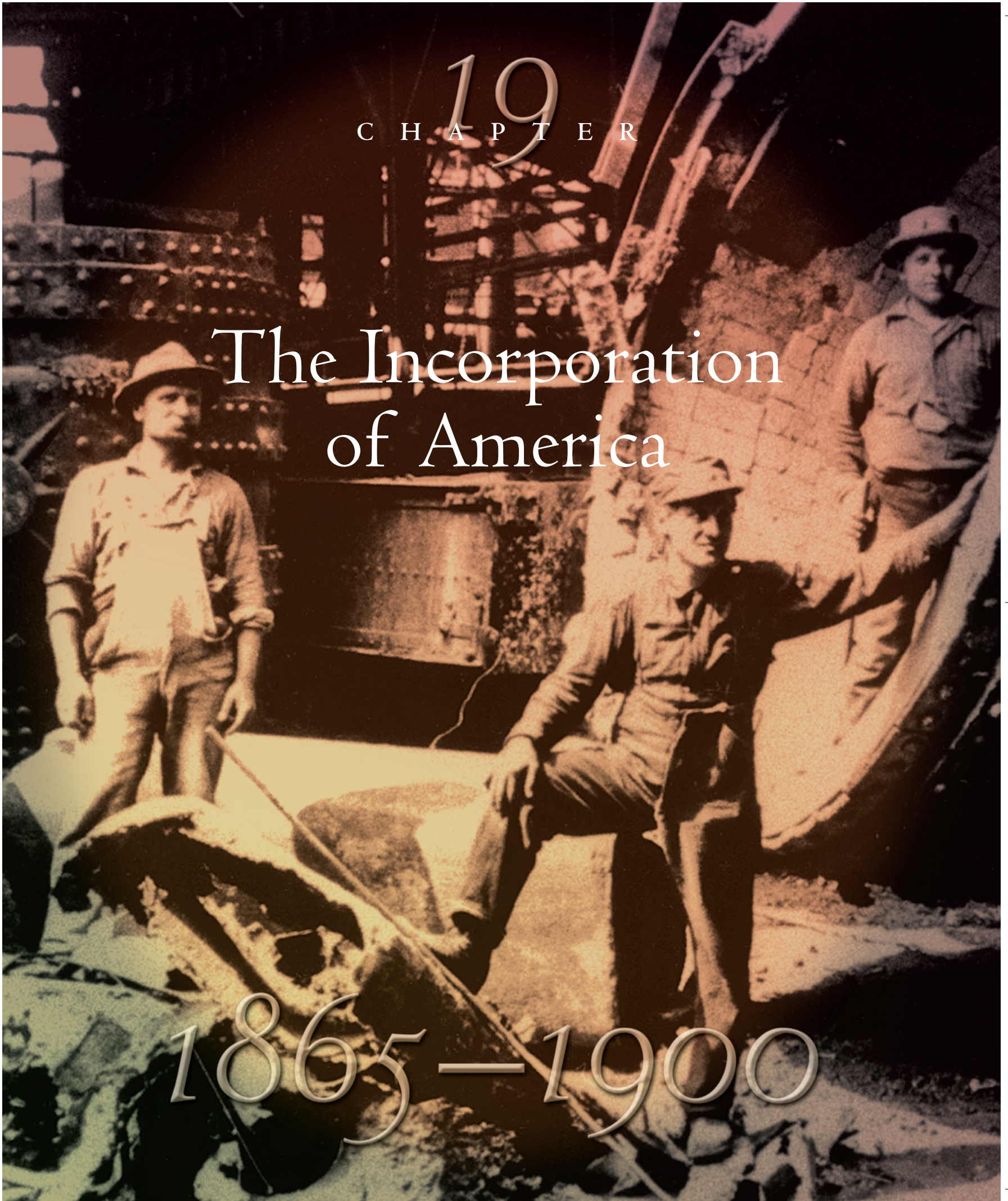


19  
CHAPTER

The Incorporation  
of America

1865—1900





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## CHAPTER OUTLINE

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### **THE RISE OF INDUSTRY, THE TRIUMPH OF BUSINESS**

Revolutions in Technology and Transportation  
Mechanization Takes Command  
Expanding the Market for Goods  
Integration, Combination, and Merger  
The Gospel of Wealth

### **LABOR IN THE AGE OF BIG BUSINESS**

The Wage System  
The Knights of Labor  
The American Federation of Labor

### **THE NEW SOUTH**

An Internal Colony  
Southern Labor  
The Transformation of Piedmont Communities

### **THE INDUSTRIAL CITY**

Populating the City  
The Urban Landscape  
The City and the Environment

### **THE RISE OF CONSUMER SOCIETY**

"Conspicuous Consumption"  
Self-Improvement and the Middle Class  
Life in the Streets

### **CULTURES IN CONFLICT, CULTURE IN COMMON**

Education  
Leisure and Public Space  
National Pastimes



## AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

### Packingtown, Chicago, Illinois

**A**pproaching Packingtown, the neighborhood adjoining the Union Stockyards, the center of Chicago's great meatpacking industry, one noticed first the pungent odor: a mixture of smoke, fertilizer, and putrid flesh, blood, and hair from the slaughtered animals. A little closer, the stench of the uncovered garbage dump blended in. Finally, one crossed "Bubbly Creek," a lifeless offshoot of the Chicago River, aptly named for the effect of the carbolic acid gas that formed from the decaying refuse poured in by the meatpacking plants. Railroads crisscrossed the entire area, bringing in thousands of animals each day and carrying out meat for sale in markets across the country.

Packingtown occupied about one square mile of land bounded by stockyards, packing plants, and freight yards. With a population of 30,000 to 40,000 at the end of the nineteenth century, it was a rapidly growing community of old and new immigrants who depended on the meatpacking industry for their livelihood. An average household included six or seven people—parents, two or three children, and two or three boarders. Typically, they lived in wooden houses divided into four or more flats. Although Irish, Germans, Bohemians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Slovaks were squeezed together in this solidly working-class neighborhood, strong ethnic identities persisted. Few households included residents of more than one nationality, and interethnic marriages were rare. Nearly everyone professed the Roman Catholic faith, yet each ethnic group maintained its own church and often its own parochial school, where children were taught in their parents' language. Political organizations, fraternal societies, and even gymnastic clubs and drama groups reflected these ethnic divisions.



The one local institution that bridged the different groups was the saloon. Located on virtually every street corner, saloons offered important services to the community, hosting weddings and dances, providing meeting places for trade unions and fraternal societies, and cashing paychecks. During the frequent seasons of unemployment, Packingtown workers spent a lot of time in saloons. Here, they often made friends across ethnic divisions, an extension of their common work experience in the nearby stockyard and packinghouses.

Most of the meatpacking industry's first "knife men"—the skilled workers in the "killing gangs" that managed the actual slaughtering and cutting operations—were German and Irish. Many had learned their butcher's craft in the Old Country. Below them were the common laborers, mainly recent immigrants from eastern Europe. Having no previous experience in meatpacking, these workers found themselves in the lowest paid jobs, such as the by-product manufacturing of glue and oleo. A sizable portion had never before earned wages. They soon discovered, as one Lithuanian laborer put it, that "money was everything and a man without money must die." But the money available—a daily wage of \$2 (or less)—was often not enough. The death rate from tuberculosis in Packingtown was thought to be the highest in Chicago and among the highest in the nation.

The Packingtown community, small and insular as it seemed to the residents, was bound into an elaborate economic network that reached distant parts of the United States, transforming the ways farmers raised livestock and grains, railroads operated, and consumers ate their meals. These workers helped make Chicago a gateway city, a destination point for raw materials coming in from the West as well as a point of export for products of all kinds.

Chicago meatpackers, led by the "big five" of Armour, Cudahy, Morris, Schwarzschild and Sulzberger, and Swift, expanded more than 900 percent between 1870 and 1890, dominating the national market for meat and establishing a standard for monopoly capitalism in the late nineteenth century. In the process, they also became the city's largest manufacturing employer. They built huge, specialized factories during the 1860s

and 1870s that speeded the killing process and—thanks to mountains of ice brought by rail from ponds and lakes—operated year round. The introduction of an efficiently refrigerated railroad car in the 1880s made it possible to ship meat nationwide. Consumers had long believed that only meat butchered locally was safe to eat, but now cheap Chicago-packed beef and pork began to appear on every meat-eater's table. Local packinghouses throughout the Midwest succumbed to the ruthless competition from Chicago.

Chicago's control of the mass market for meat affected all aspects of the industry. Midwestern farmers practically abandoned raising calves on open pastures. Instead, they bought two-year-old steers from the West and fattened them on homegrown corn in feedlots, making sure that bulk went into edible parts rather than muscle and bone. The feedlot—a kind of rural factory—replaced pasture, just as pasture had earlier supplanted prairie grasslands.

Few of the workers in Chicago's stockyards had seen a farm since they left their homelands. But as the working hands of

what poet Carl Sandburg would later call the “Hog butcher for the world, . . . City of the big shoulders,” they played their part, along with the farmer, the grain dealer, the ironworker, the teamster, and many others, in bringing together the neighboring countryside and the city to create a regional center for the production of meat and its distribution nationwide.

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, the nation's eyes were fixed on Chicago. The city had become home to several of the most technologically advanced industries in the world, and huge profits had created a population of extraordinarily wealthy individuals. At the same time, the city also gave rise to an exceptionally militant labor movement. In 1886, workers from several of the city's major industries, including meatpacking, led a nationwide campaign for shorter hours. In early May, a huge demonstration protesting police violence against strikers ended in tragedy when a bomb exploded and killed several people in the city's Haymarket Square. In its aftermath, a wave of fear swept over the nation. Chicago, many Americans believed, was leading the way—but to what?

## KEY TOPICS

- The rise of big business and the formation of the national labor movement
- The transformation of southern society
- The growth of cities
- The Gilded Age
- Changes in education
- Commercial amusements and organized sports

## THE RISE OF INDUSTRY, THE TRIUMPH OF BUSINESS

**A**t the time of the Civil War, the typical American business firm was a small enterprise, owned and managed by a single family, and producing goods for a local or regional market. By the turn of the century, businesses depending on large-scale investments had organized as corporations and grown to unforeseen size. These mammoth firms could afford to mass-produce goods for national and even international markets. At the helm stood unimaginably wealthy men, such as Andrew Carnegie, Philip Danforth Armour, Jay Gould, and John D. Rockefeller, all powerful leaders of a new national business community.

WHAT WERE the effects of the expansion in the production of both capital goods and consumer goods?

**AP\*** Guideline 15.2

Lecture Suggestion 19.1, Growth of Industry and the Changes in the Organization of Business

## QUICK REVIEW

## Growth of Industry

- ◆ 1865: \$2 billion annual production of goods.
- ◆ 1900: \$13 billion annual production of goods.
- ◆ Revolutions in technology and transportation made growth possible.

Audio-Visual Aid, “Edison’s Miracle of Light”

## Class Discussion Question 19.1



Thomas Edison, The Success of the Electric Light (1880)

## REVOLUTIONS IN TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORTATION

The Centennial Exposition of 1876, held in Philadelphia, celebrated not so much the American Revolution 100 years earlier as the industrial and technological promise of the century to come. The visiting emperor of Brazil spoke into an unfamiliar device on display and gasped, “My God, it talks!” The telephone, patented that year by Alexander Graham Bell, signaled the rise of the United States to world leadership in industrial technology (see Map 19-1).

The year 1876 also marked the opening of Thomas Alva Edison’s laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, one of the first devoted to industrial research. Three years later, his research team hit upon its most marketable invention, an incandescent lamp that burned for more than thirteen hours. By 1882, the Edison Electric Light Company had launched its service in New York City’s financial district. A wondrous source of light, electricity revolutionized both urban life and industry, soon replacing steam as the major source of power.

By this time, American inventors, who had filed nearly half a million patents since the close of the Civil War, were previewing the marvels of the next century. Henry Ford, working for the Detroit Edison Company, was already experimenting with the

PEARSON  
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To explore this map further, go to [www.myhistorylab.com](http://www.myhistorylab.com)



MAP 19-1

**Patterns of Industry, 1900** Industrial manufacturing concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest, while the raw materials for production came mostly from other parts of the nation.

WHY DID industrial patterns differ from region to region?

gasoline-burning internal combustion engine and designing his own automobile. By 1900, American companies had produced more than 4,000 automobiles. The prospect of commercial aviation emerged in 1903, when Wilbur and Orville Wright staged the first airplane flight near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

A major force behind economic growth was the vast transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869. The addition of three more major rail lines (the Southern Pacific; the Northern Pacific; and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe) in the early 1880s, and the Great Northern a decade later, completed the most extensive transportation network in the world. As the nation's first big business and recipient of generous government subsidies, railroads linked cities in every state and served as a nationwide distributor of goods. Freight trains carried the bountiful natural resources, such as iron, coal, and minerals that supplied the raw materials for industry, as well as food and other commodities for the growing urban populations.

The monumental advances in transportation and communication facilitated the progressively westward relocation of industry. The geographic center of manufacturing (as computed by the gross value of products) was near the middle of Pennsylvania in 1850, in western Pennsylvania by 1880, and near Mansfield, Ohio, in 1900.

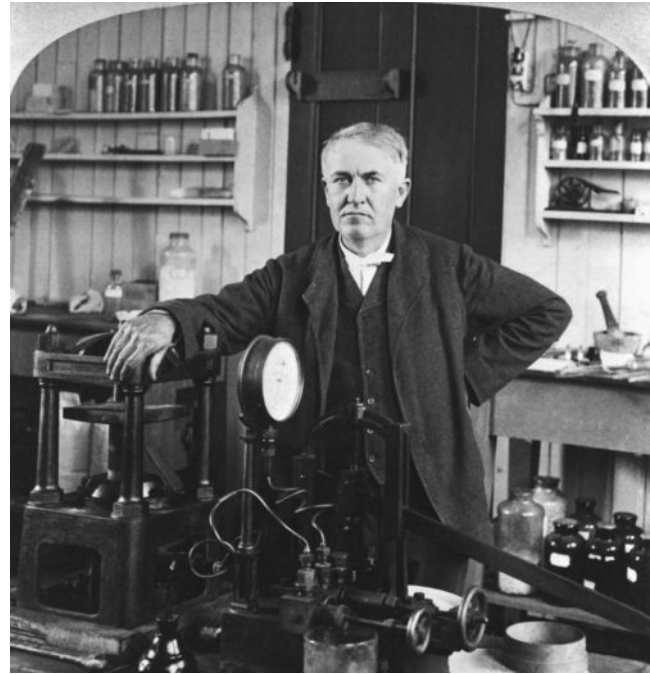
Industry grew at a pace that was not only unprecedented but previously unimaginable. In 1865, the annual production of goods was estimated at \$2 billion; by 1900, it stood at \$13 billion, transforming the United States from fourth to first in the world in terms of productivity. By the early twentieth century, American industry manufactured one-third of the world's goods.

### MECHANIZATION TAKES COMMAND

This second industrial revolution depended on many factors, but none was more important than the application of new technologies to increase the productivity of labor and the volume of goods. Machines, factory managers, and workers together created a system of continuous production by which more could be made, and faster, than anywhere else on earth. Higher productivity depended not only on machinery and technology but on economies of scale and speed, reorganization of factory labor and business management, and the unparalleled growth of a market for goods of all kinds.

All these changes depended in turn on anthracite coal, a new source of fuel, which was widely used after 1850. Reliable and inexpensive sources of energy made possible dramatic changes in the industrial uses of light, heat, and motion. Equally important, coal fueled the great open-hearth furnaces and mills of the iron and steel industries. By the end of the century, the U.S. steel industry was the world's largest, churning out rails to carry trains and parts to make more machines to produce yet more goods.

New systems of mass production replaced wasteful and often chaotic practices and speeded up the delivery of finished goods. In the 1860s, meatpackers set up one of the earliest production lines. The process of converting livestock into meat began with a live animal. A chain around the hind leg whirled the body to an overhead rail, which carried it to slaughter—all in barely half a minute's time. Then hair and bristles were removed by a scraping machine, the carcass shifted to a conveyor belt where the chest was split and the organs removed, and the body placed in a cooler. This "disassembly line" displaced patterns of hand labor that were centuries old. The production line became standard in most areas of manufacturing.



**In 1887, Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931)**

moved his laboratory from Menlo Park to West Orange, New Jersey. This photograph, taken in 1901, shows him in what many historians consider the first industrial research facility. Here, he invented the alkaline storage battery, the phonograph, and the kinoscope, the first machine to allow one person at a time to view motion pictures.

Corbis/Bettman.

### Map 19-1

The Northeastern and Midwestern United States regions were the locus of much industrial activity in the late 19th century and early 20th century. American inventors, including people such as Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford, were at the forefront of technological advancements that fueled industrial growth. A major force during this time was the vast transcontinental railroad, which was completed in 1869 and which served as a nationwide distributor of finished good and raw materials. Freight trains carried the natural resources, such as iron, coal, and minerals, from diverse areas of the country, to manufacturing centers, which were on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Pennsylvania was the center of iron ore mining; the lower Midwest was the center of coal mining, and the West was the center of gold and silver mining.

Sometimes the invention of a single machine could instantly transform production, mechanizing every stage from processing the raw material to packaging the product. The cigarette-making machine, patented in 1881, shaped the tobacco, encased it in an endless paper tube, and snipped off the tube at cigarette-length intervals. This machine could produce more than 7,000 cigarettes per hour, replacing the worker who at best made 3,000 per day. After a few more improvements, fifteen machines could meet the total demand for American cigarettes. Within a generation, continuous production became standard in most areas of manufacturing, revolutionizing the making of furniture, cloth, grain products, soap, and canned goods; the refining, distilling, and processing of animal and vegetable fats; and eventually, the manufacture of automobiles.

### EXPANDING THE MARKET FOR GOODS

To distribute the growing volume of goods and to create a dependable market, businesses demanded new techniques of merchandising on a national and, in some cases, international scale. For generations, legions of sellers, or “drummers,” had worked their routes, pushing goods, especially hardware and patent medicines, to individual buyers and local retail stores. By the end of the nineteenth century, the manufacturers of mass-produced goods had launched massive advertising campaigns to induce consumers to buy their brands over local or homemade items. Procter and Gamble, for example, eventually convinced the American housewife that its solid vegetable shortening, created in its laboratory from the surplus of cottonseed oil used to make its popular soaps, was a better choice for baking and frying than the familiar animal fats and lard, and distributors soon could not keep up with the consumer demand for Crisco.

In 1869, Francis Wayland Ayer founded an agency that would handle some of the most successful advertising campaigns of the era. Ayer’s managed the accounts of such up-and-coming companies as Montgomery Ward and the National Biscuit Company, which sold millions of packaged biscuits under the trademarked name of “Uneda.” With the help of this new sales tool, gross revenues of retailers raced upward from \$8 million in 1860 to \$102 million in 1900.

Mail-order houses helped to get these new products for consumers. Accompanying the consolidation of the railroad lines, the postal system expanded. Rates were lowered for shipping freight and postage alike. By 1896, free rural delivery had reached distant communities.

Growing directly out of these services, the successful Chicago-based mail-order houses drew rural and urban consumers into a common marketplace. Sears, Roebuck and Company, and Montgomery Ward offered an enormous variety of goods, from shoes to buggies to gasoline stoves and cream separators. The mail-order catalogue also returned to rural folks the fruits of their own labor, now processed and packaged for easy use. The Sears catalogue offered Armour’s summer sausage as well as Aunt Jemima’s Pancake Flour and Queen Mary Scotch Oatmeal, both made of grains that came from the agricultural heartland. In turn, the purchases made by farm families through the Sears catalogue sent cash flowing into Chicago.

The chain store achieved similar economies of scale. By 1900, a half-dozen grocery chains had sprung up. The largest was A&P, originally named the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company to celebrate the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Frank and Charles Woolworth offered inexpensive variety goods in five-and-ten-cent stores. Other chains selling drugs, costume jewelry, shoes, cigars, and furniture soon appeared, offering a greater selection of goods and lower prices than the small, independent stores.

Opening shortly after the Civil War, department stores began to take up much of the business formerly enjoyed by specialty shops, offering a spectrum of services that included restaurants, rest rooms, ticket agencies, nurseries, reading rooms, and post offices. Elegantly appointed with imported carpets, sweeping marble staircases, and crystal chandeliers, the department store raised retailing to new heights. By the close of the century, the names of Marshall Field of Chicago, Filene's of Boston, The Emporium of San Francisco, Wanamaker's of Philadelphia, and Macy's of New York had come to represent the splendors of those great cities as well as the apex of mass retailing.

### INTEGRATION, COMBINATION, AND MERGER

The business community aspired to exercise greater control of the economy and to enlarge the commercial empire. From the source of raw materials to the organization of production, from the conditions of labor to the climate of public opinion, business leaders acted shrewdly. Economic cycles alternating between rapid growth and sharp decline also promoted the rise of big business. Major economic setbacks in 1873 and 1893 wiped out weaker competitors, allowing the strongest firms to rebound swiftly and to expand their sales and scale of operation during the recovery period.

Businesses grew in two distinct, if overlapping, ways. Through *vertical integration* a firm gained control of production at every step of the way—from raw materials through processing to the transporting and merchandising of the finished items. In 1899, the United Fruit Company began to build a network of wholesale houses in the United States, and within two years it had opened distribution centers in twenty-one major cities. Eventually, it controlled an elaborate system of Central American plantations and temperature-controlled shipping and storage facilities for its highly perishable bananas. The firm became one of the nation's largest corporations.

The second means of growth, *horizontal combination*, entailed gaining control of the market for a single product. The most famous case was the Standard Oil Company, founded by John D. Rockefeller in 1870. Operating out of Cleveland in a highly competitive but lucrative field, Rockefeller first secured preferential rates from railroads eager to ensure a steady supply of oil. He then convinced or coerced other local oil operators to sell their stock to him. The Standard Oil Trust, established in 1882, controlled more than 90 percent of the nation's oil-refining industry.

In 1890, Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act to restore competition by encouraging small business and outlawing “every . . . combination . . . in restraint of trade or commerce.” Ironically, the courts interpreted the law in ways that inhibited the organization of trade unions (on the ground that they restricted the free flow of labor), and actually helped the consolidation of business. More than 2,600 firms vanished between 1898 and 1902 alone. By 1910, the industrial giants that would dominate the American economy until the last half of the twentieth century—U.S. Rubber, Goodyear, American Smelting and Refining, Anaconda Copper, General Electric, Westinghouse, Nabisco, Swift and Company, Armour, International Harvester, Eastman Kodak, and American Can—had already incorporated as the nation's biggest businesses.

### THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH

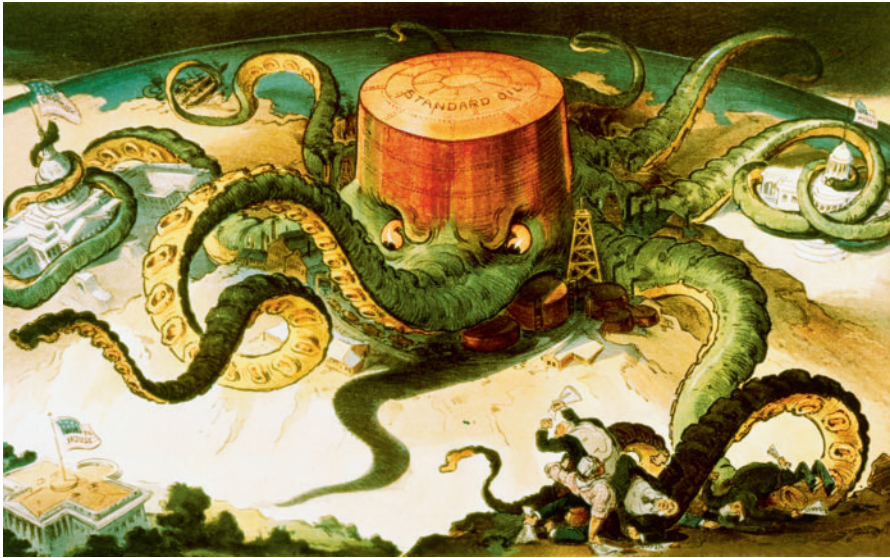
Ninety percent of the nation's business leaders were Protestant, and the majority attended church services regularly. They attributed their personal achievement to hard work and perseverance and made these the principal tenets of a new faith that imbued the pursuit of wealth with old-time religious zeal.

## AP\* Guideline 15.1

**Vertical integration** The consolidation of numerous production functions, from the extraction of the raw materials to the distribution and marketing of the finished products, under the direction of one firm.

**Horizontal combination** The merger of competitors in the same industry.





**John D. Rockefeller**, who formed the Standard Oil Company in 1870, sought to control all aspects of the industry, from the transportation of crude oil to the marketing and distribution of the final products. By the end of the decade, after making shrewd deals with the railroads and underselling his rivals, he managed to control 90 percent of the oil-refining industry. To further consolidate his interests, in 1882 Rockefeller created the Standard Oil Trust, which, by integrating both vertically and horizontally, became a model for other corporations and an inspiration for critical commentary and antitrust legislation. This cartoon, published in *Puck* in 1904, shows the stranglehold Standard Oil had on government and industry alike. In 1911, in response to an antitrust suit, the Supreme Court ordered the company to break up.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Herbert Spencer, *Social Darwinism* (1857)

**Audio-Visual Aid, “Manners and Morals of High Capitalism”**

**Gospel of wealth** Thesis that hard work and perseverance lead to wealth, implying that poverty is a character flaw.

One version of this “**gospel of wealth**” justified the ruthless behavior of the so-called “robber barons,” who accumulated unprecedented wealth and power through shady deals and conspiracies. Speculator Jay Gould, known in the popular press as the “Worst Man in the World,” wrung his fortune, it was widely believed, from the labor of others. He rose quickly from his modest origins through a series of unsavory financial maneuvers.

Speculation in railroads proved to be Gould’s forte. He took over the Erie Railroad, paying off New York legislators to get the state to finance its expansion, and he acquired the U.S. Express Company by pressuring and tricking its stockholders. When threatened with arrest, Gould sold off his shares for \$9 million and moved on to

the Union Pacific, where he cut wages, precipitated strikes, and manipulated elections in the Western and Plains states. Tired of being caricatured in the press as a great swindler, he bought the leading newspapers. At his death, one obituary described Jay Gould as “an incarnation of cupidity and sordidness,” whose life symbolized “idolatrous homage [to] the golden calf.”

Andrew Carnegie—the “Richest Man in the World”—offered a strikingly different model. He represented the “captain of industry,” who had risen from the ranks through diligence, and who refused to worship wealth for its own sake. Late in his life, he outlined his personal philosophy in a popular essay, *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889), explaining that “there is no genuine, praiseworthy success in life if you are not honest, truthful, and fair-dealing.”

A poor immigrant from Scotland, Carnegie spent his boyhood studying book-keeping at night while working days in a textile mill. In 1852, he became the personal secretary of the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Western division. He learned quickly and soon stepped into the superintendent’s job. While improving passenger train service, he invested brilliantly to build funds for his next venture.

Carnegie built an empire in steel. A genius at vertical integration, he undercut his competitors by using the latest technology and designing his own system of cost analysis. By 1900, Carnegie managed the most efficient steel mills in the world, which accounted for one-third of the nation’s output. When he sold out to J.P. Morgan’s new United States Steel Corporation in 1901, his personal share of the proceeds came to \$225 million.

Carnegie was well known as a civic leader. From one point of view, he was a factory despot who underpaid his employees and ruthlessly managed their working conditions. But to the patrons of the public libraries, art museums, concert halls, colleges, and universities that he funded, Carnegie appeared to be the single greatest philanthropist of the age. By the time he died, he had given away his massive personal fortune.

Whether following the rough road of Gould or the smooth path of Carnegie, the business community worked together to fashion the new conservative ideology of Social Darwinism, which purportedly explained, and justified, why some Americans grew rich while others remained poor. Derived from the famed British naturalist Charles Darwin’s scientific theories of evolution presented in *On the*

*Origin of Species* (1859), social Darwinism superimposed the brutal struggle for existence that supposedly dominated nature onto modern society, and underscored the principle of “survival of the fittest.” The Yale professor William Graham Sumner gave this idea an economic spin. In an essay published in 1883 titled *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*, he argued that only a few individuals were capable of putting aside selfish pleasures to produce the capital needed to drive the emerging industrial economy and, moreover, they were fully deserving of their great fortunes. In contrast, the vast majority, too lazy or profligate to rise above poverty, deserved their own miserable fates. To tamper with this “natural” order by establishing welfare programs to help the poor or redistributing wealth in any way would be hazardous to society. Meanwhile, the popular writer Horatio Alger produced a more temperate version of this credo. Publishing more than 100 rags-to-riches novels, he created heroes who manage to rise out of poverty by both hard work and luck and ultimately acquire, if not vast wealth, middle-class respectability and comfort.



**This engraving of steel manufacturing** at Andrew Carnegie's plant in 1886 features a Bessemer Converter, which converts molten pig iron into steel. The process was named after Sir Henry Bessemer of Sheffield, England, who first patented the process in 1855.

The Granger Collection, New York (0009141/4E452.14).

**WHAT WERE** the sources of the new labor being recruited for factory work in Gilded Age America?

## AP\* Guideline 15.3

In this excerpt, Frederick Winslow Taylor, the founder of scientific management, explains the complementary structure behind his new theory.

*... men believe that the fundamental interest of the employés and employers are necessarily antagonistic. Scientific management, on the contrary, has for its very foundation the firm conviction that the true interests of the two are one and the same . . . it is possible to give the workman what he most wants—high wages—and the employer what he wants—a low labor cost—for his manufactures.*

In this excerpt, Agnes Nestor, a glove maker in a Chicago factory, recalls how the piecework factory system led to high pressure to increase production to maintain steady pay.

*At noon we have only half an hour, which means that the girls have to bring cold lunches. . . . While half an hour seems a short time for lunch still a great many girls take ten or fifteen minutes of this to trim their gloves or whatever work they can do while the power is shut down. The girls all eat at their places, two or three grouping together. . . .*

## LABOR IN THE AGE OF BIG BUSINESS

Like the gospel of wealth, the “gospel of work” affirmed the dignity of hard work, the virtue of thrift, and the importance of individual initiative. But unlike business leaders, the philosophers of American working people did not believe in riches as the proof of work well done, or in the lust for power as the driving force of progress. On the contrary, they contended that honesty and competence should become the cornerstones of a society “so improved that labor shall become a blessing instead of a curse.”

This faith inspired a slender minority, less than 3 percent of the workforce, to form unions in various trades and industries. Despite its small size, the labor movement represented the most significant and lasting response of workers to the rise of big business and the consolidation of corporate power.

### THE WAGE SYSTEM

The accelerating growth of industry, especially the steady mechanization of production, dramatically changed employer–employee relations and created new categories of workers. Both in turn fostered competition among workers and created conditions often hazardous to health.

For most craft workers, the new system destroyed long-standing practices, chipped away at their customary autonomy, and placed them in competition with other, mainly unskilled workers. Frederick Winslow Taylor, the pioneer of scientific management, explained that managers must “take all the important decisions . . . out of the hands of workmen.” Teams of ironworkers, for example, had previously set the rules of production as well as their wages, while the company supplied equipment and raw materials. Once steel replaced iron, most companies gradually introduced a new system. Managers now constantly supervised workers, set the pace of production and rate of payment, and introduced new, faster machinery that made many skills obsolete. In the woodworking trades, highly skilled cabinetmakers, who for generations had brought their own tools to the factory, were largely replaced with “green hands”—immigrants, including many women—who with only minimal training and close supervision could operate new woodworking machines at cheaper rates of pay.

Not all trades conformed to this pattern. The garment industry, for example, grew at a very fast pace in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and St. Louis, but retained older systems of labor along with the new. The highly mechanized factories employed hundreds of thousands of young immigrant women, while the outwork system, established well before the Civil War, contracted ever-larger numbers of families to work in their homes on sewing machines or by hand. However, companies relied on a “sweating” system that fostered extreme competition between these two groups of workers by continually increasing daily production quotas. Paid by the piece—a seam stitched, a collar turned, a button attached—workers labored faster and longer at home or in the factory to forestall a dip in wages.

The new system of production required a vast number of people. Lured by the promise of a paying job in industry, many young men and women fled the family farm for the factory. A smaller number escaped the peonage system of agricultural labor in the South. By far, the largest proportion came from Europe or Asia. In many occupations—meat processing, clothing and textile manufacturing, cigar making, and mining, for example—immigrants predominated by the end of the century.

Industrial expansion also offered new opportunities for women to work outside the home. African American and immigrant women found employment in trades least affected by technological advances, such as domestic service. In contrast, English-speaking white women moved into the better-paying clerical and sales positions in

the rapidly expanding business sector. After the typewriter and telephone came into widespread use in the 1890s, the number of women employed in office work rose even faster. At the turn of the century, 8.6 million women worked outside their homes—nearly triple the number in 1870.

By contrast, African American men found themselves excluded from many fields. In Cleveland, for example, the number of black carpenters declined after 1870, just as the volume of construction was rapidly increasing. African American men were also systematically driven from restaurant service and barred from newer trades such as boilermaking, plumbing, electrical work, and paperhanging, which European immigrants secured for themselves.

Discriminatory or exclusionary practices fell hardest on workers recruited earlier from China to work in the mines, in the construction of railroads, and in market gardening. By the 1870s, white workers and proprietors of small businesses had formed a potent and racist anti-Chinese movement to protest “cheap Chinese labor” and to demand a halt to Chinese immigration. Calling for deportation measures, white rioters razed Chinese neighborhoods. In 1882, Congress responded to the violence by passing the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, which suspended Chinese immigration for ten years, limited the civil rights of resident Chinese, and forbade their naturalization.

For even the best-placed wage earners, the new workplace could be unhealthy, even dangerous. Meatpacking produced its own hazards—the dampness of the pickling room, the sharp blade of the slaughtering knife, and the noxious odors of the fertilizer department. Factory owners often failed to mark high-voltage wires, locked fire doors, and allowed the emission of toxic fumes. Extractive workers, such as coal and copper miners, labored in mineshafts where the air could suddenly turn poisonous and cave-ins were possible and deadly. Moreover, machines ran faster in American factories than anywhere else in the world, and workers who could not keep up or suffered serious injury found themselves without a job.

Even under less hazardous conditions, workers complained about the tedium of performing repetitive tasks for many hours each day. Although federal employees had been granted the eight-hour day in 1868, most workers still toiled upward of ten or twelve hours. “Life in a factory,” one textile operative grumbled, “is perhaps, with the exception of prison life, the most monotonous life a human being can live.” Nor could glamour be found in the work of saleswomen in the elegant department stores. Clerks could not sit down, despite workdays as long as sixteen hours in the busy season, or hold “unnecessary conversations” with customers or other clerks. Despite these disadvantages, most women preferred sales and manufacturing jobs to domestic service, which required live-in servants to be on call seven days a week, enjoying at best an occasional afternoon off.

Moreover, steady employment was rare. Between 1866 and 1897, fourteen years of prosperity stood against seventeen years of hard times. The major depressions of 1873–79 and 1893–97 were the worst in the nation’s history up to that time. Three “minor” recessions (1866–67, 1883–85, and 1890–91) did not seem insignificant to the millions who lost their jobs during those periods.

## THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

The Noble and Holy Order of the **Knights of Labor**, founded by a group of Philadelphia garment cutters in 1869, grew to become the largest labor organization in the nineteenth century. Led by Grand Master Workman Terence V. Powderly, the order sought to bring together wage earners, regardless of skill. Only by



**Thomas Nast (1840–1902)**, the most famous political cartoonist of the 1860s and 1870s, used his art to comment on pressing political issues, such as the plight of former slaves during Reconstruction, the evils of machine politics, and the rivalry between the national political parties. His drawings were made into wood engravings that were then printed in newspapers or popular magazines such as *Harper's Weekly*. In this cartoon published in 1871, Nast depicts Columbia protecting a Chinese immigrant from a racist mob.

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### Class Discussion Question 19.2



William B. Farwell, *The Chinese at Home and Abroad* (1885)

**Chinese Exclusion Act** Act that suspended Chinese immigration, limited the civil rights of resident Chinese, and forbade their naturalization.

**Knights of Labor** Labor union founded in 1869 that included skilled and unskilled workers irrespective of race or gender.

## QUICK REVIEW

**The Knights of Labor**

- ◆ Founded in 1869 by Philadelphia garment cutters.
- ◆ Knights promoted economic cooperation.
- ◆ Reached their peak during campaign for eight-hour workday.

organizing widely, Powderly insisted, would workers be able to achieve their “emancipation” from wage slavery.

The Knights endorsed a variety of reform measures—the restriction of child labor, a graduated income tax, more land set aside for homesteading, the abolition of contract labor, and monetary reform—to offset the power of the industrialists. They believed that the “producing classes,” once freed from the grip of corporate monopoly and the curses of ignorance and alcohol, would transform the United States into a genuinely democratic society.

As an alternative to the wage system, the Knights promoted producers’ cooperatives. In these factories, workers collectively made all decisions on prices and wages and shared all the profits. Local assemblies launched thousands of small co-ops, such as the Our Girls Co-operative Manufacturing Company, which was established by Chicago seamstresses in the 1880s. The Knights also ran small cooperative cigar shops and grocery stores, often housed in their own assembly buildings. Successful for a time, most cooperatives could not compete against the heavily capitalized enterprises and ultimately failed.

The Knights reached their peak during the great campaign for a shorter workday. The Eight-Hour League, led by Ira Steward, advocated a “natural” rhythm of eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for leisure. After staging petition campaigns, marches, and a massive strike in New York City, the movement collapsed during the economic recession of the 1870s. The Knights helped revive it in the next decade, and this time, the campaign aroused widespread support from sympathetic consumers, who boycotted brands of beer, bread, and other products made in longer-hour shops.

Membership grew from a few thousand in 1880 to nearly three-quarters of a million six years later. The organization was already committed to securing “for both sexes equal pay for equal work,” but Leonora Barry, who was now appointed to organize women, helped to increase their share of membership to 10 percent. The Knights also organized African American workers—20,000 to 30,000 nationally—mainly in separate assemblies within the organization. However, the organization’s open-handedness did not extend to Chinese workers, who were systematically excluded from membership.

During the first weeks of May 1886, more than a third of a million workers demonstrated for the eight-hour day by walking off their jobs. Approximately

200,000 of them won shorter hours, including Packingtown’s workers, who joined the Knights of Labor en masse. To celebrate, the Chicago community staged a huge parade of twelve marching bands and twenty-eight decorated wagons. Despite such a promising beginning, the shorter-hours campaign ended in tragedy.

On May 4, 1886, following a series of confrontations between strikers and authorities, a protest against police violence at Chicago’s Haymarket Square seemed to be ending quietly until someone threw a bomb that killed one policeman and left seven others fatally wounded. Police responded by firing wildly into the crowd, killing an equal number. After Chicago authorities arrested a group of anarchists, a sensational trial ended in death sentences, although no evidence linked the accused to the bombing. Four of the convicted were hanged, one committed suicide, and three other “Haymarket Martyrs,” as

**At the 1886 General Assembly of the Knights of Labor**, which met in Richmond, Virginia, sixteen women attended as delegates. Elizabeth Rodgers, the first woman in Chicago to join the Knights and the first woman to serve as a master workman in a district assembly, attended with her two-week old daughter. The convention established a Department of Women’s Work and appointed Leonora M. Barry, a hosiery worker, as general investigator.

© Bettmann/CORBIS.



they were called, remained jailed until pardoned in 1893, by Illinois governor John Peter Altgeld.

The Knights of Labor were crushed. Employers' associations successfully pooled funds to rid their factories of troublesome agitators, and announced that companies would no longer bargain with unions. In Packingtown, the Big Five firms drew up a blacklist to get rid of labor organizers and quickly reinstated the ten-hour day. The wage system had triumphed.

### THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

The events of 1886 also signaled the rise of a very different kind of organization, the **American Federation of Labor (AFL)**. Unlike the Knights, the AFL accepted the wage system. Following a strategy of “pure and simple unionism,” the AFL sought recognition of its union status to bargain with employers for better working conditions, higher wages, and shorter hours. In return, it offered compliant firms the benefit of amenable day-to-day relations with the most highly skilled wage earners. Only if companies refused to bargain in good faith would union members resort to strikes.

The new federation, with twelve national unions and 140,000 affiliated members in 1886, rapidly pushed ahead of the rival Knights by organizing craft workers. AFL president Samuel Gompers disregarded unskilled workers, racial minorities, and immigrants, believing they were impossible to organize and even unworthy of membership. He also believed in the “family wage,” which was to be earned by men. Women, Gompers insisted, belonged in the home and not in the factory where they would serve only to lower wages. Under his leadership, the AFL advanced the interests of the “aristocrat of labor,” the best-paid worker in the world.

Unlike the national leadership, local AFL members recuperated some of the best qualities of the Knights of Labor and established a firm basis for a new labor movement. They provided support to strikers, gathered votes for prolabor political candidates, sponsored social activities, and often published their own weekly newspapers.

Chicago's Central Labor Federation embodied the new spirit of the AFL. After the Haymarket tragedy, trade unionists worked more closely with urban reformers. Finding allies among women's clubs and church groups, within the state legislature, and even among some socially minded members of the business community, they cultivated an atmosphere of civic responsibility. The Illinois Factory Investigation Act of 1893 offered evidence of their hard work and patience, securing funds from the state legislature to monitor working conditions, and particularly to improve the woeful situation of the many women and children who worked in sweatshops.

Although the AFL represented only a small minority of working Americans—about 10 percent at the end of the century—local unions often played important roles in their communities. They may not have been able to slow the steady advance of mass production, which diminished the craft worker's autonomy and eliminated some of the most desirable jobs, but AFL members managed to make their presence felt. Local politicians courted their votes, and Labor Day, first celebrated in the 1880s, became a national holiday in 1894.

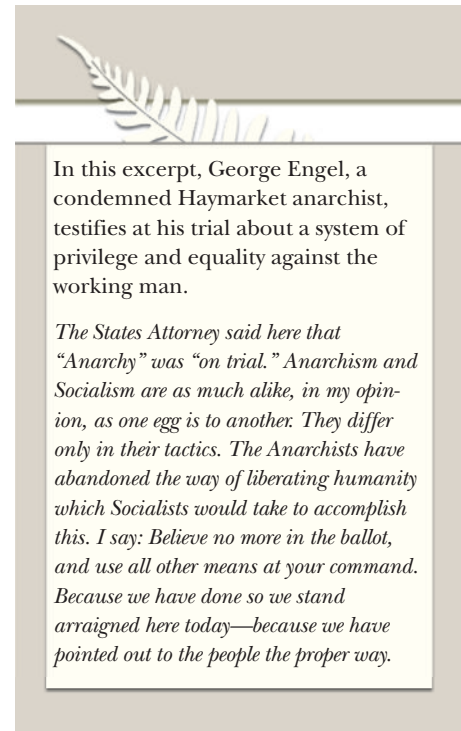
## THE NEW SOUTH

“Fifteen years have gone over” since the Civil War, journalist Whitelaw Reid complained, yet the South “still sits crushed, wretched, busy displaying and bemoaning her wounds.” Physically and financially devastated by the war, the South had little investment capital and relatively few banks to manage it. The area was economically stagnant, its per capita wealth only 27 percent of that of the Northeast. The South's countryside receded into greater

**American Federation of Labor (AFL)** Union formed in 1886 that organized skilled workers along craft lines and emphasized a few workplace issues rather than a broad social program.



George Engel, Address by  
Condemned Haymarket  
Anarchist (1886)



In this excerpt, George Engel, a condemned Haymarket anarchist, testifies at his trial about a system of privilege and equality against the working man.

*The States Attorney said here that “Anarchy” was “on trial.” Anarchism and Socialism are as much alike, in my opinion, as one egg is to another. They differ only in their tactics. The Anarchists have abandoned the way of liberating humanity which Socialists would take to accomplish this. I say: Believe no more in the ballot, and use all other means at your command. Because we have done so we stand arraigned here today—because we have pointed out to the people the proper way.*

Lecture Suggestion 19.2, Knights of Labor and the AFL

Class Discussion Question 19.3

HOW DID the development of southern industry affect the lives of African Americans living in the South?

isolation and poverty, while its few urban regions moved very slowly into the era of modern industry and technology. The southern economy was held back by dependence on northern finance capital, continued reliance on cotton production, and the legacy of slavery.

### AN INTERNAL COLONY

In the 1870s, a vocal and powerful new group of southerners headed by Henry Woodfin Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, insisted that the region enjoyed a great potential in its abundant natural resources of coal, iron, turpentine, tobacco, and lumber. Grady and his peers envisioned a “New South” where modern textile mills operated efficiently and profitably, close to the sources of raw goods, the expansive fields of cotton, and a plentiful and cheap supply of labor, unrestricted by unions or by legal limitations on the employment of children. Arguing against those planters who aspired to rejuvenate the agricultural economy based on the cultivation of a few staple crops, this group forcefully promoted industrial development and welcomed northern investors.

Northern investors secured huge concessions from southern state legislatures, including land, forest, and mineral rights and large tax exemptions. Exploiting the incentives, railroad companies laid more than 22,000 miles of new track, connecting the region to national markets and creating new cities. By 1890, a score of large railroad companies, centered mainly in New York, held more than half of all the track in the South.

Northerners also employed various means to protect their investments from southern competition. By the late 1870s, southern merchants, with help from foreign investors, had begun to run iron factories around Birmingham, Alabama. Southern iron production was soon encroaching on the northeastern market. To stave off this competition, Andrew Carnegie ordered the railroads to charge higher freight fees to Birmingham’s iron producers. New York bankers later succeeded in expatriating Birmingham’s profits through stock ownership in southern firms. After the turn of the century, U.S. Steel simply bought out the local merchants and took over much of Birmingham’s production.

The production of cotton textiles followed a similar course. Powerful merchants and large landowners, realizing that they could make high profits by controlling the cotton crop from field to factory, promoted the vertical integration of the cotton industry. The number of mills in the South grew from 161 in 1880 to 400 in 1900. Southern investors supplied large amounts of the capital for the industrial expansion and technological improvements. The latest machines ran the new mills, and the South boasted the first factory fully equipped with electricity. Production in the four leading cotton-manufacturing states—North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama—skyrocketed, far outpacing the New England mills.

Recognizing the potential for great profit, northern manufacturers, including many New England mill owners, shifted their investments to the South. By the 1920s, northern investors held much of the South’s wealth, including the major textile mills, but returned through employment or social services only a small share of the profits to the region’s people.

Beyond iron or steel and textiles, southern industry remained largely extractive and, like the South itself, rural. Turpentine and lumbering businesses pushed further into diminishing pine forests, the sawmills and distilleries moving with them. Toward the end of the century, fruit canning and sugar refining flourished. For the most part, southern enterprises mainly produced raw materials for consumption or use in the North, thereby perpetuating the economic imbalance between the sections.

#### Class Discussion Question 19.5

### AP\* Guideline 13.2

The governing role of capital investments from outside the region reinforced long-standing relationships. Even rapid industrialization—in iron, railroads, and textiles—did not carry the same consequences achieved in the North. The rise of the New South reinforced, rather than diminished, the region’s status as the nation’s internal colony.

## SOUTHERN LABOR

The advance of southern industry did little to improve the working lives of most African Americans, who made up more than one-third of region’s population. Although the majority continued to work in agriculture, large numbers found jobs in industries such as the railroad. In booming cities like Atlanta, they even gained skilled positions as bricklayers, carpenters, and painters. For the most part, however, African Americans were limited to unskilled, low-paying jobs. In the textile mills and cigarette factories, which employed both black and white workers, the workforce was rigidly segregated. African Americans were assigned mainly to janitorial jobs and rarely worked alongside the white workers who tended the machines. Nearly all African American women who earned wages did so as household workers; girls as young as ten worked as domestics or as nurses for white children.

Most trade unions refused membership to black workers. Locals of the all-white carpenters’ union, for example, maintained a segregation policy so absolute that if too few members were available for a job, the union would send for out-of-town white workers rather than employ local members of the black carpenters’ union. In an Atlanta mill in 1897, 1,400 white women operatives went on strike when the company proposed to hire two black spinners.

Only at rare moments did southern workers unite across racial lines. In the 1880s, the Knights of Labor briefly organized both black and white workers. At its high point, the Knights enrolled two-thirds of Richmond’s 5,000 tobacco operatives and made significant inroads among quarry workers, coopers, typographers, iron molders, and builders. But when white politicians and local newspapers began to raise the specter of black domination, the Knights were forced to retreat.

Wages throughout the South were low for both black and white workers. Southern textile workers’ wages were barely half those of New Englanders. In the 1880s, when investors enjoyed profits ranging from 30 percent to 75 percent, southern mill workers earned as little as 12 cents per hour. Black men earned at or below the poverty line of \$300 per year, while black women rarely earned more than \$120, and white women about \$220 annually. The poorest paid workers were children, the mainstay of southern mill labor.

As industry expanded throughout the nation, so too did the child labor force. This was especially so in the South. In 1896, only one in twenty Massachusetts mill workers was younger than sixteen, but one in four North Carolina cotton mill operatives was that age or younger. Traditions rooted in the agricultural economy reinforced the practice of using the labor of all family members, even the very young. Seasonal labor, such as picking crops or grinding sugarcane, put families on the move, making formal education all but impossible. Not until well into the twentieth century did compulsory school attendance laws effectively restrict child labor in the South.

A system of convict labor also thrived in the South. Bituminous coal mines and public work projects of all kinds, especially in remote

## QUICK REVIEW

### Race and Labor

- ◆ Advances in southern industry did little to help African Americans.
- ◆ Southern workers rarely united across race lines.
- ◆ Wages throughout the South were low for both whites and blacks.

**The processing of raw tobacco** employed thousands of African American women, who sorted, stripped, stemmed, and hung tobacco leaves as part of the redrying process. After mechanization was introduced, white women took jobs as cigarette rollers, but black women kept the worst, most monotonous jobs in the tobacco factories. The women shown in this photograph are stemming tobacco in a Virginia factory while their white male supervisor oversees their labor.

Valentine Richmond History Center.





areas, employed disciplinary methods and created living and working conditions reminiscent of slavery. African Americans constituted up to 90 percent of the convict workforce. Transported and housed like animals—chained together by day and confined in portable cages at night—these workers suffered high mortality rates. White politicians expressed pride in what they called the “good roads movement”—the chief use of convict labor—as proof of regional progress.

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF PIEDMONT COMMUNITIES

The impact of the New South was nowhere greater than in the Piedmont, the region extending from southern Virginia and the central Carolinas into northern Alabama and Georgia. After 1870, long-established farms and plantations gave way to railroad tracks, textile factories, numerous mill villages, and a few sizable cities. By the turn of the century, five Piedmont towns had populations over 10,000. Even more dramatic was the swelling number of small towns with populations between 1,000 and 5,000—from fourteen in 1870 to fifty-two in 1900. Once the South’s backcountry, the Piedmont now surpassed New England in the production of yarn and cloth, to stand first in the world.

Rural poverty and the appeal of a new life encouraged many farm families to strike out for a mill town. Those with the least access to land and credit—mainly widows and their children and single women—were the first to go into the mills. Then families sent their children. Some families worked in the mills on a seasonal basis, between planting and harvesting. But as the agricultural crisis deepened, more and more people abandoned the countryside entirely for what they called “public work.”

A typical mill community—a company town, owned “lock, stock, and barrel” by the manufacturers—was composed of rows of single-family houses, a small school, several churches, a company-owned store, and the home of the superintendent, who governed everyone’s affairs. The manager of the King Cotton Mill in Burlington, North Carolina, not only kept the company’s accounts in order, purchased raw material, and sold the finished yarn, but even bought Christmas presents for the workers’ children. It was not unknown for a superintendent to prowl the neighborhood to see which families burned their lanterns past nine o’clock at night and, finding a violator, to knock on the door and tell the offenders to go to bed. Mill workers frequently complained that they had no private life at all. A federal report published shortly after the turn of the century concluded that “all the affairs of the village and the conditions of living of all the people are regulated entirely by the mill company. Practically speaking, the company owns everything and controls everything, and to a large extent controls everybody in the mill village.”

Mill superintendents also relied on schoolteachers and clergy to set the tone of community life. They hired and paid the salaries of Baptist and Methodist ministers to preach a faith encouraging workers to be thrifty, orderly, temperate, and hard-working. The schools, similarly subsidized by the company, reinforced the lesson of moral and social discipline required of industrial life, and encouraged students to follow their parents into the mill. But it was mainly young children between six and eight years old who attended school. When more hands were needed in the mill, superintendents plucked out those youngsters and sent them to join their older brothers and sisters who were already at work.

Piedmont mill villages such as Greenville, South Carolina, and Burlington, Charlotte, and Franklinville, North Carolina, nevertheless developed a cohesive character typical of isolated rural communities. The new residents maintained many aspects of their agricultural pasts, tilling small gardens and keeping chickens, pigs, and cows in their yards. Factory owners rarely paved roads or sidewalks or provided

adequate sanitation. Mud, flies, and diseases such as typhoid fever flourished. Mill workers endured poverty and health hazards by strengthening community ties through intermarriage. Within a few generations, most of the village residents had, according to one study, “some connection to each other, however distant, by marriage,” blood, or both. Even the men and women without families boarded in households where privacy was scarce and collective meals created a familylike atmosphere. Historians have called this complex of intimate economic, family, and community ties the customs of incorporation.

## THE INDUSTRIAL CITY

Before the Civil War, manufacturing had centered in the countryside, in new factory towns such as Lowell, Massachusetts, and Troy, New York. By the end of the nineteenth century, 90 percent of all manufacturing took place in big cities. The metropolis stood at the center of the growing industrial economy, a magnet drawing raw material, capital, and labor, and a key distribution point for manufactured goods. The industrial city inspired both great hope and great trepidation. Civic leaders often bragged about its size and rate of growth; immigrants wrote to their countryfolk of its pace, both exciting and exhausting.

### POPULATING THE CITY

The population of cities grew at double the rate of the nation’s population as a whole. In 1860, only sixteen cities had more than 50,000 residents. By 1890, one-third of all Americans were city dwellers. Eleven cities claimed more than 250,000 people.

The nation’s largest cities—New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston, and Baltimore—achieved international fame for the size and diversity of their populations. Many of their new residents had migrated from rural communities within the United States. Between 1870 and 1910, an average of nearly 7,000 African Americans moved north each year, hoping to escape the poverty and oppression prevailing in the South and to find better-paying jobs. By the end of the century, nearly 80 percent of African Americans in the North lived in urban areas. Whereas many young white men sought their fortunes in the West, their sisters more often migrated to cities in search of work in manufacturing or domestic service. By the end of the century, young women outnumbered young men in most East coast cities.

Immigrants and their children were the major source of urban population growth in the late nineteenth century. Most of those in the first wave of immigration, before the Civil War, had settled in the countryside. In contrast, in the last half of the nineteenth century, it was the industrial city that drew the so-called new immigrants, who came primarily from eastern and southern Europe. In 1880, San Francisco claimed the highest proportion of foreign-born (45 percent) residents, although not the largest number. By the turn of the century, Chicago had more Germans than all but a few German cities and more Poles than most Polish cities; New York had more Italians than a handful of the largest Italian cities, and Boston had nearly as many Irish as Dublin. In almost every group except the Irish, men outnumbered women (see Map 19-2).

Like rural migrants, immigrants came to the American city to take advantage of the expanding opportunities for employment. While many hoped to build a new home in the land of plenty, many others intended to work hard, save money, and return to their families in the Old Country. In the 1880s, for example, nearly half of all Italian, Greek, and Serbian men returned to their native lands. Others could not return to their homelands or did not wish to. Jews, for instance, had emigrated to escape persecution in Russia and Russian-dominated Polish and Romanian lands. A Yiddish writer

WHAT CONTRIBUTED to the growing population of American cities?

## AP\* Guideline 16.1

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Big Cities

- ◆ Cities grew at double the rate of the nation as a whole.
- ◆ Immigrants and their children were the major source of urban population growth.
- ◆ After the Civil War, most new immigrants settled in cities.

### Lecture Suggestion 19.3, The Growth of Cities



Adna Weber, *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century* (1899)

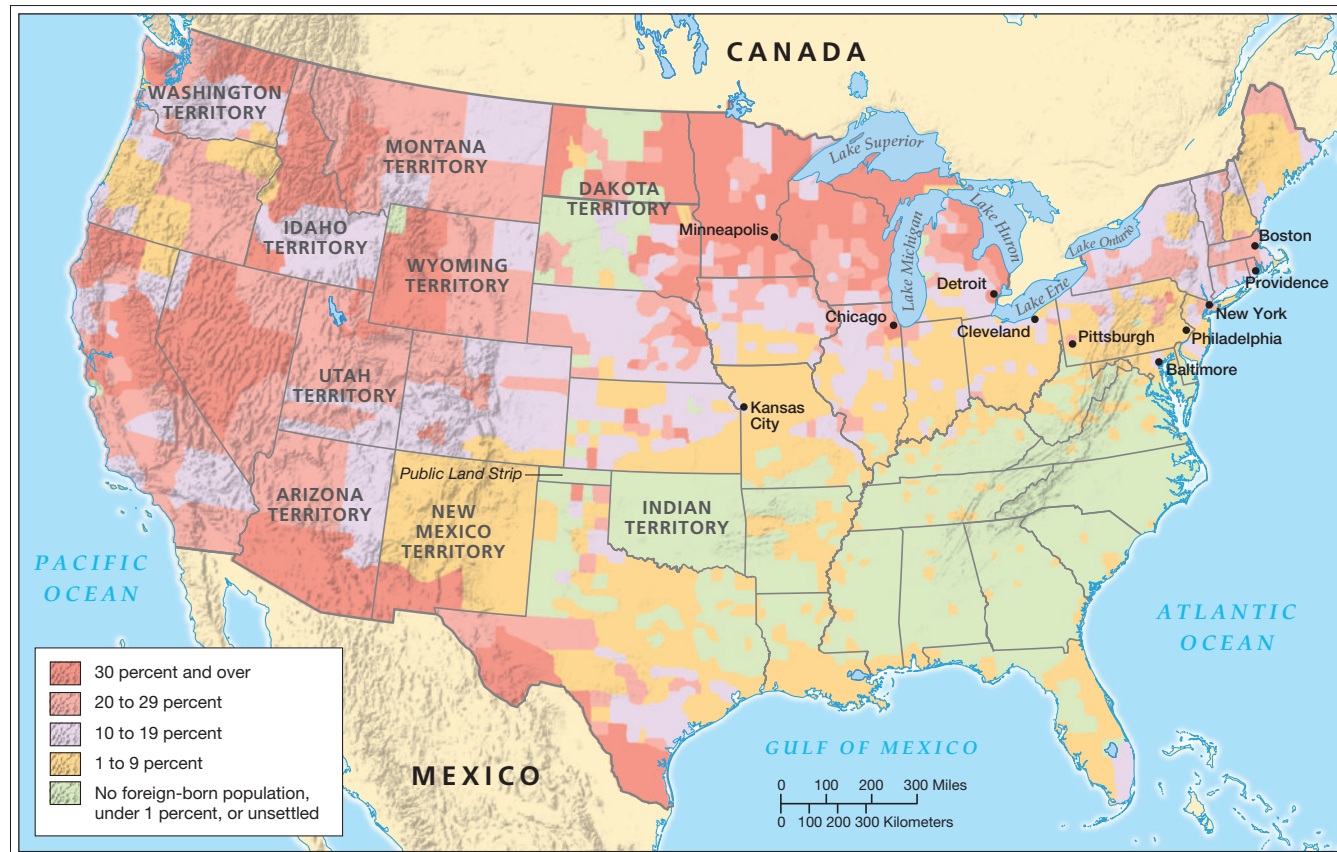
### Out of Class Activity 19.1, Immigration

## AP\* Guideline 15.5

Audio-Visual Aid, “The Golden Land”

PEARSON  
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To explore this map further, go to [www.myhistorylab.com](http://www.myhistorylab.com)



**MAP 19-2**

**Population of Foreign Birth by Region, 1880** European immigrants after the Civil War settled primarily in the industrial districts of the northern Midwest and parts of the Northeast. French Canadians continued to settle in Maine, Cubans in Florida, and Mexicans in the Southwest, where earlier immigrants had established thriving communities.

Clifford L. Lord and Elizabeth H. Lord, *Lord & Lord Historical Atlas of the United States* (New York: Holt, 1953).

**WHY DID** immigrants tend to settle in some regions and not in others?

### Map 19-2

In the late nineteenth century, immigrants and their children were the major source of urban population growth. Before the Civil War, most immigrants settled in the countryside. After the Civil War, most immigrants were drawn to industrial cities. Those immigrants were mostly from eastern and southern Europe. Like rural immigrants, those moving to cities did so to take advantage of expanding opportunities for employment. As a group, Jews had the most experience with urban life. Forbidden to own land in most parts of Europe, they had formed urban communities in European cities, many in the garment industry.

later called this generation the “Jews without Jewish memories. . . . They shook them off in the boat when they came across the seas. They emptied out their memories.”

Of all groups, Jews had the most experience with urban life. Forbidden to own land in most parts of Europe and boxed into *shtetls* (villages), Jews had also formed thriving urban communities in Vilna, Berlin, London, and Vienna. Many had worked in garment manufacturing, in London’s East End, for example, and followed a path to American cities like New York, Rochester, Philadelphia, or Chicago where the needle trades flourished.

Other groups, the majority coming from rural parts of Europe, sought out their kinfolk in American cities, where they could most easily find housing and employment. Bohemians settled largely in Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. French Canadians, a relatively small group of a few hundred thousand, emigrated from Québec and settled almost exclusively in New England and upper New York state. Finding work mainly in textile mills, they transformed smaller industrial cities like Woonsocket, Rhode Island, into French-speaking communities. Cubans, themselves often first- or

second-generation immigrants from Spain, moved to Ybor City, a section of Tampa, Florida, to work in cigar factories. Still other groups tended toward cities dominated by fishing, shoemaking, or even glassblowing, a craft carried directly from the Old Country. Italians, the most numerous among the new immigrants, settled mainly in northeastern cities, laying railroad track, excavating subways, and erecting buildings.

Resettlement in an American city did not necessarily mark the end of the immigrants' travels. Newcomers, both native-born and immigrant, moved frequently from one neighborhood to another and from one city to another. As manufacturing advanced outward from the city center, working populations followed. American cities experienced a total population turnover three or four times during each decade of the last half of the century.

### THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Faced with a population explosion and an unprecedented building boom, the cities encouraged the creation of many beautiful and useful structures, including commercial offices, sumptuous homes, and efficient public services. At the same time, cities did little to improve the conditions of the majority of the population, who worked in dingy factories and lived in crowded **tenements**. Open space decreased as American cities grew.

American streets customarily followed a simple gridiron pattern. Builders leveled hills, filled ponds, and pulled down any farms or houses in the way. City officials usually lacked any master plan, save the idea of endless expansion. Factories often occupied the best sites, typically near waterways, where goods could be easily transported and chemical wastes dumped.

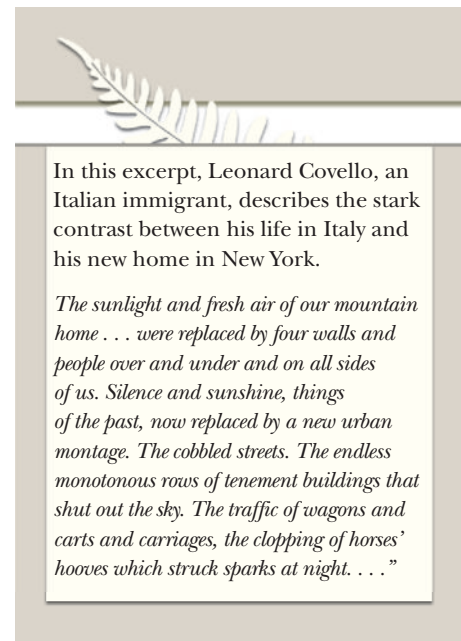
Built by the thousands after the Civil War, the tenement was designed to maximize the use of space. A typical tenement sat on a lot 25 by 100 feet and rose to five stories. There were four families on each floor, each with three rooms. By 1890, New York's Lower East Side packed more than 700 people per acre into back-to-back buildings, producing one of the highest population densities in the world.

At the other end of the urban social scale, New York's Fifth Avenue, St. Paul's Summit Avenue, Chicago's Michigan Avenue, and San Francisco's Nob Hill fairly gleamed with new mansions and town houses. Commonwealth Avenue marked Boston's fashionable Back Bay district, built on a filled-in 450-acre tidal flat. State engineers planned this community, with its magnificent boulevard, uniform five-story brownstones, and back alleys designed for deliveries. Like wealthy neighborhoods in other cities, Back Bay also provided space for the city's magnificent public architecture: its stately public library, fine arts and science museums, and orchestra hall. Back Bay opened onto the Fenway Park system designed by the nation's premier landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted.

The industrial city established a new style of commercial and civic architecture. Using fireproof materials, expanded foundations, and internal metal construction, the era's talented architects focused on the factory and office building. Concentrating as many offices as possible in the downtown areas, they fashioned hundreds of buildings from steel, sometimes decorating them with elaborate wrought-iron facades. The office building could rise seven, ten, even twenty stories high.

Architects played a key role in the late nineteenth-century City Beautiful movement. Influenced by American wealth and its enhanced role in the global economy, they turned to the monumental or imperial style, laying grand concrete boulevards at enormous public cost. New sports amphitheaters spread pride in the city's accomplishments. New schools, courthouses, capitols, hospitals, museums, and huge new art galleries, museums, and concert halls promoted urban excitement as well as

Upon migration to the United States, many followed a path to American cities where the needle trades flourished. Other groups, the majority coming from rural parts of Europe, sought out family members in American cities, where it was easiest to find housing and work. Bohemians settled in Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. French Canadians settled in New York state and New England. Cubans often moved to Tampa, Florida to work in cigar factories. Italians settled mainly in northeastern cities, laying railroad track and erecting buildings.



In this excerpt, Leonard Covello, an Italian immigrant, describes the stark contrast between his life in Italy and his new home in New York.

*The sunlight and fresh air of our mountain home . . . were replaced by four walls and people over and under and on all sides of us. Silence and sunshine, things of the past, now replaced by a new urban montage. The cobbled streets. The endless monotonous rows of tenement buildings that shut out the sky. The traffic of wagons and carts and carriages, the clapping of horses' hooves which struck sparks at night. . . ."*

**Tenements** Four- to six-story residential dwellings, once common in New York, built on tiny lots without regard to providing ventilation or light.



In his watercolor *The Bowery at Night*, painted in 1885, W. Louis Sonntag Jr. shows a New York City scene transformed by electric light. Electricity transformed the city in other ways as well, as seen in the electric streetcars and elevated railroad.

*The Bowery at Night*, 1885. Watercolor. Museum of the City of New York.

cultural uplift. The imperial style also increased congestion and noise, making the city a more desirable place to visit than to live.

The city also inspired other architectural marvels. Opened in 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge won wide acclaim from engineers, journalists, and poets as the most original American construction. Designed by John Roebling, who died from an accident early in its construction, and by his son Washington Roebling, who became an invalid during its construction, the bridge was considered an aesthetic and practical wonder. Its soaring piers, elegant arches, and intricate steel cables convey an image of strength and elasticity, inspiring a belief among artists and writers in the potential of technology to unite function and beauty. The Brooklyn Bridge also helped to speed the transformation of rural townships into suburban communities.

Like the railroad, but on a smaller scale, streetcars and elevated railroads changed business dramatically, because they moved traffic of many different kinds—information, people, and goods—faster and farther than before. Although San Francisco introduced the first mechanically driven cable car in 1873, within a decade Chicago would claim the most extensive cable car system in the world. The first electrified street railway was tested in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888, and by 1895, more than 800 communities operated systems of electrically powered cars or trolleys on track totaling 10,000 miles. In 1902, New York opened its subway system, which would grow to become the largest in the nation.

### THE CITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

By making it possible for a great number of workers to live in communities distant from their place of employment, mass transportation allowed the metropolitan region to grow dramatically. By the end of the nineteenth century, suburban trains were bringing nearly 100,000 riders daily into the city of Chicago. Suburbs sprang up outside the major cities, offering many professional workers quiet residential retreats from the city's busy and increasingly polluted downtown.

Electric trolleys eliminated the tons of waste from horsecars that had for decades fouled city streets. But the new rail systems also increased congestion and created new safety hazards for pedestrians. During the 1890s, 600 people were killed each year by Chicago's trains. Elevated trains, designed to avoid these problems, placed entire communities under the shadow of noisy and rickety wooden platforms. Despite many technological advances, the quality of life in the nation's cities did not necessarily improve.

Modern water and sewer systems now constituted a hidden city of pipes and wires, mirroring the growth of the visible city above ground. These advances, which brought indoor plumbing to most homes, did not, however, eradicate serious environmental or health problems. Most cities continued to dump sewage into nearby bodies of water. Moreover, most municipal governments established separate clean-water systems through the use of reservoirs, rather than outlawing upriver dumping by factories. Downriver communities began to complain about unendurable stench from the polluted rivers and streams.

The unrestricted burning of coal to fuel the railroads and to heat factories and homes after 1880 greatly intensified urban air pollution. Noise levels continued to rise in the most compacted living and industrial areas. Overcrowded conditions and inadequate sanitary facilities bred tuberculosis, smallpox, and scarlet fever, among other contagious diseases. Children's diseases such as whooping cough and measles spread rapidly through poor neighborhoods such as Packingtown. By the 1890s, many urban school systems employed doctors and nurses to screen children for common contagious diseases. But only after the turn of the century, amid an intensive campaign against municipal corruption, did laws and administrative practices address the serious problems of public health (see Chapter 21).

Meanwhile, the distance between the city and the countryside narrowed. Naturalists had hoped for large open spaces—a buffer zone—to preserve farmland and wild areas, protect future water supplies, and diminish regional air pollution. But soon, the industrial landscape invaded the countryside. Nearby rural lands not destined for private housing or commercial development became sites for water treatment and sewage plants, garbage dumps, and graveyards—services essential to the city's growing population.

## THE RISE OF CONSUMER SOCIETY

The growth of industry and the spread of cities had a profound impact on all regions of the United States. During the final third of the nineteenth century, the standard of living climbed, although unevenly and erratically. Real wages (pay in relation to the cost of living) rose, fostering improvements in nutrition, clothing, and housing. More and cheaper products were within the reach of all but the very poor. Food from the farms became more abundant and varied—grains for bread or beer; poultry, pork, and beef; fresh fruits and vegetables from California. Although many Americans continued to acknowledge the moral value of hard work, thrift, and self-sacrifice, the explosion of consumer goods and services promoted sweeping changes in behavior and beliefs. Leisure, play, and consumption became part of a new ideal and measure of success. Nearly everyone felt the impact of the transformation from a producer to a consumer society, although in vastly and increasingly different ways.

### “CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION”

Labeled the “**Gilded Age**” by humorist and social critic Mark Twain, the era following the Civil War favored the growth of a new class united in its pursuit of money and leisure. The well-to-do enjoyed great status throughout the nineteenth century, but only after the war did financiers and industrialists form national networks to establish their upper-class identity and to consolidate their power. Business leaders built diverse stock portfolios and often served simultaneously on the boards of several corporations. Similarly, they intertwined their interests by joining the same religious, charitable, athletic, and professional societies. Their wives and children vacationed together in the sumptuous new seashore and mountain resorts, while they themselves made deals in the exclusive social clubs and on the golf links of suburban country clubs. Just as Dun and Bradstreet ranked the leading corporations, the Social Register identified the 500 families that controlled most of the nation's wealth.

According to economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen, the rich had created a new style of “**conspicuous consumption.**” The Chicago mansion of real estate tycoon Potter Palmer, for example, was constructed without exterior doorknobs. Not only could no one enter uninvited, but a visitor's calling card supposedly passed through

### Class Discussion Question 19.4

WHAT ACCOUNTS for the rise of a consumer society and how did various groups participate in its development?



Mark Twain, from *The Gilded Age* (1873)

### Audio-Visual Aid, *The Gilded Age*

**Gilded Age** Term applied to late nineteenth-century America that refers to the shallow display and worship of wealth characteristic of that period.

**Conspicuous consumption** Highly visible displays of wealth and consumption.

the hands of twenty-seven servants before admittance was allowed. A vice president of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, Perry H. Smith, built his marble palace in the style of the Greek Renaissance. Its ebony staircase was trimmed in gold, its butler's pantry equipped with faucets not only for hot and cold water, but for iced champagne. The women who oversaw these elaborate households served as measures of their husbands' status, according to Veblen, by adorning themselves in jewels, furs, and dresses of the latest Paris design.

Conspicuous consumption reached new heights of extravagance. In New York, wealthy families hosted dinner parties for their dogs or pet monkeys, dressing the animals in fancy outfits for the occasion. Railroad magnate "Diamond Jim" Brady commonly enjoyed after-theater snacks at the city's "lobster palaces," where he consumed vast quantities of food—oysters for an appetizer, two soups, fish, a main dinner of beef and vegetables, punches and sherbet on the side, dessert, coffee, and quarts of orange juice.

Perhaps no display of wealth matched the ostentation of the "cottages" of Newport, Rhode Island, where the upper class created a summer community that displayed its power of consumption in grand style. Architect H.H. Richardson and his protégés built enormous manor houses more magnificent than the English homes they mimicked. Here, young men and women engaged in new amateur sports such as polo, rowing, and lawn tennis. Young and old alike joined in yachting and golf tournaments.

Toward the end of the century, the wealthy added a dramatic public dimension to the "high life." New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel, which opened in 1897, incorporated the grandeur of European royalty, but with an important difference. Because rich Americans wanted to be watched, the elegantly appointed corridors and restaurants were visible to the public through huge windows. The New York rich also established a unique custom to welcome the New Year: they opened wide the curtains of their Fifth Avenue mansions so that passersby could marvel at the elegant decor.

The wealthy also became the leading patrons of the arts, as well as the chief procurers of art treasures from Europe and Asia. They provided the bulk of funds for the new symphonies, operas, and ballet companies, which soon rivaled those of Continental Europe. Nearly all major museums and art galleries, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, were founded during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

### SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

A new middle class, very different from its predecessor, formed during the last half of the century. The older middle class was composed of the owners or superintendents of small businesses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and ministers and their families. The new middle class included these professionals but also the growing number of salaried employees—the managers, technicians, clerks, and engineers who worked in the complex web of corporations and government. Long hours of labor earned their families a modest status and sufficient income to live securely in style and comfort and, equally important, to separate work and home.

By the end of the century, many middle-class families were nestled in suburban retreats, away from the noise, filth, and dangers of the city. This peaceful domestic setting, with its manicured lawns and well-placed shrubs, afforded both privacy and rejuvenation as well as the separation of business from leisure and the breadwinner from his family for most of the day. Assisted by modern transportation systems, men often traveled one to two hours each day, five or six days a week, to their city offices and back again. Women and children stayed behind.



Edward Bellamy, from *Looking Backward* (1888)

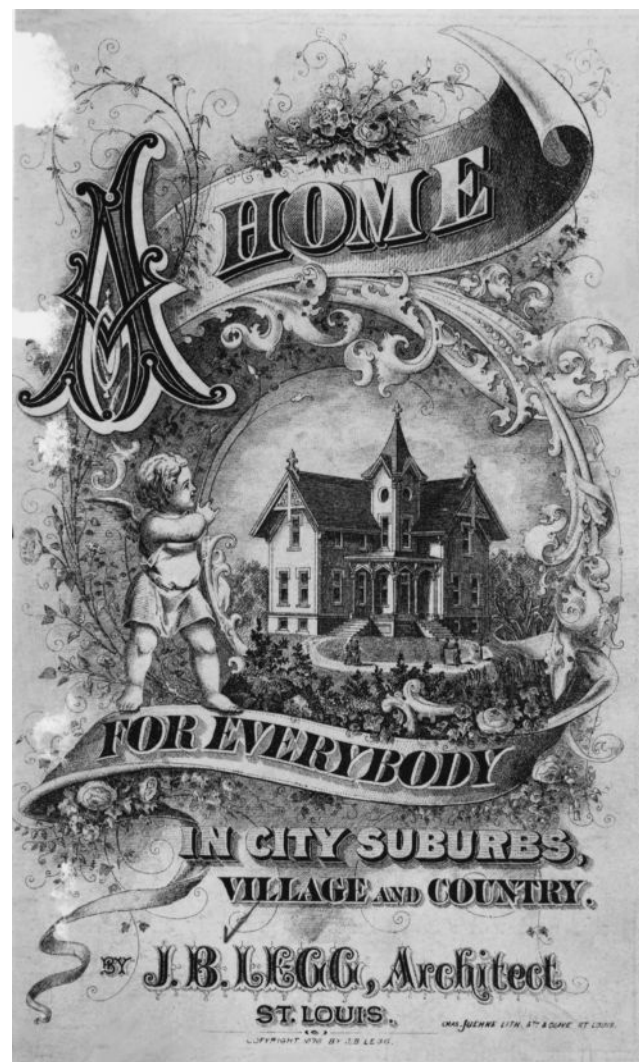
Middle-class women devoted a large part of their day to care of the home. They frequently employed one or two servants but relied increasingly on the many new appliances to get their work done. Improvements in the kitchen stove, such as the conversion from wood fuel to gas, saved a lot of time. Yet, simultaneously, with the widespread circulation of cookbooks and recipes in newspapers and magazines, as well as the availability of new foods, the preparation of meals became more complex and time-consuming. New devices, such as the eggbeater, speeded some familiar tasks, but the era's fancy culinary practices offset any gains in saving time. Similarly, the new carpet sweepers surpassed the broom in efficiency, but the fashionable high-napped carpeting demanded more care. Thus, rather than diminishing with technological innovation, household work expanded to fill the time available.

By the end of the century, though, middle-class women were spending the greatest part of their time on consumption. They took charge of the household budget and purchased an ever expanding range of machine-made goods, packaged foods, manufactured clothing, and personal luxuries. With the rise of department stores, which catered specifically to them, shopping combined work and pleasure and became a major pastime for women.

Almost exclusively white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant, the new middle class embraced “culture” not for purposes of conspicuous consumption but as a means of self-improvement. Whole families visited the new museums and art galleries. One of the most cherished institutions, the annual season of lectures at the Chautauqua campgrounds in upstate New York, brought thousands of families together in pursuit of knowledge of literature and the fine arts. The middle class also provided the bulk of patrons for the new public libraries.

Middle-class families applied the same standards to their leisure activities. What one sporting-goods entrepreneur rightly called the “gospel of EXERCISE” involved men and women in calisthenics and outdoor activities, not so much for pleasure as for physical and mental discipline. Hiking was a favorite among both men and women and required entirely new outfits: for women, loose upper garments and skirts short enough to prevent dragging; for men, rugged outerwear and jaunty hats. Soon, men and women began camping out, with almost enough amenities to re-create a middle-class home in the woods. Roller-skating and ice-skating, which became crazes shortly after the Civil War, took place in specially designed rinks in almost every major town. By the 1890s, the “safety” bicycle had also been marketed. It replaced the large-wheel variety, which was difficult to keep upright. A good-quality “bike” cost \$100 and, like the piano, was a symbol of middle-class status. In 1895, Chicago hosted thirty-three cycle clubs, with nearly 10,000 members.

Leisure became the special province of middle-class childhood. Removed from factories and shops and freed from many domestic chores, children enjoyed creative play and physical activity. Summer camps, offering several weeks of sports and handicrafts, attracted many children to New England during this period. The toy market boomed, and lower printing prices helped children's literature flourish. Children's magazines such as *St. Nicholas* and *Youth's Companion* were filled with stories, poems, and pictures. Slightly older children read westerns, sports novels of many kinds, and such perennial and uplifting classics as *Little Women* and *Black Beauty*.



Taken from J. B. Legg's architecture book, this page illustrates the ideal suburban home. His book, published in 1876, was aimed at the prospering middle class.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

## QUICK REVIEW

### The New Middle Class

- ◆ Middle-class women devoted a large portion of their day to housework.
- ◆ The new middle class embraced “culture” as means of self-improvement.
- ◆ Leisure activities reflected middle-class values.



### LIFE IN THE STREETS

Immigrants often weighed the material abundance they found in the United States against their memories of the Old Country. One could “live better” here, but only by working much harder. In letters home, immigrants described the riches of the new country but warned friends and relatives not to send weaklings, who would surely die of stress and strain amid the alien and intense commercialism of American society. In many immigrant communities, alcoholism and suicide rates soared. Embittered German immigrants called their new land *Malhuerica*, “misfortune”; Jews called it *Ama Reka*, Hebrew for “without soul”; and Slavs referred to it as *Dollerica*.

Many newcomers, having little choice about their place of residence, concentrated in districts marked off by racial or ethnic lines. In San Francisco, city ordinances prevented Chinese from operating laundries in most of the city’s neighborhoods, and the city’s schools excluded their children. In the 1880s, Chinese San Franciscans, representing 10 percent of the city’s population, crowded into a dozen blocks of restaurants, shops, and small factories known as Chinatown. In Los Angeles and San Antonio, Mexicans lived in distinctive barrios. In most cities, African American families were similarly compelled to remain in the dingiest, most crime-ridden, and dangerous sections of town.

Young people new to the city often found lodging in small residential hotels or boardinghouses. The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), established in the 1850s, and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), organized a decade later, provided temporary residences mainly to native-born, white, self-supporting men and women. The most successful “women adrift,” such as clerical workers and retail clerks, lived in the new furnished-room districts bordering the city’s business center. The least prosperous landed on “skid row,” where homeless people spent time in the rough taverns, eating free lunches in return for purchased beer, waiting for casual labor, and sometimes trading sexual favors for money.

The working-class home did not necessarily ensure privacy or offer protection from the dangers of the outside world. In the tenements, families often shared

their rooms with other families or paying boarders. During the summer heat, adults, children, and boarders competed for a sleeping place on the fire escape or roof, and all year round, noise resounded through paper-thin walls. But so complex and varied were income levels and social customs that no single pattern emerged. Packingtown’s Slovaks, Lithuanians, and Poles, for example, frequently took in boarders, yet Bohemians rarely did. Neither did the skilled iron rollers who worked at the Carnegie Steel Company in Homestead, Pennsylvania. These well-paid craft workers often owned their own homes, boasting parlors and even imported Belgian carpets. At the other extreme, Italian immigrants, who considered themselves fortunate to get work with a shovel, usually lived in overcrowded rented apartments, just a paycheck away from eviction.

Whether it was a small cottage or a tenement flat, the working-class home involved women and children in routines of household labor without the aid of new mechanical devices. In addition to

**The intersection of Orchard and Hester streets** on New York’s Lower East Side, photographed ca. 1905. Unlike the middle classes, who worked and played hidden away in offices and private homes, the Jewish lower-class immigrants who lived and worked in this neighborhood spent the greater part of their lives on the streets.

The Granger Collection.



cooking and cleaning, women used their cramped domestic space for work that provided a small income. They gathered their children—and their husbands after a hard day's labor—to sew garments, wrap cigars, string beads, or paint vases for a contractor who paid them by the piece. And they cooked and cleaned for the boarders whose rent supplemented the family income.

Despite working people's slim resources, their combined buying power created new and important markets for consumer goods. Often they bought shoddy replicas of products sold to the middle class: cheaper canned goods, inferior cuts of meat, and partially spoiled fruit. Several leading clothing manufacturers specialized in inexpensive ready-to-wear items, usually copied from patterns designed for wealthier consumers, but constructed hastily from flimsy materials. Patent medicines for ailments caused by working long periods in cramped conditions sold well in working-class communities, where money for doctors was scarce. Their high alcohol content might lift a person's spirits, if only temporarily.

The close quarters of the urban neighborhood allowed immigrants to preserve many Old World customs. In immigrant communities such as Chicago's Packingtown, Pittsburgh's Poletown, New York's Lower East Side, or San Francisco's Chinatown, people usually spoke their native language while visiting their friends and relatives. The men might play cards while women and children gathered in the stairwell or on the front stoop to trade stories. In good weather, they walked and talked, an inexpensive pastime common in European cities. No organization was as important as the fraternal society, which sponsored social clubs and provided insurance benefits. Social organizations, known as *huiguan*, were especially important in preserving clan and dialect among the largely male unmarried population of Chinese San Francisco. Immigrants also re-created Old World religious institutions such as the temple, church, or synagogue, or secular institutions such as German family-style taverns or Russian Jewish tearooms. Chinese theaters, in inexpensive daily and nightly performances, presented dramas depicting historical events or explicating moral teachings, and thereby preserved much of Chinese native culture. Immigrants also replicated their native cuisine (as much as available foods allowed) and sang their own songs, accompanied by the polka, mazurka, or tamburitzza, according to tradition. They married, baptized children, and buried their dead according to Old World customs.

In the cosmopolitan cities, immigrants, by being innovative entrepreneurs as well as the best customers, helped to shape the emerging popular culture. German immigrants, for example, created Tin Pan Alley, the center of the popular music industry. They also became the first promoters of ragtime, which found its way north from Storyville, the red-light district of New Orleans. Created by African American and creole bands, ragtime captivated those teenage offspring of immigrants who rushed to the new dance halls.

When developers realized that “wholesome fun” for the masses could pay better than upper-class leisure or lower-class vice, they decided to transform Coney Island into a magnificent seaside park filled with ingenious amusements such as water slides, mechanized horse races, carousels, roller coasters, and fun houses. On the rides or at the nearby beach, young men and women could easily meet apart from their parents, cast off their inhibitions, and enjoy a hug or kiss. Or they could simply stroll through the grounds, looking at exotic performers, enjoying make-believe trips to the Far East or even the moon, entranced by fantastic towers, columns, minarets, and lagoons lit up at night to resemble dreams rather than reality. At Coney Island or at Riverview, Chicago's oldest amusement park, located on the city's North Side, millions of working-class people enjoyed cheap thrills that offset the hardships of their working lives.



In this excerpt, Richard K. Fox highlights the important development of leisure activities, specifically Coney Island, as an integral part of daily life.

*There are various ways of bathing at Coney Island. You can go in at the West End, where they give you a tumbledown closet like a sentry box stuck up in the sand, or at the great hotels where more or less approach to genuine comfort is afforded. The pier, too, is fitted up with extensive bathing houses, and altogether no one who wants a dip in the briny and has a quarter to pay for it need to go without it.*

WHAT ROLE did public spaces play in late nineteenth-century popular culture?

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Public Education

- ◆ 1870: 160 public high schools.
- ◆ 1900: 6,000 public high schools.
- ◆ Expansion of public education benefited women.

## CULTURES IN CONFLICT, CULTURE IN COMMON

The new commercial entertainments gave Americans from various backgrounds more in common than they would otherwise have had. On New York's Lower East Side, for instance, theater blossomed with dramas that Broadway would adopt years later, while children dreamed of going “uptown” where the popular songs they heard on the streets were transcribed onto sheet music and sold in stores throughout the city. Even so, nothing could smooth the tensions caused by conflicting claims to the same resources, such as public schools and urban parks.

### EDUCATION

As industries grew and cities expanded, so did the nation's public school system. Business and civic leaders realized that the welfare of society now depended on an educated population, one possessing the skills and knowledge required to keep both industry and government running. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the idea of universal free schooling, at least for white children, took hold. Kindergartens in particular flourished. St. Louis, Missouri, opened the first public school kindergarten in 1873, and by the turn of the century, more than 4,000 similar programs throughout the country enrolled children between the ages of three and seven.

Public high schools, which were rare before the Civil War, also increased in number, from 160 in 1870 to 6,000 by the end of the century. In Chicago alone, average daily attendance multiplied sixfold. Despite this spectacular growth, which was concentrated in urban industrial areas, as late as 1890 only 4 percent of children between the ages of fourteen and seventeen were enrolled in school, the majority of them girls planning to become teachers or office workers. Most high schools continued to serve mainly the middle class. In 1893, the National Education Association reaffirmed the major purpose of the nation's high schools as preparation for college, rather than for work in trades or industry, and endorsed a curriculum of rigorous training in the classics, such as Latin, Greek, and ancient history. The expected benefits of this kind of education rarely outweighed the immediate needs of families who depended on their children's wages. At the end of the century, 50 percent of the children in Chicago between the ages of ten and twelve were working for wages.

Higher education also expanded along several lines. Agricultural colleges formed earlier in the century developed into institutes of technology and took their places alongside the prestigious liberal arts colleges. To extend learning to the “industrial classes,” Representative Justin Morrill of Vermont sponsored the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862, which funded a system of state colleges and universities for teaching agriculture and mechanics “without excluding other scientific and classic studies.” Meanwhile, established private institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia grew, with the help of huge endowments from business leaders such as Rockefeller and Carnegie. By 1900, sixty-three Catholic colleges were serving mainly the children of immigrants from Ireland and eastern and southern Europe. Still, as the overall number of colleges and universities grew from 563 in 1870 to nearly 1,000 by 1910, only 3 percent of the college-age population took advantage of these new opportunities.

One of the most important developments occurred in the area of professional training. Although medical and law schools dated from the mid-eighteenth century, their numbers grew rapidly after the Civil War. Younger professions, such as engineering, pharmacy, and journalism, also established specialized training institutions. In 1876, the Johns Hopkins University pioneered a program of research and graduate studies, and by the end of the century, several American universities, including



The Morrill Act (1862)

Stanford University and the University of Chicago, offered advanced degrees in the arts and sciences.

This expansion benefited women, who previously had had little access to higher education. After the Civil War, a number of women's colleges were founded, beginning in 1865 with Vassar, which set the academic standard for the remainder of the century. Smith and Wellesley followed in 1875, Bryn Mawr in 1885. By the end of the century, 125 women's colleges offered a first-rate education comparable to that given to men at Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. Meanwhile, coeducation grew at an even faster rate; by 1890, 47 percent of the nation's colleges and universities admitted women. The proportion of women college students changed dramatically. Women constituted 21 percent of undergraduate enrollments in 1870, 32 percent in 1880, and 40 percent in 1910. Despite these gains, many professions remained closed to women.

An even greater number of women enrolled in vocational courses. Normal schools, which offered one- or two-year programs for women who planned to become elementary school teachers, developed a collegiate character after the Civil War and had become accredited state teachers' colleges by the end of the century. Normal schools enrolled many women from rural areas, particularly from poor families. Upon graduation, these women filled the personnel ranks of the rapidly expanding system of public education. Other institutions, many founded by middle-class philanthropists, also prepared women for vocations. For example, the first training school for nurses opened in Boston in 1873, followed in 1879 by a diet kitchen that taught women to become cooks in the city's hospitals. Founded in 1877, the **Women's Educational and Industrial Union** offered a multitude of classes to Boston's wage-earning women, ranging from elementary French and German to drawing, watercoloring, and oil and china painting; to dress-making and millinery, stenography and typing; as well as crafts less familiar to women, such as upholstering, cabinetmaking, and carpentry. In the early 1890s, when the entering class at a large women's college like Vassar still averaged under 100, the Boston Women's Educational and Industrial Union reported that its staff of 83 served an estimated 1,500 clients per day. By that time, one of its most well-funded programs was a training school for domestic servants.

The leaders of the business community had also begun to promote manual training for working-class and immigrant boys. One leading San Francisco merchant described the philosophy behind this movement as a desire to train boys "to earn a living with little study and plenty of work." Craft unionists in several cities actively opposed this development, preferring their own methods of apprenticeship to training programs they could not control. But local associations of merchants and manufacturers lobbied hard for "industrial education" and raised funds to supplement the public school budget. In 1884, the Chicago Manual Training School opened, teaching "shop work" along with a few academic subjects, and by 1895, all elementary and high schools in the city offered courses that trained working-class boys for future jobs in industry and business.

The expansion of education did not benefit all Americans or benefit them all in the same way. Because African Americans were often excluded from colleges attended by white students, special colleges were founded shortly after the Civil War. All-black Atlanta and Fisk universities both soon offered rigorous curricula in the liberal arts. Other institutions, such as Hampton, founded in 1868, specialized in vocational training, mainly in manual trades. Educator Booker T. Washington



**George Washington Carver (1864–1943)**, who had been born in slavery, was invited by Booker T. Washington to direct agricultural research at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. A leader in development of agriculture in the New South, Carver promoted crop diversification to rejuvenate soil that was depleted by the continuous planting of cotton and encouraged the cultivation of alternative, high-protein crops such as peanuts and soybeans. He designed his programs in sustainable agriculture mainly for African American farmers and sharecroppers rather than for commercial purposes.

The Granger Collection, New York.

**Women's Educational and Industrial Union**  
Boston organization offering classes to wage-earning women.

encouraged African Americans to resist “the craze for Greek and Latin learning” and to strive for practical instruction. In 1881, he founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to provide industrial education and moral uplift. By the turn of the century, Tuskegee enrolled 1,400 men and women in more than thirty different vocational courses, including special cooking classes for homemakers and domestic servants. Black colleges, including Tuskegee, trained so many teachers, that by the century’s end the majority of black schools were staffed by African Americans.

The nation’s educational system was becoming more inclusive and yet more differentiated. The majority of children attended school for several years or more. At the same time, students were tracked—by race, gender, and class—to fill particular roles in an industrial society.

### LEISURE AND PUBLIC SPACE

#### Class Discussion Question 19.6

Most large cities set aside open land for leisure-time use by residents. New York’s Central Park opened for ice-skating in 1858, providing a model for urban park systems across the United States. In 1869, planners in Chicago secured funds to create a citywide system composed of six interconnected large parks, and within a few years, Lincoln Park, on the city’s north side, was attracting crowds of nearly 30,000 on Sundays. These parks were rolling expanses, cut across by streams and pathways and footbridges and set off by groves of trees, ornamental shrubs, and neat flower gardens. According to the designers’ vision, the urban middle class might find here a respite from the stresses of modern life. To ensure this possibility, posted regulations forbade many activities, ranging from walking on the grass to gambling, picnicking, or ball playing without permission, to speeding in carriages.

The working classes had their own ideas about the use of parks and open land. Trapped in overcrowded tenements or congested neighborhoods, they wanted space for sports, picnics, and lovers’ trysts. Young people openly defied ordinances that prohibited play on the grassy knolls, while their elders routinely voted against municipal bonds that did not include funds for more recreational space in their communities. Immigrant ward representatives on the Pittsburgh City Council, for instance, argued that band shells for classical music meant little to their constituents, while spaces suitable for sports meant much.

Eventually, most park administrators set aside some sections for playgrounds and athletic fields and others for public gardens and band shells. Yet intermittent conflicts erupted. The Worcester, Massachusetts, park system, for example, allowed sports leagues to schedule events but prohibited pickup games. This policy gave city officials more control over the use of the park for outdoor recreation, but at the same time forced many ball-playing boys into the streets. When working-class parents protested, city officials responded by instituting programs of supervised play, to the further dismay of the children.

Public drinking of alcoholic beverages, especially on Sunday, provoked similar disputes. Pittsburgh’s “blue laws,” forbidding businesses to open on Sunday, were rigidly enforced when it came to neighborhood taverns, while large firms like the railroads enjoyed exemptions. Although the Carnegie Institute hoped to discourage Sunday drinking by sponsoring alternative events, such as free organ recitals and other concerts, many working people, especially beer-loving German immigrants, continued to treat Sunday as their one day of relaxation. In Chicago, when not riding the streetcars to the many beer gardens and taverns that thrived on the outskirts, Germans gathered in large numbers for picnics in the city’s parks.

Toward the end of the century, many park administrators relaxed the rules and expanded the range of permitted activities. By this time, large numbers of the middle

class had become sports enthusiasts and pressured municipal governments to turn meadowlands into tennis courts and golfing greens. In the 1890s, bicycling brought many women into the parks. Still, not all city residents enjoyed these facilities. Officials in St. Louis, for example, barred African Americans from the city's grand Forest Park and set aside the smaller Tandy Park for their use. After challenging this policy in court, African Americans won a few concessions, such as the right to picnic at any time in Forest Park and to use the golf course on Monday mornings.

### NATIONAL PASTIMES

Toward the end of the century, the younger members of the urban middle class had begun to find common ground in lower-class pastimes, especially ragtime music. Introduced to many northerners by the African American composer Scott Joplin at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, “rag” quickly became the staple of entertainment in the new cabarets and nightclubs. Middle-class urban dwellers began to seek out ragtime bands, and congregated in nightclubs and even on the rooftops of posh hotels to listen and dance and even to drink.

Vaudeville, the most popular form of commercial entertainment since the 1880s, also bridged middle- and working-class tastes. Drawing on a variety-show tradition of singers, dancers, comedians, jugglers, and acrobats, who had entertained Americans since colonial days, “vaude” became a big business that made ethnic and racial stereotypes and the daily frustrations of city life into major topics of amusement. Vaudeville palaces—ten in New York, six in Philadelphia, five in Chicago, and at least one in every other large city—attracted huge, “respectable” crowds that sampled between twenty and thirty dramatic, musical, and comedy acts averaging fifteen minutes each. One study estimated that before vaudeville gave way to movie theaters in the 1920s, between 14 and 16 percent of all city dwellers attended shows at least once a week. Sunday matinees were especially popular with women and children.

Sports, however, outdistanced all other commercial entertainments in appealing to all kinds of fans and managing to create a sense of national identity. No doubt the most popular parks in the United States were the expanses of green surrounded by grandstands and marked by their unique diamond shape—the baseball fields. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the amateur sport of gentlemen and Union soldiers suddenly became the “national pastime.” Both American and English children had for years been playing a form of baseball, known mainly as “rounders,” when a group of young men in Manhattan formed the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club in 1845 and proceeded to set down the game's rules in writing. Baseball clubs soon formed in many cities, and shortly after the Civil War, traveling teams with regular schedules made baseball a professional sport. The formation of the National League in 1876 encouraged other spectator sports, but for generations, baseball remained the most popular.

Rowdy behavior gave the game a working-class ambience. Well-loved players known for their saloon brawls occasionally disappeared for a few days on “benders.” Team owners, themselves often proprietors of local breweries, counted heavily on beer sales in the parks. Having to contend with hundreds of drunken fans, officials maintained

### AP\* Guideline 16.3

**One of the finest American painters** of the period, known for realistic depictions of physical exertion in amateur athletics, Thomas Eakins here turned his attention to the commercial baseball park. The batter and catcher appear as well-poised athletes, dignified in their dress and manner—everything that the baseball player of the late nineteenth century was not very likely to be.

Thomas Eakins, *Baseball Players*, 1875. Watercolor. The Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art.



## The Standard Oil Company

John D. Rockefeller, who formed the Standard Oil Company in 1870, sought to control all aspects of the industry, from the transportation of crude oil to the marketing and distribution of the final products.

Rockefeller's best-known critic was Ida Tarbell. In 1904 she published *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, first in serial form in the popular *McClure's Magazine* and later as a book. Tarbell's muckraking exposé attracted a great deal of attention. But even more popular were political cartoons depicting Rockefeller's stranglehold on the entire oil industry.

**WHAT DOES** this cartoon tell us about Rockefeller's reputation at the turn of the twentieth century? What does it suggest about Americans' feelings about the trusts?

*Puck* magazine, which had been founded in 1871 by Joseph Keppler, an immigrant from Austria, held up Rockefeller and his company to ridicule. This cartoon, published in *Puck* in 1904, shows Standard Oil as a sinister octopus, wrapping its arms around the White House and Congress as well as workers and

even the denizens of Wall Street. In 1911, in response to an antitrust suit, the Supreme Court ordered the company to break up. The modern corporations Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Amoco, and Sohio (some of which have recently merged) all descended from Rockefeller's Standard Oil.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

order only with great difficulty. Outfielders occasionally leaped into the grandstand to punch spectators who had heckled them. To attract more subdued middle-class fans, the National League raised admission prices, banned the sale of alcohol, and observed Sunday blue laws. Catering to a working-class audience, the American Association kept the price of admission low, sold liquor, and played ball on Sunday.

Baseball, like many other sports, soon became incorporated into the larger business economy. In Chicago, for example, the first baseball clubs organized in the 1850s. After the Civil War, local merchants, such as Marshall Field, began to support teams, and by the end of the decade there were more than fifty company-sponsored teams, playing in the local leagues. By 1870, a Chicago Board of Trade team emerged as the city's first professional club, the White Stockings. Capitalized as a joint stock company, the White Stockings soon succeeded in recruiting a star pitcher from the Boston Red Stockings, Albert Spalding, who eventually became manager and then president of the team. Spalding also came to see baseball as a source of multiple profits. He procured the exclusive rights to manufacture the official ball and the rule book, while producing large varieties of other sporting equipment. Meanwhile, he built impressive baseball parks in Chicago, with seating for 10,000 and special private boxes above the grandstands for the wealthy. He easily became the foremost figure in the National League.

Spalding also succeeded in tightening the rules of participation in the sport. In 1879, he dictated the "reserve clause," which prevented players from negotiating a better deal and leaving the team that originally signed them. He encouraged his player-manager "Cap" Anson to forbid the White Stockings from playing against any team with an African American member. The firing of Moses "Fleet" Walker, an African American, from the Cincinnati team in 1884 marked the first time the color line had been drawn in a major professional sport. Effectively excluded, African Americans organized their own traveling teams. In the 1920s, they formed the Negro Leagues, which produced some of the nation's finest ballplayers.

Players occasionally organized to regain control over their sport. They frequently complained about low wages and arbitrary rules, and like factory workers in the 1880s, they formed their own league, the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball

## CHRONOLOGY

|             |  |             |   |
|-------------|--|-------------|---|
| <b>1862</b> | Morrill Act authorizes "land-grant" colleges   | <b>1883</b> | William Graham Sumner published the social Darwinist classic <i>What Social Classes Owe to Each Other</i>                                   |
| <b>1869</b> | Knights of Labor founded   | <b>1886</b> | Campaigns for eight-hour workday peak<br>Haymarket riot and massacre discredit the Knights of Labor<br>American Federation of Labor founded |
| <b>1870</b> | Standard Oil founded   | <b>1890</b> | Sherman Antitrust Act passed  |
| <b>1873</b> | Financial panic brings severe depression   | <b>1893</b> | Stock market panic precipitates severe depression   |
| <b>1876</b> | Baseball's National League founded<br>Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone  | <b>1895</b> | Coney Island opens  |
| <b>1879</b> | Thomas Edison invents the incandescent bulb<br>Depression ends   | <b>1896</b> | Rural free delivery begins  |
| <b>1881</b> | Tuskegee Institute founded   | <b>1900</b> | Andrew Carnegie's <i>Gospel of Wealth</i> recommends honesty and fair dealing   |
| <b>1882</b> | Peak of immigration to the United States (1.2 million) in the nineteenth century<br>Chinese Exclusion Act passed<br>Standard Oil Trust founded | <b>1901</b> | U.S. Steel Corporation formed   |



Players, with profits divided between participants and investors. This effort failed, partly because fans would not desert the established leagues, but mostly because successful baseball franchises demanded large quantities of capital. American sports had become big business.

As attendance continued to grow, the enthusiasm for baseball straddled major social divisions, bringing together Americans of many backgrounds, if only on a limited basis. By the end of the century, no section of the daily newspaper drew more readers than the sports pages. Although it interested relatively few women, sports news riveted the attention of men from all social classes. Loyalty to the “home team” helped to create an urban identity, while individual players became national heroes.

## CONCLUSION

By the end of the nineteenth century, industry and the growing cities had opened a new world for Americans. Fresh from Europe or from the native countryside, ordinary urban dwellers struggled to form communities of fellow newcomers through work and leisure, in the factory, the neighborhood, the ballpark, and the public school. Meanwhile, their “betters,” the wealthy and the new middle class, made and executed the decisions of industry and marketing, established the era’s grand civic institutions, and set the tone for high fashion and art.

Rich and poor alike shared many aspects of the new order. Yet, inequality persisted and increased, as much a part of the new order as the Brooklyn Bridge or advertising. During the mostly prosperous 1880s, optimists believed that unfair treatment based on region, on class, and perhaps even on race and gender might ease in time. By the depressed 1890s, however, these hopes had worn thin, and the lure of overseas empire appeared as one of the few goals that held together a suffering and divided nation.

### Suggested Answer:

Successful essays should note:

- How the incandescent bulb altered the lives of workers, the middle class, the New South, and the urban population (Document A)
- The impact of the light bulb on the home, office, and factory (Document A)
- The effect of electricity within the city setting, for example, electric lights and electric streetcars (Image p. 666 and Document B)
- The impact of industrialization on leisure activities (Image p. 670 and Document B)
- How industrialization changed the lives of workers and the New South (p. 730 and 746 and Document C)
- Henry W. Grady’s identified changes within the New South (Document D)

## AP\* DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

**Directions:** This exercise requires you to construct a valid essay that directly addresses the central issues of the following question. You will have to use facts from the documents provided and from the chapter to prove the position you take in your thesis statement.

**Assess the ways in which technology and industrialization and the attendant changes in American social structure altered the lives of three of the following groups:**

- (1) **Workers**
- (2) **the middle class**
- (3) **the New South**
- (4) **the urban population**

### DOCUMENT A

Examine the picture on the next page. Edison devised his first commercially successful light bulb in 1879.

- *What was the potential of the incandescent bulb for altering the lives of each of the groups mentioned above?*
- *How would it affect the home, office, or factory?*



U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Edison National Historic Site.

## DOCUMENT B

Examine the painting of New York City at night on page 666.

- *How did electricity change the lives of people who lived in cities like this?*

Now compare the painting of the middle class at play in Franklin Park, Boston (below), to the photo of the urban working class in New York City (page 670).

- *How did industrialization change the lives of both groups?*



Maurice Brazil Prendergast (American, 1858–1924), *Franklin Park, Boston, 1895–97*, watercolor and graphite on paper, 17½ × 13¾ inches, Daniel J. Terra Collection, Terra Museum of American Art. Photograph © 1996, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago.



National Archives and Records Administration.

**DOCUMENT C**

Industrialization brought factories and new prosperity to the South, but it also brought child labor in the mills, company towns (see page 740), and exploitation of workers. Children in the photo to the left worked in the Catawba Cotton Mill in Newton, North Carolina, in 1908.

- How did industrialization change the lives of workers and the New South?

**DOCUMENT D**

But in all this what have we accomplished? What is the sum of our work? . . . We have challenged your spinners in Massachusetts and your iron-makers in Pennsylvania. . . . We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work. . . . We have let economy take root and spread among [us]. . . .

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. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity.

—Henry W. Grady, “The New South,”  
December 22, 1886 speech before the  
New England Society of New York

- What changes in the South were on Grady’s mind as he gave this speech?

# AP\*

## PREP TEST

**Answer Key**

|     |     |     |      |      |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1-C | 4-E | 7-C | 10-A | 13-C |
| 2-B | 5-B | 8-D | 11-C | 14-E |
| 3-E | 6-A | 9-B | 12-D |      |

Select the response that best answers each question or best completes each sentence.

- By the beginning of the 1900s:
  - most American businesses were still family owned and operated.
  - federal anti-monopoly laws had retarded the growth of big business.
  - businesses, depending on large-scale investments, had organized and formed vast corporations.
  - every business enterprise in America was a giant corporation.
  - the United States had fallen significantly behind in terms of industrial technology.
- An important manufacturing innovation at the end of the nineteenth century was:
  - interchangeable parts.
  - continuous production.
  - division of labor.
  - steam power.
  - supply-chain management.
- Between 1865 and 1900, the growth of big business in America was facilitated by:
  - the efforts of the National Association of Manufacturers.
  - the creation of the Department of Commerce.
  - the low tariffs enacted by the federal government.
  - the congressional interpretation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.
  - horizontal integration and vertical combination.
- To justify their wealth, many American businessmen embraced the ideology of:
  - totalitarianism.
  - utilitarianism.
  - Taylorism.
  - Marxism.
  - social Darwinism.
- The American Federation of Labor:
  - worked to dismantle the factory system and return to artisan production.
  - appealed to skilled workers and concentrated on improving their wages.
  - advocated a profit-sharing program that would eliminate the wage system.
  - proved unsuccessful because it openly supported radical social changes.
  - appealed to unskilled workers in hopes of gaining newly arrived immigrants.

6. In the South:
  - a. labor was often provided by children and convicts.
  - b. wages tended to be a little higher than average.
  - c. unions worked to eliminate race discrimination.
  - d. no manufacturing jobs were available at all.
  - e. labor was often completed by poorly paid women.
7. As the United States approached the twentieth century:
  - a. most major American cities lost population as so many people moved West.
  - b. foreign immigrants lived in cities but northern African Americans remained rural.
  - c. internal migrants and foreign immigrants increased the urban population.
  - d. for the first time more than half the population lived in metropolitan areas.
  - e. newly arrived immigrants arrived primarily in the western and southern cities.
8. One important urban innovation between 1870 and 1900 was the:
  - a. introduction of paved streets to facilitate motor traffic.
  - b. creation of the city-manager form of government.
  - c. use of radios to help fight the growing crime rate.
  - d. development of streetcars and elevated railroads.
  - e. invention of the motor coach and model T.
9. Thorstein Veblen described the wealthy class's extravagance as:
  - a. ostentatious display.
  - b. conspicuous consumption.
  - c. the good life.
  - d. money for nothing.
  - e. vainly ridiculous.
10. One noticeable result of the incorporation of America was the:
  - a. leisure time and activities available to middle-class children.
  - b. increasing number of middle-class children working in factories.
  - c. number of poor children who began to obtain a college education.
  - d. insistence that children become self-sufficient as soon as possible.
  - e. number of middle-class girls attending higher-level education.
11. During the late nineteenth century:
  - a. very little innovation in education occurred in the United States.
  - b. high school graduates increased but college enrollment dropped.
  - c. opportunities for obtaining an education expanded in many ways.
  - d. most Americans would attend at least two years of college.
  - e. most middle-class Americans would obtain a four-year degree.
12. The famous educator who emphasized industrial training for African American students was:
  - a. George Washington Carver.
  - b. W.E.B. Du Bois.
  - c. Thurgood Marshall.
  - d. Booker T. Washington.
  - e. Frederick Douglass.
13. Toward the end of the 1800s:
  - a. going to motion pictures had become by far the favorite activity for Americans.
  - b. white Americans became fascinated with the jazz culture of African Americans.
  - c. sports, particularly baseball, became the major form of popular entertainment.
  - d. most middle-class Americans spent their leisure time pursuing the fine arts.
  - e. dances clubs thrived on the youth and excitement of America's middle class.
14. By the 1890s:
  - a. the economic growth of the 1890s encouraged many Americans to partake in rapid consumer spending.
  - b. the prosperity of the 1880s had eliminated most social and racial divisions in the United States.
  - c. poverty still existed but the vast majority of economic problems in the United States were resolved.
  - d. a severe economic depression caused most Americans to reject the ideals of a capitalistic society.
  - e. problems in the United States caused many Americans to become interested in an overseas empire.