CHAPTER 17

In the Wake of War

ANTICIPATION/REACTION

Directions: Before you begin reading this chapter, in the column entitled “Anticipation” place a check mark beside any of the following seven statements with which you now agree. When you have completed your study of this chapter, come back to this section and in the column entitled “Reaction” place a check mark beside any of the statements with which you then agree. Note any variation in the placement of check marks from Anticipation to Reaction and explain why you changed your mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipation</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. _____ The horrific violence of the Civil War produced a postwar mood of sober reflection on the priority of life, family, and spiritual values</td>
<td>1. _____</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. _____ In the late nineteenth century, unlike the late twentieth century, the U.S. national government was dominated by Congress, not by the presidency.</td>
<td>2. _____</td>
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<td>3. _____ Freedmen (former slaves) lost their right to vote in southern states as soon as Union’s occupying troops withdrew and southern Democrats regained control of former Confederate state governments.</td>
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<td>4. _____ Booker T. Washington emerged as the first spokesman for resistance against disenfranchisement, discrimination, segregation, and second-class citizenship for African Americans.</td>
<td>4. _____</td>
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<td>5. _____ The labor needed to build the western transcontinental railroad to California was largely provided by immigrant workers from Mexico.</td>
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<td>6. _____ Most of the land issued under the Homestead Act was acquired by individual or family farmers in 160-acre lots.</td>
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<td>7. _____ Most of the wealth extracted from the western mining frontier after the Civil War was taken by the prospectors who arrived first with their picks and shovels.</td>
<td>7. _____</td>
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Chapter 17 you should be able to:

1. Compare and contrast the major political parties in the 1870s and 1880s
2. Explain the significance of Booker T. Washington’s “Atlanta Compromise.”

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3. Identify the federal government’s policies toward the Plains Indians in the late nineteenth century, and explain the relative success and failure of each.
4. Compare and contrast the key features of the mining, farming, and cattle frontiers in the late nineteenth century, and identify the significance of the railroads to each.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

New Problems, New Solutions

The English author James Bryce, in *The American Commonwealth*, claimed that the politicians neglected to solve the problems produced by rapid industrialization.

Congress Ascendant

In the post-Reconstruction era, many Americans were strongly materialistic and tolerated waste and corruption so long as no one interfered with their personal pursuit of profit. Congress dominated the government between the administrations of Andrew Johnson and Theodore Roosevelt but was held in overall low esteem. The Senate was perceived as a “rich man’s club,” whereas the House of Representatives gained notoriety for its disorder and inefficiency. Partisan divisions were fundamentally sectional, stemming from the outcome of the Civil War. The parties seldom took clearly opposing positions on issues and were often balanced in Congress, but the Republicans won all but two presidential elections between 1860 and 1908. Businessmen, African Americans, the wealthy, and New England usually favored Republicans, while immigrants, Catholics, ethnic minorities, and the South usually voted for Democrats. Grover Cleveland was the only Democrat to occupy the White House between the election of James Buchanan (1856) and Woodrow Wilson (1912), but most presidential contests were extremely close.

The Political Aftermath of War

The political history of the late nineteenth century bore little relationship to the meaningful issues of the day. Four issues dominated the post-Reconstruction era: “the bloody shirt,” the tariff, currency reform, and civil service reform. By “waving the bloody shirt,” Republican politicians blamed Democrats for the Civil War and the Lincoln assassination, and supported the Grand Army of the Republic’s demand for pensions for Union veterans. Both parties, manufacturers, workers, and farmers all supported protective tariffs. Business and political leaders argued that protective tariffs fostered the growth of industry and created jobs. Tariff debates usually ignored the public interest in deference to special interests, and every new tariff bill turned into an occasion for logrolling, lobbying, and politicking.

Currency issues revolved around greenbacks, the paper money issued by the Union government during the Civil War. Steps were taken to increase or decrease the amount of money in circulation. Greenbackers supported inflation in an age of deflation, but the major parties refused to confront each other over the issue until the end of the century, and the net economic effect was negligible. Civil service reform was proposed as government grew larger and more complex. Corruption, waste, and venality flourished and created a federal government that that was
monumentally inefficient. But politicians of both parties, arguing that patronage was the life-
blood of politics, paid only lip service to reform.

**Blacks After Reconstruction**

Minorities were treated with contempt in the postwar decades. As Reconstruction ended, President Rutherford Hayes told African Americans to trust southern whites, a policy Frederick Douglass termed “sickly conciliation.” For a while, African Americans, though treated to northern indifference and southern fraud, intimidation, and violence, were not totally disenfranchised in the postwar South. But by 1900 few African Americans were permitted to vote, a deprivation resulting from poll taxes and literacy tests.

Almost every Supreme Court decision after 1877 that affected African Americans somehow nullified or curtailed their rights. In 1883, the Supreme Court struck down the Civil Rights Act of 1875 on grounds that the Fourteenth Amendment protected African Americans from discrimination by the states, but not by individuals. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Court affirmed a policy that would stand for another 58 years: Segregation was legal so long as separate facilities were of “equal quality.” Most northerners supported the government and the courts that allowed segregation to be imposed throughout the South. This halted the progress in public education for African Americans the Reconstruction governments had made. The African American schools that survived taught a docile, essentially subservient philosophy, preparing their students to accept second-class citizenship.

**Booker T. Washington: A “Reasonable” Champion for Blacks**

Most late-nineteenth-century whites were convinced that African Americans were racially inferior and consigned them complacently to poverty, ignorance, and oblivion. African Americans reacted to this situation in a variety of ways, making a choice between militancy and black separatism on one hand, and self-help and accommodation on the other.

In his 1895 “Atlanta Compromise” speech, Washington urged whites to assist African American “self-help” endeavors. He minimized the importance of civil and political rights for African Americans and advised them to accept segregation and second-class citizenship while concentrating on learning useful skills. After African Americans improved themselves accordingly, Washington predicted, they would be accepted as equals by whites. Though he chose accommodation and not confrontation, Washington worked against restrictive measures and organized African American voters in the North.

**White Violence and Vengeance**

By the time of the Atlanta Compromise, Washington’s call for “sagacious silence,” could hardly be heard over the cries of African American victims of white violence. From 1890 to 1910, nearly a hundred African Americans were lynched annually; others were executed after biased and nominally legal trials. Some were brutally mutilated before being put to death.
White fears were excited by rumors of African American males as rapists and predators; white women hence demanded that white men do their duty to protect their womenfolk. Violence succeeded in disenfranchising many southern African American men, a situation which created opportunities for African American women to fill the familial and community leadership void.

**The West After the Civil War**

Many foreign-born residents coming from Mexico, China, and Europe immigrated to the West after the Civil War. Besides its great open spaces, the West contained several bustling cities, the most significant being San Francisco. The western economy was based on agriculture, mining, commercial ventures, and the early stages of industrialization. California was particularly affected by the steady flow of Chinese laborers, most of whom came to the United States under the Burlingame Treaty of 1868. The Chinese provided much of the labor needed to build the western link of the transcontinental railroad, but, after 1880, as the need for their labor declined and resentment against them increased, Congress passed legislation prohibiting any further Chinese immigration.

**The Plains Indians**

For 250 years Indians had been driven back steadily by the whites, but they still occupied roughly half of the United States in 1860. The Plains tribes lived by hunting the buffalo, millions of which ranged over the Plains. From the whites, the Indians obtained the horse, the cavalry sword, the rifle, liquor, and diseases. Over time, the buffalo herds diminished and warfare increased. The United States government treated each tribe as a separate sovereign nation in the policy of “concentration,” initiated in the 1851 tribal council called at Horse Creek near Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Using this strategy of divide and conquer, each Indian tribe was persuaded to accept limits to its hunting grounds.

**Indian Wars**

Warfare erupted on the Plains when federal troops were pulled from the West to fight against the Confederacy. In 1864, a party of Colorado militia led by Colonel J. M. Chivington came upon an unsuspecting Cheyenne community at Sand Creek and killed an estimated 450 people. General Nelson A. Miles termed this Chivington Massacre the “foulest and most unjustifiable crime in the annals of America.” In turn, the Indians killed dozens of isolated white families. In 1866, the Oglala Sioux under Red Cloud killed Captain W. J. Fetterman’s entire band of 82 soldiers, who were constructing the Bozeman Trail through Sioux hunting grounds in Montana. In 1867, the government changed strategy and announced that the Plains Indians would be confined to two small reservations, one in the Black Hills of South Dakota and the other in Oklahoma. This new “small reservation” policy was weakened by the ferocity of the Indians’ guerilla warfare and by the government’s maladministration of Indian affairs. Indian Bureau agents often cheated the Indians.

When gold was discovered in the Black Hills, miners entered reservation lands, and the Sioux again went on the warpath. Led by Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Rain-in-the-Face, 2,500 Sioux
killed the entire 264-man force led by General George Custer at the Little Bighorn River in Montana. While the battle heartened the Indians, when they ran short of rations that autumn they returned to the reservation.

**The Destruction of Tribal Life**

The building of the transcontinental railroads and the slaughter of the buffalo signaled the destruction of tribal life on the Plains. By the 1880s the buffalo neared extinction, and tribes in the mountains and deserts beyond the Plains gave up their fight. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 divided tribal lands into individual allotments in a vain attempt by Congress to convert the Indians into small agricultural capitalists. The Dawes Act had disastrous consequences in the long run, and in 1934 the government resumed the previous policy of encouraging tribal ownership and recognizing distinct Indian cultures.

**The Lure of Gold and Silver in the West**

The natural resources of the West were exploited thoughtlessly and ruthlessly. Gold and silver discoveries spurred the growth of mining towns, which sprang up overnight. Claims were staked out along every stream and gully. Soon the boom collapsed, as the prospectors encountered mainly backbreaking labor and disappointment. Miners adopted the get-rich-quick philosophy and gave no thought to conserving resources for future generations.

Law enforcement was a constant problem, as such mining towns as Virginia City, Nevada, and Deadwood, South Dakota, attracted rascals, pickpockets, and gamblers from throughout the world. Virginia City was built on the riches of the Comstock Lode, and Deadwood was born in the Black Hills strike.

Homestake Mining ultimately controlled the mines about Deadwood, and Anaconda Mining dominated the area about Butte, Montana. Thus, although independent and enterprising prospectors made the key discoveries, stockholders of large mining corporations made off with most of the wealth. These gold and silver rushes had valuable results: They provided the nation with immense wealth, they stirred increased interest and permanent settlement in the West, and they speeded its political organization.

**Big Business and the Land Bonanza**

The 160 acres of land permitted under the Homestead Act of 1862 was insufficient for raising livestock or commercial agriculture west of the Mississippi. Moreover, many potential homesteaders could not raise the $1,000 needed to finance a farm, even on free land. The Timber Culture Act of 1873, helpful to farmers in Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, allowed individuals to claim an additional 160 acres of land if they agreed to plant a quarter of it in trees within 10 years. The Timber and Stone Act of 1878 allowed anyone, including lumber companies, to acquire a quarter section of forestland for $2.50 per acre.

Frontier farmers grappled with many problems as they pushed across the Plains with their families. Despite the rich soil, the farmers faced periodic drought, floods, grasshopper plagues,
blizzards, and fires. Only the most hardy could endure. At the same time, the flatness of the land, rail connections with the East, and the availability of farm machinery encouraged the growth of corporate “bonanza” farms. These farms could buy wholesale and obtain concessions from railroads and processors. Their harvesting of cereal crops on the Plains made that region the new breadbasket of America.

Western Railroad Building

Private investors would not hazard the huge sums need to lay tracks across hundred of miles of western land when traffic over the road could not possibly produce profits for many years. Therefore, government subsidized the laying of railroads across the West through loans and land grants to states and to companies building intersectional trunk lines. Most of the grants went to four transcontinental railroads: Union Pacific-Central Pacific from Omaha to Sacramento; the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe from Kansas City to San Francisco; the Southern Pacific from San Francisco to New Orleans; and the Northern Pacific, joining Duluth with Portland, Oregon.

Land-grant railroads encouraged the growth of the West by advertising their property widely, by providing cheap transportation for settlers and the army, and by providing efficient shipping services for farmers. The Pacific Railway Act of 1862 established the pattern for land grants, with builders of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific allocated five square miles of public land on each side of the railway for each mile of track laid. In competing for the subsidies, the two companies built redundant miles of inferior-grade track. The one transcontinental railroad built without federal land grants was James J. Hill’s high-quality Great Northern, connecting St. Paul with the Pacific.

The Cattle Kingdom

For 20 years after the Civil War, cattlemen and sheep raisers made millions of dollars grazing their herds on public lands on the Plains. The rise in demand for food in America’s growing industrial cities and the expansion of the railroad network made these herds of cattle increasingly profitable.

In 1866, a number of Texans drove large herds northward toward Sedalia, Missouri, railhead of the Missouri Pacific, but the wooded terrain and the presence of Indian reservations hampered the route. The next year drovers led herds north by a more westerly route along the Chisholm Trail to Abilene, Kansas. At the same time, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving drove 2,000 head in a great arc west to New Mexico Territory and into Colorado.

Open-Range Ranching

Cattlemen found that the hardy Texas stock could flourish on the prairie grasses of the Great Plains. The grasses offered cattlemen a bonanza almost as valuable as the gold mines; they profited by fattening their cattle on the public’s land. Investors from Europe and the East began to pour funds into the cattle business. Open-range ranching required ownership of only a few acres along some watercourse. In this semi-arid region, control of water enabled a rancher to dominate the surrounding area. Outfits such as the Nebraska Land and Cattle Company and the
Union Cattle Company of Wyoming soon dominated the business, much as large companies had consolidated mining holdings.

Ranchers poached on the public domain because under federal law there was no reasonable way for them to obtain possession of the large areas of grassland necessary to raise cattle on the Plains.

**Barbed-Wire Warfare**

Congress’ refusal to change the land laws resulted in fraud and overcrowding. The Desert Land Act of 1877 allowed anyone to obtain 640 acres in the arid states for $1.25 an acre provided that the owner irrigated part of it within three years. Over 2.6 million acres were taken up under this law, but in most cases no sincere effort was made to irrigate the land.

Ranchers formed cattlemen’s associations to halt thievery and protect their water rights. To keep other ranchers’ cattle from those sections of the public domain they considered their own, the associations fenced huge areas. Barbed wire, invented in 1874 by Joseph F. Glidden of Illinois, thereby contributed to the disappearance of the open range. The open-range cattle kingdom was further undermined by overproduction, overgrazing, and by blizzards that preceded and followed the summer drought of 1886. Cattle ranching, like mining, thereafter became less of an individual enterprise and more of a big business.

**PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS**

*Define the following:*

Gilded Age ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

“waving the bloody shirt” _____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

greenbacks __________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

patronage ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

poll tax ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
literacy test

land grant

severalty

bonanza farm

Describe the following:

Grand Army of the Republic

concentration policy

Custer’s Last Stand

Plessy v. Ferguson

Atlanta Compromise

Civil Rights Cases

Chisholm Trail
<table>
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<th>Event/Act</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burlingame Treaty</td>
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<td>Sand Creek Massacre</td>
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<td>Black Hills</td>
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<td>Pacific Railway Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comstock Lode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timber Culture Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timber and Stone Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desert Land Act</td>
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*Identify the following:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph G. McCoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph F. Glidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.J. Fetterman/J.M. Chivington</td>
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SELF-TEST

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. In the post-Reconstruction period, which of the following was the most admired?
   A. natural resource conservation
   B. material gain
   C. personal sacrifice for the common good
   D. efficient and honest government

2. In the Gilded Age, the fundamental division between Democrats and Republicans was
   A. ethnic.
   B. emotional.
   C. religious.
   D. sectional.

3. In the 1870s and 1880s national elections,
   A. people voted fairly evenly between Democrats and Republicans.
   B. most people voted Republican.
   C. most people voted Democratic.
   D. a remarkable number of people voted for third parties.

4. Which one of the following would LEAST likely vote for a Democratic candidate in a late-
nineteenth-century presidential election?
   A. white southerner
   B. Catholic
   C. African American
   D. immigrant

5. Which one of the following was NOT one of the four issues that obsessed politicians in the
   late nineteenth century?
   A. civil service reform
   B. tariff rates
   C. racial policies
   D. aid to Civil War veterans

6. In the late nineteenth century, high protective tariffs were favored by
   A. farmers.
   B. manufacturers.
   C. wage workers.
   D. all of the above.

7. Of the following, those LEAST likely to support some kind of currency inflation in the late
   nineteenth century were
   A. farmers.
   B. greenbackers.
   C. bondholders.
   D. silver miners.
8. In the Civil Rights Cases, the Supreme Court
   A. upheld its decision in Plessy v. Ferguson.
   B. outlawed segregation in public accommodations.
   C. ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment protects a person’s civil rights against invasion by the states, not by individuals.
   D. declared that the Constitution is “color blind.”

9. In the late nineteenth century, the
   A. percentage of black males who voted more than doubled.
   B. living standard of the average southern black more than doubled.
   C. number of black children who attended integrated public schools more than doubled.
   D. number of black men lynched by racist mobs more than doubled each year.

10. In the “Atlanta Compromise,” Booker T. Washington
    A. demanded that Congress enact a Force Act requiring that blacks be allowed to vote in the South.
    B. called for the desegregation of public accommodations.
    C. urged blacks to learn practical skills rather than demand their political rights.
    D. insisted that blacks must marshal all their efforts to oppose the Supreme Court’s “separate but equal” doctrine.

11. Which one of the following had the LEAST effect on disenfranchising southern blacks in the late nineteenth century?
    A. violence and violent rhetoric aimed at blacks
    B. literacy tests
    C. poll taxes
    D. the Supreme Court’s ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson

12. The 1868 Burlingame Treaty
    A. encouraged the immigration of Chinese laborers to work on railroad construction.
    B. prohibited the immigration of any Chinese immigrants for 10 years.
    C. denied the right to vote to Chinese immigrants.
    D. banned Chinese immigrants from the California gold fields.

13. The most important thing the whites gave the Plains Indians was
    A. the horse.
    B. the rifle.
    C. reservation land.
    D. farming skills.

14. The government Indian policy called “concentration” was designed to do all the following EXCEPT
    A. provide land allotments and citizenship to individual Indians.
    B. reduce intertribal warfare.
    C. enable the government to negotiate separate treaties with each tribe.
    D. implement a strategy of divide and conquer against the Indians.
15. The most decisive blow to the survival of the Plains Indians’ culture came from
   A. slaughter of the buffalo.
   B. blizzards and droughts.
   C. neglect of their farms.
   D. success of the U.S. Army.

16. Which of the following pairings is a mismatch?
   A. J. M. Chivington—Sand Creek Massacre
   B. George A. Custer—Little Bighorn River
   C. Nelson A. Miles—“The only good Indians I ever saw were dead.”
   D. W. J Fetterman—Chief Red Cloud

17. The chief beneficiaries of the wealth in the western mining fields were
   A. stockholders of mining corporations.
   B. boom town merchants.
   C. Chinese laundries.
   D. the earliest prospectors.

18. The gold rushes had all these results EXCEPT
   A. they helped pay for the Civil War and postwar economic development.
   B. they brought permanent settlement to the West.
   C. they introduced the concept of environmental preservation to the West.
   D. they speeded the political organization of the West.

19. “Bonanza” farms usually cultivated
   1. vegetables.
   2. potatoes.
   3. cotton.
   4. wheat.

20. The cattle boom was ended by a combination of all of these EXCEPT
   A. overproduction.
   B. rising costs.
   C. open-range grazing.
   D. bad weather.

**Essay Questions**

1. Identify four key political issues of the Gilded Age and explain the failure of political leaders to respond to the challenges these issues presented.

2. Explain how and why the Plains Indians were subdued and confined to reservations.

3. Explain how the *Civil Rights Cases* of 1883 and the Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* limited the civil rights and social equality of African Americans in the United States. Elaborate on the African Americans’ response to these decisions.

4. Identify the similarities and differences of life in the mining, farming, and cattle frontiers.
5. Explain the connection between government policies and construction of the transcontinental railroads in the late nineteenth century.

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE

Circle the item in each of the following sets of items which is LEAST related to the other three.

1. massacre, bison, army, Fargo
2. Comstock, Atchison, Deadwood, Homestake
3. discrimination, separatism, citizenship, repression
4. scalping, tepees, reservation, warriors
5. miners, drovers, mavericks, fencing
6. claims, irrigation, prospectors, assay
7. semi-arid, desert, humid, drought
8. grasshoppers, blizzards, fire, harvest
9. Comanche, Cherokee, Crow, Cheyenne