

# Unit 5 1865-1898

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



Urbanization  
The "New" South  
Closure of the Frontier  
Indian Wars



### Brief Summary

This summary is not meant to replace your reading and study time in your AMSCO guide, and it by no means covers every significant fact from the era... but it will provide a simple overview/review of the era with some of the major terms in bold as a reminder of those items most likely to show up on the exam. Consider it an introduction to the era review. As you **READ**, **highlight** any event/item that you do not recall or understand. (Summary written by John Braithwaite with minor adaptations by Rebecca Richardson, Allen High School)

Land was abundant and, thanks to the **Homestead Act**, it was cheap. With the completion of the **Transcontinental Railroad** in 1869, settlers now had a fast and reliable way to get there. After the Civil War, many people traveled west for a fresh start. The transcontinental railroad tied the nation together. It became a curse however, to farmers who were overcharged to ship their crops to market. Native Americans fought with the government to maintain their identity. Ultimately, they failed and were consigned to live their lives on **reservations** and to become assimilated into white society. Among the various groups of western settlers were cowboys. They herded thousands of cattle at a time to railroad heads. This **open range** time ended with the introduction of **barbed wire** in 1874. Others included miners and ranchers. There was a gold rush in Colorado (**Pike's Peak**) and gold and silver rush in Nevada (**Comstock Lode**). Boomtowns followed these rushes with banks, saloons, brothels following the economic activity. Many boomtowns went bust.

The main problem in moving west was that settlers encountered hostile Native Americans. The U.S. government had pushed them westward with the promise of not being bothered again. Starting with the close of the Civil War in 1865, however, United States soldiers began moving them to reservations. The natives had one *major* battle at **Little Bighorn** in 1876 that they won. The U.S. government then began to aggressively shove the natives to the reservations. In Florida, the army fought the Seminole Indians, eventually capturing and moving many of them. The survivors escaped to the Everglades. A movement called the **ghost dance** swept through the reservations. It called to the spirits to bring back the buffalo that the army had purposely destroyed and eliminate all white people. Some of the Natives left the **reservations** and were pursued by the cavalry to **Wounded Knee** where they were slaughtered. By 1890, most Indians were living on reservations in squalid conditions. Congress passed the **Dawes Act** in 1887 which tried to "whiten up" the Natives. This policy, known as **assimilation**, would remain official government policy until the 1930's.

The **Gilded Age** is the time period between **Reconstruction** (1865-1877) and the **Progressive Era** (1890-1920). Although U.S. Grant's two terms as President were in Reconstruction, he is often defined as the beginning of the Gilded Age. It is a time when big business and the rich businessmen ran the country. The presidents were a bland, bearded bunch who let millionaire businessmen do what they wanted with very little government interference. Corrupt politicians ran the big cities and most states. These politicians openly took bribes to ensure that the government would not interfere with business making money at the people's expense. The business practices of the time such as the exploitation of the workers forcing them to labor for ridiculously long hours and low pay (which forced them to put all family members including small children to work), and the damage done to the environment would be considered illegal today. But, in the age of **rapid industrialization**, these men were admired by many for their ability to make enormous sums of wealth. An invention of major importance was the light bulb (**Thomas Edison**), which allowed people to work twenty-four hours a day.

The millionaires roll call included: **Andrew Carnegie**, who controlled U.S. Steel, Carnegie used **vertical integration** to dominate the steel industry. **John D. Rockefeller** ran the monopoly of Standard Oil as a **horizontal consolidation** he used cut throat business practices to put small companies out of business then purchased them at a deep discount. **Cornelius Vanderbilt** made his fortune in railroads. **J.P. Morgan** was a banker who was so wealthy that he actually loaned the United States money during the **Panic of 1893**. Although there were many examples of greed, these "**Captains of Industry**" also helped the new, urbanizing and industrializing society evolve into an economy where Americans had the highest standard of living in the world. Rich businessmen fought the negative stereotype of "**robber baron.**" This included Carnegies "**Gospel of Wealth**" which stated that the rich had a moral responsibility to help the poor and better society by investing in things like libraries, education, and other public facilities .

The railroads were growing very fast. It was also the only way for farmers to get their crops to market. The railroads took advantage of the farmers by overcharging them for shipping and storing the crops. The disgruntled farmers organized into a group called the **Grange**, aka the **Patrons of Husbandry**. They pushed Congress to regulate the railroads. The **Farmer's Alliance** later took up the call and put more pressure on the government to stop the railroads from taking advantage of farmers. Eventually, the **Interstate Commerce Commission** was set up to regulate the railroads. It was the first time the government regulated an industry.

The cities of this time period were dominated by political machines. This was an organization who would buy votes to remain in power. Once in power, they would steal as much money as possible from the government. The most notorious **city boss** was from New York named **William "Boss" Tweed**, who controlled **Tammany Hall**. Political machines would also hand out jobs to supporters in a practice known as **patronage**. This practice extended all the way to the White House. President Garfield was assassinated by a crazed, disgruntled office seeker. The U.S. government finally passed the **Pendleton Civil Service Act**. It made people who wanted a federal government job take a test. It then based hiring on qualifications, rather than who you knew for approximate 10% of government jobs. Eventually that percentage increased.

As industry grew and working conditions worsened...outraged workers began to organize into **unions** to increase their rights and benefits at work. [Examples were: **National Labor Union, Knights of Labor, & AF of L**. The big businessmen violently crushed any labor movement because they didn't want to pay workers more due to the fact that it would cut into their profits. Any **strike** by labor would be broken up by night stick wielding policemen who were usually paid by the businessmen, **Pinkertons**. The newspapers didn't help the unions by painting the strikers as **socialists** and **anarchists**, bent on destroying society. One of the most successful unions was the **American Federation of Labor** or the **AFL**. It was composed of skilled workers who couldn't be easily replaced by **scab labor**. They pushed for tangible benefits such as shorter work hours and better pay.

Two groups in society faced special discrimination. The Chinese out west were constantly harassed. In 1882, the **Chinese Exclusion Act** was passed that outlawed Chinese immigration for ten years, later extended to twenty years. There were new waves of immigrants in the late 1800s such as the **Italians** who also faced intense discrimination. Anti-immigrant sentiment continued into the next era, **Progressive Era**.

African Americans were treated little better than during slavery. They faced a time of **legal or de jure segregation** called **Jim Crow**. A Supreme Court case called **Plessey vs. Ferguson** ruled that **separate but equal** facilities in the south were fine. This was the law until the 1954 case of **Brown vs. Board**, which overturned the **separate but equal doctrine** and began the Civil Rights Movement. During the 1890's there were two prominent African Americans who became spokesman for their race. **Booker T. Washington**, who founded the **Tuskegee Institute**, was more conciliatory toward white society and wanted African Americans to get an education before demanding equal rights. **W.E.B. Dubois**, a Harvard graduate, wanted the top ten percent (**Talented Tenth**) of African Americans to be given total equality with whites. He advocated for a more progressive and more aggressive form of civil rights. These efforts were also a part of the next era, **Progressive Era**, which saw many attempts to better society for many groups including women, workers, immigrants, etc.