

WK 33 LABOR ISSUES

5.11.09

READ } FOLLOW CHART FROM WK 30 ²
(SHOULD READ UP TO CH 5 IN ISLAND OF HOPE BY NOW)

WRITE } NO H/W BUT
EXPOSITORY OUTLINE DUE!!

DUE } 5.11 - EXPOSITORY ESSAY PLANNING WORKSHEET
5.18 - TIMELINE
6.1 - FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

BY THIS DATE YOU SHOULD HAVE FINISHED YOUR PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FOR YOUR PAPER. ALSO, YOU SHOULD HAVE NOTES FROM YOUR BOOKS SO YOU CAN BEGIN WRITING YOUR FIRST DRAFT.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL GRADES

This week, grammar students are studying various lifestyles in America in the Gilded Age. Everyday life was beginning to look more and more like yours, but what things were still different? This week you can find out! Also, some of you are continuing your study of the lives that various immigrants led during this period. Life was hard in Eastern cities. Upper-grammar students will learn about a program that reformers of the Children's Aid Society developed to relocate orphans from the city to the West. Dialectic students will continue their in-depth look at daily life of immigrants and their study of the life of Andrew Carnegie.

Rhetoric students this week have three main topics to cover. First, like students on all levels, you'll read about the second administration of President Grover Cleveland. Cleveland had been defeated in his bid for re-election four years earlier because most people thought him too strict. After four years of President Harrison's more lenient policies, which gave segments of the American people what they thought they wanted, America had much bigger civil service and pension plan payments and a treasury that was depleted of gold. Grover Cleveland was running for President again, and Americans gladly welcomed him back for another four-year term!

Last week, you read about the views and successes of the Captains of Industry. This week, rhetoric students will learn about how the other half lived: those who toiled for long hours in the nation's factories. Laborers had almost no rights as employees and often endured a hard life as they worked in mines and factories to produce goods that they seldom could enjoy. As the Gilded Age progressed, leaders arose who sought to help laborers to organize themselves into groups that were strong enough to face down the powerful industrialists. One would think that the American public would have been on the side of these underdogs, looking at these hardworking people with love and compassion. But laborers were mostly foreign immigrants, and established Americans feared that their violent strikes and labor unions would undermine American institutions. They also feared that these newcomers from Europe were importing socialistic and communistic ideas that would rend the fabric of American society. So, those who desired better pay, shorter hours, and safer working conditions had an uphill battle against both profit-seeking industrialists and the general public, who wanted peace and security above all else.

Another group who feared to love were the Southern white leaders. After President Hayes removed federal troops, white Democrats regained power over state governments in the South. Starting in 1890 in Mississippi, white leaders passed a series of unconstitutional and oppressive laws that have come to be collectively called Jim Crow laws. These laws were designed to deny blacks fundamental constitutional rights, especially the right to vote. In the same year, Louisiana passed a law that said that no "colored" people could ride in the same railroad car with whites. Two years later, a group of concerned citizens convinced Homer Plessy, who was $\frac{1}{8}$ black, to board an all-white car as a test of the law. Plessy was told to leave the car and, when he refused, was removed and jailed. In 1896, his case made it to the Supreme Court, which ruled that separate facilities were not inherently unequal. Thus was the Southern practice of segregating blacks and whites legalized. This decision, and the unconstitutional laws that it allowed, created a deep gulf between blacks and whites in the South which has yet to be fully bridged. As whites sought every possible way to "keep the black man down," black leaders arose to combat the illegal and unjust oppression of their people. Some, like Booker T. Washington, advocated patience and hard work for blacks. Others, like W.E.B. Du Bois, thought that blacks should fight for their constitutional rights. As the years went by, the South sunk into deep patterns of racial division and hatred, economic stagnation, and (for many) despair.



Homer Plessy