

History 340
Critical Periods in American History the 1890s
Roger Williams University
CAS 228
M, W, F, 12:00 - 12:50
Fall Semester, 2007

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Week of September 24, 2007

Read, in *Schlereth*:

Chapter 2: *Working*, from "Office Work and Service Jobs" to end. 67 - 85

Machines revolutionized work outside of factories, as well. In the case of office work, the typewriter and telephone made the modern office possible, and offered new opportunities for women in the job market. In the home, a revolution was around the corner, but not quite there as yet. New mechanical devices (like the carpet sweeper) were making housework easier, but the electrification of housework was yet to come. This had a far different effect on opportunities for women, as appliances made it easier for persons to do their own work.

We've seen some of this from the point of view of those working as we've read *Schlereth*. Here, we'll look at the big picture, and how the modern corporation, born during this period, concentrated economic power in the hands of the new industrialist class. We'll look at the way companies on a new scale "rationalized" entire industries: Steel and Oil, to name just two. We'll also think a little about the emerging field of "scientific" management, and how the new science of business changed the relationship of employee to employer.

For Wednesday, September 26

Read, in *Chambers*,

Chapter 3, *The Corporate Revolution* pp. 54 - 79

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For Friday, September 28

Read, in *Fink*,

7.1 John W. Holway, a Pinkerton Guard, Views the Battle of Homestead, 1992 189 - 193

7.2 Eugene V. Debs Denounces the Role of the Corporation and the Courts in the Pullman Strike, 1895 193 - 194

The Depression of the 1890s (Painter) 201 - 208

Also, *On the Internet*.

- Download The Homestead Strike at Practical History
 - Visit the Roadside Marker Site for the Homestead Strike, making sure you browse the site thoroughly. All the photographs can be enlarged, and the links take one to other significant sources of information.
 - The University of Pittsburg site: After the Battle of Homestead: Counting the Dead and Criminalizing the Strikers, where you'll find interesting facsimile primary documents of the aftermath. Note that these are typed, evidence of the technological change we looked at on Monday.
 - The Chicago Public Library's Site: 1894: The Pullman Strike where you'll want to browse the primary sources and read the first hand accounts. Note that the pictures all enlarge.
 - Letters from the Strikers to the Governor of Illinois, and his Responses.
- (Links for all these are on the web version of this week's syllabus).

Changes on this scale could not occur without serious disruptions, among them economic cycles of boom and bust and ongoing conflicts between management and labor, which found itself at considerable disadvantage in this new industrial reality. We'll look at two instances of labor conflicts, the Homestead Strike and the Pullman Strike, each of which turned remarkably violent, each of which saw government intervening on the side of the corporation, and each of which raised serious questions about the survival of equalitarian principles in this new industrial age.

NOTE: The strikes at Homestead, Pennsylvania and Pullman, Illinois, were made particularly vivid by the rapidly improving photographic techniques which made a real "photo-journalism" possible. As you consider what you read, think about how pictures of militia encampments in the middle of towns would make your particular character react. You'll see some of these at linked websites above

Danielle Ray had a great idea (my humble opinion). Why not have your alter-egos encounter each other and discuss some of these materials? I can't think of a single good reason why not, and lots of good reasons why. So I'm proposing that we organize into groups of 4 or so for this purpose. I'm not particularly concerned how we get organized. I think I'll leave that up to you, unless you need a matchmaker to operate on this. There are tools available for electronic meetings as well as meetings in the flesh, and you can make this as "real" as you wish...i.e., find reasons for your characters to meet or just discuss the different reactions of your characters as yourselves. Think about it, and

Thanks, Danielle.