

lation to just 200,000 persons, most of whom lived as
ment.

th Century In 1924, in partial recognition that
failed, the federal government granted U.S. citi-
ndians, whether or not they had complied with the
sident Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s,
an Reorganization Act (1934), which promoted the re-
ganization and culture. Today, more than 3 million
ng to 500 tribes, live within the United States.

t
nded in 1848, the Spanish-speaking landowners in
est were guaranteed their property rights and granted
vn-out legal proceedings often resulted in the sale or
arrivals. Hispanic culture was preserved in dominant
ch as the New Mexico territories, the border towns,
ia.

oved to find work, such as to the sugar beet fields
, and the building of western railroads. Before 1917,
s open and few records were kept for either seasonal
rs. Mexicans, like their European counterparts, were
nomic development of the region.

vement

tation sparked the conservation movement, and the
hotographs of western landscapes helped to push Con-
ern icons as Yosemite Valley as a California state park
890), and to dedicate the Yellowstone area as the first



California, 1909. Library of Congress

1800s, an increased creation of federal reserves and a federal forest service to pro-
tect federal lands from exploitation. Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Grover
Cleveland reserved 33 million acres of national timber.

With the closing of the frontier era, Americans grew increasingly concerned about the loss of public lands and the natural treasures they contained. The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 and the Forest Management Act of 1897 withdrew federal timberlands from development and regulated their use. While most “conservationists” believed in scientific management and regulated use of natural resources, “preservationists,” such as John Muir, a leading founder of the Sierra Club in 1892, went a step further, and aimed to preserve natural areas from human interference. The education efforts of the Arbor Day, Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club were another sign of a growing conservation movement by 1900.

The New South

While the West was being “won” by settlers and the U.S. Army, the South was recovering from the devastation of the Civil War. Some southerners promoted a new vision for a self-sufficient southern economy built on modern capitalist values, industrial growth, and improved transportation. Chief among them was Henry Grady, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*. Grady spread the gospel of the New South with editorials that argued for economic diversity and laissez-faire capitalism. To attract businesses, local governments offered tax exemptions to investors and the promise of low-wage labor.

Economic Progress

The growth of cities, the textual industry, and improved railroads symbolized efforts to create a “New South” in the late 19th century.” Birmingham, Alabama, developed into one of the nation’s leading steel producers. Memphis, Tennessee, prospered as a center for the South’s growing lumber industry. Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy, became the capital of the nation’s tobacco industry. Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina overtook the New England states as the chief producers of textiles. By 1900, the South had 400 cotton mills employing almost 100,000 white workers. Southern railroad companies rapidly converted to the standard-gauge rails used in the North and West, so the South was integrated into the national rail network. The South’s rate of postwar growth from 1865 to 1900 equaled or surpassed that of the rest of the country in population, industry, and railroads.

Continued Poverty

Despite progress and growth, the South remained a largely agricultural section—and also the poorest region in the country. To a greater extent than before the war, northern financing dominated much of the southern economy. Northern investors controlled three-quarters of the southern railroads and by 1900 had control of the South’s steel industry as well. A large share of the profits from the new industries went to northern banks and financiers. Industrial workers in

the South (94 percent of whom were white) earned half of the national average and worked longer hours than elsewhere. Most southerners of both races remained in traditional roles and barely got by from year to year as sharecroppers and farmers.

The poverty of the majority of southerners was not caused by northern capitalists. Two other factors were chiefly responsible: (1) the South's late start at industrialization and (2) a poorly educated workforce. Only a small number of southerners had the technological skills needed for industrial development. The South failed to invest in technical and engineering schools as did the North. Furthermore, in the late 1800s, political leadership in the South provided little support for the education of either poor whites or poor African Americans. Without adequate education, the southern workforce faced limited economic opportunities in the fast-changing world of the late 19th century.

Agriculture

The South's postwar economy remained tied mainly to growing cotton. Between 1870 and 1900, the number of acres planted in cotton more than doubled. Increased productivity, however, only added to the cotton farmer's problems, as a glut of cotton on world markets caused cotton prices to decline by more than 50 percent by the 1890s. Per capita income in the South actually declined, and many farmers lost their farms. By 1900, more than half the region's white farmers and three-quarters of the black farmers were tenants (or sharecroppers), most of them straining to make a living from small plots of 15 to 20 acres. A shortage of credit forced farmers to borrow supplies from local merchants in the spring with a lien, or mortgage, on their crops to be paid at harvest. The combination of sharecropping and crop liens forced poor farmers to remain tenants, virtual serfs tied to the land by debt.

Some southern farmers sought to diversify their farming to escape the trap of depending entirely on cotton. George Washington Carver, an African-American scientist at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, promoted the growing of such crops as peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans. His work played an important role in shifting southern agriculture toward a more diversified base.

Even so, most small farmers in the South remained in the cycle of debt and poverty. As in the North and the West, hard times produced a harvest of discontent. By 1890, the Farmers' Southern Alliance claimed more than 1 million members. A separate organization for African Americans, the Colored Farmers' National Alliance, had about 250,000 members. Both organizations rallied behind political reforms to solve the farmers' economic problems. If poor black and poor white farmers in the South could have united, they would have been a potent political force, but the economic interests of the upper class and the powerful racial attitudes of whites stood in their way.

Segregation

With the end of Reconstruction in 1877, the North withdrew its protection of the freedmen and left southerners to work out solutions to their own social and economic problems. The Democratic politicians who came to power in the

southern states after Reconstruction, known as redeemers, won support from two groups: the business community and the white supremacists. The latter group favored policies of separating, or segregating, public facilities for blacks and whites as a means of treating African Americans as social inferiors. The redeemers often used race as a rallying cry to deflect attention away from the real concerns of tenant farmers and the working poor. They discovered that they could exert political power by playing on the racial fears of whites.

Discrimination and the Supreme Court During Reconstruction, federal laws protected southern blacks from discriminatory acts by local and state governments. Starting in the late 1870s, however, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down one Reconstruction act after another applying to civil rights. In the *Civil Rights Cases* of 1883, the Court ruled that Congress could not legislate against the racial discrimination practiced by private citizens, which included railroads, hotels, and other businesses used by the public. Then, in 1896, in the landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana law requiring "separate but equal accommodations" for white and black passengers on railroads. The Court ruled that the Louisiana law did not violate the 14th Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws."

These federal court decisions supported a wave of segregation laws, commonly known as Jim Crow laws, that southern states adopted beginning in the 1870s. These laws required segregated washrooms, drinking fountains, park benches, and other facilities in virtually all public places. Only the use of streets and most stores was not restricted according to a person's race.

Loss of Civil Rights Other discriminatory laws resulted in the wholesale disfranchisement of black voters by 1900. In Louisiana, for example, 130,334 black voters were registered in 1896 but only 1,342 in 1904—a 99 percent decline. Various political and legal devices were invented to prevent southern blacks from voting. Among the most common obstacles were literacy tests, poll taxes, and political party primaries for whites only. Many southern states adopted so-called grandfather clauses, which allowed a man to vote only if his grandfather had cast ballots in elections before Reconstruction. The Supreme Court again gave its sanction to such laws in a case of 1898, in which it upheld a state's right to use literacy tests to determine citizens' qualifications for voting.

Discrimination took many forms. In southern courts, African Americans were barred from serving on juries. If convicted of crimes, they were often given stiffer penalties than whites. In some cases, African Americans accused of crimes were not even given the formality of a court-ordered sentence. Lynch mobs killed more than 1,400 men during the 1890s. Economic discrimination was also widespread, keeping most southern African Americans out of skilled trades and even factory jobs. Thus, while poor whites and immigrants learned the industrial skills that would help them rise into the middle class, African Americans remained engaged in farming and low-paying domestic work.

Responding to Segregation Segregation, disenfranchisement, and lynching left African Americans in the South oppressed but not powerless. Some responded with confrontation. Ida B. Wells, editor of the *Memphis Free Speech*

a black newspaper, campaigned against lynching and the Jim Crow laws. Death threats and the destruction of her printing press forced Wells to carry on her work from the North. Other black leaders advocated migration. Bishop Henry Turner formed the International Migration Society in 1894 to help blacks emigrate to Africa. Many African Americans moved to Kansas and Oklahoma.

A third response to oppression, advocated by Booker T. Washington, was to accommodate it. Washington, a former slave, had graduated from Hampton Institute in Virginia. In 1881, he established an industrial and agricultural school for African Americans in Tuskegee, Alabama. There, African Americans learned skilled trades while Washington preached the virtues of hard work, moderation, and economic self-help. Earning money, he said, was like having "a little green ballot" that would empower African Americans more effectively than a political ballot. Speaking at an exposition in Atlanta in 1895, Washington argued that "the agitation of the questions of social equality is the extremist folly." In 1900, he organized the National Negro Business League, which established 320 chapters across the country to support businesses owned and operated by African Americans. Washington's emphasis on racial harmony and economic cooperation won praise from many whites, including industrialist Andrew Carnegie and President Theodore Roosevelt.

Later civil rights leaders had mixed reactions to Washington's approach, especially his Atlanta speech. Some criticized him as too willing to accept discrimination. For example, after 1900, the younger African American leader W. E. B. Du Bois would demand an end to segregation and the granting of equal civil rights to all Americans. (See Chapter 21.) In contrast, other writers have praised Washington for paving the way for black self-reliance because of his emphasis on starting and supporting black-owned businesses.

Farm Problems: North, South, and West

By the end of the 1800s, farmers had become a minority within American society. While the number of U.S. farms more than doubled between 1865 and 1900, people working as farmers declined from 60 percent of the working population in 1860 to less than 37 percent in 1900. All farmers—white or black, westerner or southerner—faced similar problems.

Changes in Agriculture

With every passing decade in the late 1800s, farming became increasingly commercialized—and also more specialized. Northern and western farmers of the late 19th century concentrated on raising single cash crops, such as corn or wheat, for both national and international markets. As consumers, farmers began to procure their food from the stores in town and their manufactured goods from the mail-order catalogs sent to them by Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck. As producers, farmers became more dependent on large and expensive machines, such as steam engines, seeders, and reaper-thresher combines. Ever larger farms were run like factories. Unable to afford the new equipment, small