



# Contents

Preface v  
Correlation Guide xv  
Introduction xvii

## UNIT 1 THE GILDED AGE 1

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

**YES:** George M. Fredrickson, from *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Harper & Row, 1971) 4

**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) 12

George M. Fredrickson concludes that racism, in the form of the doctrine of white supremacy, colored the thinking not only of southern whites but of most white northerners as well and produced only halfhearted efforts by the Radical Republicans in the postwar period to sustain a commitment to black equality. Heather Cox Richardson argues that the failure of Radical Reconstruction was primarily a consequence of a national commitment to a free-labor ideology that opposed an expanding central government that legislated rights to African Americans that other citizens had acquired through hard work.

### Issue 2. Was the Wild West More Violent Than the Rest of the United States? 23

**YES:** David T. Courtright, from “Frontiers,” in Ronald Gottesman and Richard Maxwell Brown, eds., *Violence in America: An Encyclopedia, vol. 1* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1999) 25

**NO:** Robert R. Dykstra, from “To Live and Die in Dodge City: Body Counts, Law and Order and the Case of *Kansas v. Gill*,” in Michael A. Bellesiles, ed., *Lethal Imagination, Violence and Brutality in American History* (New York University Press, 1999) 35

Professor of history David T. Courtright argues that the cattle, mining, and lumbering Western frontiers were extremely violent because these regions were populated by young, single, and transient males who frequented saloons and prostitutes, and engaged in fights. Professor Robert R. Dykstra argues that Dodge City had a low crime rate in the decade 1876–1885, and in the murder case of *Kansas v. Gill*, it conducted a jury trial “according to conventions nurtured through a thousand years of Anglo-American judicial traditions.”

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

**YES:** Howard Zinn, from “Robber Barons and Rebels,” in *A People’s History of the United States* (HarperCollins, 1999) 53

**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) 63

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. Was the American Labor Movement Radical? 78**

**YES:** **Leon Fink**, from *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (University of Illinois Press, 1983) 80

**NO:** **Carl N. Degler**, from *Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America*, 3rd ed. (Harper & Row, 1984) 92

Although stopping short of a frontal attack on capitalism, Professor Leon Fink argues that the Knights of Labor envisioned a kind of workingman's democracy that would ensure minimal standards of health and safety at the industrial workplace. 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.

#### **Issue 5. Were Late Nineteenth-Century Immigrants “Uprooted”? 103**

**YES:** **Oscar Handlin**, from *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*, 2nd ed. (Little, Brown and Company, 1973) 105

**NO:** **Mark Wyman**, from *Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880–1930* (Cornell University Press, 1993) 114

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? 125**

**YES:** **Richard Hofstadter**, from *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1955 and 1972) 127

**NO:** **Charles Postel**, from *The Populist Vision* (Oxford University Press, 2007) 135

According to Richard Hofstadter the Populists created a conspiracy theory around the issues of industrialism 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 THE RESPONSE TO INDUSTRIALISM AND REFORM, WAR, AND DEPRESSION 145**

### **Issue 7. Did Booker T. Washington's Philosophy and Actions Betray the Interests of African Americans? 146**

**YES:** Donald Spivey, from *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868–1915* (Greenwood Press, 1978) 148

**NO:** Robert J. Norrell, from "Understanding the Wizard: Another Look at the Age of Booker T. Washington," in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Booker T. Washington and Black Progress: Up From Slavery 100 Years Later* (University of Florida Press, 2003) 157

Donald Spivey contends that Booker T. Washington alienated both students and faculty at Tuskegee Institute by establishing an authoritarian system that failed to provide an adequate academic curriculum to prepare students for the industrial workplace. Robert J. Norrell insists that Booker T. Washington, while limited by the racial climate of the day in what he could accomplish, nevertheless spoke up for political and civil rights, decried mob violence, and defended black education as a means of promoting a more positive image for African Americans in an era dominated by the doctrine of white supremacy.

### **Issue 8. Did the Progressives Fail? 168**

**YES:** Richard M. Abrams, from "The Failure of Progressivism," in Richard Abrams and Lawrence Levine, eds., *The Shaping of the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Little, Brown, 1971) 170

**NO:** Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, from *Progressivism* (Harlan Davidson, 1983) 180

Professor of history Richard M. Abrams maintains that progressivism was a failure because it tried to impose a uniform set of values upon a culturally diverse people and never seriously confronted the inequalities that still exist in American society. Professors of history Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick argue that the Progressives were a diverse group of reformers who confronted and ameliorated the worst abuses that emerged in urban industrial America during the early 1900s.

### **Issue 9. Was Woodrow Wilson Responsible for the Failure of the United States to Join the League of Nations? 192**

**YES:** John M. Cooper, Jr., from *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) 194

**NO:** William G. Carleton, from "A New Look at Woodrow Wilson," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Autumn 1962) 205

Professor John M. Cooper argues that the stroke that partially paralyzed Woodrow Wilson during his speaking tour in 1919 hampered the 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. William G. Carleton believed that Woodrow Wilson understood the role that the United States would play in world affairs.

## **Issue 10. Was Prohibition a Failure? 215**

**YES:** David E. Kyvig, from *Repealing National Prohibition*, 2nd ed. (The University of Chicago Press, 1979, 2000) 217

**NO:** J. C. Burnham, from "New Perspectives on the Prohibition 'Experiment' of the 1920s," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 2 (Fall 1968) 227

David E. Kyvig admits that alcohol consumption declined sharply in the prohibition era but that federal actions failed to impose abstinence among an increasingly urban and heterogeneous populace that resented and resisted restraints on their individual behavior. J. C. Burnham states that the prohibition experiment was more a success than a failure and contributed to a substantial decrease in liquor consumption, reduced arrests for alcoholism, fewer alcohol-related diseases and hospitalizations, and destroyed the old-fashioned saloon that was a major target of the law's proponents.

## **Issue 11. Did the New Deal Prolong the Great Depression? 238**

**YES:** Burton W. Folsom, Jr., from *New Deal or Raw Deal? How FDR's Economic Legacy Has Damaged America* (Simon & Schuster, 2008) 240

**NO:** Roger Biles, from *A New Deal for the American People* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1991) 251

Professor Burton W. Folsom, Jr., argues the New Deal prolonged the Great Depression because its antifree 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 12. Did President Roosevelt Deliberately Withhold Information About the Attack on Pearl Harbor from the American Commanders? 261**

**YES:** Robert A. Theobald, from *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor: The Washington Contribution to the Japanese Attack* (Devin-Adair, 1954) 263

**NO:** Roberta Wohlstetter, from *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford University Press, 1967) 273

Retired rear admiral Robert A. Theobald argues that President Franklin D. Roosevelt deliberately withheld information from the commanders at Pearl Harbor in order to encourage the Japanese to make a surprise attack on the weak U.S. Pacific Fleet. Historian Roberta Wohlstetter contends that even

though naval intelligence broke the Japanese code, conflicting signals and the lack of a central agency coordinating U.S. intelligence information made it impossible to predict the Pearl Harbor attack.

## UNIT 3 THE COLD WAR AND BEYOND 287

### Issue 13. Was President Truman Responsible for the Cold War? 288

**YES:** Arnold A. Offner, from “Another Such Victory”: President Truman, American Foreign Policy, and the Cold War, *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1999) 290

**NO:** John Lewis Gaddis, from *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1997) 302

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. John Lewis Gaddis argues that after a half century of scholarship, Joseph Stalin was uncompromising and primarily responsible for the cold war.

### Issue 14. Was Rock and Roll Responsible for Dismantling America’s Traditional Family, Sexual, and Racial Customs in the 1950s and 1960s? 312

**YES:** Jody Pennington, from “Don’t Knock the Rock: Race, Business, and Society in the Rise of Rock and Roll,” in Dale Carter, ed., *Cracking the Ike Age: Aspects of Fifties America* (Aarhus University Press, 1992) 314

**NO:** J. Ronald Oakley, from *God’s Country: America in the Fifties* (Dembner Books, 1986, 1990) 328

Professor Jody Pennington believes that the emergence of rock and roll in the 1950s along with new forms of consumerism expressed “the inner conflict between conservative and rebellious forces for high school teenagers who wanted to rebel against their parents yet still grow up to be them.” Writer J. Ronald Oakley argues that although the lifestyles of youth departed from their parents, their basic ideas and attitudes were still the conservative ones that mirrored the conservatism of the affluent age in which they grew up.

### Issue 15. Did President John F. Kennedy Demonstrate a Strong Commitment to Civil Rights? 346

**YES:** Carl M. Brauer, from *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction* (Columbia University Press, 1977) 348

**NO:** Nick Bryant, from *The Bystander: John F. Kennedy and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Basic Books, 2006) 354

Carl M. Brauer asserts that President John F. Kennedy carried out an unambiguous commitment to civil rights that far exceeded anything his immediate predecessors had done and which included efforts to end discrimination in voting, education, hiring practices, public facilities, and housing. Nick Bryant claims that President Kennedy took an overly cautious approach to civil rights matters to avoid a confrontation with

white southern Democrats in Congress and relied too heavily on symbolic, largely cosmetic changes that left him with a meager legacy of civil rights accomplishments.

### **Issue 16. Did President Nixon Negotiate a “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam in 1973? 365**

**YES:** Richard Nixon, from *The Real War* (Warner Books, 1980) 367

**NO:** Larry Berman, from *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam* (The Free Press, 2001) 378

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? 392**

**YES:** F. Carolyn Graglia, from *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief Against Feminism* (Spence, 1998) 394

**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) 404

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 America experienced major transformations in their private and public lives in the twentieth century.

### **Issue 18. Is the United States a Declining Power? 422**

**YES:** Andrew J. Bacevich, from *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (Metropolitan Books: Henry Holt and Company, 2008) 424

**NO:** Fareed Zakaria, from *The Post-American World* (W.W. Norton, 2009) 435

Professor Andrew J. Bacevich, a West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran, believes that the United States has major problems because it has enlarged the power of the presidency and abuses its military power to create an informal empire in the energy-rich Persian Gulf in its pursuit of a consumer-dominated good life. Dr. Fareed Zakaria, a political commentator for CNN, believes the United States is still a great power in the post-industrial world because of its tremendous advantages in education, immigration, and scientific innovation.