Georgia Studies

Unit 5: The New South

Lesson 1: Economics of the New South

Study Presentation
Lesson 1: Economics of the New South

- ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
  - How did politics, public discourse, and social reaction lead to divisions in Georgia after Reconstruction?
The Bourbon Triumvirate

- Democrats controlled Georgia’s government after Reconstruction.
- Powerful Democratic leaders, known as the “Bourbon Triumvirate” were Joseph E. Brown, Alfred H. Colquitt, and John B. Gordon.
- Their goals were:
  - expand Georgia’s economy and ties with industries in the North;
  - maintain the tradition of white supremacy.
Decline of the Bourbon Triumvirate

• “Independent Democrats” criticized the Bourbons for not attending to the needs of the poor or improve education and working conditions in factories.

• Leaders William and Rebecca Latimer Felton worked to improve conditions for poor Georgians using newspapers to highlight problems in the state.

• Rebecca Latimer Felton later briefly served as the first female United States Senator (from November 21, 1922 until the next day).

• The convict lease system “rented” prisoners to companies to use as workers. It took many years for the poor conditions the prisoners endured to be brought to light and changed.
The New South Era

• Challengers to the Bourbon Triumvirate wanted Georgia to be more industrialized.

• **Henry Grady** was a speaker and newspaper editor.

• Grady described Georgia as a place which could have competitive industry and more efficient farming.

• **Grady** envisioned improved race relations in a “New South” which left its antebellum past behind.
Business in Georgia

• First International Cotton Exposition was held in 1881. Helped to show off the economic recovery of the South after Reconstruction. Other International Cotton Expositions were held in 1887 and 1895.

• 1895 International Cotton Exposition
  – 800,000 visitors in three months
  – designed to show economic recovery in the South
  – encouraged investments in southern businesses
Education in the New South Era

• Funding to provide elementary education for all children in Georgia grew slowly from 1868-1895.

• Teachers were paid a little more than farm hands and had little or no training. Normal schools were started to train more teachers.

• The “school year” was only three months long which allowed children to work on farms or in factories.

• The state constitution of 1877 did not allow for school beyond 8th grade and segregated black and white students.
Agriculture in the New South Era

- Crop prices declined through the 1870s.
- The Grange and the Farmers’ Alliance started out as social groups but began to reorganize to put pressure on lawmakers to find ways to help farmers. This was known as populism.
- Georgia created the first state to have a Department of Agriculture.
- Co-ops allowed farmers to work together to buy goods and equipment at a lower cost.
# The Progressive Movement

## Goal: Progress!

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<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Business</th>
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<td>• fight poverty</td>
<td>• break up large corporations</td>
<td>• greater voice of “the people”</td>
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<td>• Improve child labor laws</td>
<td>• regulate businesses</td>
<td>• more voters</td>
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<tr>
<td>• improve working conditions</td>
<td>• decrease corporate power in government</td>
<td>• did not seek to increase participation of blacks in elections</td>
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The People’s Party

- **Populists**: Supporters of a political idea (populism) that supported the rights of the “common” people in their struggle with the wealthy people.
- Poor farmers and low wage workers were followers of Populists.
- Grange and Farmer’s Alliance worked to protect farmers’ rights – joined with unions to create People’s Party.
- Wanted “Australian ballot” – printed by the government, not local political parties, then collected and locked in ballot boxes.
- **Tom Watson**, famous Georgia populist, worked for Rural Free Delivery bill to deliver mail to rural areas for free.
Georgia’s Progressive Era Governors

• Hoke Smith: worked to concentrate political power in the rural counties instead of larger counties and cities
  – white supremacist
  – led passage of law requiring land ownership before a person could vote – excluded many blacks
  – better funding of public schools
  – child labor laws passed
  – Smith-Lever Act (1914): created Agricultural Extension Service to teach improved farming methods
  – Smith-Hughes Act: helped establish vocational schools for youth

• “Little Joe” Brown: son of Civil War era governor Joseph E. Brown
1906 Atlanta Riot

• Began as a result of racial tensions between white and black citizens of Atlanta.

• In 1906, Hoke Smith (former publisher of the Atlanta Journal) and Clark Howell (editor of the Atlanta Constitution) were running for election as Georgia’s governor in 1906. Both men used their influence in the media to try and take away voting rights for black citizens.

• Newspapers began to publish stories about African American men attacking white women.

• Rioting began on September 22\textsuperscript{nd} and lasted until September 26\textsuperscript{th}. Military forces are eventually brought in to help end the riots.

• 21 people killed; hundreds of others wounded and large amounts of property were destroyed.
The Trial of Leo Frank

- 1913: man accused of killing a 14-year-old employee, Mary Phagan in Atlanta
- Mr. Frank was a Jewish man from New York
- Little evidence against Mr. Frank, but he was convicted and sentenced to death
- Governor Slaton changed death sentence to life imprisonment
- Armed men, calling themselves the Knights of Mary Phagan, took Frank from the prison, and he was lynched
- White supremacist Ku Klux Klan reborn from the members of the Knights of Mary Phagan
The County Unit System

• In 1917, the Neil Primary Act created the “county unit system”.

• Plan designed to give small counties more power in state government so that the larger counties (which contained large numbers of black voters) would have less power.

• Smaller counties had more county unit “votes” even though they had fewer voters.

• People could be elected to office without getting a majority of votes.

• Declared unconstitutional in 1962.