

Outline of Major Essay Topics from APUSH Exams, 2000-2008

US History: 1878-1919

I. Agriculture

A. Homestead Act (1862)

1. 160 acres of free land to any family willing to settle on it for at least five years
2. Supplemented with offers from railroads and land speculators
3. Best lands often ended up in hands of railroad companies and speculators
4. Brought many settlers (sodbusters) to Great Plains
5. Many returned East because of hardships (“In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted”) like extreme weather (winters of 1885-1887), plagues of grasshoppers, social isolation, and realization that 160 acres not enough to farm on Great Plains
6. Few successful farmers used dry farming and deep plowing techniques, planted hardy strains of Russian wheat (to withstand extreme weather), and created dams and irrigation systems (reshaped physical environment)

B. Trends (to 1900)

1. Overproduction (due in part to farm machinery, irrigation, and chemical fertilizers) and falling prices (wheat, cotton, corn)
2. Boom and bust economic cycles (Panic of 1873, Panic of 1893)
3. Increase in government land grants to railroads encouraged railroad expansion, including transcontinental railroads, which led to westward settlement, emerging national markets linking regions, ease of transporting agricultural products to Eastern markets, and less isolation of farmers
4. Agricultural surpluses fueled urbanization and industrial expansion
5. From 1865 to 1900, number of U.S. farms doubled, but farmers as a percentage of working population decreased from 60% to 37%
6. Farming becoming increasingly commercialized (farmers dependent upon large and expensive machines like steam engines, seeders, and reaper threshers) and specialized (focus on single cash crop for sale on national and international market)
7. Small-scale farmers could not compete and often driven out of business

8. Falling prices led to need to sell more (which only led to even lower prices), increased foreclosures, and eventually sharecropping and tenancy

9. If farmers made profit, usually used to pay high rates for short haul lines (no competition) and grain elevators

C. Relationship with Ranchers, Railroads, Indians

1. Range Wars

Barbed wire, 1874, Joseph Glidden

2. Railroads

Made transportation of agricultural and cattle products from west to east more efficient

Chicago became meatpacking center; Texas and Montana important for cattle raising

Refrigerated railroad car

3. Indians

Dawes Severalty Act (opened up land for white settlement)

C. Southern Agriculture

1. Remained tied to cotton production (1870 to 1900, cotton acreage doubled and cotton prices declined rapidly)

2. Sharecropping

i. Common in South after Civil War (1/2 Southern white farmers, 3/4 Southern black farmers)

ii. Incurred debts that landowner deducted from their crop share at harvest time (crop lien)

iii. Landowner controlled sharecropping contracts

3. Attempted diversification

i. George Washington Carver

a. African American scientist

b. Promoted growing of peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans, thus helping shift Southern agriculture toward more diversified base

D. Farmers' Organizations and Resistance

1. Grange (Patrons of Husbandry)

- i. Founded 1868 by Oliver Kelley for organization of farmers for social and educational purposes
- ii. Mostly in South and Midwest but had representation in almost all states
- iii. Panic of 1873 pushed Grange to take economic and political action to defend its members against middlemen, trusts, and railroads
- iv. Midwest Grange groups formed cooperatives, businesses owned and operated by farmers to avoid middlemen fees (Montgomery Ward, mail-order company, formed as cooperative to meet Granger needs on the farm)
- v. Main political and economic target: railroads; successfully lobbied state legislatures (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin) to regulate grain elevator and railroad rates and criminalized railroad price fixing via pools and rebates
- vi. *Munn v. Illinois* (1877, states allowed to limit railroad freight rates, upheld Granger laws) BUT *Wabash v. Illinois* (1886, regulation of interstate commerce an exclusive federal right, many Granger laws became unconstitutional)
- vii. Interstate Commerce Act (1886, in response to *Wabash* and subsequent outcry of farmers, required railroad rates to be "reasonable and just," set up Interstate Commerce Commission as first federal regulatory agency, ICC ironically helped railroads more than farmers by stabilizing rates and curtailing competition, ICC lost most of its cases in 1890s)
- viii. Declined severely by late 1870s

2. Farmers' Alliances

- i. Late 1880s – new rise in farmer discontent because of new lows for agricultural prices
- ii. Farmers' Alliances boasted millions members by 1880, including orator Mary Lease ("Raise less corn and more hell!")
- iii. Similar to Grange – mostly for social, educational, economic, and political purposes; different than Grange – serious potential for national political party or movement

iv. Race

- a. Southern farmers' alliances initially consisted of both poor white and poor black farmers, encouraged by Alliance leaders like Tom Watson (son of former slaveowners)
- b. Colored Farmers' National Alliance (250,000 members)

v. Gender

- a. Women, like Mary Lease, played prominent role in Farmers' Alliances
- b. Women were full voting members in most local Alliances
- c. Many Alliance women advocated for other reforms as well, like temperance (sobriety key to farming life, they argued)
- d. Advocated extending suffrage to women (notice former Grange, Farmers' Alliance, and Populist areas of country were first to grant women right to vote)

vi. Ocala Demands (1890, National Alliance criticized both Republicans and Democrats)

- a. Direct election of U.S. senators (17th Amendment, 1913)
- b. Lower tariff rates (Wilson, post-WWII)
- c. Graduated income tax (Wilson-Gorman Tariff, 1894, 2% tax on income over \$4000; 16th Amendment, 1913)
- d. New banking system regulated by federal government (Federal Reserve Act, 1913)
- e. Increase money supply
- f. Federal storage of crops ("subtreasury plan") and federal loans

3. Populists (People's Party)

- i. Built on Farmers' Alliance and success of 1890 elections but had broad appeal (e.g. former Greenbackers, Knights of Labor, socialists, Free Silverites, prohibitionists, women's rights groups, anarchists)
- ii. Omaha Platform (1892, political platform for new party and nominate Pres. and VP candidate)

- a. Direct election of U.S. senators (17th Amendment, 1913)
- b. Initiative and referendums at state level (Progressive Era state-level reform, most in West)
- c. Unlimited coinage of silver (increase money supply)
- d. Graduated income tax (Wilson-Gorman Tariff, 1894, 2% tax on top-tier incomes; 16th Amendment, 1913)
- e. Public ownership of railroads, telegraphs, and telephones via federal government
- f. Federal storage of crops (“subtreasury plan”) and federal loans
- g. Eight-hour day for industrial workers

iii. Election of 1892

- a. Populist candidate James Weaver won 22 electoral votes (1 million votes)
- b. Many Populists won elected office (1000+ state legislature seats, 3 governors, 5 U.S. Senators, 10 U.S. Reps)
- c. Populists lost in South due to disenfranchisement of African Americans (Jim Crow laws) because of fear of united lower class of both blacks and whites

iv. Panic of 1893

- a. Worst collapse of the U.S. economy up until that time, lasted 4-8 years
- b. 20% unemployment
- c. Coxey’s Army (1894)
 - Ohio businessman and Populist Coxey led hundreds to DC to appeal for government work-relief assistance and currency inflation
 - Mob dispersed peaceably, a few were arrested

v. Election of 1896

- a. Divided Democrats: Cleveland’s Goldbugs vs. William Jennings Bryan’s Silverites (“Cross of Gold” speech)

b. Populists latched onto “free silver” before 1896 Democratic Convention to gain support of non-farmers and thus supported Bryan in 1896 (“fusion” with Democratic Party)

c. Democrats incorporated some of Populist platform into their own, but many Populists has their doubts about the Democrats’ and Bryan’s long-term goals

d. Republicans (McKinley and his advisor Mark Hanna) pinned blame for Panic of 1893 on Democrats

e. Increasing crop prices, threats of lay offs at prospect of low protective tariffs of Democrats, and ??? led to McKinley victory

f. Results

- End of political stalemate and stagnation of Gilded Age

- Began era of Republican dominance (7 of 9 presidential elections, 17 of 20 Congressional sessions)

- Republicans became party of big business, industry, and strong national government; Democrats as sectional Southern party and remaining Populist sentiment

- End of Populists as national party

- Triumph of urban values over rural interests

II. Late Industrial Revolution and Labor

A. Definition/Description of Late Industrial Revolution

1. Rise of heavy industry in post-Civil War era, led to being #1 in world by 1900 (bigger than next three—Britain, France, Germany—combined)
2. Available abundant natural resources essential to heavy industrialization
3. Available abundant labor supply after Civil War (including New Immigrants)
4. Largest market in world (growing population via transportation network)

5. Available abundant capital (both American and European) for industrial investment
6. Increased productivity via technology
7. Friendly government policies
 - i. Protected private property
 - ii. Subsidized railroads
 - iii. Protected U.S. manufactures with protective tariffs
 - iv. Little government regulation of business
 - v. Little taxing of corporate profits
8. Talented U.S. entrepreneurs and businessmen

B. Industry

Railroads

Carnegie, Carnegie Steel/U.S. Steel

Rockefeller, Standard Oil

J.P. Morgan, financier and banker

Gould

Frick

Pullman

Pinkertons (strikebreakers)

C. Labor

National Labor Union, 1866-1872

Greenback/Labor Party

Knights of Labor, 1880s, organized unskilled and skilled workers, male and female

American Federation of Labor, craft unions

Socialist Party

Anarchists

Molly Maguires

Mother Jones

Emma Goldman

Eugene Debs

D. Ideas

Laissez-faire

Social Darwinism

Monopolies/Trusts

Industry Tactics

Lockout

Blacklists

Yellow-dog contracts

Private guard/state militia

Court injunctions

Labor Tactics

Strikes

Boycotts

Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth

Taylorism, scientific management

E. Laws/Court Cases

Interstate Commerce Commission, 1887

Sherman Antitrust Act, 1890

U.S. v. E.C. Knight

F. Strikes/Labor Violence

Great Railroad Strike, 1877

Haymarket affair, 1886

Homestead strike, 1892

Pullman strike, 1894

G. Economy

Panic of 1873

Panic of 1893

III. New South

A. Definition

1. Henry Grady's editorials in Atlanta Constitution promoted New South ideas (economic diversity, laissez-faire capitalism, tax exemptions for investors to start new businesses and low-wage labor as incentives to locate businesses in South)
2. New vision for a self-sufficient Southern economy built on modern capitalist values, industrial growth, and improved transportation
3. Leading New South centers
 - i. Birmingham – steel
 - ii. Memphis – lumber
 - iii. Richmond – tobacco
 - iv. Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina – textiles (overtook New England)
4. Post-Civil War growth (population, industry, railroads) equaled and sometimes exceeded that of other regions
5. Ineffectiveness of New South ideas
 - i. Despite growth and New South ideas, South still largely agricultural and poorest region
 - ii. Northern financing controlled much of Southern economy; Southern profits went to Northern investors
 - iii. Most Southern workers (both white and black) still sharecroppers or (tenant) farmers

iv. South lagged because of late industrial start (roots in early Republican era) and lack of educated work force (roots in colonial era); Southern leaders also failed to provide adequate education for Southern workforce (both poor black and poor white) in late 19th century

6. Segregation

i. Part of New South ideas (though not always stated explicitly)

ii. Redeemers (Southern Democratic politicians after Reconstruction) supported by business community and white supremacists, used race as a way to keep political power by playing on racial fears of whites and deflect criticism of tenant farmers and poor whites

iii. Supreme Court began to dismantle Reconstruction laws after 1877

a. Civil Rights cases (1883, Congress cannot legislate against racial discrimination practiced by private citizens, including railroads, hotels, and other businesses used by public)

b. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896, separate but equal facilities did not violate 14th Amendment)

IV. American West

V. American City

A. New Immigration

B. Urban Design and Structure

C. Politics

D. Urban Reform

VI. Progressive Reform

A. Definition

B. Journalism

C. Local Politics

D. Labor (include socialism)

E. Civil Rights

F. Women's Rights

D. TR

E. Taft

F. Wilson

VII. World War I

A. Causes

B. Major Battles/Campaigns

C. Results

1. Red Scare

2. Labor Violence

3. Race Riots

4. Recommitment to Isolationism