

Guide to the Photos

POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORY

Between 1880 and 1900 the economic development of the nation overshadowed the politics of the period. Railroads moved steadily westward, opening new frontiers and creating great fortunes for those who built them. The people who built the railroads and those who founded the other great financial empires of the day felt that they were fulfilling their destinies. The growth and expansion of the country created not only a feeling of national strength but also a desire to be considered a world power. The sinking of the battleship Maine on February 15, 1898, in which 260 Americans were killed, provided the rationale to show America's might. By April, America was at war. U.S. Army forces saw military action in Cuba and Puerto Rico and the American Navy defeated the Spanish fleet in the Philippines.

1. William McKinley during his presidency. Born in Niles, Ohio in 1843, McKinley was Governor of Ohio from 1892 to 1896. He was elected President in 1896, re-elected in 1900 and assassinated in 1901.

- What type of image does President McKinley project in this photo?
- How might McKinley's desire for the country's expansion have influenced his decision to recommend war?
- Secretary of State John Hay referred to the Spanish-American War as a "splendid little war." What does this remark suggest about America's attitude toward the war? How might his remark have influenced public opinion?

2. Spanish-American War. This photo shows a light artillery battery in Puerto Rico in 1899. Although these soldiers faced danger from the enemy, the far greater danger was that of yellow fever and malaria. Some 4,500 soldiers died in the war but only about 400 died in combat.

- What weapons are shown in this photo?
- How were these weapons transported? How would modern weapons be moved?
- How did the tropical climate affect the soldiers?
- Why were the soldiers unprepared?

3. American fleet returning to New York Harbor after victory in the war. During the late 1800s, the American Navy underwent a dramatic modernization, moving from sail to steam and from wood to steel.

- What are these ships made of? How were they powered?

- How does this photo reflect the "new" American Navy? How do you think a sailor from a sailing ship would feel about the "new" navy?
- Why was the Navy so important in the Spanish-American War?

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Thomas Edison may well have been America's greatest inventor and he was certainly its most prominent. By 1900 he had developed the electric light, the phonograph and motion pictures. Edison's accomplishments are all the more remarkable because he was nearly deaf.

4. Thomas Edison, inventor of the electric light, the phonograph and the motion picture.

- How have recording devices changed?
- Before the electric light, how did people light their homes and factories?
- How did the electric light change America?
- Which of Edison's inventions do you think is the most important? Which one would adults in your life think is the most important?

5. Telephone poles. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 and by 1887 there were 146,000 miles of wire that served 150,000 subscribers.

- How were messages sent before the phone?
- How did the telephone influence business?
- How did the telephone contribute to the urbanization of America?

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

Railroads and the Westward Migration

In 1869 the Central Pacific Railroad, built eastward from California, and the Union Pacific Railroad, built westward from Omaha, Nebraska, were joined together at Promontory Point, Utah. For the first time in America's history it was possible to travel by train from one coast to the other. The link became a symbol of American growth and the railroads continued to grow and to spawn new territories. The railroads not only dramatically reduced travel time, they also fostered new technologies needed to build the required bridges and tunnels. By 1890 annual railroad revenues had reached a billion dollars—more than two-and-one-half times the revenue of the United States government.

6. Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads joined at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869.

- Why do you think this photo was taken?
- What different types of people appear in this photo?
- Why was the joining together of the two railroads such an important occasion?
- How did the joining of the two railroads symbolize the growth of the American nation?

7. Railroad construction on the Humboldt Plains in Nevada.

- In what region of the United States was this picture taken?
- Why was this regarded as the “easy” part of the construction of the transcontinental railway? What difficulty lies ahead?

8. Bridge construction in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. The railroads spurred the development of tunnel and bridge construction and used huge tracts of timber.

- Why was it necessary to build a bridge here?
- What country did these workers come from?
- Why were Chinese workers imported to build the railroad?
- How are the vehicles powered?

9. Wagon train. Although the railroad dominated transportation in the 1880s, there were still destinations that were unreachable except by wagon train.

- Why did families want to travel together?
- Why did families have to carefully choose what they were going to bring to their new homes?
- What hardships did this kind of travel pose?
- What soon made the wagon train obsolete?

Native Americans

The continued westward expansion of the railways increased the contacts and conflicts between whites and Indians. The encroachment of the railroads and the spread of cattle ranching and farming into former Indian territory resulted in increased confinement of Indians to reservations. Many tribes, formerly nomadic, were forced into new and unfamiliar lifestyles. The wanton destruction of buffalo herds further eroded the Indian way of life.

10. Geronimo. This Apache chief was among the last to wage a war against the Army. He surrendered in 1886.

- What image was the photographer trying to achieve by posing Geronimo as he did?
- Why did the Indians fight against the whites?
- Was there any justification to their wars?

11. Dakota Indians, 1882.

- What kinds of dwellings are shown here?
- What advantage was the tepee to the Indian?

- The Dakotas were a nomadic people. Why was reservation life particularly difficult for them?

12. Sioux Indians in South Dakota. This photo, taken in 1891, shows the Sioux after they left the reservation in search of freedom, after troops massacred 200 people at Wounded Knee. They were soon forced to return to the reservation and this was the last instance of major resistance to reservation life. There were some 4,000 people, 1,000 horses and 500 wagons in the march.

- In what season of the year was this picture taken?
- What means of transportation are shown?
- Why were buffalo so important to the Sioux?
- How did the Indians' lives change when they could no longer hunt buffalo?
- These Sioux were leaving their reservation to seek freedom. Why did they not feel free on the reservation?

13. Indian pueblo in Taos, New Mexico.

- Why were these homes built out of clay?
- What type of modern housing do these homes resemble?
- How do these homes indicate a difference in lifestyle from the Sioux in Photo 12?

Western Ranching

By the 1880s the image of the western cowboy was changing from that of an independent adventurer to the less romantic one of a wage earner on a large ranch. The need for water in an arid land forced most ranches to be built along streams or springs. Often the landowner owned only enough land to control the water rights and grazed his cattle on the nearby public lands. As the cattle industry grew, the cattlemen began to fence in the public land, claiming it for their own. In 1885, President Cleveland ordered the destruction of all the fences on public land and required ranchers to buy all the land they had been using.

14. Western town in 1893.

- What kind of stores can you find in this town?
- What is the most common form of transportation shown in the photo?
- Do you think that a trip to town was a frequent event for farm families?

15. Cowboys on the range. Before the railroad reached the cattle-raising states of the Southwest, cattle were driven across country to rail heads. 2,500 longhorns were driven 1,200 miles by a crew of about 12 cowboys.

- What was the cowboy's job?
- What kind of life did cowboys live on long cattle drives?
- Why were cattle driven from Texas to places like Abilene and Dodge City?

- Why was the horse so important to the cowboy?
- Why was branding cattle so important on the public range?
- Why were large open spaces critical to successful cattle ranching?

16. Stockyard in Chicago, Illinois.

- Why were these cattle brought together in a stockyard such as this?
- How did the railroad help make this scene possible?

Western Farming

The extension of the railroad into the West dramatically increased the number of acres under cultivation. Railroad agents lured new immigrants to the West with cheap land and promises of new wealth. Between 1870 and 1900 more acres were put into cultivation than in all previous years since the founding of America. Coupled with the extension of the railroads were new developments in the technology of equipment, such as farming-seeders, combines, mowers and rotary plows. With these new tools a single person could harvest over 100 acres, whereas prior to the new technology a farmer could harvest less than 10. Western farming also brought great hardship to the early pioneers. There was little lumber so sod houses were common. Water was in short supply and weather or insects could wipe out the entire year's crop in a matter of minutes. The Homestead Act offered free or cheap land in 160-acre blocks. With marginal amounts of arable soil and water it was soon found that the 160-acre blocks were too small and that 2,500 acres was more realistic. With each home on a large expanse, isolation became a common problem for western families.

17. Land rush. In 1889 the federal government opened up 2 million acres of land in Oklahoma to anyone who would claim the 160-acre sections. 20,000 "boomers" lined up on the borders to await the signal to begin their rush to make a claim.

- Was there any way in which more qualified people could have been found in order to reduce the number of failures?
- Although 160 acres seems like a lot of land, it was soon found that larger farms were needed. Why do you think farms had to be so large to be successful?

18. McCormick reaper.

- How did machines like this one change farming in the United States?
- How is harvesting different today? How would the reaper be powered?

19. Combined harvester in the Imperial Valley in California. A combine was used both to cut the wheat and to separate the grain from the husks. At harvest time

reapers and combines worked their way north, following the ripening crops and harvesting successive fields.

- What is the "horsepower" of this machine?
- Why did machines like this create a demand for larger and larger farms?

20. Ranch of Jose Mascural in Hollywood, California.

- What was the purpose of the windmill?
- How do the trees suggest that this is a new ranch?
- What jobs might children do on the ranch?
- How would you feel about living here?

21. Sod house.

- In what season of the year was this picture taken?
- Why would houses on the Plains often be built out of sod/earth?
- What do you think these people did for fun?

22. Prairie house in 1885 in the Dakotas.

- Why were homes so far apart on the Plains?
- Do you think that it would be lonelier living here or on a farm in the East?
- What was a woman's life like on the Plains?

Southern Life

Southern farms were increasingly operated on a crop lien system. Unable to finance the purchase of seed and equipment, the farmer borrowed money and granted the lender a lien on the coming crop. Frequently the lender was the supplier of the seed and equipment. Bound to the supplies by the need for the loan, the farmer was often overcharged for the supplies. To repay the loans, more and more acreage had to go into the cash crops and less to the subsistence farming that supplied the needs of the farm family. In the South the cash crop was often still cotton.

23. Weighing in.

- Why is the weighing in of the cotton so important for the farmer?
- Why was cotton such an important crop to the southern farmer?

24. Steamboats taking on cotton.

- Where did these steamboats run? Would steamboats be effective on the ocean?
- How was the cotton brought to the docks?

Black Americans

In the 1880s the majority of black Americans lived in the South and over 90% depended on farming or on life as a domestic servant. Their status was essentially unchanged from the days when they were slaves. Blacks faced ever-increasing discrimination through poll taxes and Jim Crow laws which codified the separation of the races.

25. Farm in Jacksonville, Florida in 1886.
- What is the construction of the building?
 - Based on the evidence in this photo, how much do you think the status of blacks had changed since the Civil War?
 - What barred blacks from achieving greater economic gains?

26. Howard University was chartered by Congress in 1867 and has become a leading black university in America.

- What discipline are these students studying?
- How are today's college classes different?
- Why was a black university so important to blacks in the 1880s and early 1900s?

Economic Development

Railroad construction was but one of the ways to fortune in the 1880s. The great natural resources of America, including timber, gold, silver, iron ore and oil, were discovered and exploited. The huge plants that were built to process steel and other natural resources often led to development of economic trusts and pools to provide the necessary capital. For example, by 1898 over 80% of oil was refined by Standard Oil. Although the economy generally prospered, overproduction and speculation caused a financial panic in 1873 and again in 1893.

27. Mining town.

- What evidence do we have that this is a mining town?
- What forms of transportation are shown?
- What evidence is there that this town was planned?
- What kinds of goods and services are offered in this town?
- What are the poles on the edge of the street?

28. Silver King Mine in Superior, Arizona in 1882.

- What are the wagons used for? What would be used today?
- What is powering the wagon?
- How did the mining industry impact on the American Indians?

29. Wagon train in Denver in the 1880s.

- Was this wagon train used to ship freight or people?
- What might be the destination of this wagon train?
- What cargo might the train be carrying?

30. Bank of Arizona in 1897.

- How is this bank different from today's bank?
- Why would a farmer or a miner need a loan?
- Why would a bank lend them money?

- How would a small bank help the community in which it did business?

31. Tree felling. Like mining, timbering required huge expanses of land. The Timber and Stone Act offered land in 160-acre lots at \$2.50 per acre in California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

- How were these trees harvested?
- Why was this dangerous work?
- How are the methods for harvesting trees different today?
- What are some of the uses of timber?
- Why did the railroads require huge amounts of lumber?

32. Field timber cutting.

- How was the wood brought out of the forest?
- How was the cut wood sent from the field timber mill?
- What impact did foresting have on the environment?
- Did the loggers replace the trees they cut down?
- The government offered huge expanses of land at cheap prices to encourage timber production. Was this a good policy in the short run? In the long run?

33. Ships. After the Civil War, American shipping declined as investors looked to the railroads for greater returns. Before the war, two-thirds of all American import and export tonnage was carried by American ships; by 1880 it had dropped to one-sixth. In 1892 more tonnage was carried under sail than under steam power.

- How does this picture show the future and the past of shipping?
- Why did motorized ships replace sailboats?
- How did the railroad affect the shipping industry?

34. San Francisco Harbor.

- Where is the ship on the far right going?
- Why were harbors so important to early American cities?
- Why have they become less important in the development of today's cities?
- How would the transcontinental railroad affect San Francisco's importance as a port?

35. Oil fields at Titusville, Pennsylvania.

- Why was petroleum becoming increasingly important in the 1880s?
- What are some of the products made from petroleum?
- What was kerosene used for? What replaced kerosene lamps as a source of home lighting?

36. New England cotton mill.

- Where was the cotton probably grown that was woven in this mill?
- Why was cotton shipped from the South and Southwest to New England to be manufactured into cloth?
- How did the rivers in New England lead to the development of mills like this one?
- What evidence of industrialization is shown in this photo?

37. New England cotton mill.

- How do we know that this picture was taken after 1880?
- Why were children employed to do routine tasks?
- Would new jobs in the factory be different from the jobs that people held in the past?
- Would people have to learn new skills to work in a factory like this one?
- How does this picture reflect the beginnings of industrialization in America?

38. Blacksmith.

- What was a blacksmith's job?
- Why was the blacksmith still important in the 1880s?
- How do you think this blacksmith would feel about taking a job in one of the new factories of the age?

39. Coxe's Army. Frustrated by a depression and unemployment, Jacob Coxe led his "army" on a march on Washington, D.C. to demand that the government issue new currency to reduce unemployment and create consumer demand. They marched from Ohio to Washington where they were dispersed by police.

- How do the different costumes suggest different types of people?
- Why do people march on Washington?
- What kind of media coverage would a march like this get today?
- Why is publicity important to a demonstration like this?

40. Pullman strike. In 1894 workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company struck for better wages. They were supported by other railway workers and train service was effectively paralyzed. President Cleveland ordered federal troops against the strikers and broke the strike.

- Do you think that the President should use troops against unions?
- Do you think that unions have the right to stop all railway traffic?
- How do you think these soldiers felt confronting neighbors who were among the strikers?
- How do you think the troops were able to break the strike?

Urbanization

Although the dramatic growth of cities would await the twentieth century, cities began to play an increasing role in American life during the 1880s. Cities expanded onto vacant land within their boundaries and, increasingly, annexed the smaller towns that had grown up on their borders. Trolleys and cable cars became fixtures in San Francisco and Chicago in the 1880s. Between 1890 and 1902, trolley car track mileage increased from 1,300 miles to 22,000 miles. The advent of public transportation further extended the boundaries of the city. By the 1890s cities had also begun to improve sewage and water systems to make urban living healthier.

41. Bridge under construction.

- How did people travel over water before large bridges were constructed?
- How did the building of huge bridges help build cities?
- Do you think that these men were aware of the impact that their work would create?
- How might this picture be different today?

42. St. Louis, Missouri.

- Do you think the people in this photo were aware it was being taken?
- In what season of the year was this picture taken?
- What products were probably being sold from the cart on the street?
- What means of communication are shown?

43. Chicago Stock Exchange, designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan in 1894. Chicago pioneered the development of the skyscraper in the 1880s in part through the architectural leadership of Sullivan. It was in Chicago that the first steel frame skyscraper was built.

- Was this likely to have been a typical building in the 1800s?
- How did the elevator contribute to the development of the skyscraper?
- Louis Sullivan, who designed this building, was one of the leading architects of his day. What makes this building handsome?

44. New York street scene.

- What means of transportation is shown in this photo?
- What is being sold from the carts?
- How are the streets lit?
- How did people dry their clothes?

45. San Francisco street scene.

- What kinds of transportation are shown in this photo?
- What types of stores are shown?

46. Street scene. Although trolleys were common, the horse-drawn carriage was still the most popular form of transportation. In 1880 there were 150,000 horses in New York City.

- What form of public transportation is shown in this picture?
- How were the fares collected?
- Where was the best seat on a sunny day?
- Where was the best seat on a rainy day?
- Why were billboards such an important means of advertising?

47. Monument under construction. The Statue of Liberty was designed by the sculptor Frederic Bartholdi and was given by the people of France to the U.S. The 225-ton statue was shipped in 215 crates and assembly was completed in October 1886.

- What monument is being constructed?
- The monument was built in France and erected in the U.S. How was it put together?
- What has the statue come to symbolize?

Women's Suffrage

In the late 1800s more and more of the nation's production moved away from the family as men left the home to work. As production moved out of the home, the role of women became increasingly dedicated to raising children and maintaining a home. Providing for the education, religion and morality of the family became the ideal. Outside work was regarded as a rough-and-tumble arena suited only for men.

48. Woman and child.

- Why were women considered so important in the home?
- How does this picture show the concept of a woman's role in the 1880s? What role was this woman supposed to assume?
- How have women's roles changed?

49. Suffragettes.

- What role have these women assumed?
- Did they see a different role for themselves than others of their generation?
- Why was politics regarded as appropriate only for men?
- What does this attitude suggest about peoples' perceptions of politics in the 1880s?

Everyday Life

The average American benefited between 1860 and 1900 as per capita income rose 150%. Mass-produced tin cans brought new foods to the consumer. The proliferation of the sewing machine led to the rise of mass-produced clothes. With the mass production of clothes came the

big department stores such as Macy's, Wanamakers, Jordan Marsh and Marshall Field.

50. Family portrait.

- Why was this photo taken? Have you ever been part of such an event?
- What had these people been doing before the photo was taken?
- How many generations are represented here?
- Which person would you say is the "head" of this family?
- What role do you think the black woman played? Do you think that she was important to the family?

51. Family portrait.

- How many generations are represented here?
- Is this more formal than Photo 50? Why?
- How many children are in the photo? Are families likely to be this large today?
- How do you think the younger boy feels about his outfit?

52. Parlor in 1894. The 1880s provided many people with a measure of affluence and many found elaborate ways to flaunt their wealth.

- Do you think that most people who lived in the 1890s lived in a house or apartment like this? Does this woman seem wealthy?
- How would you describe this parlor?
- What was used to light the apartment?

53. Store interior.

- What kind of store is this?
- This store is part of a supermarket chain. Can you tell which one?
- How is it different from today's grocery stores?

54. Bargain counter at Sigel Cooper's store in 1897.

- Are bargain counters today much like the one shown here?
- What might be on sale to attract this crowd?
- What fashion item has declined in popularity since 1897? Why has the hat's popularity declined?

55. Afternoon outing. Coach and party on Broadway, New York City.

- Why were so many people seated on the outside of the coach?
- What kind of lighting was on the carriage? On the Casino?
- In what season was this picture taken? Why do you think so?
- Do you think that the clothes would be comfortable in the summer?
- What was taking place at the casino?

56. Bicycle club, 1883. Bicycling was a popular and fashionable activity in the 1880s.

- Why do you think this photo was taken?
- How do you think these young men felt about their bicycles?
- How are these bicycles different from today's?

57. Baseball game.

- How has baseball changed? What has stayed more or less the same?
- Why has baseball been such a popular pastime in America?
- How did a shorter work week affect peoples' desire to see spectator sports?

58. Picnic.

- How is this scene much like a scene at a picnic today?
- How would you describe the dress of the picnickers?
- Why are there so few men in this picture?

59. Fishing.

- Why might children in the 1880s have spent more time outside than children today?
- What other forms of recreation did young boys have in the 1880s?
- What forms of recreation didn't they have that kids have today?

60. Beach scene at Asbury Park, New Jersey.

- How have fashions changed?
- Do these clothes look particularly comfortable for a summer's stroll?
- How would this scene be different today?
- How do the women's clothes reflect a different attitude toward women?

61. Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago, Illinois in 1893.

- Why do countries have World's Fairs?
- How do they reflect a nation's sense of pride?
- Why would a World's Fair have been particularly important to Americans in the 1880s?

who wrote unsentimental prose about the Midwest became a symbol for the generation—Mark Twain. Twain's characters still live today and he is one of the most popular writers of all time.

62. Mark Twain.

- Based on this photo, how would you describe the character of Mark Twain?
- Why are the characters that Mark Twain created so enduring?
- Why does a novel sometimes give a better feel for history than a history book?
- Why is the novelist “freer” to depict a period?
- Which is likely to be more accurate?

63. Opera.

- How would you describe the sets of this opera?
- Why would big, popular operas appeal to the people of the 1890s?
- How did the growth of cities contribute to the development of the arts?

64. James McNeil Whistler.

- What is the purpose of the room shown in this photo?
- Why was an influential American artist important to a growing nation?
- Whistler called his most famous work *Arrangement in Gray and Black Number 1*. (Most of us know it as *Whistler's Mother*.) How does this show that he thought the form of the painting was more important than its subject?

ART AND POPULAR CULTURE

The most popular reading matter in the 1880s, particularly among youths, was the dime novel. Early examples were mostly adventure stories about the Wild West, but soon detective stories and even science fiction became popular. Horatio Alger created stories of young men making their way in the world by using the virtues of honesty, thrift and courage. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*, written in 1880, sold over 2 million copies many years before becoming a popular movie. An American writer