Period 6 (1865-1898)

Industrial America and the Western Frontier – Chapter 16 and 17

Historians refer to this era in different ways:

* Second Industrial Revolution
* Railroad Era All are correct and all
* Last Frontier could be used on the
* Indian Wars AP Exam!
* Gilded Age

This post-Civil Wartime period saw the emergence of:

1. **MAJOR ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY**
   1. Railroads (transcontinental)
      1. Federal land grants (Homestead Act – 160 acres of western land to anyone who settled on it for 5 years, Morrill Land Grant Act)
      2. Veterans, Irish and Chinese worked on railroads
      3. Chinese Exclusion Act
      4. Beginning of the cowboy, “wild west”, time zones
      5. Frustration with railroads included overbuilding, fraud, mismanagement, price fixing
      6. Solutions included Granger Laws (1870s), Interstate Commerce Act (1886) – didn’t really work
      7. Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis” – said frontier life encouraged individualism, social equality and innovation in American life, but that once the frontier was gone then the United States was destined to face the same class conflict and division as Europe
      8. Reservation policy for Native Americans
      9. Indian Wars - Indian Appropriation Act of 1871 ended recognition of native independence, Red River War, Battle at Little Big Horn, Dawes act (1887), Battle at Wounded Knee in 1890 (this was the end of the Indian Wars)
   2. Steel production
      1. Bessemer process of strengthening steel
      2. Andrew Carnegie and US Steel Corporation
      3. Skyscrapers and building vertically
   3. Electric light
      1. Thomas Edison
      2. George Westinghouse
2. **GROWTH OF CORPORATIONS AND BIG BUSINESS**
   1. Beginning of industrial capitalism
      1. No government regulation on business
      2. No protection for factory workers
   2. “robber barons” gained huge fortunes (first millionaires)
      1. Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller
      2. Social Darwinism – social survival of fittest used to justify why some were getting super wealthy and others struggled
      3. Gospel of Wealth – responsibility of wealthy to use their money to help better society (Carnegie)
   3. Large corporations began to dominate politics and agriculture
3. **CHALLENGES TO ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**
   1. Labor unions
      1. National Labor Union, Knights of Labor, American Federal of Labor
      2. Haymarket Riot (violent protest by Knights of Labor in Chicago)
      3. Beginning of use of strikes (Homestead strike in Pittsburgh, Pullman strike in Chicago)
   2. Farmers organizations
      1. National Grange Movement, farmers alliances
      2. Farmers worked together to deal with falling food prices (wheat, cotton) and rising transportation costs, taxes
      3. Populist party – political party that emerged from frustration of rural/western farm workers
   3. New South
      1. “New South” was a way to attract new businesses and encourage economic growth – growth of cities, industry and railroads
      2. Still mostly agricultural with widespread poverty (slow to industrialize, poorly educated workforce)
      3. Falling cotton prices cause many to lose their farms
      4. Sharecropping, crop-lien system kept many in poverty (esp. African-Americans)
      5. End of Reconstruction in 1877 caused segregation to increase – Supreme Court supported many segregationist laws (Plessy v. Ferguson allowed “separate, but equal”)
      6. Loss of civil rights – disenfranchisement, economic discrimination, lynching
      7. Response included confrontation (Ida B. Wells and anti-lynching campaign), education (Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute) and political activism (WEB DuBois and creation of NAACP)
   4. Growing middle class
      1. Shift from rural to urban
      2. Rise in number of wage workers and white-collar jobs
      3. Increase in number of working women