

Assign # _____ Name _____ State: _____

The Age of the Railroads - Introduction

CLAIM: The growth and consolidation of railroads benefitted the nation but also led to corruption and required government regulation.

By 1890, rail lines totaled more than (1)_____. But building and running the railroads was difficult and dangerous work for thousands of workers. By 1888, more than (2)_____ railroad workers had died and another 20,000 had been injured. Workers earned very little - and Asians and African Americans less than white workers.

The railroads helped link the nation. Schedules were difficult to maintain, however, as each community set its own (3)_____. So, in 1883, the railroads and many towns began using four standard time zones. Railroads stimulated growth of the iron, (4)_____, coal, lumber, and glass industries. They also helped towns and cities grow. George Pullman built a factory to make railroad sleeping cars. As demand for his cars rose, he built a large town south of (5)_____ to house the workers he needed. While the housing was of good quality, Pullman tried to control his workers' lives. They conducted a violent (6)_____ in 1894.

Some business practices led to (7)_____. In the Crédit Mobilier scandal of 1868, some officers of the Union Pacific used trickery to earn millions for themselves. They also gave stock to some (8)_____ officials to buy silence. These scandals helped fuel the anger of the Grangers, (9)_____ who wanted to limit rail companies' power. They persuaded some states to pass laws regulating railroad rates. In 1877, the (10)_____ said government could regulate industry for the public good. Congress passed the Interstate (11)_____ Act in 1887, but the commission it created was not strong enough to control the railroads.

The (12)_____ of 1893 and 1894 changed the industry. Many railroads failed, and a few survivors seized many of the rest. By 1900, seven companies owned most of the nation's railways.