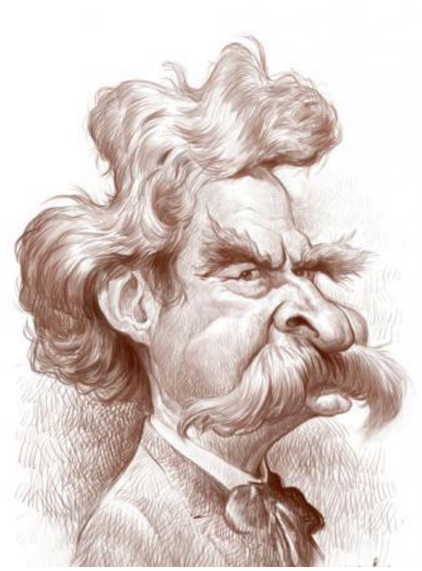
Unit 12: *The Gilded Age*

Name: ________________________

Lecture 12.1 • *The Age of Invention*

In American history, the post Civil War era (1865 - 1890) is known as the "Gilded Age". It was a period of prosperity, new wealth, creativity, and invention.



Who is this?

Leisure Time

- A central feature of the Gilded Age, was the increasing about of free time and extra income that many Americans began to have.
- In U.S. cities, zoos, parks, museums, and symphonies were created ... and **department stores** — like Macy's, Sears, Walgreens, etc. — were opened.
- This is also when promoters like "**Buffalo Bill**" **Cody**, and **P.T. Barnum** popularized traveling circuses and theatrical exhibitions.

Professional Sports

- Thousands began playing and watching new sports like **football** (1880s), **basketball** (1891), and **prize fighting** [i.e. boxing] (1850s).
- But it was **baseball** more than any other sport that captured the nation's attention. By the 1880s, it was clearly "America's pastime".

Personal Reflection:

The Arts

- Interest in popular music also grew. The most popular music writers of the time were **Antonín Dvorâk**, **Gustav Mahler**, and **John Philip Sousa**.
- At the same time, artists like **James Whistler**, **George Bellows**, and **Mary Cassatt** developed a new artistic style called "**realism**", which focussed on everyday subjects rather than the grandeur of nature that the romantic artists liked.

Literature

- For the first time, Americans were reading more books by *American* authors than European writers. Like their artist friends, this new generation of "realist" authors focussed on average, daily life.

  Henry James - *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

  Emily Dickinson - *Poems* (1890)

  Mark Twain - *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876)

Lecture 12.2
The Age of Invention

Another defining characteristic of the Gilded Age was an enormous leap forward in science, technology, and invention.

The Age of Invention

1866 - George Pullman designs the railroad **sleeping car** and **dining car**.

1866 - The **transatlantic telegraph** cable links Europe and America.

1868 - The **typewriter** speeds up business & communication.

1873 - Electric **streetcars** begin to appear in America cities.

1876 - Alexander Graham Bell perfects the **telephone**.

1877 - Thomas Edison's **phonograph** introduces recordable sound to the world.

1878 - Gustavus Swift invents the **refrigerated box car**. With easy shipping, the consumption of meat in America skyrockets.

1879 - Edison's incandescent **light bulb** illuminates the country.

1884 - Lewis Waterman invents the **fountain pen**.

1888 - George Eastman founds **Kodak** and perfects the **camera**.

1889 - Herman Hollerith invents the **electro-mechanic tabulating machine**. The world's first real computer.

How many of these inventions are now built into your smartphone?

<u>Personal Reflection</u>:

Lecture 12.3
The Age of Invention, cont.

New Materials & Energies

- 1870s - Lightweight **steel** replaces iron in construction.
- The invention of steel made possible the construction of sky scrapers and high speed ocean liners.
- 1880s - **Oil** joins steam and coal as the fuel of American industry.
- But it was the harnessing of **electricity** that had the greatest impact on American society.

Who is this?

The Age of Electricity

- The early fathers of electricity were **George Westinghouse**, **Thomas Edison**, and the Serbian-born **Nikola Tesla**.
- All three were brilliant men, but **Edison** was the smarter businessman, and by the turn-of-the-century was known as the "Father of Electricity"
- Edison did invent hundreds of useful items, but it was really his creation of **Menlo Park** — America's first research institute — that changed the face of American science and industry.

Personal Reflection:

Lecture 12.4
The Birth of Big Business

During the Civil War, American business was still run by thousands of small companies. After the war though, these small companies were soon ***consolidated****.*

Who is this?

The Captains of Industry

- **Cornelius Vanderbilt** was known as America's "railroad baron". He routinely used coercion, bribery, and even the threat of violence to get smaller railroads to sell out to him.
- **Andrew Carnegie** was the king of the steel industry. By 1892, he controlled steel all the way from the iron mines to the ship yards and railroad factories.

  Carnegie spent large amounts of his fortune on **philanthropy**.
- **J.P. Morgan** was America's first investment banker. He made his millions by buying up majority shares of stock in a new kind of American business ... the **corporation**.
- **John D. Rockefeller** was America's "oil baron". Rockefeller was a ruthless businessman who used any methods he could to control the oil industry.

  By the end of the 1800s, Rockefeller's company, **Standard Oil**, controlled 95% of the oil industry. Rockefeller had a **monopoly** on American oil.

Personal Reflection:

Two Views of Big Business

- Many Americans disliked monopolies and large companies. They said that they restricted competition, kept prices high, promoted classism in America, and kept men like Rockefeller and Vanderbilt too powerful.
- Proponents said that big businesses were simply part of the American system of free-market capitalism.
- Thus began an argument that continues to today ... Which is more important? Private business and free enterprise, or the welfare and well-being of society as a whole?

consolidate: to buy and merge small companies into one large company
philanthropy: using one's wealth to benefit other people
corporation: a publicly owned business run by a group of stock-holders
monopoly: exclusive control of a commercial activity

Lecture 12.5
The Third Great Awakening

During the period from 1880 to 1900, many American intellectuals began to turn to new scientific, philosophical, and political ways of viewing their world.

Science

- In 1859, **Charles Darwin** published *The Origin of Species*. His main claim was that all living species evolve over time, and that through mutation, they "select" physical traits which assist in their survival.
- Other scientists applied Darwin's theory to humans and concluded that the origins of mankind were evolutionary instead of divine.
- This period also saw the birth of other new scientific disciplines like psychology, statistics, sociology, deep astronomy, and paleontology.
- In medical science, most physicians by the 1880s had accepted the bacterial explanation for infectious disease. This simple discovery changed everything we thought we knew about illness and human biology.

Philosophy

- Some American intellectuals blamed the horrors of the Civil War on the concept of absolute evil (slavery) & absolute good (abolition). From this belief was born a new philosophical idea called "**pragmatism**".
- First conceived of by writers like **John Dewey**, **William James**, and **Oliver Wendell Holmes**, pragmatism suggested that what is "true" is really just what "works" for us.
- The pragmatists asserted that there is no absolute "right" and "wrong"; there are simply ideas that we call true because they are useful.

Politics

- Blaming American free-market capitalism and the wealthy for many of the ills facing the nation's poor, many people started to turn to several new European political philosophies:

socialism - the government should control some parts of society in order to protect the weak

communism - the government should control all aspects of society and everyone should be equal

anarchism - all governments are inherently unjust and the people should rule themselves

What's the difference between "anarchism", and "anarchy"?

<u>Personal Reflection</u>: