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## UNIT 1 THE GILDED AGE 1

### Issue 1. Did Reconstruction Fail as a Result of Racism? 2

**YES:** LeeAnna Keith, from *The Colfax Massacre: The Untold Story of Black Power, White Terror, and the Death of Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 2008) 6

**NO:** Heather Cox Richardson, from *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865–1901* (Harvard University Press, 2001) 15

LeeAnna Keith characterizes the assault on the Grant Parish courthouse in Colfax, Louisiana, on Easter Sunday in 1873 as a product of white racism and unwillingness by local whites to tolerate African American political power during the era of Reconstruction. Heather Cox Richardson argues that the failure of Radical Reconstruction was primarily a consequence of a national commitment to a free labor ideology, which opposed an expanding central government that legislated rights to African Americans that other citizens had acquired through hard work.

### Issue 2. Did a “New South” Emerge Following Reconstruction? 26

**YES:** Edward L. Ayers, “Mill and Mine,” from *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 1992) 30

**NO:** James Tice Moore, from “Redeemers Reconsidered: Change and Continuity in the Democratic South, 1870–1900,” *Journal of Southern History* (vol. 44, August 1978, pp. 357–378) 39

Edward L. Ayers, while conceding that some areas of the South remained tied to agriculture and that industrial development did not always match the rhetoric of New South boosters, insists that manufacturing and industrial production, funded by local capital, made impressive strides in the post-Reconstruction South and positively touched the lives of millions of southerners. James Tice Moore challenges the view that the white, Democratic political elite that ruled the post-Reconstruction South abandoned antebellum rural traditions in favor of business and commerce and concludes that these agriculturally oriented “Redeemers” actually represented a continuity of leadership from the Old South to the New South.

### Issue 3. Were the Nineteenth-Century Entrepreneurs “Robber Barons”? 51

**YES:** Howard Zinn, from “Robber Barons and Rebels,” in *A People’s History of the United States* (HarperCollins, 1999) 55

**NO:** **John S. Gordon**, from “Was There Ever Such a Business!” in *An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power* (Harper Perennial, 2004) 65

According to Howard Zinn, the new industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan adopted business practices that encouraged monopolies and used the powers of the government to control the masses from rebellion. John S. Gordon argues that the nineteenth-century men of big business such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie developed through the oil and steel industries’ consumer products that improved the lifestyle of average Americans.

#### **Issue 4. Were American Workers in the Gilded Age Conservative Capitalists? 78**

**YES:** **Carl N. Degler**, from *Out of Our Past*, 3rd ed. (Harper & Row, 1984) 82

**NO:** **Herbert G. Gutman**, from *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976) 90

Historian Carl N. Degler maintains that the American labor movement accepted capitalism and reacted conservatively to the radical organizational changes brought about in the economic system by big business. Professor of history Herbert G. Gutman argues that from 1843 to 1893, American factory workers attempted to humanize the system through the maintenance of their traditional, artisan, and preindustrial work habits.

#### **Issue 5. Were Late Nineteenth-Century Immigrants “Uprooted”? 102**

**YES:** **Oscar Handlin**, from *The Shock of Alienation*, 2nd ed. (Little, Brown and Company, 1973) 106

**NO:** **Mark Wyman**, from *The America Trunk Comes Home* (Cornell University Press, 1993) 115

Oscar Handlin asserts that immigrants to the United States in the late nineteenth century were alienated from the cultural traditions of the homeland they had left as well as from those of their adopted country. Mark Wyman argues that as many as four million immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1930 viewed their trip as temporary and remained tied psychologically to their homeland to which they returned once they had accumulated enough wealth to enable them to improve their status back home.

#### **Issue 6. Were the Populists Irrational Reactionaries? 126**

**YES:** **Richard Hofstadter**, from *The Folklore of Populism* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1955 and 1972) 130

**NO:** **Charles Postel**, from *The Populist Vision* (Oxford University Press, 2007) 138

According to Richard Hofstadter, the Populists created a conspiracy theory around the issues of industrialism and the “money question” that activated a virulent strain of nativism and anti-Semitism, and revealed their desire to return to a rural utopia that they associated with the early nineteenth century. Charles Postel characterizes the Populists as forward-thinking reformers

who hoped to use the government to manage an increasingly modern, technologically sophisticated, and globally connected society for the benefit of ordinary citizens.

## UNIT 2 REFORM, DEPRESSION, AND WAR 149

### Issue 7. Did the Conservation Movement of the Early Twentieth Century Successfully Preserve the American Environment? 150

**YES:** T.H. Watkins, from “Father of the Forests (Gifford Pinchot),” *American Heritage* (vol. 52, February/March 1991) 154

**NO:** Ted Steinberg, from *Conservation Reconsidered* (Oxford University Press, 2002) 163

According to T.H. Watkins, Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot was a practical conservationist whose agency managed to balance the preservation of the environment with the “wise use of earth and its resources for the lasting good of men.” According to Ted Steinberg, the conservationists often had negative effects on the ecosystem of America’s forests, plants, and animals in their effort to bend nature to conform to the desire of mankind.

### Issue 8. Was Woodrow Wilson Responsible for the Failure of the United States to Join the League of Nations? 177

**YES:** John M. Cooper, Jr., from *Breaking the Heart of the World* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) 181

**NO:** William G. Carleton, from “A New Look at Woodrow Wilson,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Autumn 1962) 192

Professor John M. Cooper argues that the stroke that partially paralyzed Woodrow Wilson during his speaking tour in 1919 hampered the then president’s ability to compromise with the Republicans over the terms of America’s membership in the League of Nations if the Senate ratified the Treaty of Versailles. The late William G. Carleton believed that Woodrow Wilson understood better than any of his contemporaries the role that the United States would play in world affairs.

### Issue 9. Were the 1920s an Era of Social and Cultural Rebellion? 203

**YES:** Gilman M. Ostrander, from “The Revolution in Morals” in John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody, eds., *Change and Continuity in Twentieth-Century America: The 1920s* (Ohio State University Press, 1968) 206

**NO:** David A. Shannon, from *American Society and Culture in the 1920s* (Houghton Mifflin, 1965) 214

Gilman M. Ostrander portrays the 1920s as the beginning of an urbanization of American morals, which included dramatic changes in women’s fashion and behavior and the emergence of a more affluent society and leisure class focused on mass consumer goods that encouraged Americans to

live beyond their means, thereby undermining the traditional virtue of thriftiness. David A. Shannon asserts that the social and cultural changes described by many as revolutionary were actually superficial elements of which significance to the 1920s has been exaggerated; the real catalysts for change were the processes that expanded the American economy by ushering in prosperity through the creation of a mass consumer culture.

## **Issue 10. Did the New Deal Prolong the Great Depression? 227**

**YES:** **Burton W. Folsom, Jr.**, from *New Deal or Raw Deal? How FDR's Economic Legacy Has Damaged America* (Simon & Schuster, 2008) 231

**NO:** **Roger Biles**, from *A New Deal for the American People* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1991) 242

Professor Burton W. Folsom, Jr., argues the New Deal prolonged the Great Depression because its anti-free-market program of high taxes and special-interest spending to certain banks, railroads, farmers, and veterans created an antibusiness environment of regime uncertainty. Professor of history Roger Biles contends that, in spite of its minimal reforms and nonrevolutionary programs, the New Deal created a limited welfare state that implemented economic stabilizers to avert another depression.

## **Issue 11. Was the World War II Era a Watershed for the Civil Rights Movement? 252**

**YES:** **Richard M. Dalfume**, from "The 'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution," *Journal of American History* (vol. 55, 1968, pp. 90–106) 255

**NO:** **Harvard Sitkoff**, from "African American Militancy in the World War II South: Another Perspective," in Neil R. McMillen, ed., *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South* (University Press of Mississippi, 1997, pp. 70–92) 264

Richard M. Dalfume argues that the period from 1939 to 1945 marked a turning point in American race relations by focusing the attention of African Americans on their unequal status in American society and stimulating a mass militancy whose goals, tactics, and strategies sowed the seeds for the modern civil rights movement. Harvard Sitkoff challenges the "watershed" interpretation by pointing out that, after Pearl Harbor, militant African American protest against racial discrimination was limited by the constraints imposed on the nation at war, the dwindling resources for sustained confrontation, and the genuinely patriotic response by black Americans to dangers faced by the nation.

## **Issue 12. Was It Necessary to Drop the Atomic Bomb to End World War II? 276**

**YES:** **Robert James Maddox**, from "The Biggest Decision: Why We Had to Drop the Atomic Bomb," *American History* (May/June 1995) 280

**NO:** **Tsuyoshi Hasegawa**, from *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) 289

Professor of American history Robert James Maddox contends that the atomic bomb became the catalyst that forced the hard-liners in the

Japanese army to accept the emperor's plea to surrender, thus avoiding a costly, bloody invasion of the Japanese mainland. Professor of American history Tsuyoshi Hasegawa argues that the Soviet entrance into the war played a greater role in causing Japan to surrender than did the dropping of the atomic bombs.

## UNIT 3 THE COLD WAR AND BEYOND 303

### Issue 13. Was President Truman Responsible for the Cold War? 304

**YES:** **Arnold A. Offner**, from "Another Such Victory": President Truman, American Foreign Policy, and the Cold War, *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1999) 308

**NO:** **John Lewis Gaddis**, from *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1997) 320

Arnold A. Offner argues that President Harry S. Truman was a parochial nationalist whose limited vision of foreign affairs precluded negotiations with the Russians over Cold War issues. After a half century of scholarship, John Lewis Gaddis argues that Joseph Stalin was uncompromising and primarily responsible for the Cold War.

### Issue 14. Did President John F. Kennedy Cause the Cuban Missile Crisis? 329

**YES:** **Thomas G. Paterson**, from "When Fear Ruled: Rethinking the Cuban Missile Crisis," *New England Journal of History* (vol. 52, Fall 1995) 333

**NO:** **Robert Weisbrot**, from *Maximum Danger: Kennedy, the Missiles, and the Crisis of American Confidence* (Ivan R. Dee, 2001) 346

Professor Thomas G. Paterson believes that President Kennedy, even though he moderated the American response and compromised in the end, helped precipitate the Cuban missile crisis by his support for both the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and the continued attempts by the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro. Historian Robert Weisbrot argues that the new sources uncovered in the past 20 years portray Kennedy as a president who had not only absorbed the values of his time as an anti-Communist cold warrior but who nevertheless acted as a rational leader and was conciliatory toward the Soviet Union in resolving the Cuban missile crisis.

### Issue 15. Did the Activism of the 1960s Produce a Better Nation? 361

**YES:** **Terry H. Anderson**, from *The Sea Change* (Oxford University Press, 1995) 365

**NO:** **Peter Clecak**, from *The New Left* (Harper & Row, 1973) 374

Terry H. Anderson concludes that the activism of the 1960s inspired citizens of all types to demand changes that produced a transformation of American politics, society, culture, and foreign power and made the United States a more democratic and inclusive nation. Peter Clecak contends that the political and cultural revolutionaries of the 1960s failed to revolutionize themselves or

American society and quickly discovered that, without a clear program, viable organizations, or a significant constituency, they were essentially powerless against the prevailing social order.

### **Issue 16. Did President Nixon Negotiate a “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam in 1973? 386**

**YES:** Richard Nixon, from *The Vietnam Syndrome* (Warner Books, 1980) 390

**NO:** Larry Berman, from *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam* (The Free Press, 2001) 401

Former President Richard Nixon believes that the South Vietnamese government would not have lost the war to North Vietnam in 1975 if Congress had not cut off aid. According to Professor Larry Berman, President Nixon knew that the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 were flawed, but he intended to bomb North Vietnamese troops to prevent the collapse of South Vietnam until he left office.

### **Issue 17. Has the Women’s Movement of the 1970s Failed to Liberate American Women? 414**

**YES:** F. Carolyn Graglia, from *Domestic Tranquility* (Spence, 1998) 418

**NO:** Sara M. Evans, from “American Women in the Twentieth Century,” in Harvard Sitkoff, ed., *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2001) 427

Writer and lecturer F. Carolyn Graglia argues that women should stay at home and practice the values of “true motherhood” because contemporary feminists have discredited marriage, devalued traditional homemaking, and encouraged sexual promiscuity. According to Professor Sara M. Evans, despite class, racial, religious, ethnic, and regional differences, women in the United States experienced major transformations in their private and public lives in the twentieth century.

### **Issue 18. Were the 1980s a Decade of Affluence for the Middle Class? 443**

**YES:** J. David Woodard, from *A Rising Tide* (Praeger, 2006) 447

**NO:** Thomas Byrne Edsall, from “The Changing Shape of Power: A Realignment in Public Policy,” in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, ed., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (Princeton University Press, 1980) 460

According to Professor J. David Woodard, supply-side economics unleashed a wave of entrepreneurial and technological innovation that transformed the economy and restored America’s confidence in the Golden Age from 1983 to 1992. Political Journalist Thomas Byrne Edsall argues that the Reagan Revolution brought about a policy realignment that reversed the New Deal and redistributed political power and economic wealth to the top 20 percent of Americans.

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