Enhanced Transcript

DAVID MCCULLOUGH, SERIES HOST:
Hello and welcome to The American Experience. I'm David McCullough. In the long ago year of 1900, back at the threshold of the twentieth century, the United States, among the nations of the world, was like a big, raw boy full of robust energy and growing pains. Times were good. Prosperity had taken hold. Most Americans were living better in a material way than they ever had, or than anyone in all history until then. And with a wondrous number of new inventions and enterprises sprouting everywhere, people felt exhilarated by the possibilities of America.

Progress was something you believed in because it was all around you, plain as day. If there were some who weren't exactly enjoying a fair share of the good life, or for whom the American birthright of equality was still only a dream, the feeling was, "Well, we'll work that through. We'll see it's done."

Cynicism and self pity were not in style. The Declaration of Independence was still read aloud on the Fourth of July. But then among those Fourth of July crowds in 1900 there were venerable citizens who remembered when Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were still alive.

Of course, to confer singular importance to any one year is an arbitrary thing. And it was really 1901, not 1900, that marked the true start of the twentieth century. Just the same, to get excited about a turning of the century is an entirely human response, as we ourselves are discovering.

I have a photograph that's come down in my family. In Pittsburgh at about that time, my grandfather, in the spirit of the day, launched a new enterprise, an "electric company" --a "one-horse electric company", as my father loved to say. Here you see it: horse and buggy past and electronic future all in one picture. (The horse's name was Chester.)

As it turned out, 1900 was an exceptionally crowded year, filled with stirring events and tragedy, through which, for all the twists and turns, the current of American optimism ran powerfully.

America 1900 by producer David Grubin.

NARRATOR:
It was snowing on New Year's Day 1900 across much of the country, from the coast of Maine, down through New England, where great fat drifts blocked trolley cars.... and horses found it hard going even in their new Neverslip horse shoes. Snow fell across Pennsylvania, throughout the Midwest, and all the way out in the California mountains. All across the nation, fathers had promised their children that it would snow this New Year's day, just as it had on New Year's Day one hundred years before. A great storm had

brought in the year 1800, and between then and now, America had become the most prosperous nation on earth.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
We had the largest industrial economy, the largest agricultural economy, the highest per capita income, the highest level of education. It must have been a wonderful time to be alive for most Americans, not for everybody, but for most Americans it must have been a great time to be alive. I don't think we can understand what it was like in 1900 unless you think of optimism, of hope, of buoyancy, for the United States everything seemed to be going right.

NARRATOR:
But in the last year of the 19th century, a series of tragic events would test America's optimism: a deadly explosion in a coal mine in Utah; a devastating hurricane in Texas; two brutal wars overseas; and all year, assassins would plot to murder the president of the United States, but on January 1, 1900, most people imagined only the good things to come.

One minister rapturously told his congregation: "Laws are becoming more just, rulers more humane; music is becoming sweeter and books wiser; homes are happier, and the individual heart is becoming at once more just and more gentle.

Pt I.Spirit of the Age (45 minutes)

NARRATOR:
New Year's Day, Washington, DC. With Congress recessed for the holidays, the city was still... the 175 telephones on the hill all but silent. Mid-morning, the Sabbath-like stillness was broken by the clanging of trolleys as crowds headed for the White House. President and Mrs. William McKinley were holding the traditional New Year's day reception.

SONG: Hail to the Chief

4 years before, McKinley had led the country out of one of the worst depressions America had ever known. By 1900 he was enormously popular. Quiet, soft-spoken, reserved, he was accustomed to getting his own way.

WALTER LAFEBER:
McKinley, I think, of all American presidents, best fits the description of an iron hand in a velvet glove... he was able to get people's attention not by yelling at them but by reasoning with them and by cajoling them and by flattering them. And he was exceptionally good at this. He did not care who got credit for any particular accomplishment as long as he got what he wanted, and he invariably did.

NARRATOR:
People had come from hundreds of miles away to shake the president's hand, and McKinley gladly obliged. He was good at it. In less than 3 hours, McKinley would shake 2600 hands. 1900 was an election year. And with the economy booming, McKinley was being urged to run again and lead the country into the 20th century. But after 4 years in the White House, McKinley worried whether his wife had the strength to face 4 years more. Ida McKinley was frail and sickly.

SYLVIA JUKES MORRIS:
McKinley always thought of her as the beautiful young woman that he met when she was 22 years old. And she had this mass of auburn hair and these sky blue eyes and this very piquant face. He always had that memory in his mind. In fact, he used to say that to Mrs. Hobart, the vice-president's wife "if you'd seen Ida when she was young. Ida was so beautiful." But by then in 1900 she was a shadow of her former self. In fact she was almost ghostly. She had suffered a great deal and she was sedated by now with bromides.

NARRATOR:
McKinley was a handsome 25 year old civil war hero just starting his career as a lawyer when he first met rich, head-strong Ida Saxton, who was working in her father's bank in Canton, Ohio.

SYLVIA JUKES MORRIS:
And it was love at first sight. He took her for a drive and he proposed almost immediately, and she accepted straight-away so they were absolutely madly, passionately in love.

NARRATOR:
In 1871, Ida and William were married, and within a year, their daughter Kate was born. Soon, Ida was pregnant again. But during labor, something went wrong. Ida began to have convulsions. Her baby died six months later. Ida was never the same. The convulsions recurred. Her doctors suspected epilepsy. Then in 1876, Kate died. She was just 4 years old. Devastated, Ida went into a deep depression.

SYLVIA JUKES MORRIS:
She had blinding headaches to the point where she couldn't even sit in a room with light sometimes. So, McKinley used to have to sit holding her hand in a darkened room...but because of the nature of their devotion, that it had been this huge romance somehow they remained devoted through it all. The obvious thing for her to have done would have been to have quietly withdrawn from public life because of her impediments. But no. When he went to the White House she was right there with him. She insisted on coming down to all of the receptions, being present at all the banquets whenever she could. Because she did not want to be left behind.

NARRATOR:
As the New Year's reception wore on into the afternoon, thousands of citizens were still waiting to pay their respects to the president and First Lady. Visitors were free to wander over much of the White House, and McKinley's closest aides were worried. Anarchists had murdered Empress Elizabeth of Austria, the

president of France, the Premier of Spain, and were said to be plotting to kill every head of state of a Western country. In all the Executive Mansion there was only one guard at night, and he retired early. But if McKinley was fearful he certainly didn't show it. He was president of the most prosperous nation on earth. Most Americans were optimistic and so was he.

In the winter of 1900, northerners with money, tired of the cold, and the cinder-covered streets, were heading South. "It's against the policy of Americans," one railroad man said, "to remain locked up by ice one-half of the year."

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
This is the first time that people can travel over land quickly and easily... Within a person's lifetime they've gone from the days when having to travel to the next town was a hard slog over terribly hard roads. Now, for heaven's sakes, they can travel in an hour on, on a train.

NARRATOR:
Men and women who had taken six months to cross the country in covered wagons now made the trip in six days. And they could take a vacation anywhere on the continent. One guide book recommended "winter-stations" in the Carolinas, Florida--even California, for those "afflicted with consumption, gout, rheumatism, or chronic bronchitis."

That someone from Buffalo or Detroit could enjoy the sun in Florida during the winter seemed to defy nature itself.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
I don't think you can exaggerate how much change was in the air for people. Things that had been around, conditions that had been taken for granted since time immemorial had changed. The scientific technological industrial revolution of that time was something absolutely unprecedented in human history.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, Americans were dazzled by the onrush of inventions. Machines that could peer inside the human body were revolutionizing medicine. Autos were promising to replace horses. There was even a doll house for sale with its own electric doorbell and electric lights no bigger than a pea. Americans believed that the inventions of the day were going to make them smarter, happier, healthier. Even popular music celebrated the breakthroughs.

MAX MORATH :
The turn of the century, particularly in America, represented a period that will someday be compared to the Renaissance. Within a period of very short time, 15-20 years, most of the breakthroughs in technology occurred that now influence our lives so heavily. Everything since then has been engineering. You capture motion. Motion picture comes about this time. Now everything since is engineering. It's technology. Sure, the picture's better, but the idea of seeing people move on a screen is new. The telephone. "Hello? I'm

talking to Chicago." A miracle. But we take it for granted. You break through and record sound. It's gotten better, but everything since is simply engineering.

Do you realize that when the phonograph broke through just prior to 1900, that there were touring groups that went out with an old cylinder phonograph and the horn that you yelled into and the little mica diaphragm that transcribed, and they'd go to a town and they'd rent a hall and people would come and they'd play the phonograph and there'd be a dog barking. (Barks Twice and Claps) And people would applaud. And then the leading citizens of the town would come up. The mayor would come up and they'd instruct him and he would say, "Hello?" And they'd play it back, "Hello?" (Claps) And people would applaud.

The electric light, for heaven's sake. The electric current. The breakthroughs were considered miraculous.

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J. :
Most people in 1900 can remember a time, a very recent time, when most of the things you did in your life were hard work, dirty, and disorganized. There's still a good bit of that around as a matter of fact, but all around them, particularly in cities, there begin to be amazing things, amazingly precise, well-engineered systems that are beginning to transform a - a dirty, messy world. Plumbing. You have to be still fairly well-to-do to have plumbing, but it's around and you know that that's sort of coming. There are a lot of things like that, that are sort of right around the corner even for people like you. You can see them around you and you know that after a while you'll have them, too...The promise that you will have electric lights and maybe you even have one already, a bulb hanging in your house. Or maybe you even have a hot plate that you plug in, just a little one, but maybe you have one already. This is - is a hot plate better than a great big, robust iron stove which is a pretty mature technology, a cook stove? No. It doesn't cook nearly as well, but the future. Ah!

NARRATOR:
In 1900, while Americans were dreaming of the future... the world around them was changing, leaving a troubling undercurrent of anxiety and doubt.

DONALD L. MILLER:
No place on the face of the Earth, in the history of the world had ever changed as fast as 19th century America. And I think Americans felt the whole floor underneath them had given way. Technology seems almost a spontaneous force with a power and life of its own. What it bred, I think, more than anything is a sense of anxiety and a lot of people felt they had lost their moorings literally.

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.:
If I'm the ordinary guy in 1900, and I am mostly optimistic, but I'm pretty intimidated, too, by these ever-increasingly complex systems that are turning up all around me. I am surrounded now by systems that make me an idiot because I do not know how they work nor do I know how to fix them nor do I even know how they made them in the first place. [Electricity]... isn't like a steam engine. You can watch a steam

engine work and you can figure it all out. You watch the piston, you watch the flywheel. Not so with electricity. And so this feeling of being made small as an adult in the face of systems that transcend your intelligence, this is a hard thing along - it's a price tag for progress.

NARRATOR:
No where in America was progress more striking than in San Francisco. Fifty years before, when prospectors arrived heading for the gold fields, there were just eighty-two houses, a few scattered tents, and miles of all but impassable sand dunes. Now, at the turn of the century, 350,000 people lived here. San Francisco had become one of the country's most cosmopolitan cities - attracting writers, artists, and bohemians. 15,000 Chinese, many brought in to work on the railroads, now made their homes here, crowded into an Asian ghetto, an entire city within a city. In 1900 San Francisco was booming, but like so many other cities that had sprung out of nowhere, it had been built at a price.

For decades, the demand for lumber had been consuming the nation's forests. By 1900, half of the original forests had been cut, the great black walnut tree had all but disappeared, and the giant redwoods, standing for centuries before the republic was born, were under threat.

STEPHEN FOX :
We had been blessed on this continent with the finest natural resources of any country in the history of the world... rich forests, the finest forests in the world, and we'd just had so much of it it seemed that it was infinite. So if a forest was cut down, that's okay. There was always a new forest over the horizon. But for the first time, we started to get a sense that that may not be true, that the resources were finite. Around the turn of the century, we start to see a questioning of progress, as it has been conventionally understood, starting to see the limits of progress and that it is not an unalloyed good and in the course of this road toward progress maybe we've lost some things that we need to retrieve now.

NARRATOR:
In January, 1900, a 61-year-old Scottish immigrant living 15 miles south of San Francisco was writing a book to warn Americans that already too much had been lost... and to celebrate what still remained. For John Muir the wilderness was sacred.

"The forests of America," Muir wrote that year, "however slighted by man, must have been a great delight to God, for they were the best he ever planted. The whole continent was a garden, and from the beginning it seemed to be favored above all the other wild parks and gardens of the globe.

STEPHEN FOX:
The thing to realize about Johnny Muir is he was not like you and me. He was different. He was a pantheist, a pagan, if you will, and when he goes out there into the woods he talks to the woods and the rocks and the birds and he thinks they talk back to him. He believed was that all forms of life, and rocks, too, have souls. And in that belief, he steps outside the Christian tradition. Christians believe that only human have

souls, only humans go to Heaven. Well, Muir said that the Christian heaven was "stingy". He thought everything was divine, everything is holy, and, therefore, everything should be respected and protected.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, a wilderness craze was sweeping the country. Hiking and mountaineering were in fashion. The Audubon Society and the Sierra Club had recently been formed. People were fleeing the cities, heading for "the great outdoors."

STEPHEN FOX:
There was a widespread turning to Nature right around 1900. A lot of people in cities decided that they had lost something and they wanted to get it back. And this is the real wilderness. This is packing and camping overnight and climbing serious mountains.

NARRATOR:
For the first time, people began talking about conservation. Muir saw in "the back to nature" craze troops for his campaign to preserve the wilderness. "Even the scenery habit in its most artificial forms," he wrote, "mixed with spectacles, silliness, and kodaks, its devotees arrayed more gorgeously than scarlet tanagers - even this is encouraging, and may well be a hopeful sign of the times."

STEPHEN FOX:
He saw the good side of things and was an optimistic fellow and so he found grounds for hope... and that's the, the spirit of the age.
but actually there were grounds for hope.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, America could boast of 5 national parks; there were still millions of acres of untouched wilderness. And the environmental movement Muir championed began to find support in Washington. That year, Congress, for the first time ever, passed legislation to protect wildlife in danger of extinction. And the Senate, finally moved to protect the buffalo. There were only 400 left on the entire continent.

John Muir said he wanted "to do something for wildness and make the mountains glad." The little book he began in 1900 would remain in print throughout the 20th century, inspiring generations of Americans with his love of the natural world.

As the new century began, Americans were reaching beyond their own borders. In San Francisco, giant cargo ships laden with raw cotton from the South, fabric from New England, flour, iron and steel from Chicago and Pittsburgh were bound for the markets of Asia. For the first time, the United States was striding upon the world stage, proud and confident, competing with England, France, Germany, Japan.

New York Senator Chauncey Depew boasted to his colleagues: 'There is not a man here who does not feel 400 per cent bigger in 1900.... bigger intellectually, bigger hopefully, bigger patriotically, now that he is a citizen of a country that has become a world power."

The United States had become a world power almost overnight. But there was a price to pay. The ideals of the American Republic were being tested by the temptations of new-found Empire.

In 1898, America had gone to war with Spain and defeated the 400 year old Spanish Empire in just 113 days.

All at once, America won control of Spanish colonies on both sides of the globe, including the Philippines --- a chain of more than 7,000 islands, gateway to the markets of China. But the Filipinos wanted their own independent country. Some argued that President McKinley should give it to them. Others, that he should annex the Philippines. McKinley told a group of Methodist Church leaders how he had decided what to do: "I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight," McKinley said, "and I am not ashamed to [say] that I went down on my knees and prayed to Almighty God for light and guidance....And one night it came to me:
that there was nothing left to do but take [the Philippines] and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize them... And than I went to bed, and went to sleep and slept soundly."

WALTER LAFEBER:
Most historians do not believe that story. It's pretty clear that McKinley had thought about the Philippines long before the War of 1898 and he had decided that he needed the Philippines as a base from which the United States could make sure that Asian markets were open to American products. And China is the logical place to look for these new markets. The Chinese have 500 million potential customers, and they need everything that Americans produce. Manila essentially became the pivot of the American empire in the Western Pacific. And without Manila, McKinley would never have been able to compete for this great China market.

NARRATOR:
The president had hoped the Filipinos would willingly become part of the new American Empire. But the Filipinos were ready to die for the right to govern themselves. For years, they had fought the Spanish. Now they were prepared to fight the Americans--if they had to. In January 1899, they established the Philippine Republic. By 1900, Americans were fighting a guerrilla war 7,000 miles from home.

WALTER LAFEBER:
For the United States to maintain this empire what the United States had to do was to use force and to project that force across thousands and thousands of miles. We had never done that....and we were now involved in civilizations such as the Philippines with which we had very little acquaintance. And it was a question whether or not Americans were really that good, ah, an imperialist in order to pull this off. This was an extremely brutal war that the United States and the Filipinos fought...Americans looked down on

the Filipinos as people who were uncivilized... The term "gook" originated in the Philippine insurrection. We looked at this as essentially a superior power fighting an inferior people who deserved their inferiority because they had not been able to organize their society, they had not been able to "uplift themselves," as McKinley liked to say... the United States was willing to use very brutal force in order to bring the Filipinos around. One soldier's letter, for example, relates how one of his comrades, an American soldier, had been found murdered outside this village with his stomach slit open. And the American commander immediately orders that everyone in this Filipino village be executed. And, according to this young man who wrote home, there were a thousand men, women, and children who were executed in this reprisal for the murder of this one American soldier. This was no holds barred war between the Filipinos and the Americans. And by 1900, many Americans are beginning to wonder whether even all of the possible profits that this empire might offer were worth this kind of brutality.

NARRATOR:
As more and more American boys lost their lives, anti-war sentiment was growing. Many saw the war against a people seeking independence as "a monstrous perversion of American ideals." Multi-millionaire industrialist Andrew Carnegie, a leader of a small but important anti-imperialist movement, asked: "Is it possible that the American Republic is to be the suppressor of the Philippine struggle for independence?" Carnegie offered to buy the Philippines for $20 million and set the island nation free.

All through the winter of 1900, Americans read of devastation and horror half a globe away. Time and again they were assured that the war was all but over. But native spies reported that thousands of Philippine insurgents were plotting to rise up against American forces in Manila that a stash of bombs and munitions were hidden in a house in the center of that city that rebels were massing in the provinces.

McKinley had been told by his generals that they could subdue their barefoot opponents with 20,000 men. Then the generals asked the president for 20,000 more. But 40,000 soldiers were not enough. By 1900, 60,000 American troops were on the ground in the Philippines, and the War Department was calling for another 2 divisions. McKinley knew that his chances in the November election could hinge on a war he didn't want to fight, and didn't know how to win.

NARRATOR:
In the winter of 1900, the most popular girl in America was the Gibson girl. She was cool, flirtatious... every red-blooded American man's ideal. Pinned on the walls of homes across the country--from dormitories at Harvard to miners' cabins in the Far West--the Gibson girl set the standard for a generation of American women. She had elegance and style. She appeared independent and in control, dominating men with her seductive wiles. But the Gibson girl was a fantasy of a New York magazine illustrator named Charles Dana Gibson.

In reality, most women, by law and custom, were dependent upon men. In some states, a woman couldn't own property. Everything she earned belonged to her husband. And in every state but four she was refused the vote. A woman's only hope was to make a good marriage.

But a few women were striking out on their own--choosing careers instead of husbands. Francis Benjamin Johnston was a 36 year old photographer--pioneering a new career for women in photo-journalism, President McKinley posed for her camera just as Grover Cleveland had 6 years before. Anyone who was anyone in Washington society wanted Johnston to take her picture.

LAURA WEXLER:
Upper class, talented, energetic white women like Johnston are knocking at the door of social power and professional power in the United States. Women at the turn of the century like Johnston are beginning beginning to come out from the shadow of men. They are demanding careers, they're trying to come out from their home. And photography is Johnston's way of doing that. Johnston's saying I am a photographer, I can have a business, I'm not going to be a housekeeper, I'm not going to be a wife, I'm not going to have that feminine role. She's saying I'm going to be as good a professional photographer as any man. Johnston had studied painting in France, then began drawing illustrations for newspapers before switching to photography. Photography, she wrote, was "the more accurate medium." This is a new era for photography. A way of printing photographs in the illustrated press has just been invented, and people like Johnston are trying to figure out now what photography is for. She's getting commissioned by magazines to discover how you can use a camera to do photo-documentary.

NARRATOR:
By 1900, photographs were replacing illustrations in the popular press, and Johnston was helping define a new profession--photojournalism--showing Americans pictures of themselves they had never seen before. Johnston traveled across the country, leaving a telling record of the people of her day: coal miners in Pennsylvania; sailors returning from the Spanish-American war immigrants, pouring into New York City; black college students in Virginia; sharecroppers in the South.

Johnston's portraits introduced Americans to the faces of the famous men and women of her time: war heroes Admiral Dewey and Colonel Theodore Roosevelt ; the Educator Booker T. Washington Inventor Alexander Graham Bell; Scientist George Washington Carver; Mark Twain; Andrew Carnegie; and Susan B. Anthony.

LAURA WEXLER:
I'm amazed at her appetite for recording the people of her day, how much she traveled, how often she tracked down any opportunity to take pictures.

NARRATOR:
In a series of photographs taken at a shoe factory in Lynn, Massachusetts, Johnston challenged the idealized image of women at the turn of the century.

The women of Lynn spent their days in foul-smelling rooms, the floors soaked with chemicals, the air reeking with poisonous fumes. They worked 6 days a week, 10 hours a day, and earned less than 32 dollars a month, barely enough to put food on the table.

LAURA WEXLER:
Johnston's images of women working in factories look slightly bedraggled, they look tired, but they look very alive and human. They don't look discouraged... they look hopeful. Johnston's women have the same kind of pluck that Johnston had and knew in herself. Johnston's finding the vitality in America. And that's very much the spirit of the age. The vision of America which can move into the next century sure of itself, confident, believing that its dreams, if not true at the moment, will come true.

Part II Change is in the Air (30 minutes)

NARRATOR:
In the spring of 1900, William McKinley was in good spirits, a familiar sight leisurely strolling the streets of Washington.

Ida McKinley was feeling better although she sometimes refused to show her face to the new-fangled newsreel cameras. She was summoning all her strength as First Lady. Between bouts of crippling headaches, she'd been appearing at dinners for the cabinet and White House sing-alongs.

With his wife determined to support him, McKinley was looking forward to running for president one more time.

A man of old-fashioned principles, he was born in Niles, Ohio and shaped by the traditions and values of small-town America. As he looked out across the country, he saw little reason to worry--even as the way of life that had nurtured him was changing forever.

In 1900, Americans were still a rural people, much as they had been when the Republic was born. They were farmers and small town folk, whose lives still followed the familiar rhythms of the seasons. Work began at 4 AM and continued long after the sun went down. There was no running water or indoor plumbing, no electricity to light the night or ease the chores of the day. Women spent all morning bent over a tin basin scrubbing the laundry, or leaning over a wood-fired stove, cooking the mid-day meal.

MAX MORATH
This was a pretty tough bunch of people. They were up against a lot of things that the average American today doesn't even think about. Infant death, typhoid...

NARRATOR:
Home, family, and community provided comfort and security... but change was in the air.

Men and women who had never traveled more than a few miles beyond the sound of the church bells were leaving home for good. For decades, machines had been doing more and more of the work--replacing men, forcing them off the farm.

And the city beckoned from afar-- luring them with dreams of opportunity and success. They joined a wave of seven million, who, over the last 20 years, had said goodbye to families and friends they had known all their lives.

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J. :
They're leaving home. Pretty brave people to leave behind a world they know for a world they don't know where they're gonna be a rube. So with your heart in your throat and your hand holding your wallet so no one gets it, the few dollars that are in it, you go to the city and you try to make your way.

NARRATOR:
Nothing prepared them for what they found--the crowds, the noise, the confusion.

DAVID NASAW :
The first thing that would confront them would be the smell, the absolutely horrid, horrid smell. The city was very much a primitive place. The sewage, the human waste, the horse waste, the horse carcasses - need I go further?

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.:
The vast numbers of people coming in from the country to make their way in the city... they know they're scared to death... They don't know how it works. They don't know who's a cheat. They don't know whether they're gonna make it through the night...And yet look how courageous they are to risk all this...They sense the possibility that they can become successes. It's hard to overestimate just how powerful an idea that is at this time in America.

NARRATOR:
New York was the country's largest city in 1900--and the second largest city in the world... with more than 3 million people. Trolleys sped along at 12 miles an hour, twice as fast as the horse. Elevated trains rushed above city streets, looking, one writer observed, "like luminous winged serpents skimming through the air." And that spring, the city of New York began to build what would become the largest subway system in the world.

DAVID NASAW:
There was a sense of excitement, of newness, of promise, of hope and expectation... that the plain folk, the plain people, were no longer beasts of burden, that life was not a life of toil and trouble and then you die, that there were elements of, of gaiety, of, ah, leisure that were part of daily life.

NARRATOR:
By 1900, New York was already the entertainment capital of America. And for a nickel or a dime, there was nothing more popular than vaudeville.

There were the 3 Keatons, with 5 year-old-Buster; Sandow, the strongman from Germany; and the juggler William Claude Dukenfield, better known as W.C. Fields.

New York had more theaters than any place else in the world, and that spring, a new play was appearing on Broadway that challenged the conventions of the day.

Sapho drew sell-out crowds--and provoked the guardians of public morality. The popular English actress Olga Nethersole directed and starred in a story adapted from a French novel about a seductive woman with any number of lovers. The play created a scandal.

DAVID NASAW:
The scandalous part of "Sapho" was that at the end of the piece Sapho was carried upstairs, clearly to a bedroom. And Sapho did not protest. She went willingly to have an illicit sexual relationship with a man and she wasn't punished for it. And because the character wasn't punished in the play, Olga had to be punished in real life.

NARRATOR:
Olga was arrested and charged with "violating public decency." She faced a stiff fine and a jail sentence.

DAVID NASAW:
"Sapho" hinted that women, too, were sexual creatures and any hint that women could experience pleasure in sex was, was scandalous, was dangerous... and guardians of public morality were working overtime to stop peep shows, dime novels, picture postcards. There was just too much of it and it was too cheap. It was too available.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice proudly reported seizing more than 19,000 obscene photographs, and 7,000 circulars, catalogues, songs, and poems.

Now they went after Olga Nethersole. Her trial raged on for weeks, followed closely by every newspaper in the country. Among the witnesses was a police inspector, who testified that, in the line of duty, he had

seen the play 6 times and had not found Sapho offensive at all. Other witnesses called the play instructive. In just fifteen minutes, a sympathetic jury found Olga not guilty.

DAVID NASAW:
She was quickly let go.

NARRATOR:
The show reopened and the censors who had gotten it closed down succeeded only in expanding the audience far beyond what it would have been without the arrest. New Yorkers were now seeing things in public places, they'd never seen before. "The Kiss"--a sixteen-second film created a sensation all over the city. At the turn of the century, film was still new, and people were dazzled by any image that moved.

DAVID NASAW:
The movies in 1900 were not what we would imagine today. They were really moving snapshots called "views.".. And people watched in absolute amazement.

NARRATOR:
No one had ever imagined that pictures would ever get to move. And they could not believe that they were seeing pictures of people and places that they had read about, maybe dreamed about, but were now there before them.

New York was a city of dreamers--everyone hustling for the main chance. Americans from the countryside looking for a fresh start found themselves mixing with other newcomers, who were also searching for a better life.

In 1900, nearly 1/3 of New York's population was foreign-born.

Slavs, Italians, Jews, Poles--they too had been drawn by the dream of success in America, and instead, all too many found the same misery and hardship they thought they had left behind.

Manhattan's lower East Side was one of the most crowded spots on earth, men and women speaking languages of all kinds competing for a roof over their head and a job to put food on the table.

Many native-born Americans feared the immigrants, accused them of creating the poverty and squalor in which they had been forced to live.

Still, they came--one-half million in 1900, part of the largest wave of immigration in American history. But nearly one-third went back home. There was opportunity in America, but not for everyone.

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.:
When you read the letters that immigrants sent back to the old country...again and again you'll read something like, "I lost a finger and it's been hard while it's been healing. And it's a hard place, America. And don't send Joseph. He's not strong enough for America. But you can send the others. This is a great land and we can make a new start here."

NARRATOR:
From New York, millions of immigrants moved West. They had dreamed of finding streets paved with gold, but many became fodder for America's great industrial engine. In the Pennsylvania coal fields, the Chicago stockyards, the Pittsburgh steel mills. They worked 12 to 16 hour days, 6 days a week, often for as little as $1.35 a day. Prey to disaster of every kind, thousands a year were maimed by machines, burned by molten steel, buried by mine explosions.

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.:
They're worried about surviving. There's no safety net anywhere. There's no death benefits. There's no welfare. There's no nothin' like that. If the man of the family dies in the factory, as many thousands did, you're in trouble.

But I think if you probed people most days and said, "Are you optimistic about your own future," probably most people would say, "Yeah. This is America. Of course." Even though if you said, "But what happens if - well, yeah, it could be bad luck."

NARRATOR:
The immigrants spread out all over the country--even to the mountains of Utah. The hardscrabble town of Scofield was rich in coal, and there was plenty of work for those who wanted it.

In 1900, America ran on coal. Every train, every steamship, and almost every factory was powered by coal, and nearly every American home needed coal to make it through the winter. The nation depended on the tens of thousands of men from all across Europe who worked deep within the earth. TED HELSTEN:
The companies would send out representatives to different nationalities. First they'll go to the Greeks, then the Italians, then the Finns, and they would pay their way over here to work.

Abram Luoma had come to America to escape conscription in the armies of the Russia Tsar. In 1900, Abram and his five brothers were among the hundreds of Finns working in the Winter Quarters mine in the mountains above Scofield.

MAE LYONS:
My great-grandfather's sons, they were told, like many other immigrants, America was the place to go and have all the luxuries of life or something. It didn't prove to be that, though.

DONALD L. MILLER:
It's the most dangerous job in the world and it's been the most dangerous job in the world since the 12th century. They're working with the basic elements of the earth in these confined and exceedingly dangerous places.

There's rats all over the place. The wood that holds up the top of the mine is creaking constantly under the tremendous weight, a thousand feet of earth and rock and stone right above you. And every day you're dynamiting underneath, underneath that mountain of rock.

NARRATOR:
The Luoma brothers were quiet and industrious. Like many miners, they worked as a family team, side-by-side, day after day. The mines in Scofield were booming, there was money to be made, and the Luomas wrote their aging parents back in Finland.

MAE LYONS:
Come. We'll support you for the rest of your life. We'll take care of you. You'll have no need to ever go back to work. And so it was with that agreement that the parents came from Finland.

NARRATOR:
In February 1900, 70-year-old Abram Luoma, Senior, and his 65-year-old wife Kate had joined their six sons in Scofield. The next month, a state inspector arrived at the Winter Quarters mine.

TED HELSTEN:
The requirement was that they were to water the coal dust down all through the mine in those days. If you imagine in the mine all this coal dust layin' around there that's not wet and it's gets pluffed up in the air and you get an ignition source from an explosion, that dust will explode itself and it creates a flame front just like going down the barrel of a gun.

The mine inspector said they were doin' a good job. But a lotta witnesses said that they hadn't watered the coal dust down and so it was accumulatin' and it was dryin' out.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, there were no federal mine regulations, few state laws, and no unions in Utah. Along with the other men, Abram Luoma and his brothers had little choice. They would do their job--in spite of the dangers.

DONALD L. MILLER:
One spark, one lamp goes off and that whole mine can turn into a roaring tornado.

NARRATOR:
On the morning of May 1st, the miners were hard at work and had been since daybreak. The navy had just signed a new contract with the mine owners, calling for the delivery of 2000 tons of coal a day.
5 of the 6 Luoma brothers were deep underground in the number 4 mine.

MAE LYONS:
Just by fate one of them was not working. All the rest were working except one. He was the youngest son. Down in the valley 2 miles away, the women and children were celebrating. It was May 1st and they were having a May Day party of some kind for the children. And when they heard the noise they didn't get excited at all. They thought it was fireworks.

NARRATOR:
At 10:20 am, May 1, 1900, the most violent mine explosion America had ever known rocked the town of Scofield. Some men were blown out of the tunnels like cannonballs. More than two hundred others were trapped inside. Abram Luoma and his wife Kate joined hundreds of terrified women and children, hurrying toward the mine.

TED HELSTEN:
There was complete chaos. All they know is that there's been a big explosion and they don't know what the--the impact of that explosion. Is everybody dead? Is only a few people dead?

NARRATOR:
Once you have an explosion like that, you've used up all the oxygen in the air. So the company had to restore the air into that mine in order to go in and see what the damage is.

They did have some oxygen breathing devices. They weren't, they were pretty primitive, didn't allow 'em to go very far. The bodies they found close to the explosion were pretty well mangled, and so the men had to try to sort of put the bodies together. I was told that they carried out two heads, one of a young boy and a man that they just found the head.

Those who escaped the explosion remained trapped deep below ground in the poisonous air. One boy managed to crawl in the dark over a thousand feet. His uncle found him, near the main entrance, unconscious but alive. But most men were killed at once. Some were found with their tools still in their grasp; one man had his pipe in his hand.

TED HELSTEN:
By late afternoon they had already recovered 60 or 70 bodies. I was told they found groups of people in stacks. And you could tell by the way they were layin' and the way they were trying to find air space, that these people lived for a while, but the air was so bad and the lack of oxygen, they finally died.

MAE LYONS:
They brought in trainfuls of people to work and help to clear out the mine. And if you can imagine, they even brought one whole trainful of just caskets. And I think that there were 200 caskets on the first train that was brought in, but it wasn't nearly enough.

NARRATOR:
The Scofield mine disaster had been the worst in the history of the United States. Over 200 men had died that morning, leaving 107 widows and 268 children without fathers. Every family in town was grieving. Zeph Thomas buried two brothers and two nephews. The Miller family lost 3 brothers.

But none suffered more than Abram and Kate Luoma, who had come all the way to Scofield from Finland just 3 months before to be near those they loved: 5 of their sons, 3 grandsons, and one son-in-law had been killed.

MAE LYONS:
Oh, It was terrible for them. And I remember my grandmother explaining how he had told her that, "If I don't live any longer than a cat, I am not dying in America." And he and his wife went back to Finland.

NARRATOR:
The coal company had no trouble replacing those who had been killed. There were applications from men from all over the country. But in the spring of 1900, as the men returned to the mines, the explosion was carved in their memory. "Remember the Scofield Disaster" would become the rallying cry when 8 months later miners attempted to organize a union for their protection.

Relief for the widows and orphans came in from Nevada, North Dakota, New York City. Farmers sent crates of eggs and butter, women held bazaars, but there was no help from either the state or federal government.

Members of the US House of Representatives rejected a plea for aid because, they said, there was no precedent for such action.

The tragedy in Scofield also lived on in a ballad written that spring.

"Oh mothers and wives of the miners Strew flowers while life is still fair. Send your men off to danger with loving embrace. Bid them goodbye with a prayer."

NARRATOR:
In 1900, the fourth of July was an especially joyous, noisy affair. Everyone who could kept his carriage home that day. Fireworks were known to unnerve the horses. That summer, Americans were counting themselves: the 1900 census totaled 76 million of them. There were now more telephones than bathtubs, but still more blacksmiths than doctors, only 8000 cars and in all the country less than 10 miles of concrete

roads. On July 4, as tradition demanded, Americans proudly read from the Declaration of Independence, but that summer, old fashioned patriotism mingled with old fashioned politics. 1900 was an election year. The great question... who would lead the nation into the 20th Century?

Part III A Great Civilized Power (50 minutes)

NARRATOR:
In Washington the last summer of the 19th century began quietly.
Tourists moved through the city, guidebooks in hand, wandering from one government building to the next. Washington was more like a small town than the capitol of a great nation... so informal that one government bureaucrat kept a hen by his desk.

In June, President McKinley was meeting with advisors organizing the Republican Convention. The Democrats were already denouncing, the war in the Philippines, and McKinley was worried. In 1900, it was beneath the dignity of the president to campaign. McKinley would need a strong running mate to take his case for an American Empire to the American people.

On June 19, at the Republican Party Convention in Philadelphia, he found him. As the Governor of New York stepped forward to second McKinley's nomination, the delegates went wild. "He was all that the idolizing thousands wanted," one reporter noted "direct, dashing, fearless, possibly a little careless...and everything he was, the people liked him for."

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
Theodore Roosevelt is literally the rising star of American politics in 1900. He's gone within the space of a little over a year, from obscurity to being, one of the most famous people in America. He's a war hero. He's the war hero, the single greatest war hero to come out of the Spanish-American War. He becomes the man of the hour.

NARRATOR:
Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill had captured the imagination of the country. One Kansas newspaperman wrote Theodore Roosevelt: "is the coming American of the twentieth Century." When Roosevelt won his party's nomination for vice-president, McKinley had the running mate he needed.

But as the delegates cheered, a crisis was brewing half-way around the world that would test McKinley's resolve to make the United States a world power and challenge his hopes for re-election.

LETTER:
Dear Loved Ones,
Did you hear of the trouble the Christians are having in the two provinces just East of us? There is a native secret society called the Boxers , who say they are going to overthrow the Protestant religion in China. Just

how far they will be allowed to persecute missionaries and their converts is not easy to say. With love to you all, Eva.

NARRATOR:
Eva Price was a missionary from Des Moines, Iowa, one of thousands of Americans about to be swept up in a brutal war that would rivet the attention of the country all through that summer.

WALTER LAFEBER:
One of the great ironies about 1900 is that the United States appears as one of the great world powers at the very moment that the world is exploding into revolution.

NARRATOR:
Eva had arrived in China 11 years before to find an angry, frustrated people, their country carved up by hostile, foreign powers bent on exploiting its vast markets.

WALTER LAFEBER:
By 1900, China is looked at as a nation that can not defend itself. China would be described as a "bone among the dogs... The dogs are, of course, the imperial powers. And the United States is one of the dogs competing for the bone." China is seen as a great prize, as a bottomless market for both industrial exports and for missionaries.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, thousands of missionaries, inspired by the evangelical fervor sweeping American universities, were spreading the Gospel in Asia. "China is open to the gospel now," missionary leaders said. "It may not be so when she becomes strong enough to dictate her treaties."

Eva and her husband Charles had sacrificed a comfortable life in America to live in an isolated province in China with their 7-year-old daughter Florence.

VIRGINIA PHIPPS:
Eva was a very home-loving person. She had her family here. She loved them dearly, and it was very hard for her to leave... She longed for letters from home and from her loved ones. She was very lonesome. But they wanted to do something for the betterment of the world and to, ah, spread Christianity was their way.

NARRATOR:
Eva and Charles ran a school, nursed the old, and the sick, taught the Bible. Eager to record the exotic world around her, Eva brought along a camera. Like most Americans, she saw the Chinese as a backward people, mired in superstition and magic, worshiping idols, waiting for the blessings of conversion. The Chinese saw Eva as a barbarian, corrupting their ancient culture and religion. "The missionaries destroy the gods we worship," protested the Chinese. "They revile our ethics, ignore reason. Their aim is to engulf the country."

LUCILLE WILSON:
The Chinese couldn't figure out why the missionaries were coming into their land. Their main word for them was foreign devils. And that's what they called them--foreign devils. With hatred of outsiders growing, a mysterious sect began roaming the countryside, burning churches, and killing missionaries. They were called the Boxers. Their rallying cry--"Exterminate the foreigner." Their prime target--the missionaries.

WALTER LAFEBER:
It is not surprising that the Boxers would target the missionaries. Once American missionaries were able to get into interior provinces of China, it opened these provinces up to American business people, and consequently American diplomatic officials on the scene nicely call the American missionaries the pioneers for American trade and business, because once they opened up an area, then the other Americans could come along behind and sell goods. The Chinese did not miss this.

NARRATOR:
By the summer of 1900, the Boxer uprising had spread to the province where the Prices lived and worked.

LETTER:
Dear Home Folks,
We are all well and as happy as circumstances will allow, putting our trust in Him for whose sake we are here. Florence has quite a curiosity to see the "Boxers" but I hope she'll not get a chance. Love to you all,
Eva

NARRATOR:
All summer, the new, fast trans-Atlantic steamers were fully booked, and had been for months. 75 thousand Americans were sailing for France--teachers from Ohio, meatpackers from Kansas City, firemen from Chicago, all bound for the 1900 Paris Exposition. Over fifty-seven million people came that year to see thousands of exhibits from every corner of the globe.

DAVID NASAW:
The world's fairs were a showplace for the wonders of the present and the wonders of the future, a place for every country, every product, every nationality, every ethnic group to show off. And you got a sense that the world was a bit smaller, and America was very much a part of it.

NARRATOR:
American businessmen found the Exposition a glorious opportunity to hawk everything from linotype machines to processed meats. "The Americanization of the World," an English writer noted, is well under way." The Paris Exposition was a tribute to technology and progress. Visitors marveled at moving sidewalks, wireless telegraphy, the most powerful telescope ever built, and the first escalator anyone had ever seen. At night, the city was ablaze. An electrical search light was said to be "like the finger of some Sun God."

JOHN M. STAUDENMAIER, S.J.:
The conscious intent of the people designing the world's fairs is clearly... to teach people that progress works. So the Hall of Electricity, the electric light displays are terrific things, fountains with different colored lights in them, dazzling stuff. Call them wonderments, the sorts of things where you just walk around shaking your head and say, "What will they think of next?" You also have scenes of colonial superiority... from India and from Africa and places like this that are steeped in a kind of white man's superiority, racist sort of a thing that say, "Come here and you will really see what progress is doing," because you will see the counterpoint to progress, which is backward, savage, uncivilized, interesting, salacious, stuff."

DAVID NASAW:
Each world's fair catalogued in hierarchical rank peoples of the world
and the white folk were always at the top and the people of color, far at the bottom. People from the Philippines or from Africa were displayed as examples of the brutish savagery that highlighted the essential goodness, by contrast, of white Americans and white Europeans.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, the belief that people of color were inferior to white people was as widespread in the United States as any place in the world. Popular songs, theater, vaudeville all portrayed African Americans as ignorant, foolish, and child-like.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
American culture was so racist, and thought of African Americans as inferior, as a matter of course. We were depicted as buffoons, oftentimes eating watermelon, with huge red lips and large eyes. And they essentially made African Americans ridiculous. This kind of racism was kind of a paternalism. Yes, these people are inferior, they will never be as great as we are, but we can help them.

NARRATOR:
Although many black Americans were doctors, ministers, teachers, writers, most found themselves trapped in a hostile world. 9 out of 10 still lived in the South where they were denied the freedoms that other Americans took for granted--even the right to vote.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
By 1900, we had no rights. We were not treated like second-class citizens, we were treated as non-citizens.

NARRATOR:
After the Civil War, African Americans had voted, sent representatives to Congress, served as sheriffs, justices of the peace, and sat alongside whites on juries, school boards and city councils.

But by 1900, all that had come to an end. Through poll taxes, literacy tests, and dozens of other schemes, Southern whites had stripped African Americans of their most basic rights as citizens.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
By 1900 the South was what we call Jim Crowed. That meant that it was segregated. We were not going to be seated next to whites. We couldn't use the same facilities as whites.

NARRATOR:
And to make sure that African Americans did not attempt to assert themselves in any way, the white South resorted to terrorism.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
The last 16 years of the 19th century, there were 2500 lynchings in the South. And the majority of them were African Americans. And that terrorism reached an intensity in 1900.

NARRATOR:
Early that year, Representative George White of North Carolina had put a bill before Congress to make lynching a federal crime. Not long before, there had been 22 black Congressmen in Washington. Now, in both the House and Senate, George White was the only one who remained. "To cheapen Negro life," he said, "is to cheapen all life. The first murder paves the way for the second until crime ceases to be abhorrent."

NARRATOR:
There had been 107 reported lynchings in 1899, White told the House. His bill was designed to stop the killing.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
George White's anti-lynching bill really didn't have a chance... a bill by the last remaining African American Congressman was not going to get anywhere... whites in Congress, many of them from the South said, we need to keep the vicious, brutal African American males in line to keep them from attacking the flower of white womanhood.

NARRATOR:
With terror and oppression part of daily life, America's 9 million blacks looked to one man more than any other for leadership. Booker T. Washington was just finishing his autobiography, "Up From Slavery," which would inspire generations of black Americans.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
Washington had worked his way from being a slave to being a coal miner as a little boy, to working for a wealthy white woman, to setting up this school in Tuskegee.

NARRATOR:
Back in 1881, Washington had founded Tuskegee Institute, dedicated to teaching black Americans practical skills. "Our knowledge," he said, "must be harnessed to the real things in life."

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
He was advocating for African Americans to be carpenters, to be bricklayers, to be seamstresses... to create black businesses and to become a self-reliant people. Booker T. Washington was an accommodationist. And his program was to accommodate the social and political situation of the South. Washington felt that if you don't have economic power, then you're going to the white man empty-handed.

NARRATOR:
Black progress, Washington said, "must be laid on love of work, economy, ownership of property, bank accounts." But in 1900, a new black leader was emerging, unwilling to compromise with white America. W.E.B. Du Bois believed that without political power African Americans would never achieve equality.

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
Du Bois did not feel that you could accommodate injustice. He felt that if you didn't demand your rights as other citizens, you were really selling your people short.

NARRATOR:
Du Bois never intended to be an activist. He wanted to be a scholar. Born free in a small New England town, he had studied Greek and Latin as a boy, and became the first black to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard. By the spring of 1899, Du Bois was a 31 year old professor of sociology at Atlanta University. He believed he could fight bigotry and hatred with reason and scholarship.

DAVID LEWIS:
Du Bois believed in the power of social science to transform the society. He kept saying, "Americans are thinking wrong about race because they don't know."

NARRATOR:
But then Du Bois witnessed a crime so vicious that it convinced him that writing alone was not enough to overcome the prejudice of white Americans.

In Atlanta, in April, 1899, Sam Hose, an African American, was lynched, burned, then brutally dismembered, and put on display in a downtown store window.

DAVID LEWIS:
And Du Bois passed the storefront in which the dismembered parts of Mr. Hose were on display, he stopped, riveted to the spot and went back to campus, and decided that social science wouldn't transform society, that politics would. Du Bois becomes convinced that the cure for society's ills was not to tell people the truth, but to convince them to act upon that truth.

NARRATOR:
Du Bois would soon break openly with Booker T. Washington: "Mr. Washington," Du Bois would write "asks black people to give up political power, civil rights, higher education of Negro youth. But Negroes

must insist that voting is necessary for modern manhood, that discrimination is barbarism, that black boys need education as well as white boys." The problem of race, he said in 1900, would be the problem for the 20th century.

NARRATOR:
All through the spring and early summer, Americans were reading that the Boxer Rebellion had spread... more churches had been destroyed, more missionaries, killed. "We have heard," Eva Price wrote "that the Boxers are in our own city... We have learned what it is to have the feeling that we were facing death itself." 300 miles North of the Prices, in Peking, the capital of China. The compound where hundreds of foreign diplomats lived had come under siege. Among those trapped inside were Americans and their families--surrounded by more than 20,000 angry Chinese.

"They advanced in a solemn mass," wrote one hostage. "Their yells were deafening, while the roar of gongs, drums, and horns sounded like thunder."

WALTER LAFEBER:
And everyone understands that if this siege succeeds, that they are probably going to massacre all of the foreigners that they can get their hands on.

NARRATOR:
On June 13, the Boxers cut the telegraph lines connecting the foreign compound with the rest of the world. With American soldiers already dying in an unpopular war in the Philippines, McKinley was being forced once again to take action on the other side of the globe.

WALTER LAFEBER:
McKinley has to make an historic decision. And the decision is whether or not to send US troops out of Manila and onto the mainland of Asia. And what McKinley does is not only order the troops onto the Asian mainland to fight on, in China, but he does it without consulting anyone. He essentially goes to war without asking Congress anything about it. And it becomes a very important historic precedent, that later American presidents will use to order American troops around the world.

NARRATOR:
By the end of June, 2,500 American soldiers had left Manila to join an international army. Their mission--to put an end to the Boxer Rebellion and liberate the hostages. Far from Peking, the Prices faced increasing danger. "We're living in a suspense that cannot be imagined," Eva wrote. "We live moment by moment."

NARRATOR:
A killer heat wave hit America that summer, holding most of the nation in its grip. From Portland, Maine to the Great Lakes, summer meant escaping to the shore--if only for a day. As never before, vacations were becoming a part of American life. The wealthy spent their summers in exclusive enclaves. In 1900,

there were 4,000 millionaires, and with no income tax, a million dollars went a long way. The rich idled their summers away--living much as kings would, if kings had the money.

JEAN STROUSE:
By 1900, the great American fortunes far surpassed the fortunes of the leading dukes and lords and royal heads of Europe. In the summers, these people went to Newport, to Southampton, to Maine. And they built fabulous, luxurious chateaux, especially in Newport. That was the fashionable colony.

NARRATOR:
There were ornate palaces with over a hundred rooms, called cottages, and competitions to see who could hold the most outrageous party. One host invited his guests to bring their horses to a sit-down dinner.

JEAN STROUSE:
People gave elaborate costume balls; in which, at one of them, there were something like 14 people who came as Louis XVI. There were lots of Napoleons and a few Marie Antoinettes.

NARRATOR:
In small towns that summer, there were picnics, sports, fireworks, and the music of John Philip Sousa.

MAX MORATH:
John Philip Sousa was everywhere in 1900 and band music was everywhere... there weren't too many middle-class people in America listening to Beethoven, because how could they? They were no recordings, yet. They couldn't go to the concert halls. The philharmonic was not accessible. Band music on tour, the concert in the park, was cookin' in 1900.... John Philip Sousa was the Arthur Fiedler of his time. But people loved it, he didn't have any strings, he didn't have any violins. He couldn't do a lot of things. He didn't have any pianists. He had bands. Horns. I mean you had to be heard across the park.

NARRATOR:
Sousa was king, but in 1900, outdoor band concerts had a new kind of competition. Americans everywhere were listening to records, buying sheet music and pianos, and singing the same songs. The music industry had just been born. Songs had become commodities.

MAX MORATH:
It was possible to publish a tune in New York on Friday and have copies of it in San Francisco next week, not to mention Des Moines and everywhere in between...The five and ten. That's where the music was merchandised... Rural free deliver, RFD, kicked in in 1897. So the farmers could get some music... Here was finally a business. An industry. There's money to be made and out of the woodwork come all of these young dudes saying, "Hey, man, let's go into the music business!" "I don't know anything about it." "Never mind. we can sell sheet music. They sold a million copies in Chicago last week. Let's go."

NARRATOR:
In 1900, a new hit was flying off the racks of five and dime stores all across the country--"The Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin.

MAX MORATH:
Eighteen-ninety-nine, late in the year, Scott Joplin's first successful rag "The Maple Leaf Rag" is published out in Sedalia, Missouri. In 1900, it snowballed, it sold and sold and sold and it's probably the best selling rag of all time.

NARRATOR:
Joplin had learned classical music from his father, a former slave, who was an accomplished violinist, and the syncopated style of plantation songs and dances from his mother, who played the banjo and sang in church choirs.

MAX MORATH:
Ragtime is not an unsophisticated music... Rhythmically it's complex, the left hand keeps a constant beat, the right hand is constantly going off that beat. And when it does that continuously, it creates an elation. I can't explain why that is, but in the hands of someone that knows how to do it, it's exciting.

NARRATOR:
In 1900, Joplin was 32 years old, and had spent most of his life traveling around the Midwest, making music with other African American musicians--the musicians who invented ragtime.

MAX MORATH:
In 1900, you have these very talented young black musicians who are now absorbing all of the music that's around them... they heard French quadrilles, they heard Baptist hymns, plus they heard the European masters. They heard Chopin, they heard Mendelssohn.

NARRATOR:
But because it came from the black world...the whole thing was considered... as gross, an intrusion, bad. "This invasion of vulgarity in music [is] a national calamity," wrote one critic. "This plague is upon us... like an epidemic of cholera... The people have sold themselves body and soul to the musical satan... alas, this is what sells."

MAX MORATH:
It's going to take some time for the pianists, not to mention the ears of Americans, to say, "What is that? Wow, I like that. What are they playing, Harriet? I mean it's exciting. What do they call that? Oh, they call it rag time."

NARRATOR:
In China, the crisis grew more ominous as the siege in Peking continued. Inside the foreign compound, 480 men were holding off 20,000 Chinese with just 5 cannons. 7 Americans had been killed, many more wounded. Supplies were dwindling. The diplomats and their families were surviving on rice and the meat from slaughtered horses. American consul Edwin Conger , managed to smuggle out one last desperate message: "Quick relief only can prevent general massacre."

But American soldiers were still many miles from Peking, fighting their way through the countryside alongside Welsh Fussiliers, Bengal Lancers, Punjabis, Sikhs, Russians, Japanese, French, Italians.

WALTER LAFEBER:
The United States had never sent a military force outside the Western Hemisphere until 1898. Suddenly in 1900, we have 5,000 American troops on the mainland of Asia, fighting in league with the European powers. This was something that was unimaginable two years before.

NARRATOR:
"If only soldiers would come into our province," Eva Price wrote home, "we would probably be saved. We have so longed and prayed they may come in time."

VIRGINIA PHIPPS:
they were virtually trapped because they were in the interior and there really was almost no way out. And all they could hope for really was that the allied soldiers would come soon.

NARRATOR:
On July 5, Theodore Roosevelt, campaigning in the Midwest, defended McKinley's decision to send troops to China. America's new role as a world power demanded it, he said. As for the war in the Philippines we should hold on to that island nation at any cost. "I am for expansion every time," Roosevelt told the crowds. "I do not want this flag to come down where our men have fought and shed their blood for it."

That same day, from his home in Lincoln, Nebraska, William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate for president, challenged the Republican party's vision of a more militant America. 4 years before, Bryan, had also won the nomination, and gone down to defeat calling McKinley a pawn of big business. Now he labeled the president an imperialist. "Imperialism," Bryan told reporters, "is the most dangerous of the evils now menacing our country."

WALTER LAFEBER:
This was a time which the Philippine insurrection was going badly. This was the time when the Boxers were besieging the foreign compound and we did not know whether or not they were going to massacre all of the foreigners in China and it looked as though, ah, McKinley's foreign policies were in shambles.

NARRATOR:
All summer, Bryan drew huge crowds across the country as he lashed out at the president for trampling the rights of the people of Asia. "We dare not educate the Filipinos," Bryan said, "lest they learn to read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States."

WALTER LAFEBER:
Bryan believes that American foreign policy is immoral and that the United States has no business fighting these kinds of wars. He believes that what McKinley has done has not only corrupted American society, but has corrupted the American Constitution.

NARRATOR:
While McKinley managed his campaign from behind the scenes in Canton, Ohio, Roosevelt answered Bryan's charges.

WALTER LAFEBER:
Theodore Roosevelt was the best possible spokesman McKinley could have found to make the imperialist case in 1900. He was "the" symbol of American imperialism - the Rough Rider of the War of the 1898, the person who had written more about the glories of American expansionism than probably any other person at that time.

NARRATOR:
"Every expansion of a great civilized power," Roosevelt wrote, "means a victory for law, order, and righteousness."

WALTER LAFEBER:
The Democrats attacked the Republicans on the grounds that they were using force to impose American society on other races in the Philippines and in China. Roosevelt thought this was absurd. Roosevelt pointed out that this is exactly what we had done with the Indians and he hadn't known too many Democrats who really objected to this. And, as he said at one point, "If we are going to turn the Philippines back to the Filipinos, then we should turn Arizona back to the Apaches."

NARRATOR:
As the summer wore on, Americans waited anxiously for news from Peking. The siege was now in its second month. Then, on August 13, after more than a month of fierce fighting, the international army at last reached the Chinese capital to be met by the sickening stench of unburied dead. The Chinese had dug trenches around the city wall and controlled all the gates. The next morning, the international forces attacked. They stormed the walls, broke through the gates, and routed the Chinese. After fifty-five days of fear and waiting, the siege of the foreign compound was lifted--the hostages freed. That same day, 300 miles to the South, Eva and Charles Price prepared to leave with their daughter Florence.

VIRGINIA PHIPPS:
They received word that 20 soldiers were coming to escort them to Peking. They were very leery. They were frightened. But they had no choice.

NARRATOR:
2 weeks before, Eva had written her final letter:

Dear Home Folks,
During the past 6 weeks, we have lived from day to day expecting it to be our last on earth. 33 of our friends were beheaded. Among them were 12 children and two pregnant women.

May God increase our faith and trust, our peace and willingness to do his will.
with a heartful of love to you all, from us three
Charles, Eva, and Florence

NARRATOR:
On the morning of the 15th, the Chinese soldiers brought a wagon to the compound and ordered the Prices to get in.

LUCILLE WILSON:
Before they left that day she hugged Florence. And Florence did not exactly what was ahead. And when Florence left the room,
Aunt Eva got down on her knees and prayed that if it was going to happen, that Florence would be taken first before she would be taken. And they were loaded in the wagon. It was a beautiful morning, such a beautiful morning that they sang going part of the way... They left the compound because they were assured that they would be given security. And they were tricked.

NARRATOR:
After a journey of just twenty miles, the Chinese soldiers drew their guns, and their swords.

LUCILLE WILSON:
They were hacked to death, and they were thrown in the ditch, and after it was all over, some of their Chinese friends went back and got their bodies and buried them.

NARRATOR:
In Peking, some of the soldiers in the international army had already begun to take revenge. But the hostages were free. "Once more," the London Times exulted, "a small segment of the civilized world, cut off and surrounded by an Asiatic horde, has exhibited those moral qualities which render mere numbers powerless." For nearly two months, the president had prayed daily that the hostages would be saved. Now, at the end of August, McKinley had one more cause for alarm. King Humbert the First of Italy had just

been assassinated in his summer palace by an anarchist. And anarchists had recently attempted to kill the Prince of Wales and the Shah of Persia. Now they were targeting the president of the United States.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
The anarchists were the international terrorists of their day. They went around killing heads of state or even just prominent people because they believed in some way this would bring the system down. They believe that the system is corrupt, that it's unfair to little people, and that if you lop off the head, then the body itself will die.

NARRATOR:
The president, was warned of the danger, but went about his life as he always had, returning to Canton, Ohio, to spend the summer with Ida in the house they both so loved. "We began our married life in that house," McKinley said, "our children were born there, one of them died and was buried from there. Some of the tenderest memories of my life are centered there, and some of the saddest."

All that summer McKinley tried to spend as much time with Ida as he could. Ida desperately needed her husband. She lived in constant fear of the violent seizures that threatened to overcome her.

SYLVIA JUKES MORRIS:
And they would come on suddenly. They would be playing cards, or dining out with friends or something. And there was a hissing noise, that was always the warning sign, there was a loud hissing through her teeth and he knew it was coming on. So he would throw either his handkerchief over her head, to spare her embarrassment, or a napkin, whichever, if they were at the dining table.

NARRATOR:
Ida took to knitting slippers, which she gave away to charities. It was said that she knit 3500 pairs while she was First Lady. She cherished the daily rides alone with her husband on the lonely back roads outside of Canton.

On a small farm just 60 miles away, Leon Czolgosz was living with his parents. Twenty-eight year old Czolgosz hated the American government. He believed that all rulers were the enemies of working people.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
He is the son of immigrants, but American born, who had sort of knocked around. Leon would drift off and he would work at various jobs in cities and he would come back to the farm. He was almost certainly mentally disturbed.

NARRATOR:
Later his family would recall that Leon had stayed up night after night reading accounts of King Humbert's assassination.

Part IV Anything Seemed Possible (45 minutes)

NARRATOR:
Across America, the presidential campaign was the great fall entertainment. Never before had candidates campaigned so hard, so far, or spent so much money. William Jennings Bryan, just 40 years old, was a firebrand, criss-crossing the country, speaking, 6, 8, even 12 times a day. But the Republicans had their own young powerhouse, the 41-year-old vice-presidential nominee. "I am as strong as a bull moose," Theodore Roosevelt told reporters, and no one doubted him.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
He becomes the sensation of the 1900 campaign. He can match William Jennings Bryan as a campaigner. Bryan could campaign 18 hours a day, so could Theodore Roosevelt. Bryan could draw big crowds, Theodore Roosevelt could draw bigger crowds. Bryan could excite crowds by what he said, Theodore Roosevelt could excite crowds by who he was.

NARRATOR:
By September, the Republicans appeared to be taking the lead. With the economy strong, Bryan was having a hard time drumming up enthusiasm for his anti-imperialist campaign.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
He can't get any fire going. He can't arouse the public. He's campaigning out in Kansas, and he's going on about "How terrible it is and what a danger it is to the country that we have this empire that's gonna drag us down," supposedly one farmer looked at another one and said, "Price of hogs is 60 cents a pound. Guess we can stand it."

With the election just two months away, Bryan decided to change course, and began to attack McKinley for his alliance with big business. Bryan blasted the president for his support of the Trusts, the giant corporations that were swallowing up many of America's small businesses. The Trusts were destroying competition, manipulating prices, buying and selling politicians.

DAVID NASAW:
Bryan is appealing to the plain people. Bryan is saying very clearly that the railroads, the manufacturers, the bankers, Wall Street were all fleecing the common folk, the farmers, the workers.

Bryan was a demon, an absolutely frightening character for the upper classes for the wealthy. And there are moments in 1900 where fear ripples through the upper classes.

NARRATOR:
But for all his fiery oratory, Bryan still faced an uphill battle. Prosperity was the Republican rallying cry. A full dinner pail the party slogan. But that September, coal miners in the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania, were threatening to walk off the job. A strike could throw the economy into turmoil, and give Bryan one last chance.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
This can shut down the factories. This can shut the productive manufacturing side of the American economy down fast. The other thing is that anthracite coal was the chief home heating fuel. So that a miners strike could bring a long, cold winter.

It's the kind of wild card that no politician and particularly not somebody who is as commanding and controlling as William McKinley ever wants to see happen.

NARRATOR:
Throughout 1900, there had been ugly labor disputes everywhere. Bricklayers and carpenters, cigarmakers and brewers, stone masons, hod carriers, mill hands, all were demanding better working conditions and higher pay.

In the Pennsylvania coal fields, the president of the United Mine Workers had been trying for more than a year to organize a divided group of miners.

John Mitchell was only 30 years old. He wore a jeweled ring and a Prince Albert suit, but the miners liked and trusted him. He was one of their own. His father had been a miner, and Mitchell himself had begun work in the mines when he when he was just a boy.

DONALD L. MILLER:
Child labor is common practice. The average miner is making about $400 dollars a year; it wasn't enough to support a family. Consequently, when you were 9, 10 years old you were pulled out of school whether you liked it or not, and off you went into a place called a "breaker," which is a huge factory for the processing of coal. And there, the boys would sit and coal would come down in chutes underneath them. They couldn't wear gloves because they had to go into the coal by hand and pick out the slate and the rock from the coal as it came roaring down under them. And they had bosses, working behind them with bull whips. And there was so much dust in the breaker that the kids would wear bandannas across their faces and they'd take them off and all you would see was just the little whites of their eyes.

Mitchell knew first hand the misery of mining, but he also knew how difficult it would be to unite a divided work force...Welsh, Slavs, Italians, Poles, Irish.

Mitchell's main challenge was that the work force is divided along ethnic lines. And there's deep hatred. When the Slavic miners were brought into the region, they were brought in, it was believed, to depress

wages and they got a great American welcome when they come off the trains. They were stoned by the Irish miners.

John Mitchell had an exceedingly difficult task ahead of him, one that had frustrated every other organizer. Beginning back in the 1850's. Every union movement had failed because of these ethnic divisions and differences. And a lot of his advisors counseled him that he was facing an absolutely impossible task.

NARRATOR:
The summer heat wave lingered into September across much of the country.

In Galveston, Texas, the beaches drew tourists from as far away as Kansas City. Down at the Pagoda bathhouse, bathers were enjoying the heavy surf. Few paid any heed to the report on September 4 that a hurricane was building out in the Gulf of Mexico.

JOEL B. KIRKPATRICK, JR.:
Galveston was a popular vacation destination. They had music in public parks. There was even a man who invented a buggy with a sail on it who sailed along the beach.

NARRATOR:
Despite daily warnings about the storm, it was business as usual down at Galveston's deepwater harbor. More than a hundred ships lined the stone-capped piers.

RONALD P. STAGNO:
Galveston was really the main hub of commerce in the entire state of Texas. It was the main export for almost all of the Texas crops, particularly cotton. It was one of the most prosperous cities in the entire country. Some people even called it "a second New York City."

NARRATOR:
Washed by Galveston Bay on one side, and the Gulf of Mexico on the other, Galveston was a city of 36,000, sitting precariously on a narrow sand island, rising only a few feet above sea level.

RONALD P. STAGNO:
Galveston Island is a barrier island. It sits out there and protects the mainland from the power of storm surge. It is a barrier against hurricanes. And nothing at all protects Galveston. There had been talk of building a wall against the sea along the ocean shore, but a sea wall was expensive, and a bond proposed to raise the money never even came up for a vote.

JOEL B. KIRKPATRICK, JR.:
The people of this island denied the power of that Gulf of Mexico out there for years and years. They respected the gulf but they were not afraid of it. The 10 to 12 foot natural sand dunes that had been on the

front of Galveston had been removed so tourists could have easier access to the beach. So one of the natural barriers was gone. They thought they could ride out anything, anything.

NARRATOR:
On September 8th, the head of the National Weather Service in Galveston woke early and was down at the beach by 5am. Isaac Cline didn't like what he saw.

"The storm swells were increasing in magnitude and frequency," he later wrote. "Great danger was approaching."

Cline was a careful, meticulous man. He lived with his family in a house he had built near the beach which he thought could withstand any storm. He was unaccustomed to rash judgments.

When he telegraphed the Weather Bureau in Washington, he tried to restrain his mounting anxiety: "Unusually heavy swells from southeast... Such high water with opposing winds never observed previously." But that day in downtown Galveston, no one paid much attention to warnings about the weather.

LINDA MACDONALD:
It was a Saturday morning and many people worked at least half a day that morning. I remember my grandfather telling me about playing in the surf and how grand it was to see the waves smashing on the beach.

NARRATOR:
But as the wind increased hour by hour, the tide inch by inch, Cline began to fear the worst. At noon, he hurried to the beachfront, warning everyone, that "great danger threatened."

LINDA MACDONALD:
He went up and down the beach telling people, "Seek higher ground. Move into the heart of the city." But for the residents of Galveston, keep in mind "higher ground" is very relative. Along the sea front it was two-and-half feet above sea level, downtown, four-and-half feet, and somewhere out in the Gulf is a 20-foot tidal surge heading full force for Galveston. By the middle of the afternoon, winds gusted up to 60 miles an hour, the tide had reached 8 feet. Bridges washed out, trains stopped running, there was no longer any way to leave the island.

NARRATOR:
"An awful disaster," Cline wrote, "was upon us." At 3 o'clock, Cline reported to Washington one last time.

"Gulf rising, water covers streets of about half city."

Then the lines from Galveston fell silent. The city perched on the edge of the sea was entirely cut off from the outside world.

Galveston reeled as the winds punished its unprotected shores. The sea rose higher and higher, flooding the downtown, reaching as high as a man's chest.

JOEL B. KIRKPATRICK, JR.:
Estimates of the wind speed were 120 miles, ah, an hour and upwards. That's the kind of wind that will drive a straw through a palm tree, or it's full of sand, will abrade the hide right off of you.

NARRATOR:
Kline left the telegraph office and fought his way home. "I waded nearly two miles to my home through water, often above my waist," he wrote. "Hurricane winds were driving timbers and slates, roofs of buildings were flying through the air.

LINDA MACDONALD:
Around seven-thirty a great tidal surge hit the south side of the city. It knocked buildings off of their foundations. And houses fell upon houses and whole blocks of houses.

RONALD P. STAGNO:
The rapid rise of water drove Isaac and, and his family higher and higher, up to the second level of their--their home and there, they could see all of the debris being whipped around by all the water

NARRATOR:
Suddenly a quarter mile section of trolley track tossed loose by the storm slammed into the Cline home.

"The house creaked," Cline wrote, "and was carried over into the surging waters. With my wife and six year old child, I was carried down under the wreckage. My wife's clothing was entangled and she never rose again... A flash of lightning revealed my baby girl floating on wreckage a few feet away. I struggled out of the timbers and reached her."

Cline and his daughter drifted in the darkness for hours, enduring the fury of the storm.

"Sunday, September 9th, came with a clear sky," Cline remembered "almost a calm and quiet sea. A most beautiful day. But oh, the horrible sights that greeted our eyes."

Nearly half of the homes of Galveston had been swept away. In one area where 20,000 people had lived, not a house remained.

JOEL B. KIRKPATRICK, JR.:
Galveston was like a war zone that had been bombed. All the homes along the Galveston beach front had been splintered and overturned. Galveston lost between 6,000 and 7,000 people out of a population of 36,000. That's one in six. The day after the storm, they tolled the bell for people who died until they

reached the point where they would be constantly tolling the bell and so they stopped. There was nothing but wreckage and bodies on this island. It was a sandbar piled high with death and full of destruction.

NARRATOR:
It had been the worst natural disaster in the nation's history. The first reports from Galveston spoke of a city "lifeless and bloomless, streets choked with debris and corpses, the vomitings of a maddened, retching ocean."

9 days after the storm, Clara Barton and the Red Cross arrived to tend the wounded and the homeless. Aid poured in from all over the country. As soon as he got word, President McKinley ordered troops to Galveston with tents and emergency supplies.

But in the face of the overwhelming disaster, even as they grieved, the people of Galveston began to rebuild. The bridges would be higher, the buildings stronger, the wharves reconstructed, as one resident said, to withstand "even such a hurricane as the one we have just experienced."

JOEL B. KIRKPATRICK, JR.:
The people of this little sandbar showed a great deal of grit and determination. They rebuilt, they came back, they tried to bring this little city together again.

LINDA MACDONALD:
There was a tremendous feeling of optimism and wanting to build back and to reclaim their city, and it's a source of great pride to those who stayed here.

NARRATOR:
It was 14 days before Isaac Cline was able to file his formal report on the hurricane. He concluded, "It appears that a sea wall would have broken the swells and saved much of the loss of both life and property."

RONALD P. STAGNO:
Isaac Cline recommended that something had to be done to protect this city from catastrophic storms in the future. What they had thought about years ago was what he thought they should do now. They should build that sea wall. Nothing had ever been done like this before. Three miles long, 100 feet wide, 16.5 feet high.

NARRATOR:
Galveston still sits precariously on a sandbar, protected by the sea wall built after the most destructive hurricane in the nation's history --the hurricane of 1900.

Two weeks after the Galveston hurricane, on September 17th, in coal towns throughout northeastern Pennsylvania, the United Mine Workers issued a call for a strike, demanding recognition of their union and a living wage.

But on the morning of the strike, when the work whistle blew, no one knew - not the press, White House, or even the union - what the miners would do.

Union President John Mitchell was asking bitterly divided miners to challenge the mightiest monopoly in America, a handful of wealthy coal operators, controlled by America's most powerful financier, J. Pierpont Morgan.

DONALD L. MILLER:
By 1900, J.P. Morgan Enterprises, just about wrapped up the entire anthracite region. So you're fighting a distant corporation way off on Wall Street and how do you reach out to that? How do you reach out even to communicate with it? And it's the largest industrial conglomeration, the largest industrial consolidation in the country, this anthracite empire.

The miners feared the coal operators, but they distrusted one another even more. The men came from different countries, spoke different languages, and Mitchell had spent years trying to unite them.

He had sent in teams of organizers before he arrives in the anthracite region and they worked inside the community, learning the languages of the people, appreciating what they ate, appreciating their customs.

And when he spoke to miners, it was this: You don't have to drink, if you're Irish, with Italians, but you work with them and to get anything done in the way of improvements in the work force at the job, at the job site, you've got to bury your antagonism, temporarily, and join with these people in a common effort. Otherwise, you know, you're just fodder, cannon fodder for the capitalists.

He had a refrain. Everywhere he went it was the same. "The coal you mine is not Slavic coal. It's not Irish coal. It's not Polish coal. It's not Italian coal. It's coal.

NARRATOR:
By the day of the strike, Mitchell had convinced nine thousand miners to join the union. But more than 140,000 miners had not. Unless most of them went on strike, the union would be broken, the union men thrown out of their homes and fired, never to work in the mines again. In one home after another, miners and their wives struggled with a difficult decision. At dawn in the little coal towns across northeastern Pennsylvania, every miner wondered what his neighbor would do. Then slowly, men began to drift from their homes in their Sunday best.

To the astonishment of everyone, 90,000 men stayed out of the mines that first day. Some marched from one mine to the next, urging those who were still at work to come out and join them.

DONALD L. MILLER:
These are not radical people. They're fighting for a piece of the American pie, in a sense, so little, a decent living wage so they could continue to support their churches, support their communities and support their families.

NARRATOR:
By week's end, 120,000 miners had joined the strike. By the second week well over 90% of the mines were closed. But the mine owners refused to negotiate.

As the strike continued, Mitchell was becoming a hero, especially to the boys in whose ranks he had once stood, the breaker boys.

"As I saw those eager eyes peering at me, " he said, "the fight had a new meaning for me. I felt that I was fighting for the boys, fighting a battle for innocent childhood."

By the middle of October, the miners had been out for a month. They had no savings and little help from the union. Some were reduced to scavenging the woods for food. Still, they held on.

WILLIAM W. WHYNE:
The miners at times were actually starving. They couldn't buy from the company store because they, they didn't have the credit. They had to mine the coal to get the credit. And the big companies, the companies that owned the mines, could care less. They thought, "Well, we'll starve them out. If they--if they, they're going to strike, we'll, we'll stop it. They'll either work or else."

NARRATOR:
As the strike wore on, mills, factories, and homes across the country were running low on coal, and prices began to skyrocket. With the election and cold weather coming on fast, the strike had become a campaign issue.

DONALD L. MILLER:
Mitchell timed the strike perfectly. He timed the strike to occur just before the national election to make a fool out of McKinley with his campaign slogan of "a full dinner pail". I mean you can't even heat your homes in New York City and Philadelphia and places like that. Also you throw the issue to William Jennings Bryan. Bryan's running a campaign against these large industries that are wrapping up the economy. With the union and the coal operators stalemated, McKinley grew more and more concerned.

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.:
He's especially worried as the weather gets colder and people's homes are going to start getting cold and that maybe people will blame him or blame the Republicans. So, what he does is he has his friend, his political colleague, Senator Mark Hanna, meet with the mine owners.

DONALD L. MILLER:
Hanna approaches the owners and he lays it right on the line. "If this strike is successful, it's gonna be Bryan, rather than McKinley, and you're in some real hot water at that point because this is the guy who's going after the major monopolies and corporations. You people are running one of the most tightly knit and far-reaching industrial monopolies in the history of the world.

And you don't want Bryan in the presidency. You want Mr. McKinley.

But despite the pressure from Hanna, the mine owners still refused to bargain.

When they refuse, he goes over their heads to Pierpont Morgan, and Morgan puts heavy pressure on, and all of a sudden signs begin to appear that "Yes, we're open for work at an increase of 5 and 6 percent in the wage scale, but no recognition of the union. That's one thing they would not do and wouldn't do.

NARRATOR:
Mitchell rejected the offer. On October 28th, just 1 week before the election, the mine owners made a new proposal. They still refused to recognize the union, but they now offered a ten percent increase in pay.

Mitchell accepted. The strike was over.

DONALD L. MILLER:
What they offer is hardly anything. But the miners are bankrupt. They're starving and they're willing to go back to work because they have to go back to work to support their families.

They got, in a sense, a de facto recognition of the union, that it existed, that Mitchell existed, that the UMW was there and there for the long term. But, believe me, you know, this thing wasn't over because it's just a dress rehearsal for something bigger.

In the fall of 1900, John Mitchell had done what many thought impossible - uniting a divided group of workers.

When Mitchell leaves the region, he leaves a work force of over a hundred thousand men organized in a national union.

In every worker's home after the 1900 strike there would generally be a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and right beside it would be a picture of John Mitchell. "Johnny de Mitch", they called him, ah, "our Lincoln, our savior"...

And when he leaves, the breaker boys get together and they give him a gold medallion which he wears around his neck. And as his carriage leaves Hazelton, um, as many as 5,000 breaker boys followed it outside of town.

With the miner's strike over, Bryan had nothing left to run on.

His attempt to label McKinley an imperialist had failed. So had his hopes to paint the president as a tool of big business. Most Americans didn't seem to care.

NARRATOR:
When the votes were counted, it was McKinley's picture that flashed on giant screens in cities across the country. Americans had voted their pocketbooks.

Prosperity had carried the day as it would so often throughout the coming century.

The policy of the Republican party - building an industrial powerhouse at home and expanding American power abroad - became the policy of the nation.

But while most Republicans were celebrating, the Republican from North Carolina was being forced out of politics.

Congressman George White had not run for reelection - because he knew he could never win.

Across the South, Black men had been kept from the polls by new laws, intimidation, and violence. Even White's own family had been terrorized.

In his farewell speech, White would rise to challenge his colleagues for the final time.

It would be the last speech that any black would give to Congress for the next 28 years.

"These parting words," White said, "are in behalf of an outraged, heartbroken, bruised, and bleeding people, but industrious, loyal people, rising people, full of potential.

"This Mr. Chairman, is perhaps the Negroes' temporary farewell to the American Congress. But let me say, phoenix-like, he will rise-up someday, and come again."

MARGARET WASHINGTON:
Yes, it is a period of demoralization 1900... African Americans, they've had a bad time, Jim Crow is there. But they're not slaves, the world is open to them. And they want things to get better and they're working to make it better.

It's amazing that this song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was composed in 1900. It has become the African American national anthem. And what is there to sing about. Sing about the past. And sing about how far we have come. In spite of the oppression, lift your voices and sing.

It's a new century. This is 1900. This is a new day.

NARRATOR:
As 1900 drew to a close, stories of change continued to herald a new era. In Boston, on Dec. 30, the last horse drawn trolley was replaced by an electric bus. That same week, the first overseas telephone call was made between Key West, Florida, and Havana, Cuba. And on the last day of the 19th century, scientists reported they were searching for messages from Mars. Never had a nation risen so fast and gone so far as the United States had in the past 100 years. America appeared to have everything. There was good reason for hope and confidence: it was more than the wonder of artificial light or ice in the summer and heat in the winter and bath tubs with running water--the possibilities in America seemed greater than they'd ever been.

Only a few were asking whether America had grown too rich and too powerful to live up to its own democratic ideals. At midnight, on December 31, 1900, Americans welcomed the 20th century. 150,000 people gathered in downtown New York. Kansas City blazed with thousands of crimson, incandescent lights. In town after town, newspapers and magazines were predicting marvelous things in the 100 years to come: great Air-Ships would fly across the seas; wireless telephones would span the world; people would watch moving images in their own homes. Someone, someday, would walk on the moon. There were even predictions that the 20th century would see an end to poverty and war. America was the richest and most powerful nation on earth, with a popular president who would lead the country into the new century. Anything seemed possible.

On September 6, 1901 Leon Czolgosz made his way through the enormous crowds at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY. Czolgosz was headed for the Temple of Music - where he would wait for the president of the United States. In his pocket was a short-barrelled, 32 caliber, Iver-Johnson revolver. At 7 minutes past 4, as McKinley reached out to shake the hands of those who had come to greet him, Czolgosz fired twice, and the president fell wounded. For a week, McKinley's life hung in the balance.

He called for Ida on the last day, Friday the 13th. As she bent over him and held his hands, he was heard to murmur, 'Nearer my God to Thee.' Then she was helped from the room.

"My precious left us this morning around 2 o'clock," Ida wrote in her diary. "I hope the dear Lord will take me very soon."

As the country mourned, the Pan American Exposition dimmed its lights. For 2 days, the festival of progress meant to herald the 20th century stood like a silent monument to the dead president. Then, as the new president, young Theodore Roosevelt, made his way to Washington, the Exposition reopened its doors, and turned on its lights.

That night, there were fireworks over Lake Erie.