Unit 2 Glossary (The Gilded Age)

**Andrew Carnegie**- (1835-1919) Andrew Carnegie’s business sense made him one of the richest men in the world and one noted for his philanthropic endeavors. Born in Scotland, Andrew Carnegie relocated with his family to Pennsylvania in 1848. He was a telegraph messenger, personal telegrapher to the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s western division, and eventually superintendent of the railroad’s western division during the Civil War. Starting in 1856, Carnegie began investing in other companies. By 1863 he was earning $40,000 a year from investments. He turned to manufacturing in 1872 and established Carnegie, McCandless and Co. in Pittsburgh to manufacture steel using the Bessemer process. In 1892 it became Carnegie Steel Co., Ltd. When he retired from business in 1901 he was one of the wealthiest men in the world. He shared his wealth through a range of philanthropic causes, granting more than $350,000,000 to worthy causes aiding education, international peace, libraries, culture centers, research, and publications.

**Big Business**- Business ruled during the years after the Civil War. Just before the Civil War, Congress passed legislation allowing businesses to form corporations without a charter from the U.S. government. After the Civil War, these corporations came to dominate much of American business, and, in the process, to define American life. The era of Big Business began when entrepreneurs in search of profits consolidated their businesses into massive corporations, which were so large that they could force out competition and gain control of a market. Control of a market allowed a corporation to set prices for a product at whatever level it wanted. These corporations, and the businessmen who ran them, became exceedingly wealthy and powerful, often at the expense of many poor workers.

**William Jennings Bryan**- (1860-1925) A noted politician and orator, William Jennings Bryan supported reforms benefiting ordinary people. He served as a representative to the Illinois legislature where he favored income tax, prohibition, and women’s suffrage. He earned the Democratic nomination for president in 1896 but lost the race. He also lost in 1900 and 1908. He served as Woodrow Wilson’s secretary of state but resigned in 1915 because he did not support Wilson’s aggressive stance toward Germany. Bryan made a fortune in real estate deals in Florida. His last oration was as a spokesman for the prosecution in the Scopes trial in which he supported a literal interpretation of the Bible and denounced the teaching of evolution in the schools.

**Eugene V. Debs**- (1855-1926) Debs supported unionization and labor reforms, opposed strikes, and favored negotiation as a means to improve the conditions for laborers. He founded the American Railway Union (ARU) in 1893 to organize railroad workers, coal miners, and longshoremen employed in the industry, regardless of their skills. Failure of the ARU in 1894 convinced Debs of the value of socialism as an economic system and he joined the Socialist Democratic Party (Socialist Party of America) in 1901. He ran for president five times on the socialist ticket, once from prison. He used his campaigns to further the causes of women’s suffrage, the abolition of child labor, and shorter workdays.

**Gilded Age**- The period or era from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century. Mark Twain satirized this time period by stating this was an era of “serious social problems hidden by a thin gold gilding.” The Gilded Age was a time of enormous growth, especially in the North and West. This attracted millions of immigrants from Europe. Railroads were the major industry, but the factory system, mining, and labor unions also gained in importance. The South remained economically devastated; its economy became increasingly tied to cotton and tobacco production, which suffered low prices. The political landscape was notable for its corruption. The dominant issues were cultural (prohibition, education, women’s suffrage, and ethnic and racial groups), and economics (tariffs and money supply).

**Haymarket Riot**- On May 4, 1886, a labor protest rally near Chicago’s Haymarket Square turned into a riot after someone threw a bomb at police. At least eight people died as a result of the violence that day. Despite a lack of evidence against them, eight radical labor activists were convicted in connection with the bombing. The Haymarket Riot was viewed a setback for the organized labor movement in America, which was fighting for such rights as the eight-hour workday. At the same time, the men convicted in connection with the riot were viewed by many in the labor movement as martyrs.

**Homestead Strike**- An industrial [lockout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockout_%28industry%29) and [strike](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_action) which began on June 30, 1892, culminating in a battle between strikers and private security agents on July 6, 1892. The dispute occurred at the [Homestead Steel Works](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homestead_Steel_Works) in the [Pittsburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pittsburgh) area town of [Homestead, Pennsylvania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homestead,_Pennsylvania), between the [Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amalgamated_Association_of_Iron_and_Steel_Workers) (the AA) and the [Carnegie Steel Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Steel_Company). In 1890, the price of rolled-steel products started to decline, dropping from $35 a gross ton to $22 early in 1892. In the face of depressed steel prices, Henry C. Frick, general manager of the Homestead plant that Carnegie largely owned, was determined to cut wages and break the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, one of the strongest craft unions in the country. Although only 750 of the 3,800 workers at Homestead belonged to the union, 3,000 of them met and voted overwhelmingly to strike. Frick responded by building a fence three miles long and 12 feet high around the steelworks plant, adding peepholes for rifles and topping it with barbed wire. Workers named the fence "Fort Frick." Deputy sheriffs were sworn in to guard the property, but the workers ordered them out of town. Workers then took to guarding the plant that Frick had closed to keep them out. This action signified a very different attitude that labor and management shared toward the plant. Workers believed because they had worked in the mill, they had mixed their labor with the property in the mill and they believed that in some way the property had become theirs, not Andrew Carnegie's. The final result was a major defeat for the union and a setback for efforts to unionize steelworkers. Frick then turned to the enforcers he had employed previously: the Pinkerton Detective Agency's private army, often used by industrialists of the era. When the private armies of business arrived, the crowd warned the Pinkertons not to step off the barge. But they did. No one knows which side shot first, but under a barrage of fire, the Pinkertons retreated back to their barges. For 14 hours, gunfire was exchanged. Strikers rolled a flaming freight train car at the barges. They tossed dynamite to sink the boats and pumped oil into the river and tried to set it on fire. By the time the Pinkertons surrendered in the afternoon three detectives and nine workers were dead or dying. The workers declared victory in the bloody battle, but it was a short-lived celebration. The governor of Pennsylvania ordered state militia into Homestead. Armed with the latest in rifles and Gatling guns, they took over the plant. Strikebreakers who arrived on locked trains, often unaware of their destination or the presence of a strike, took over the steel mills. Four months after the strike was declared, the men's resources were gone and they returned to work. Authorities charged the strike leaders with murder and 160 other strikers with lesser crimes. The workers' entire Strike Committee also was arrested for treason. However, sympathetic juries would convict none of the men.

**Industrialization**- The process in which a society or country (or world) transforms itself from a primarily agricultural society into one based on the manufacturing of goods and services. Individual manual labor is often replaced by mechanized mass production and craftsmen are replaced by assembly lines. Characteristics of industrialization include the use of technological innovation to solve problems as opposed to superstition or dependency upon conditions outside human control such as the weather, as well as more efficient division of labor and economic growth.

**Labor Unions**- As industrialization increased in the United States following the Civil War, the rights of laborers were undermined by the emphasis of employers to increase production and profits. Workers unionized to effect change. However, laborers were not united in the efforts because established workers rarely cooperated with immigrant or black workers who were willing to work for less. The majority of laborers, particularly the unskilled, did not join the early unions and their interests were not defended. In the late 1800s, two out of three working Americans depended on wages instead of self-employment. Laborers organized, forming unions to oppose unfair treatment, but corporations continued to wield more power than labor. The first union was the National Labor Union (1866). By

1872, 32 national unions existed serving the special interests of bricklayers, typesetters, and shoemakers. In 1886 Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor (AFL) as an association of several national unions. Gompers sought better wages and hours and general improvement in the conditions under which laborers worked. He supported boycotts and walkouts and focused on the issues concerning skilled workers. He did not represent the interests of the unskilled, of women, or blacks. Between 1881 and 1900 there were 23,000 strikes involving 6,610,000 workers and employers lost $450 million. But this labor agitation still reflected the interests of only a small percentage of all laborers. Public support for labor increased during the period as people recognized the rights of laborers to organize, practice collective bargaining, and strike. In 1894, the federal government declared Labor Day as a legal holiday in tribute to laborers. This occurred the same year the federal government broke the strike of laborers for the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago.

**Political Machines**- Political machines, informal organizations that control formal processes of government, are created by elected officials to guarantee their power. Leaders resort to bribery and force, if necessary, to hold office. Friends are rewarded with jobs within the government, a process called the spoils system. Andrew Jackson used this system in his first term as president in 1829 to reward political backers. At this time it challenged the near monopoly of government participation held by the upper classes. Political machines also engage in gerrymandering by supporting the division of election districts unfairly to assure that the candidates favorable to the machine carry more districts than the opposition. Political machines plant representatives in election districts, make deals with judges and other professions, and buy votes by offering services in exchange for support. Political machines often exist in big cities. One of the most notorious, the Tweed Ring led by “Boss” Tweed, used bribes and fraudulent elections to wrest $200 million from New York City coffers. His undercover dealings were disclosed by The New York Times in 1871.

**Populist Movement**- Coalition of U.S. agrarian reformers in the Midwest and South in the 1890s. The movement developed from farmers' alliances formed in the 1880s in reaction to falling crop prices and poor credit facilities. The leaders organized the Populist, or People's, Party (1892), which advocated a variety of measures to help farmers. They also demanded an increase in the circulating currency (to be achieved by the unlimited coinage of silver), a graduated income tax, government ownership of the railroads, a tariff for revenue only, and the direct election of U.S. senators. Many state and local Populist candidates were elected in the Midwest. In 1896 the Populists joined with the Democratic Party to support the [Free Silver Movement](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Free+Silver+Movement) and the unsuccessful presidential candidacy of [William Jennings Bryan](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Bryan%2c+William+Jennings). The movement declined thereafter, though some of its causes were later embraced by the [Progressive Party](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Progressive+Party).

**Pullman Strike**- (1894) The Pullman Company, owned by George Pullman, manufactured railroad cars, and by 1894 it operated "first class" sleeping cars on almost every one of the nation's major railroads. The company's manufacturing plants were in a company-owned town on the outskirts of Chicago. Pullman publicized his company town as a model community filled with contented, well-paid workers. The Pullman workers, however disagreed, especially after the onset of the economic depression that began in 1893.  During that depression, Pullman sought to preserve profits by lowering labor costs. When the firm slashed its work force from 5,500 to 3,300 and cut wages by an average of 25 percent, the Pullman workers struck. The American Railway Union (ARU), led by Eugene Debs, was trying to organize rail workers all across the country. The Pullman workers joined the ARU, and Debs became the leader of the Pullman strike. The ARU enjoyed wide influence among the workers who operated trains.  To bring pressure on Pullman, the union asked trainmen to refuse to run trains on which Pullman sleeping cars were attached. The union told the railroads that their trains could operate without the Pullman cars, but the railroads insisted that they had contracts with the Pullman Company requiring them to haul the sleeping cars. The result was an impasse, with railroad workers in and around Chicago refusing to operate passenger trains.  The conflict was deep and bitter, and it seriously disrupted American railroad service. The strike ended with the intervention of the United States Army. The passenger trains also hauled mail cars, and although the workers promised to operate mail trains so long as Pullman cars were not attached, the railroads refused. Pullman and the carriers informed federal officials that violence was occurring and that the mail was not going through. Attorney General Richard Olney, who disliked unions, heard their claims of violence (but not the assurances of local authorities that there was no uncontrolled violence) and arranged to send federal troops to insure the delivery of the mail and to suppress the strike. The union leader, Debs, was jailed for not obeying an injunction that a judge had issued against the strikers. The Pullman strike brought Eugene Debs national attention, and it led directly to his conversion to socialism.  The events of the strike led other Americans to begin a quest for achieving more harmonious relations between capital and labor while protecting the public interest.

**Sherman Anti-Trust Act**- In 1890 the U.S. Congress passed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in an effort to control monopolies. The act outlawed efforts to consolidate business under trusts which monopolized and restrained free trade. The act had little impact on business practices. More trusts were formed in the 1890s under President William McKinley’s administration than in any previous period, but the act did support the importance of public good over private gain.

**Social Darwinism**- The theory that Charles Darwin's theory of "survival of the fittest" can also be applied to society; that competition between individuals, groups, or nations drives social evolution in human societies.

**Third Parties**- Third parties or minority parties serve a useful purpose in democratic government. They offer a voice to those seeking to reform the dominant two-party system. They reflect an interest in change and often contribute new political ideas. Frustrated farmers in the South and West formed the People’s Party or Populists and in 1892 nominated James Weaver, a Greenback-Labor candidate in the election of 1880 as their presidential candidate. The party platform called for a graduated income tax; government ownership of the telephone, the telegraph, and railroad, and the unlimited coinage of silver. As third-party issues garner public support, the issues are often adopted by a major party. This happened to the Populists in the presidential campaign of 1896 when the Democrats and their nominee William Jennings Bryan appropriated much of the Populist platform. Other issues such as child labor laws, antitrust laws, and women’s suffrage were also adopted by a major party. No-table third-party candidates for president include Eugene Debs (Socialist candidate, 1908, 1912, 1920), Theodore Roosevelt (Bull Moose, 1912), George Wallace (American Independent, 1968), and H. Ross Perot (Independent, 1992, 1996).