

CHAPTER 17 The American West, 1865–1890

- 1862 Homestead Act**
Passed under the Lincoln administration, this act provided 160 acres of public land virtually free to settlers who were willing to live on it for five years and “improve” (build a small dwelling) on it.
- 1865 Long Drive of Texas longhorns begins**
The longhorns were the wild descendants of the Spanish cattle brought to the New World centuries earlier. Cowboys drove large herds of longhorns a thousand miles from Texas to Kansas in order to load them on railroads destined for the Chicago stockyards.
- 1867 Patrons of Husbandry (the Grange) founded**
Farmers organized the Grange so that their families would have an opportunity to gather with other farm families for a variety of social and educational activities. This organization also gave the farmers opportunities to discuss mutual problems.
- U.S. government adopts Reservation policy for Plains Indians**
The government decided to take charge of Indian affairs by forcing them onto certain tracts of land and treating them as dependent wards of the state. The settlement patterns in the West did not allow for a large nomadic population, and the Indians were restricted to their designated lands.
- 1869 Union Pacific–Central Pacific transcontinental railroad completed**
- 1874 Barbed wire invented**
Barbed wire, colloquially called “bob wire,” was made by twisting short pieces of pointed wire around ordinary fence wire. Because the sharp points prevented cattle from knocking down the fencing, it was possible for farmers to protect their crops from an invasion of cattle from the range.
- 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn**
Popularly known as “Custer’s Last Stand,” this defeat of the U.S. Army by the Sioux demonstrated to the government the necessity of carrying out a coherent policy which would settle, once and for all, the “Indian problem.”
- 1877 San Francisco anti-Chinese riots**
White mobs attacked Chinese immigrants and threatened to burn the docks where they disembarked. Both political parties in California sought and ultimately obtained congressional legislation that barred Chinese laborers from entering the United States.
- Munn v. Illinois***
This Supreme Court decision upheld the “Granger laws” by ruling that any business that served the public interest was subject to state control. States could thus regulate railroad rates and storage costs at grain warehouses. Ten years later a more conservative Court effectively reversed the decision.
- 1879 Exoduster migration to Kansas**
Fearing racial discrimination in the post-Reconstruction South, thousands of African-Americans from Mississippi and Louisiana migrated to Kansas. By 1880, there were 40,000 Exodusters in the state.
- 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act**
In response to the anti-Chinese agitation of California’s white workers, Congress passed this law, which prevented the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States.
- 1886 Dry cycle begins on the Great Plains**
Even though farmers were aware that the weather on the plains ran in wet and dry cycles, the barely adequate rainfall of the previous decade did not prepare them for the drought years. Farmers who had gone into debt enlarging their holdings found it more difficult than ever to bring a crop to market.
- Wabash v. Illinois***
This Supreme Court decision effectively overturned *Munn v. Illinois*, declaring that states exceeded their power when they regulated rates on railroads engaged in interstate commerce.
- 1887 Dawes Severalty Act**
This act sought to integrate the Indians into American agricultural life. It provided that the reservations would be divided into individually-owned farms, with each Indian head of household receiving 160 acres. Not taking into account the fact that Plains Indians were not farmers, this system led eventually to the sharp reduction of Indian land ownership.
- Interstate Commerce Act**
This act made it possible for the federal government to regulate railroad rates in interstate commerce. The Interstate Commerce Commission was the first such federal regulatory agency.
- 1889 Oklahoma opened to white settlement**
The federal government placed the former Indian Territory of Oklahoma under the Homestead Act, which allowed whites to claim the land.
- 1890 Indian massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota**
In December the U.S. Army wiped out an encampment of Sioux Indians, killing over 153 men, women, and children. This was the last battle fought in the pacification of the Plains Indians.
- U.S. Census declares end of frontier**
In the decennial census of that year, the government stated that the patterns of settlement in the West were now so widespread that there was no longer a frontier line.

CHAPTER 18 Capital and Labor in the Age of Enterprise, 1877–1900

- 1869 **Knights of Labor founded in Philadelphia**
This secret society sought to enlighten American workers so that they would form a “cooperative commonwealth” in which capitalists and workers would join together in a productive society.
- 1872 **Montgomery Ward, first mail-order house, founded**
This firm offered consumer goods for sale by catalog throughout rural America, providing a national market for the growing retail industry.
- Andrew Carnegie starts construction of Edgar Thompson steel works near Pittsburgh**
This mill, using the revolutionary Bessemer converter, operated in the new, integrated fashion, incorporating all of the stages of production in one continuous operation that began with iron ore and ended with steel rails.
- 1873 **Panic of 1873 ushers in economic depression**
The panic that followed the failure of a major financial institution led to a sharp rise in unemployment (up to 25 percent) and the collapse of thousands of businesses. It brought about a renewed effort on the part of working people to assert themselves against the power of big business.
- 1875 **John Wanamaker establishes first department store in Philadelphia**
- 1878 **Gustavus Swift introduces refrigerator car**
The refrigerated railroad car made it possible to ship meat from the Swift packing plant in Chicago to customers throughout the United States.
- 1886 **Haymarket Square bombing in Chicago**
While a group of anarchists were staging a rally in Haymarket Square protesting the killing of strikers, the police sought to disperse the meeting. A bomb was thrown, and several police were killed or injured. Without concrete evidence, several anarchists were charged with criminal conspiracy, arrested, and convicted. Four were executed.
- American Federation of Labor (AFL) founded**
Several trade unions joined together to form this confederation. Rejecting social activism, the AFL sought gradual changes in the workplace. Since the members of trade unions were skilled workers, they were able to wield more labor power than most industrial workers.
- 1890 **United States passes Britain in producing iron and steel**
- 1892 **Homestead strike crushed**
After the Pennsylvania striking steelworkers defeated the private army of Pinkerton operatives sent by Henry Clay Frick to dislodge them, martial law was declared in the area and the government arrested the leaders of the strike.
- 1893 **Panic of 1893 starts depression of the 1890s**
The troughs forming an integral part of any “business cycle” recurred, and many dislocations of the panic of 1873 were repeated. For example, a third of the railroad industry (by track mileage) went bankrupt.
- 1894 **President Cleveland sends troops to break Pullman boycott**
Striking Pullman railroad car workers threatened to bring the whole national rail system to a standstill, but the company was able to bring the federal government to its aid by attaching U.S. mail cars to each train. When the strikers sought to stop even those trains, President Cleveland sent federal troops in to break the strike.
- 1895 **Frederick W. Taylor explains scientific management in “A Piece Rate System” essay**
This essay, which articulated Taylor’s new management system, called for two innovations: Manual laborers were to be told exactly how to perform their tasks, denying them the ability of using any skill or knowledge they possessed; and workers were to have no autonomy on the shop floor—they were merely to obey the orders of their supervisor.
- Southeastern European immigration exceeds northern European immigration for the first time**
The shifting needs of American industry called for an expansion of the pool of unskilled labor. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe better filled this need than did those from northern Europe. This shift in the pattern of immigration also had a significant cultural impact on the United States because most of the new immigrants differed from the old in religion, among other things.
- 1901 **Eugene V. Debs helps found Socialist Party**
After his experience with the failed Pullman strike, Debs turned in more radical directions by allying himself with the growing Marxist socialist movement, out of which came the Socialist Party of America.
- 1905 **Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) founded**
Their experience in the western mining strikes demonstrated to the radical miners that more aggressive direct action against the power of big business was necessary. They founded the IWW in the hopes of significantly transforming industrial society by destroying the power of the industrial and political bosses.

CHAPTER 19 The Politics of Late Nineteenth-Century America

- 1874 **Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) founded**
Although calling itself a "temperance" movement, the WCTU was actually an abstinence movement, calling for the elimination of alcoholic beverages. Under the leadership of Frances Willard, the movement adopted a "Do-Everything" policy, that is, it concerned itself with any reform activity in which women had an interest.
- 1877 **Rutherford B. Hayes inaugurated; end of Reconstruction**
Hayes removed federal troops from the South upon entering office. Without the protection of the federal government, the Reconstruction experiment in biracial government could not protect itself from the violence and intimidation exercised by the Redeemers.
- 1881 **President James A. Garfield assassinated**
This violent act by Charles Guiteau, a disappointed office seeker, stirred the government to begin a reform of the civil service.
- 1883 **Pendleton Civil Service Act**
Enacted as a result of the assassination of Garfield, this legislation provided for a series of examinations to be given by the new Civil Service Commission for those interested in procuring certain federal jobs. At first only 10 percent of federal positions were covered by the act, but subsequent presidents added more.
- 1884 **Mugwump reformers bolt the Republican party to support Grover Cleveland, first Democrat elected president since 1856**
Liberal Republicans shifted their support in this election because they associated their party's presidential candidate, James G. Blaine, with the widespread corruption in the Grant administrations.
- 1887 **Interstate Commerce Act creates the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to regulate railroads**
This legislation was enacted when the Supreme Court ruled in 1886 that states did not have the right to regulate interstate commerce. Because of conservative Court rulings and reluctant enforcement, the ICC had little effect until the twentieth century.
- 1890 **McKinley Tariff**
The Republican administration passed the McKinley Tariff of 1890 which was highly protectionist, that is, it charged high duties on imports. The widespread unpopularity of this tariff contributed to Democratic electoral victories in 1890 and 1892.
- * **Mississippi becomes the first state to adopt literacy tests to disfranchise blacks**
- Many southern states used a variety of methods, both direct and indirect, to remove blacks from politics. The Supreme Court upheld the Mississippi law in 1898, saying that it was permissible to restrict the ballot as long as race was not used as the disqualifying criterion.
- 1892 **People's (Populist) Party founded**
In the presidential election of 1892, this third party, which grew out of the Farmers' Alliances, was able to capture over a million votes and carry four western states.
- 1893 **Panic of 1893 leads to national depression**
Repeal of Sherman Silver Purchase Act (1890)
President Cleveland persuaded Congress to repeal the Silver Purchase Act that had reestablished a bimetallic currency. This action put the United States back on the gold standard, leading to a vigorous popular outcry for the coinage of silver and destroying Cleveland's position in the Democratic Party.
- 1894 **Coxey's Army**
Under the leadership of Jacob S. Coxey, a large group of unemployed workers marched to Washington seeking government relief for their condition. Cleveland dispersed them forcibly and arrested Coxey. This action, along with the president's interference in the Pullman boycott, lost him the support of America's working class.
- 1895 **Booker T. Washington sets out the Atlanta Compromise**
Washington's address to a largely white audience at the Atlanta Exposition offered to withdraw black demands for social equality if white society would support industrial education for blacks and subsequently employ them. This "accommodationist" position impressed white philanthropists and made Washington the power broker for black America.
- 1896 **Election of William McKinley; free silver campaign crushed**
The volatile depression economy caused the electorate to vote for "sound money," rejecting what the Republicans called the "revolutionary" assault on the gold standard by Bryan and the silver Democrats.
- Plessy v. Ferguson* upholds constitutionality of "separate but equal" facilities
This Supreme Court decision set in place the doctrine on which the South built a system of racial segregation in almost all aspects of its society.
- 1897 **Economic depression ends**

CHAPTER 20 The Rise of the City

- 1871 **Chicago fire**
The great Chicago fire killed 250 and left 100,000 people homeless. The business district, formerly constructed of wood, was quickly rebuilt out of brick and stone, and the city rapidly recovered. Wooden buildings were later banned throughout the city.
- 1873 **Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner publish *The Gilded Age***
This satirical novel about nineteenth-century business affairs lent its title to a historical period of materialism and cultural shallowness.
- 1875 **Dwight L. Moody launches urban revivalist movement**
Urban revivalism drew vast crowds and paved the way for subsequent evangelists such as Billy Sunday.
- 1876 **Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone**
Communication was greatly enhanced by this invention, which was so popular that by 1900 one and a half million telephones were in use in the United States.
- National Baseball League founded**
Businessmen discovered that money could be made in spectator sports and proceeded to organize baseball to that end.
- 1878 **Electric arc-light system installed in Philadelphia**
Previously gaslit city streets became safer with this development. Practical applications of electricity transformed many aspects of urban life.
- 1879 **Thomas Edison's incandescent light bulb**
This discovery made it possible to use electric lighting extensively in homes, offices, and factories.
- Salvation Army arrives from England**
Putting to use methods developed in the slums of London, the Army set out to provide for the spiritual and material needs of the urban poor.
- 1883 **New York City's Metropolitan Opera founded**
The Vanderbilts and their newly rich friends founded the Metropolitan Opera when they were barred from purchasing boxes at the Academy of Music, which was controlled by the families of "old wealth."
- Brooklyn Bridge opens**
The use of new construction methods made it possible to build this suspension bridge. It is still considered a masterpiece of both engineering and aesthetic achievement.
- 1885 **Joseph Pulitzer purchases the *New York World***
Pulitzer built this newspaper into one of the most powerful in the nation. Publisher William Randolph Hearst's competition with the *World* helped start the Spanish-American War in 1898.
- 1885 **William Jenney builds first steel-framed structure, Chicago's Home Insurance Building**
Although it was not a skyscraper, this innovative building paved the way for the construction of taller and taller structures.
- 1888 **First electric trolley line constructed in Richmond, Virginia**
Frank Sprague's invention quickly caught on, and by 1900 the trolley car had become the dominant means of urban mass transit.
- 1893 **Chicago World's Fair**
In the six months that it was open this fair had more than 27 million visitors.
- 1895 **The comic strip "The Yellow Kid" appears**
Hearst printed this newspaper comic strip in yellow ink. This technique led to the term "yellow journalism" to describe a paper's sensationalist style of reporting news events.
- 1897 **Boston's subway**
The first underground rapid transit system appeared in Boston, but the subway achieved its greatest potential in New York City.
- 1900 **Theodore Dreiser publishes *Sister Carrie***
Dreiser was the greatest American novelist of the naturalism school, and this work's depiction of the impact of urban life on its heroine is no less relevant today than when it first appeared.
- 1901 **New York Tenement House Reform Law**
So-called New Law tenements were required to have open courts, indoor toilets, and fire safeguards, but enforcement of the law was lax and nothing was done to improve existing housing stock.
- 1906 **San Francisco earthquake**
The most severe damage in this violent natural disaster came from the firestorm that followed the quake. Hundreds of people died, and property damage was estimated at \$500 million.
- 1913 **Woolworth Building, New York City**
The erection of this fifty-five-story building, called the "Cathedral of Commerce," marked the beginning of Manhattan's famous skyline.