

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 October 8, 2007

Hey! Monday Happens on Tuesday!! How about that??? I get two sessions with you delightful people back-to back.

For *Tuesday, October 9* (Monday's Schedule applies)

Read, in *Chambers*,

Chapter 4: A Changing Society and Culture pp. 80 - 124

We have already become acquainted with a number of the changes which this chapter considers, but here the emphasis will be on the psychological effects of these changes, and perhaps on the sociology of change, as well. We will also begin to note that this new society is losing its Victorian flavor and moral attitudes are changing. We'll consider how these changes arise out of the economic and geographic changes we're noticing. We will touch on racism, but we'll return to look at blacks in the 1890s in much greater detail later.

They started selling watches. Then Richard Sears and Alva Curtis Roebuck started a revolution -- a "wish book" that made life on the farm a little easier and put consumer goods within reach of every American. A story of entrepreneurial triumph as well as an affectionate portrait of America from the 1890s through the 1920s.

The last part of Chambers' chapter returns to the question of the new consumer culture which we looked at on Friday last. Either this class session or probably Wednesday, I'll show another PBS video: *Mr. Sears' Catalog*. The italicized paragraph above is taken from promotional material for the video. The primary focus of it is the period from 1893 to 1906 and it should cement our understanding of the new consumer culture very well. What will determine whether or not I show the video will depend on your response to the little torture exercise I outline below.

Internet Activity

I've been showing you a *lot* of material on the 1890s which I've found by prowling around the Internet. I'm beginning to think that I should get you out there prowling, too. So here's a little exercise I've devised for you.

- Chambers' Chapter 4 is divided into Subheadings...all his chapters are. In some cases the subheading is specific enough to search using one or the other of the two methods I'm suggesting below. In some instances, there are names of organizations, individuals, or movements which could be searched profitably. **So...**
 1. Choose a subheading, name, movement, or individual of personal interest to you,
 2. Search it using either [Clusty](#) or [Google Advanced](#), and, from the search results, choose one response you find interesting and maybe useful to another student, and add it to the ***Chambers Chapter 4 Journal*** I've added to blackboard. I'll show how to do this in class on Friday.
 3. Your Journal entry must be *unique*...so check who may have posted something earlier.
- Hint You'll find this most manageable by choosing good *limiters*. For example, make sure you include 1890s. If you find you need to limit further, (For example, you get too many responses which are unrelated to the United States), you can use *United States* as a limiter.

For ***Wednesday, October 10*** (See above). No new readings. We'll either be working on Chamers or watching Sears, depending.

For ***Friday, October 12***

Two World's Fairs

Read, in Schlereth,

Prologue, Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, 1876, pp. 1-6

Interlogue, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893 pp. 169-175.

We'll work at understanding what the cultural importance of expositions of this kind was. We'll also try to predict why Schlereth *invents* the word, "interlogue" for this exposition in 1893. You may discover some interesting connections between the Chicago World's Fair and the Pullman Strike if you look carefully. Shall I make a contest out of this? Perhaps...let me think about it.

From the Internet:

The Free Library of Philadelphia has created nice resource base on the [**Centennial Exposition of 1876**](#). Illinois Institute of Technology has done the same thing for the [**Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893**](#). Visit both, browse around a little, and come prepared to share what you've found. I'd be delighted if you located 5 "interesting things" from each fair. I'll provide a spot to put these on blackboard. The Columbian Exposition Website is a bit more difficult to use because it uses "frames" technology (which means that the address of the page doesn't change as you move around the website). I'll demonstrate a technique for getting around that little problem in class.