

History 346
The Gilded Age
M-W-F 10:00 - 10:50
CAS 228
Roger Williams University
Spring Semester 2014

Michael R. H. Swanson, Ph. D
Office: GHH 215
Hours: M, W, F, 11:00 - 1:00
and by appointment
e-mail: mswanson@rwu.edu
Phone: 254 3230

Week of January 27

For **Monday, January 27**

We'll continue with the discussion we began on Wednesday to clean and clear up whatever might be necessary. I would also like to have you do two things:

- **First**, browse through the Mark Twain's *The Gilded Age* and estimate how long it will take you to read it, assuming you start tomorrow. I would like everyone to finish it before the general discussion on it begins, and the book may also help some of you decide which of the goings on in this era are of most interest to you personally.
- **Second** I want you to click on the link marked web resources. Think of this as a hunt for buried treasure. There are 171 websites on the .pdf file that you'll reach when you do. Look the list over. I don't want you to visit all of them but I'd like to look in two or three which seem to be of special interest to you (I won't complain if you look at four of them). Then browse in those websites for **something** which draws your attention. Go to it and take a good look at it. Put the link for it in your blog AND in the Clog. I haven't yet decided which is going to be the best way for us to share our stuff.

For **Wednesday, January 29**

Read,

On the Internet,

#1, [Andrew Carnegie on Wealth](#) (North American Review)

#2, [Henry George Introduction to Progress and Poverty](#)

Theoretically speaking, these documents are always available to you on the Internet, But I find it a good practice to download them to my own computer "just in case," and if I'm really operating in cautious mode, I print them out and put them in a notebook. It's your choice.

PLUS

...this little poem by The Reverend Alexander Lewis (1902)

There is always a way to
rise, my boy
Always a way to advance
Yet the road that leads to
Mount Success
Does not pass by the way
of Chance,

But goes through the stations of
Work and Strive,
Through the valley of
Persevere;
And the man that succeeds while
others fail,
Must be willing to pay most dear.

For there's always a way to
fail, my boy,
Always a way to slide,
And the men that you find at
the foot of the hill
All sought for an easy ride.
So on and up, though
the road be rough
And the stones come
hick and fast,
There is room at the top for
the man that tries,
And victory comes at last.

If you find this inspiring, you might want to read the book from which I extracted it:
[Stepping stones to manhood: a book of inspiration for boys and young men](#)
By William Peter Pearce

The book is fascinating, but the file is rather large, Those who have Adobe Digital Editions installed on their computers, might wish this version instead.

[Stepping stones to manhood: a book of inspiration for boys and young men](#)
By William Peter Pearce

Those who don't have Digital Editions installed might want to install it.

Andrew Carnegie and Henry George look at the economic machine from widely differing perspectives. Interestingly, both men rose from very humble origins to positions of fame and prominence. In Carnegie's case, one can add wealth to the list of his triumphs. George, on the other hand became a public icon for those who greeted the new economy with suspicion. Alexander Lewis's short poem is the kind of thing which teachers at the turn of the century might encourage their students to memorize. (I won't force that on any of you... but if you have invented an appropriate character you may want to learn this "by heart." How does one become rich? Lewis provides what becomes the standard American answer for a century or more.

For Friday, January 31

A Culture in Motion

Read, in Schlereth:

Chapter 1: Moving pp. 7-31

and, on the Internet

[Streetcars of Charlotte, NC](#)

[Streetcars of Williamsport, PA](#) (Through “end of an era”)

[Streetcars of Detroit](#)

As Schlereth will demonstrate, all sorts of mobility dominated American culture at the turn of the century. It may help to organize thinking about this as a matter of scale of distance, as much as anything else. At the top of the scale would be immigration. At the bottom, the commute from domicile to workplace. In between would be the movement between regions of this country, and from the farms, villages and market towns to the emerging industrial centers. All of these happened more or less simultaneously and more or less continuously, and at an ever accelerating pace.

Today, we'll look at the bottom of the scale looking at the trolley and the trolley commute. By 1936, Trolleys were considered figures of fun, but in the Gilded Age they were the latest thing in moving people about. [The Library of Congress American Memory collection of Thomas Edison's early films](#) has examples of films which demonstrate public fascination with these modern inventions. [Here is one of them.](#)

Looking Ahead

We'll flip to the top of the distance scale next week as we explore immigration and immigrants.

To do this, we're going to do some work with historic census figures. I'll give a demonstration in class today, but you might try playing with the materials yourself. You'll find them at <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/>. You might also want to check historical census data from the Census Bureau itself. <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.