

American Social and Cultural History, 1865 to the present

Outline of Course - 1

- Impact of the Civil War
- The 'Wild West' and its settlement
- Two innovations that began before the Civil War but reached their zenith in the later-19th Century
 - Railroads
 - Western Union and the telegraph

Outline of Course - 2

- New Communication innovations
 - The Post Office and the mail
 - Cheap mass-circulation newspapers and magazines
 - The typewriter
 - The telephone
- Immigration
- America in 1900
 - Changes in the home from 1865-1900
 - Changes in the office from 1865-1900

Outline of the Course – 3

- Electricity and its impacts
- The skyscraper city
- The automobile and its impacts
- Radio and its impacts
- Movies and their impacts
- A Note about the Roaring 20s and the Great Depression

Outline of the Course – 4

- World War II and its impacts
- Television
- The changes brought about by the 1960s and 1970s
- Digital Media

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had major financial effects – 1
 - Before the Civil War, Federal currency consisted only of gold, silver, and copper coins
 - Before the Civil War, roughly 1600 state-chartered banks each issued their own banknotes, which usually were accepted only in the state of the issuing bank
 - To help pay for the war, the Federal government issued \$450 million worth of paper currency

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had major financial effects - 2
 - In 1860, federal spending was less than 2% of the GNP. By 1865, it was 25% of the GNP
 - In 1860, the national debt was \$65 million, and had never risen above \$127 million. By 1865, it was \$2.75 billion
 - Before the Civil War, the largest federal budget in U.S. history was \$74 million. The largest deficit was \$27 million. In 1865, the Federal deficit was \$964 million (74% of the total budget)

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had major financial effects – 3
 - There are basically 3 ways to finance a war
 1. Raise taxes – This led to the income tax and the Bureau of Internal Revenue
 2. Issue printing press money – This led to inflation, especially in the South
 3. Borrowing via bonds – This led to the emergence of finance houses that eventually became investment banking houses by selling public and corporate securities. It also turned many Americans into bondholders

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The War popularized several things - 1
 - Canned goods, especially Borden's condensed milk and Van Camp's pork & beans
 - Pup tents or Dog tents
 - Ambulances
 - Mass-produced sized clothing
 - Military uniforms
 - Mourning clothes
 - Dog tags
 - Routine embalming of the dead

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The War popularized several things – 2
 - Ice cream
 - Baseball
 - Dime Novels
 - Watches
 - Guns and the American love of firearms

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had several major effects -1
 - Post-war crime waves
 - The creation of national cemeteries
 - Burial in these cemeteries was only for Union soldiers. There was no official reburial of Confederates
 - This led Southern civilians, mostly women, to mobilize private efforts to accomplish Confederate reburial. These efforts and the organizations they spawned became a means of keeping sectionalist identity alive and perpetuating southern resistance to northern domination and reconstruction

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had several major effects -2
 - Growth of federated voluntary associations
 - An increase in the power of the federal government vis-à-vis the states
 - The war led to an increase in the fiscal and administrative capabilities of the federal government
 - The war weakened support for states' rights
 - The enactment of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments created rights under the federal Constitution that were enforceable against the states
 - Later these Amendments would come to mean that the original Bill of Rights applied to the states as well as the federal government

Some Notes About the Civil War

- The Civil War had several major effects -3
 - Large scale drug addiction
 - Western Union becoming a telegraph monopoly
 - Led to French intervention in Mexico
 - Led to the creation of the Canadian confederation
 - Federal obscenity laws
 - Set a precedent for future U.S. military doctrine

Reconstruction - 1

- By early 1866, each former-Confederate state had revised its laws to reflect the abolition of slavery but the resulting Black Codes severely restricted Blacks
 - Barred land ownership by Blacks
 - Limited the ability of Blacks to testify in court against Whites
- Congress in reaction passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866
 - Declared the freedmen to be U.S. citizens with all of the rights pertaining thereto

Reconstruction – 2

- The 14th Amendment reflected two concerns of the Republican Congress
 - The fear that the Civil Rights Act of 1866 might be declared unconstitutional
 - The fear that the negation of the 3/5th clause due to the abolition of slavery would enhance the political power of the South after the 1870 census reapportionment
 - This would enable the Southern Democrats to regain power and possibly repeal such wartime legislation as the Homestead Act, the Morrill Land-Grant College Act, and the wartime banking, tariff, and currency legislation
 - It would probably make the Republicans a permanent minority party unlikely to either win the Presidency or Congress

Reconstruction – 3

- The fear of Southern whites voting en bloc for the Democrats led the Republicans to support suffrage for Blacks and disenfranchisement for those who were leaders of the Confederacy.
 - Hence the 14th and 15th Amendments
- While there were Black congressmen, 2 Black senators (both from Mississippi), a Lt Governor, and numerous state legislators
 - Most Southern officials were white
 - Most Southern black officials were not former slaves, but part of the 10% of the Black population in 1860 that had been free

Reconstruction – 4

- What the North was trying to accomplish in the South was similar to what the U.S. was trying to accomplish in Iraq
 - Frustrated by Southern racism, the South's resentment at its defeat, and the poverty and lawlessness of the post-Civil War South
- In the reconstructed states, revenues in an economy devastated by war were insufficient to meet the additional demands imposed by programs of education, public works, and railroad construction
 - This led to the widely-believed charge that Reconstruction governments were notoriously extravagant and corrupt and needed to be “redeemed”

The End of Reconstruction

- The end result:
 - After the disputed election of 1876, Reconstruction was abandoned
 - The Southern “Redeemers” – the old southern elite of plantation owners now supplemented by railroad magnates and manufacturers - came to power
 - The Redeemers followed a low-tax ideology and adopted a policy of retrenchment which meant cutting taxes and reducing public services

The New South

- By the end of the 1870s, the South still had not economically recovered from the Civil War
 - In 1880, U.S. per capita wealth was \$1,086 outside the South and only \$376 in the South
 - In 1880, the estimated value of property in the U.S. was \$47.64 billion, of which the South had only \$5.72 billion
- While the South did acquire railroads and industry (especially textiles and pig iron), its economy was still dependent on cotton in an era when prices were declining
 - The result: sharecropping

The Rise of Jim Crow - 1

- Under slavery, slaveowners sought to extract labor from their slaves and prevent slave insurrections
 - This made segregation impractical since it made labor extraction and monitoring of Afro-American behavior difficult
 - The fact of slavery made clear the relative social status of the races

The Rise of Jim Crow -2

- Emancipation and the Reconstruction Amendments overturned both slavery and the social status structure of the South
 - The fact that in the eyes of the law, blacks were now equal to whites made the reaffirming white supremacy a pressing psychological problem for many insecure lower-class whites
 - One possible answer to the problem was Jim Crow

The Rise of Jim Crow – 3

- Segregation developed as part of an ongoing struggle between radical racists who hated Blacks and Southern conservatives
 - Both agreed that Blacks were inferior but disagreed over how Whites should respond
 - While the racist radicals had no qualms about tormenting Blacks, conservatives were appalled by the radicals' hatred and propensity toward violence
 - For conservatives, the remedy was segregation. It permitted Whites to avoid contact with Blacks while allowing Blacks some social space

The Rise of Jim Crow – 4

- During the late-1880s and 1890s, several Southern states passed segregation laws
- The first segregation laws pertained mostly to transportation, especially train travel
 - Train travel involved close contact for many hours and often overnight among passengers, a number of whom were women.
 - Trains had multiple cars so that railroad companies could easily segregate passengers

The Rise of Jim Crow – 5

- There were two opponents of Jim Crow laws:
 - Private businesses, such as railroad and streetcar companies, since they saw segregation laws as expensive and difficult to administer
 - Blacks, who saw segregation as degrading.
- The South reacted against Black protest against segregation by disenfranchising Blacks
 - This was done by the use of cumulative poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses

The Rise of Jim Crow - 6

- The end results:
 - Virtually all Blacks and a large number of poor whites were disenfranchised
 - In the 1890s, an average of 73% of men voted. Only 30% did so in the 1900s
 - The South became a one-party entity, with the Democratic party exercising unchallenged dominance.
 - The party was dominated by a business-planter elite, committed to low taxes and preservation of the status quo
 - Segregation became institutionalized throughout the South

The Wild West

- Geography of the Wild West
 - Arid grasslands of the Great Plains
 - Rocky Mountains & the High Sierras
 - Hot Deserts of the Southwest (AZ, western NM, southern CA)
 - Cold Deserts of NV, eastern WA & eastern OR

The Wild West

- Westward Movement
 - In the 19th century, a farmer's son with little hope of inheritance had four options
 - Learn a trade
 - Join the army
 - Go to sea
 - Seek his fortune on the frontier

The Wild West

- In 1865, there were very few settlements between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific coast
 - Except for the Indians, it was largely uninhabited
- By 1890, the Census Bureau considered the frontier to no longer exist
- Settlement of the West took place in three waves – ranchers, miners, and farmers

The Wild West

- The Cattle Drives of the 1860s-1880s reflected:
 - Large herds of longhorns in Texas
 - Sizable post-Civil War migration to Texas
 - The coming of the railroad to Kansas
 - The knowledge that the Texas longhorns could sell for much less than eastern cattle

The Wild West

- Effects of the Texas cattle drives:
 - Branding of cattle
 - Extension of the cattle kingdom northward
 - Growth of cow towns like Dodge City & Abilene KS
 - Prostitution a major source of town income
 - Notion that cattle had a right to free access to grass and water
 - This precipitated eventual wars between the cattlemen and the farmers

The Wild West

- Notes re the Cowboy
 - Out of 7 cowboys, 5 were Anglo, 1 was Hispanic, & 1 was Black
 - The cowboys formed the lower half of a two-class system of cattlemen and cowboys
 - Cowboys were generally lower-class hireling bachelor laborers in a risky line of work
 - The cowboy's picturesque dress was largely adopted from Mexican cattle herders
 - The nature of their work required fostered characteristic virtues and resulted in a unique sub-culture

The Wild West

- While ranching opened the Great Plains, it was mining that led to the settling of the mountains and the desert
 - Between 1859 (when silver was discovered in Nevada) and 1880, \$292 million of silver bullion was mined
 - The 1870s saw gold, silver, and copper discoveries in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, South Dakota, and New Mexico

The Wild West

- Mining Methods
 - Placer mining – used by prospectors
 - Prospectors were usually unmarried male transients hoping to strike it rich
 - Lode mining – required the use of heavy machinery and was done by mining companies
 - Lode miners were generally residents of mining towns employed by the mine

The Wild West

- Miners
 - Consisted of men working in remote areas without their families
 - Mining towns were normally rowdy places
 - In 1880, the silver mining town of Leadville Colorado had a saloon for every 80 persons, a gambling establishment for every 170, a bordello for every 200, and a church for every 5,000.
 - Crime rates in mining towns were very high

The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Crime rates in the West were high. There were several reasons for this:
 - The existence of an “Honor Culture”
 - High male to female gender ratios
 - Many men unable to find wives
 - Racism and ethnic hostility
 - Widespread ownership and carrying of firearms and knives

Homicide Rates

| Name | Years | Homicide Rate (per 100,000) |
|---|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Nevada County CA (gold rush country) | 1851-56 | 83.0 |
| Leadville CO (silver mining town) | 1880 | 105.0 |
| Bodie CA (gold mining town) | 1878-82 | 116.0 |
| Henderson County IL (rural farming county) | 1859-1900 | 4.3 |
| Boston MA | 1860-82 | 5.8 |
| | 1990-92 | 19.1 |
| Philadelphia PA | 1860-80 | 3.2 |
| | 1990-92 | 28.6 |

The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Reasons for high crime rates (cont)
 - The widespread presence of lower-class male cultural norms that:
 - Fostered gambling and drinking
 - Led to recreational association with other men in commercial establishments linked to vice, such as saloons, gambling halls, and brothels
 - The presence of a large number of:
 - Civil War veterans – both Union and Confederate
 - Young men aged 15-24
 - People who had been in trouble with the law back East

The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Reasons for high crime rates (cont)
 - Geographic remoteness
 - Law officers were few in number and often corrupt
 - Major economic conflicts
 - Cattlemen vs. Farmers
 - Cattle barons & Business corporations vs. Those who opposed corporate interests

The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Law enforcement ineffectiveness led to vigilantism
- To sum up: “The frontier attracted armed bachelors filled with dangerous substances and dangerous ideas: whiskey, racial contempt, and homicidal sensitivity about honor.” David Courtwright *Violent Land*, p66.

The Wild West – Women

- As time passed, there was a growing presence of women and children. This
 - Changed the population structure
 - Changed the moral climate, since most of them were moral conservatives
 - Moral reaction against the saloon led to the movement for Prohibition
 - Having their reform efforts blocked by politicians allied to the vice industries led to support for female voting enfranchisement

The Wild West - Farmers

- Free land brought farmers to the Great Plains
- New inventions enabled farmers to farm where no crop had grown before
 - New varieties of wheat
 - Mechanization of wheat farming
 - Dry farming enabled farmers to use water below the soil in arid country

The Wild West - Farmers

- Result of the farming innovations
 - Wheat production greatly increased
 - 1867 – 2.11 million bushels
 - 1900 – 599 million bushels
 - Labor to produce 15 bushels of wheat
 - 1840: 35 hours
 - 1900: 15 hours
 - Wheat exports
 - 1867: 6 million bushels
 - 1900: 102 million bushels

The Wild West - Farmers

- Effects of Large-Scale Production
 - American farmers now in a world economy
 - Farmers went into debt to buy farm machinery and land
 - The combination of lower prices and more onerous debts was Populism
 - Directed at the railroads and grain elevators
 - Expressions of Nativist feelings
 - And in the South, anti-Black feelings

Post-Civil War Railroad

| Year | 1860 | 1865 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Mileage | 30,000 | 35,000 | 53,000 | 93,000 | 164,000 |

Post-Civil War Railroad

- A Few Key Notes
 - Railroads differed from previous business enterprises
 - They were a public service enterprise that required enormous up-front outlays of capital
 - They were geographically spread-out entities that required extensive coordination to operate
 - Once built, they were expensive to run and maintain – i.e. they were not only capital-intensive but also labor-intensive
 - Their profitability required both eminent domain, limited liability, and government subsidy

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Some Notes
 - Post-Civil War Railroads were corporations – only corporations could raise the enormous amounts of capital needed and had limited liability
 - In addition to capital from stockholders and bondholders, railroads required government subsidies
 - These subsidies took the form of state and municipal purchases of stock and Federal government land grants

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Some Notes – 2
 - Railroads were the first firms that that needed C² systems
 - Before the telegraph, railroads were also the fastest known means of communication as well as of transportation.
 - Coordination remained a major problem until railroads adopted the telegraph.
 - The use of the telegraph for railroad dispatching began with the Erie RR in 1851

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Economic Impacts - 1
 - The railroad created new economic resources by making economically possible exploitation of
 - PA, WV, and KY coal deposits
 - Iron ore deposits in the Mesabi region of MN
 - Copper deposits in MT
 - The railroad created a national market for goods by destroying the transportation cost barrier that had protected local manufacturing monopolies from competition

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Economic Impacts – 2
 - The railroad, as a consumer, created a massive demand for iron, steel, coal, lumber, steam engines, telegraphic equipment, and machine tools
 - The railroad created a whole host of new occupations
 - The railroad linked different parts of the country together

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Economic Impacts -3
 - The railroad turned some villages into cities and others into hamlets and ghost towns
 - The railroad relegated the stagecoach and wagon from a primary mode of land transport to feeder status
 - The railroad fostered the development of capital markets and the New York Stock Exchange

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Economic Impacts – 4
 - The railroads initially fostered the cattle drives of the 1860s and 1870s when they built lines to Dodge City and Abilene
 - By building railroads to Texas and the northern Plains, the railroads made the cattle drives obsolete
 - Railroads provided an organizational model for later mass merchandisers and manufacturers

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Social Effects - 1
 - The railroads, with their need for trains to be at specific places at specific times, altered people's consciousness of time and made us slaves to the clock
 - The railroad created both timetables and a major market for watches since both railroad employees and passengers needed to know the exact time
 - The railroad created standardized time and time zones

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Social Effects – 2
 - The railroad with the help of the telegraph and newspaper built a national audience for certain actors, speakers, and entertainers
 - The railroads permitted performers and speakers to tour much of the country and become famous
 - The railroad, with the aid of the postage stamp, fostered the growth of the postal service

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Social Effects – 3
 - The railroads created the first city suburbs.
 - Different from the later automobile suburbs
 - Railroad suburbs were small communities strung out like beads on a string separated by rural areas
 - The railroad, with the help of the post office, made possible a national market for books and other publications

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Social Effects – 4
 - The train altered the psychological experience of travel
 - The train and the refrigerated rail car diversified the American diet by enabling the transportation of perishable foods like milk, meat, and seafood
 - Crisfield MD and the Eastern Shore became major exporters first of oysters and then of soft-shell Blue Crabs

Post-Civil War Railroad

- Social Effects – 5
 - Congestion in the horse-drawn city
 - Almost every passenger journey or freight shipment began or ended with a horse-drawn vehicle or horse
 - To haul passengers and freight, the large Percherons and Clydesdales by the 1880s became familiar sights on the streets
 - One result: a lot of horse-caused pollution. Each horse produced about 12,000 lbs of manure and 400 gallons of urine per year, much of which ended up in the street