**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2/19/14 Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_**

**GILDED AGE SOCIETY**

**Source**: <http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/gildedage/>

**Urbanization**

The Gilded Age saw the United States shift from an agricultural to an urban, industrial society, as millions of Americans flocked to **cities**in the post–Civil War era. Nearly 40 percent of Americans lived in urbanized areas by 1900, as opposed to 20 percent in 1860. Many young people left the countryside in search of new wonders: cities were at the height of modernization for the time, with skyscrapers, electric trolleys, department stores, bridges, bicycles, indoor plumbing, telephones, and electric lamps.

|  |
| --- |
| **1.** Why did people move to cities during the era of **urbanization**? |

**Mass Immigration**

In addition to this major shift from rural to urban areas, a new wave of **immigration** increased America’s population significantly, especially in major cities. Immigrants came from war-torn regions of **southern and eastern Europe**, such as Italy, Greece, Poland, Russia, Croatia, and Czechoslovakia. This new group of immigrants was poorer and less educated than the Irish and German immigrants who had made the journey to the United States earlier in the century. By the early twentieth century, more than a million immigrants were entering eastern U.S. cities on a yearly basis. Many immigrants could barely make a living, working as unskilled laborers in factories or packinghouses for low wages.

|  |
| --- |
| **2.** What hardships did immigrants face when they came to America? |

**Nativism**

Many **nativists**—Americans descended primarily from Irish and German immigrants (but not exclusively those groups)—saw these immigrants as illiterate and poor, unable to learn English and with little experience living in a democratic society. Many of America’s Protestants also disliked the fact that many of the new immigrants were Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Jewish. Many Anglo-Saxon Americans worried that eastern and southern Europeans would “outbreed” them and take over their once-“pure” race. Many nativists pushed for immigration restrictions; Congress agreed and eventually limited immigration entry in 1882.

Nativists in the United States reserved special hatred for **Chinese**immigrants—a group that had worked countless hours of labor at low wages, especially on railroad construction in the West. Unions pressed Congress to pass the **Chinese Exclusion Act** in 1882, completely banning Chinese immigration to the United States. Congress did pass the act, and it remained in place until 1943.

|  |
| --- |
| **3.** How did **nativists** respond to immigration? |

**Urban Slums**

The sudden influx of millions of poor immigrants led to the formation of slums in U.S. cities. These new city dwellers lived in **tenement** buildings, often with entire families living together in tiny one-room apartments and sharing a single bathroom with other families on the floor. Tenements generally were filthy, poorly ventilated, and poorly lit—an ideal place for rats and disease.

|  |
| --- |
| **4.** Describe life in urban slums. |

**Black Civil Rights**

In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld the policy of segregation by legalizing **“separate but equal”** facilities for blacks and whites in the landmark ***Plessy v. Ferguson***decision. In doing so, the court condemned blacks to more than another half century of second-class citizenship. Despite the ruling, African-American leaders of the **civil rights** **movement** continued to press for equal rights.

|  |
| --- |
| **5.** What was the situation for African-Americans in the Gilded Age? |

**GILDED AGE INDUSTRY**

**Captains of Industry**

Big businessmen, not politicians, controlled the new industrialized America of the Gilded Age. Whereas past generations sent their best men into public service, in the last decades of the 1800s, young men were enticed by the private sector, where with a little persistence, hard work, and ruthlessness, one could reap enormous profits. These so-called **“captains of industry”** were not regulated by the government and did whatever they could to make as much money as possible. These industrialists’ business practices were sometimes so corrupt that they were given the name **“robber barons**.**”**

|  |
| --- |
| **6.** Why were the leaders of big businesses called “robber barons?” |

**Carnegie, Morgan, and U.S. Steel**

Among the wealthiest and most famous captains of industry in the late 1800s was **Andrew Carnegie**. A Scottish immigrant, Carnegie turned his one Pennsylvanian production plant into a veritable **steel**empire through a business tactic called **vertical integration**. Rather than rely on expensive middlemen, Carnegie vertically integrated his production process by buying out all of the companies—coal, iron ore, and so on—needed to produce his steel, as well as the companies that produced the steel, shipped it, and sold it. Eventually, Carnegie sold his company to banker **J. P. Morgan**, who used the company as the foundation for the **U.S. Steel Corporation**. By the end of his life, Carnegie was one of the richest men in America, with a fortune of nearly $500 million.

|  |
| --- |
| **7.** What was **vertical integration**? |

**Rockefeller and Standard Oil**

**Oil** was another lucrative business during the Gilded Age. Although there was very little need for oil prior to the Civil War, demand surged during the machine age of the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s. Seemingly everything required oil during this era: factory machines, ships, and, later, automobiles.

The biggest names in the oil industry were **John D. Rockefeller** and his **Standard Oil Company**—in fact, they were the *only*names in the industry. Whereas Carnegie employed vertical integration to create his steel empire, Rockefeller used **horizontal integration**, essentially buying out all the other oil companies so that he had no competition left. In doing so, Rockefeller created one of America’s first **monopolies**, or **trusts**, that cornered the market of a single product.

|  |
| --- |
| **8.** What is a monopoly?  **9.** How did **Rockefeller** and **Standard Oil** make so much money? |

**Social Darwinism and the Gospel of Wealth**

In time, many wealthy American businessmen, inspired by biologist **Charles Darwin**’s new theories of natural selection, began to believe that they had become rich because they were literally superior human beings compared to the poorer classes. The wealthy applied Darwin’s idea of “survival of the fittest” to society; in the words of one **Social Darwinist**, as they became known, “The millionaires are the product of natural selection.” Pious plutocrats preached the **“Gospel of Wealth**,**”** which was similar to Social Darwinism but explained a person’s great riches as a gift from God.

|  |
| --- |
| **10.** According to **Social Darwinists**, why were millionaires wealthier than other Americans? |