**Module 1: Slide Set 3: Tensions and Conflicts of the Gilded Age**

**The Plight of Labor**

* The increase of machines caused an increase in unskilled labor which had a low rate of pay with long hours.
* Labor unions failed with the rate of unemployment was so high they didnt have the dues giivng businesses the upper hand. Monotony in the work force as well as injuries became a normal thing and without labor laws, the companies just took the financial hit.
* This led to an increase in child labor which caused alot of americans to push back in rallies and strikes in conviction of greedy monopolists and politicians.
* Frederick Taylor pioneered scientific studies in labor costs that needed to be enforced by management such as specific work times, tardiness, prohibition of alcohol consumption on the job, and some forbidden to talk. This was overseen by the floor manager who some were abusive esp of different ethnicities.

**The Knights of Labor**

* First: after the depression, unemployment dropped, wages rose and allowed for economic security to form.
* Second: emergence of new leadership
* Third: Attractive message and promised positive future and did this through successful leadership of strikes.
* Admitted all industrial workers incl immigrants, african americans and eventually women.
* Grew from 10k to 700k in 1886.

**Opposition of Organized Labor**

* As new immigration began, cultural differences divided american workers.
* Employers would pity them against each other to break strikes.
* Courts issues injunctions against union strikes that they threatened property rights. Used armed forces to enforce and break strikes.
* As the Knights grew, employers and conservative politicians denounced them as radical socialists pushing violence and class warfare which made american leery of organized labor.

**Strikes and the decline of Labor Movement**

* Between 1880 and 1900 37k strikes took place, most were small but effective.
* Main strikes were the railroad strike of 1877, known as the Great Uprising, the Homestead Strike of 1892 and the Pullman Strike of 1894.

**The End of the Knights of Labor**

* The Haymarket riot of 1886 played a key role in the fall of the Knights of Labor. Conservative politicians curtailed their ability to organize and go on strike. Internal divisions weakened the Knights. Skilled members grew dismayed over policy changes within the organization and were worried the knights were too prone to strike.
* In 1886 25 unions broke away from the knights and founded American Federation of Labor. Knights ended eventually in 1893 but hung around until 1949. AF of L grew to 1.6 million members by 1904.
* AF of L esd led by Samuel Gompers and led this labor union with the idea that it would have nothing to do with socialist ideas, political parties or anti-capitalist radicalism.
* Used mediation and arbitration for labor disputes which allowed for big businesses to side with him because they could afford higher wages and shorter hours.

**The IWW “Wobblies”**

* Those that opposed the AF of L was founded in 1905 as the Industrial Workers of the World or the IWW whose motto was that the working class and the employing class had nothing in common.
* Their goal was to assemble all workers to overthrow the capitalist system but this system never became popular and was eventually decimated by govt repression.

**Outcomes for Workers**

* Workers jobs became monotonous, and they lost their freedom. They also got rising wages, spread of info and literacy and rising life expectancy.
* There was no real impact of the Industrial Revolution.

**Rise of Populism**

* Southern and midwestern share croppers were becoming chronic debtors by 1880 which caused the rise of the populist party,.It linked midwestern farms and confederate veterans from the south.
* The west had a huge harvest so over planted grain which drove down the price of food. Cotton farmers compete with Egyptian and Indian cotton and their prices were too low.
* Secondly farmers were vulnerable to economy. The amount of money in circulation did not keep pace with the rise of population which caused deflation. SO they had to sell when prices were low to pay back debts.
* Created organization, Granger movement, Greenback party, and farmers alliances in 1880, black farmers alliances led by Thomas E Watson.
* People's party created in 1892 and led in Omaha, platform written by Ignacio's Donnelly was unsuccessful to woo urban class voters.
* Populist party in 1892 was James Weaver who won 1 mil votes. Populist focused on free silver which caused the democrats to follow.
* In 1896 secured the services of William Jennings Bryan who was the Democratic Party candidate. Populists couldn't decide who their presidential candidate so they chose Bryan and picked Thomas E Watson as their vice president.
* Populism failed because it was unable to overcome the gulf between the farmers and the industrial workers. Republican won the election on behalf of sound money policy(gold standard)
* Eventually, farming lowered to less than half while most Americans lived in cities and most farms were owned by corporations.

**New Immigration**

* As immigration progressed from various countries, the idea behind Americanization occurred to have races forego old habits.
* The melting pot was that the us could transform anyone from any where in the world into a good American.

\*\*Push factors of Immigation: read through, didn't cover in class

**City Life**

* Cities grow rapidly between late 19th and early 20th centuries causing poor sanitation and pollution.
* As populations grew, agriculture industrialization grew with new technologies. As agriculture became more mechanized, became less farm labor and as they moved to cities, new jobs arose such as factory operatives, laborers, and domestic servants.
* A significant rural to urban migration involved African Americans leaving the south and moving to the north.
* As cities grew, they began to annex surrounding towns. By 1897, 40 adjacent towns merged into the city of New York.

\*\*Read through the rest of city life, he said he went a little overboard with the slides.

**Political Machines**

* Political machines grew as cities grew. They produced opportunities for politicians to reward supporters with construction contracts that were build on financial kickbacks. They awarded supporters with jobs which helped the political parties to win during elections**.**
* Political machines also engaged in voter intimidation and election fraud. Used influence with the police department to manipulate the vote numbers.
* They were good for cities as they promoted growth and aided the poor but they were definitely corrupt.

**“Boss” William Tweed**

* Poster boy for political corruption, most notorious politician in US History.
* Bribed and bought votes to put this people into every elected office. NY was controlled by the “tweed ring”
* His influence shifted power away from the state and the New York City. His officials knew inside information on construction projects gave him the ability to buy and sell land for great profit. He would start his own companies and force the city to do business with him.
* He used gangs to intimidate voters, and bribes to control police, judges and other officials. Business were eager to work with him and he put a price on everything.
* Tweed was ultimately stopped when a bookkeeper sent documents to the new york times about the construction of the Tweed Courthouse.Found guilt sentenced 12 years but only spent one. Was then sued by the state for 6mill where we went to jail again. He managed to escape where he fled to cuba and then to spain where he was arrested by local police due to an photo seen of him. He died in jail in 1878.