

East and West Shaking Hands at Laying Last Rail, by Andrew Russell

Transcontinental Railroad – 1869

As the railroad was gaining in popularity, and rails were cropping up all over the United States, one thing was missing. Goods to be shipped to the West Coast (California) either had to be loaded onto wagons for the trip over the Sierra Mountains, or shipped by ocean via Cape Horn, South America. It was time for a **transcontinental railroad!**

A plan was made for the **Central Pacific Railroad Company** to build the western portion, while the **Union Pacific Railroad Company** built the eastern portion. The locomotive *Jupiter* was built in New York for Central Pacific, shipped by ocean liner to California, then sent east. The Union Pacific locomotive #119 was sent west. The rails were laid, and the two locomotives met on **May 10, 1869**, in Promontory, Utah. America's East was now connected to the West.

Before a large crowd a ceremonial "golden spike" was put in place, engraved with the words:

*"May God continue the unity of our country,
as this railroad unites the two great oceans of the world."*

©2014 Kathy Rabideau www.catholicschoolhouse.com

61



Portrait engraved by G.E. Perine & Co., NY, 1855. Used as Public Relations portrait in *History of Woman Suffrage* by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Volume I, published in 1881

Susan B. Anthony – 1869

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) was a civil-rights activist and leader in the women's suffrage (right to vote) movement.

Susan loved to learn, and could read and write by the age of three.

While in elementary school, her teacher refused to teach her long division because she was a girl. When her father learned of the poor and unfair education she was receiving, he pulled her out of school. He joined with other families to form a group homeschool and saw to her education himself!

She joined with **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** to form the first women's temperance society. Susan believed in equal rights for all people and thought that by working together blacks and women could achieve more. When black men got the right to vote with the passage of the 15th Amendment in 1869, she devoted herself to working even harder for women's right to vote. She and Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869.



Bell speaking into telephone prototype, 1876

Bell Invents Telephone – 1876

The telephone was invented by **Alexander Graham Bell** in **1876**. He used his musical knowledge of notes and pitch to figure out how tones could travel over wires. The invention of the telephone was one more step in improving communication across our vast country.

Bell recorded in his journal on **March 10, 1876**, the first words spoken over the telephone. He said to his assistant in the next room, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you."

The Bell Telephone Company became an important business, giving jobs to many. Women worked as operators, while men were employed as linemen. This huge company became known to Americans as "Ma Bell."

The invention of the rotary dial, which transmitted pulses over the line, reduced the dependence on operators. Touch-tone dialing was introduced by AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph Company) in 1963 and is the method used today.



The American Base-Ball Players in England, Match between the Red Stockings and the Athletics, Prince's Ground. Published in Harper's Weekly. Hand-colored wood engraving, September 12, 1874

Baseball's National League – 1876

Baseball evolved from the English game of **rounders**, played by the early colonists. Like baseball, it involved hitting a ball and advancing through bases. In 1845, Alexander Cartwright became known as the Father of Baseball by starting the first local baseball club, the Knickerbocker Base Ball club of New York.

Baseball became an American phenomenon when the Civil War helped spread it throughout the country. Union soldiers who knew the game played for recreation. Other soldiers and confederate prisoners watched them, and then brought the game home when they returned from the war. Soon people from all parts of the country were playing the game.

The **National League** formed in **1876**, making baseball a professional sport. **Babe Ruth** joined the New York Yankees in 1920, and became baseball's biggest star. Other famous players include Ty Cobb, Joe DiMaggio, Jackie Robinson, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, and Pete Rose.



Thomas Edison light bulb

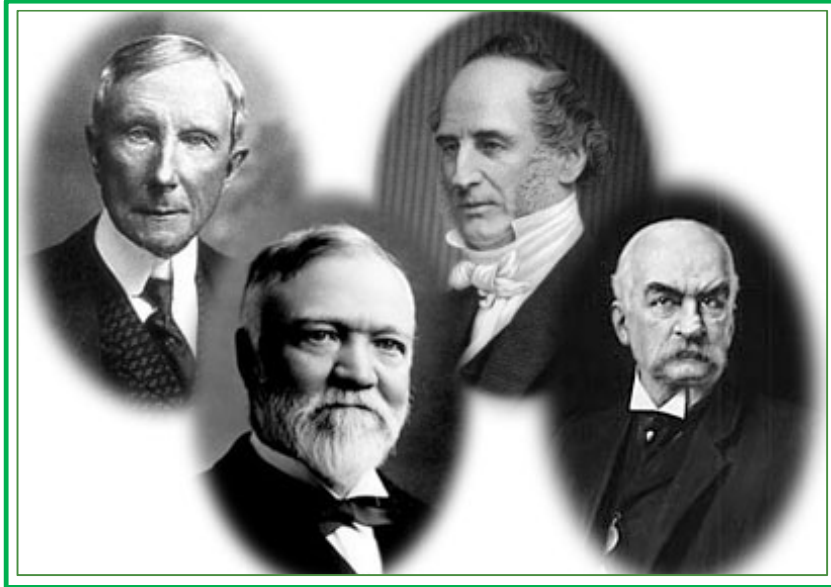
Edison's Light Bulb – 1879

In 1878, **Thomas Edison** started the Edison Electric Light Company to produce a more reliable, longer-lasting light bulb. He improved upon previous designs of the incandescent light bulb by using carbon filaments and applied for a patent in **1879**.

Edison had other great inventions and set up the first industrial research lab, Edison Labs. He also received patents for the **motion picture, phonograph, alkaline battery, stock ticker, Portland cement, a way to distribute electricity to houses**, and more.

Edison did not dwell on mistakes. Once, he handed a new bulb to his helper, Jimmy, to be carried upstairs for testing. Jimmy dropped the bulb. Instead of being angry, Edison made a new bulb, which took several days. Remarkably, he once again called Jimmy to carry the bulb upstairs, "carefully this time," restoring Jimmy's confidence!

His lab assistants, called "muckers," worked night and day. Edison believed hard work was the key to success. He famously said, ***"Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."***



Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan

Wealthy Industrialists

Around the turn of the 20th century, new technologies changed world-wide industries. People who aggressively formed companies and **monopolies** often became very wealthy. This led to an age of extremes, in wealth and status, often called “**the gilded age.**”

Cornelius Vanderbilt (1774-1877) made his wealth in shipping and railroads. He gave the money to start Vanderbilt University.

John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) founded the Standard Oil Company. He supported many medical and educational causes, including the University of Chicago and Johns Hopkins University.

J.P. Morgan (1837-1913) was a successful financier and banker. His wealth enabled him to be a benefactor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harvard University, and other hospitals and schools.

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) formed Carnegie Steel Company. J.P. Morgan would later merge this company with others to become US Steel. He used this wealth to form libraries, colleges, and schools.



The City Museum of Washington, DC. The structure was originally one of the many Carnegie libraries, built in 1902, photo by Bobak Ha'Eri, 2008

Public Libraries – 1881

The idea of a library was not new. Since ancient times there had been a need to have a gathering place to preserve ideas and writings.

During the early days of our country, libraries were formed, usually beginning with the collection of a single wealthy patron.

Subscriptions were offered which allowed people to pay for membership and borrowing privileges.

After the Civil War, newly forming women's groups pushed for the organization of free libraries to give equal access to all people. In **1876**, the **American Library Association** was founded. That same year Melvil Dewey developed the **Dewey Decimal System**.

In the late 1800's there was an explosion in growth of public libraries in the US. This can mostly be attributed to one man, philanthropist **Andrew Carnegie**, who helped build more than 2,000 public libraries around the world between **1881 and 1929**. He believed libraries were key to any man being able to achieve an education.



Vintage poster, date unknown

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show – 1883

Born in 1846, **William F. Cody** became a talented frontiersman with a reputation for skill and bravery. When he was young, he traveled west, watching cattle and driving teams for the wagon trains. For a time he hunted buffalo to feed the hungry men working on the railroad, earning himself the nickname, "**Buffalo Bill.**"

All of these experiences gave him a great vision of what the Wild West was about. He was becoming a national folk hero, partly because of books, called dime novels, which told the story of "Buffalo Bill."

He soon discovered that he also had talent as a showman, and in **1883**, he organized **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show**. This show was an outdoor extravaganza that was part history and part circus. It involved buffalo hunts with real buffalo, fights with Indians, Pony Express rides, roping demonstrations and of course showed off Buffalo Bill's excellent marksmanship! Buffalo Bill's shows turned the simple cowboy into a hero!



Ad appearing in *The Photographic Herald and Amateur Sportsman*, November 1889

Eastman's Camera – 1888

George Eastman wanted to make a camera that would be easy to use and portable. First, he invented photographic roll film to replace the heavy individual glass plates. Then, in **1888**, his first camera which used this roll film became available. After all 100 pictures were taken, the camera was sent back to the factory for processing and reloaded with fresh film. He called this camera “Kodak.”

The **Eastman Kodak Company** used the slogan “You press the button, we do the rest” during the 1890s to promote this new camera, declaring that no particular skill was needed to operate it. This made photography available to the general public for the first time.

Eastman's business ideas were also new at the time. He empowered his workers by paying dividends in addition to wages. These dividends increased with the profits of the company.

Eastman used his money as a philanthropist to better society, building universities and clinics. He was instrumental in the construction of MIT and the Eastman School of Dentistry.



Landing at Ellis Island, 1902

Immigration – 1840s-1920s

America was the land of opportunity for much of the world. During the 19th century, immigrants came in waves:

- 1840s and 1850s – **Irish**, potato famine
- 1840s to 1880s – **Germans**, economic depression, unemployment
- 1849 to 1870 – **Chinese**, gold rush and transcontinental railroad labor
- 1870s to 1900s – **Scandinavians**, shortage of farmland
- 1880s to 1920s – **Eastern European Jews**, religious persecution
- 1880s to 1920s – **Italians** and **Eastern Europeans**, poverty

Many immigrant groups were initially discriminated against (treated badly). There was even a political party, the “know-nothings,” which formed in the 1850s under the belief that low-wage earning immigrants would take away jobs and ruin America.

Many immigrants overcame difficulties through hard work and were a major source of population growth at this time. As these communities “melted” together into the new American culture, the United States became known as the “Melting Pot” of the world.