

Breaking the Gilded Hierarchy: The Bully Pulpit and the Birth of the Square Deal

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Individual Paper

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Process Paper

Choosing my topic for National History Day was a struggle because I wanted to find a historical moment that personally impacts my life today. As an avid reader and writer in my hometown of Pittsburgh, I serve as the only youth journalist for KDKA, the oldest radio station in the nation. Journalism, and by extension all forms of expressive writing, is a central part of my identity.

When I first learned about President Theodore Roosevelt in my AP United States History class, my teacher introduced him as a true intellectual. Roosevelt was a man who reportedly devoured one book a day, authored 35 of his own, and served as a member of the American Historical Association.

As a president, he immediately stood out to me due to his clear intellect. As I learned about the Square Deal and how progressive it was for an era of low government oversight, it remained at the forefront of my mind during my search for a topic. Eventually, I landed on the 1902 Anthracite Coal Strike because of its roots in my home state of Pennsylvania and how it eventually led to the implementation of Roosevelt's Square Deal policies.

The coal strike embodies the NHD theme by highlighting how a working-class labor revolution over one of the nation's most essential resources forced the federal government to confront industrial power. Unlike previous presidents who reflexively sided with business interests, Roosevelt intervened not to crush the strike, but to mediate it. This marked both a revolution and a reformation in the role of the American presidency.

I began my research by exploring broad overviews of industrialization and corporate power in the Gilded Age through documentaries, podcasts, and scholarly articles. From there, I narrowed my focus to primary sources, such as Roosevelt's speeches and correspondence, as well as firsthand accounts from union leaders and mine owners. Secondary sources helped me understand the

broader economic and political context of Eastern Pennsylvania and the rise of federal regulatory power.

I chose the paper category to display my research because I already write in forms of poetry, essay, and journalism; completing this project felt like adding yet another tool to my writing belt. Furthermore, the paper format allowed for a larger word count, providing the space to expand upon and analyze my sources more deeply.

Finally, my thesis argues that the Square Deal redefined the presidency by positioning Roosevelt as a mediator between capital and labor, rather than a defender of corporate monopolies. In today's highly polarized political climate, where compromise often feels impossible, Roosevelt's intervention highlights a moment when executive leadership prioritized national stability over partisan or corporate loyalty, reshaping the modern expectations of presidential responsibility.

Beginning in the 1870s, the United States transformed from a simple mercantile nation into a major industrial power, a shift that concentrated wealth and destabilized social conditions. This era, characterized by its opulent displays of wealth and corporate power, became known as the Gilded Age.¹ Yet, like all things gilded, this rapid growth hid extreme wealth inequality and hazardous working conditions. By the turn of the 20th century, while the American economy was rapidly expanding, society was falling apart.²

The human cost of the Industrial Revolution was staggering. Roughly two-thirds of the population belonged to a struggling working class.³ By 1890, eleven out of every twelve families in the United States earned less than \$1,200 per year, roughly \$13,780 today.⁴ Laborers faced standard ten to twelve-hour shifts, but coal workers were uniquely trapped: their employers were also their landlords. High rents ensured that miners could never afford to leave, confining families to overcrowded and unsanitary tenement housing.⁵ Unregulated labor ran rampant, as documented by social reformer Jacob Riis, who observed: “There is no such thing as a dinner hour; men and women eat while they work, and the ‘day’ is lengthened at both ends far into the night.”⁶ In the nation’s urban slums, one-third of children that were born, died before reaching five years of age.⁷

While working-class Americans faced deteriorating living conditions, industrial elites accumulated unprecedented wealth. Within thirty years, through largely unregulated corporate consolidation, the United States became the world’s leading industrial giant, with a GDP growing

¹ Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, "Front Matter," introduction to *The Gilded Age : a Tale of Today* (Floating Press, 2011)

² *Ibid.*

³ Thomas Pollock, "Progress and Poverty: Industrial Capitalism in the Gilded Age, 1877-1893," *Who Built America?* 2, no. 1, <https://www.whobuiltamerica.org/book/wba/part-i-monopoly-and-upheaval-1877-1914>.

⁴ "Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970," United States Census Bureau, last modified 1977, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1975/compendia/hist_stats_colonial-1970.html.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ "Homelessness," in *How the Other Half Lives : Studies among the Tenements of New York : with Related Documents*, by Jacob A. Riis and David Leviatin, 2nd ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011), [Page 11].

⁷ "Historical Statistics," United States Census Bureau.

by nearly 5% annually.⁸ American steel production surpassed that of Britain, France, and Germany combined.⁹ Industrialists like Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller were hailed as “Titans of Industry” and condemned as “Robber Barons” held a monopoly on power that rivaled the government itself.¹⁰

This corporate dominance eventually triggered a political reaction. In 1896, William Jennings Bryan gained massive popularity by attacking the top 1% and calling for a populist revolution through graduated income taxes and business regulations.¹¹ Fearing a loss of control, industrial leaders heavily financed his contender, McKinley’s campaign, providing solicited donations exceeding \$16.5 million in today’s currency.¹² McKinley’s presidency, however, was short lived, his assassination in 1901 left vice president Theodore Roosevelt, as his successor.¹³ Unlike McKinley, Roosevelt represented a threat to the political dominance of Gilded Age industrialists. He saw the presidency as a place to advocate for the common man, in favor of regulating business.¹⁴ This ideological shift toward regulation was soon tested by the escalating tensions in the energy sector. The turning point came when Roosevelt departed from historical precedent to address the crisis in the coal fields.¹⁵ President Roosevelt’s intervention in the 1902

⁸ Loyola, Mario. 2019. “What Made America Great in the Gilded Age.” The Heritage Foundation. 2019. <https://www.heritage.org/trade/commentary/what-made-america-great-the-gilded-age>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Editors of Encyclopaedia, ed., “Cornelius Vanderbilt,” Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified February 26, 2026, <https://www.britannica.com/money/Cornelius-Vanderbilt-1794-1877>.

¹¹ United States Department of State, “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925),” Office of the Historian, Bureau of Administration, <https://history.state.gov/departments/history/people/bryan-william-jennings>.

¹² Christopher Klein, “How Gilded Age Corruption Led to the Progressive Era,” History, A&E Television Networks, last modified February 4, 2021, <https://www.history.com/articles/gilded-age-progressive-era-reforms>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “The Bully Pulpit.” 2026. Google Books. 2026. https://books.google.com/books?id=4W7Q-gr_TSAC&printsec=copyright#v=onepage&q&f=false.

¹⁵ Jonathan Grossman, “The Coal Strike of 1902: Turning Point in U.S. Policy,” U.S. Department of Labor, last modified 2003, <https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/coalstrike#:~:text=On%20Friday%2C%20October%203%2C%201902,to%20peacemaker%20in%20industrial%20disputes>.

Coal Strike marked a revolution in presidential authority by forcing the federal government to react and compromise with both the workers and industries, a break from the Gilded Age tradition of protecting corporate power, and reforming the role of the president as a mediator between labor, capital, and public welfare.¹⁶ Through his intervention and the reforms later known as the Square Deal, he expanded expectations of federal responsibility in labor disputes and national crises. Roosevelt's reforms rested on three interrelated principles: regulation of corporations, protection of consumers, and conservation of natural resources.¹⁷ These pillars reflected his broader belief that federal authority should actively balance the interests of capital, labor, and the public.

Before Theodore Roosevelt, the American presidency was defined by Congressional dominance and executive passivity with policies like *laissez faire* being central to shaping the Gilded Age.¹⁸ Roosevelt, however, revolutionized the role of the President by transforming it into a "bully pulpit", a platform where he could advocate for the "common man".¹⁹ Roosevelt was, from Senator Joseph Foraker's perspective, "a steam engine in trousers."²⁰ His intellectual vitality and restless energy informed his expansive conception of the presidency. Despite his carefully curated persona as a rugged "man of the people," Roosevelt was a product of the very elite he would later challenge.²¹ Roosevelt enjoyed immense economic privilege, which granted

¹⁶ Jonathan Grossman, "The Coal Strike of 1902: Turning Point in U.S. Policy," U.S. Department of Labor, last modified 2003, <https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/coalstrike#:~:text=On%20Friday%2C%20October%203%2C%201902,to%20peacemaker%20in%20industrial%20disputes>.

¹⁷ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. 2019. "Square Deal | United States History." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Square-Deal>.

¹⁸ Patterson, James T. 1976. "The Rise of Presidential Power before World War II." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 40 (2): 39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1191370>.

¹⁹ Brett Zongker, "Papers of President Theodore Roosevelt Now Online," Library of Congress, last modified October 17, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-18-132/papers-of-president-theodore-roosevelt-now-online/2018-10-17/>.

²⁰ Library of Congress Manuscript Division., "Letter from Joseph Benson Foraker to Theodore Roosevelt," Theodore Roosevelt Center, <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/collection/library-of-congress-manuscript-division>.

²¹ "The Family Man - Theodore Roosevelt Association." n.d. www.theodoreroosevelt.org. https://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=991271&module_id=339339.

him a degree of intellectual leisure that was unthinkable for the average American. Beyond his differing policies, Roosevelt had an unconventional view of the Constitution, and rejected his predecessors' narrow interpretation²² of the Constitution as a restrictive set of boundaries on federal power. He famously argued that "the Constitution belongs to the people and not the people to the Constitution."²³ He believed the President had the responsibility to act in the interest of the national welfare unless specifically forbidden by law.²⁴

In 1902, Roosevelt pressured the Justice Department to break up the Northern Securities Company.²⁵ By dismantling this railroad monopoly, Roosevelt did the unthinkable: he challenged J.P. Morgan, the most powerful financier in America. However, historians often debate the true motivation behind Roosevelt's stance. While he painted himself as a "champion of the common man,"²⁶ some scholars argue that his opposition to the "Titans" was due to his status: Roosevelt viewed the emerging industrial giants as threats to his social status among the elite.²⁷ Regardless of his true motivation, Roosevelt's refusal to negotiate with the "Titans" at the expense of the public would soon face its ultimate test in the soot-filled mines of Pennsylvania²⁸.

In May 1902, the mountains of Pennsylvania became the front line of a national crisis. Led by the United Mine Workers (UMW), 147,000 miners walked out of the anthracite coal fields,

²² "Interpretations of Law as Part of the President's Take Care Duties | Constitution Annotated | Congress.gov | Library of Congress." 2025. Congress.gov. 2025. https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artII-S3-3-5/ALDE_00000102/.

²³ Zongker, "Papers of President," Library of Congress.

²⁴ Roosevelt, Theodore. *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 1: Letters and Related Material, -1919; 1913, July 1-Aug. 1*. July 1, - August 1, 1913. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990178/>.

²⁵ National Archives, "Theodore Roosevelt," White House Archives.

²⁶ Roosevelt, Theodore. *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 1: Letters and Related Material, -1919; 1913, July 1-Aug. 1*. July 1, - August 1, 1913. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990178/>.

²⁷ Office of the Historian. 2019. "U.S. Diplomacy and Yellow Journalism, 1895–1898." History.state.gov. 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/yellow-journalism>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

demanding a 20% wage increase, an eight-hour workday, and safer working conditions.²⁹ While labor unrest was a hallmark of the Gilded Age, this strike was uniquely dangerous because coal was essential to industrial production and urban heating.³⁰ The impasse forced Roosevelt to choose between traditional executive passivity or complicity with corporate interests and active federal intervention to preserve national stability. Initially, President Roosevelt was hesitant to intervene in the strike; as traditionally the United States Government had crushed labor strikes in favor of industrial interests.³¹

Yet as winter approached, the threat of social disorder and economic collapse became more substantial³² threatening to transform a regional labor dispute into a national crisis.³³ In New York City, the desperation was so palpable that residents had begun purchasing coconut shells and scrap wood to use as makeshift fuel.³⁴ The media accused Roosevelt of courting a national recession simply to make a point against the industrial elite.³⁵ To the average American, the President's standoff looked less like leadership and more like a gamble. Faced with a growing disaster, Roosevelt chose to make an unprecedented move.

On October 3, 1902, roughly five months after the strike started, he invited both the United Mine Workers leader John Mitchell and the mine operators into the White House to

²⁹Grossman, "The Coal," U.S. Department of Labor.

³⁰Kahle, Trish. 2023. "Coal Mining and Labor Conflict – Energy History." Energyhistory.yale.edu. 2023. <https://energyhistory.yale.edu/coal-mining-and-labor-conflict/>.

³¹Klein, Christopher. 2020. "How the Gilded Age's Top 1 Percent Thrived on Corruption | HISTORY." HISTORY. January 27, 2020. <https://www.history.com/articles/gilded-age-corruption-corporate-wealth>.

³²Susan Berfield, "The Coal Strike That Defined Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency," *Smithsonian Magazine*, accessed 2020, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-roosevelt-and-jp-morgan-fixed-coal-mine-strike-180975311/>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Newspaper article on the Anthracite Coal Strike*. [June 2, 1902]. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o282683>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

discuss potential solutions, a marked shift from previous approaches.³⁶ The meeting was a disaster; the mine operators, notably George Baer, were so “insolent” that they refused any sort of compromise.³⁷ Roosevelt later wrote that “if it were not for the high office I held, I would have taken him by the seat of the pants and the nape of the neck and thrown him out the window.”³⁸ At the same time, mine owners believed the rights of workers should be protected “by the Christian men to whom God has given control of the property”.³⁹

Media outlets and political rivals attacked the President from both sides; some accused Roosevelt of intervening only to avoid political blame for the coal shortage, while others criticized him for “pigeon-holing” (suppressing) government reports to favor the miners.⁴⁰ Caught between a freezing public and defiant industrialists, Roosevelt reached a turning point. Rather than adhere to traditional limits on executive authority, he prepared to assert federal power to prevent a national crisis.⁴¹ This moment marked a decisive shift in executive practice: Roosevelt treated constitutional authority not as a constraint requiring passivity, but as a mandate to act in defense of public welfare.

In a confidential directive, Roosevelt instructed Secretary of War Elihu Root to prepare the U.S. Army to assume control of the Pennsylvania coal mines. He placed Major-General Schofield in charge of contingency plans, directing him to maintain order and take whatever steps

³⁶ “Theodore Roosevelt Ends Major Coal Strike.” 2025. HISTORY. 2025. <https://www.history.com/videos/theodore-roosevelt-ends-major-coal-strike>.

³⁷ Library of Congress Manuscript Division, “Anthracite Coal Strike: letters and telegrams,” Theodore Roosevelt Center, last modified 1902, <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o283788>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “U.S. Department of Labor -- History -- the Coal Strike of 1902; Turning Point in U.S. Policy.” 2026. Stanford.edu. 2026. <http://large.stanford.edu/publications/coal/references/grossman/>.

⁴⁰ Jordan Friedman, The President and the Press Corps, Jstor, last modified November 6, 2025, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-president-and-the-press-corps/>.

⁴¹ Berfield, “The Coal”

were required to ensure continued coal production.⁴² Roosevelt contemplated using federal power to override corporate resistance. Although the mines were never seized, the mere preparation for federal intervention signaled a redefinition of executive responsibility. Faced with the credible threat of government action, J.P. Morgan pressured the mine-owning railroad executives towards arbitration.⁴³ Roosevelt defended his actions as a duty to protect national stability and the public good.⁴⁴ The Northern Securities case demonstrated Roosevelt's willingness to use existing federal law aggressively, signaling that the executive branch would actively enforce antitrust legislation rather than defer to corporate consolidation. This was also possible due to the rising public awareness of industrial inequality, shaped in part by investigative journalists, who Roosevelt dubbed "muckrakers."⁴⁵ Unlike his predecessors, who viewed the anger of the working class as a threat to be suppressed, Roosevelt saw it as a mandate for change.

From the public's perspective, he harnessed this energy through his "Bully Pulpit," using his unprecedented popularity to demand a "Square Deal" for both capital and labor.⁴⁶ Roosevelt's political style was defined by an "almost superhuman persistence."⁴⁷ This was the man who, years later, would survive an assassination attempt in Milwaukee and with a bullet still lodged in his chest deliver a ninety-minute speech, famously declaring himself as "fit as a Bull Moose."⁴⁸ He

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Berfield, "The Hour," Columbia Alumni.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Joseph Becker, "Pennsylvania - the Mining Troubles in the Schuylkill Region,"

⁴⁶ "The Square Deal Speech." n.d. Americanliterature.com. <https://americanliterature.com/history/theodore-roosevelt/Speech/the-square-deal-speech>.

⁴⁷ "Address of President Roosevelt at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Lewis and Clark Memorial, Portland, Oregon, May 21, 1903 - Theodore Roosevelt Center." 2026. Theodore Roosevelt Center. April 2, 2026. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o289898/>.

⁴⁸ HISTORY.com Editors. 2010. "Theodore Roosevelt Shot in Milwaukee | October 14, 1912 | HISTORY." HISTORY. February 9, 2010. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/october-14/theodore-roosevelt-shot-in-milwaukee>.

was acutely aware of the media, and as the first President to have photography readily available, he knew how to use it to his advantage.⁴⁹

The threat of a total government takeover finally broke the resolve of the “coal barons” and forced them back to the bargaining table. Understanding that Roosevelt was willing to neglect the power and financial influence of industry owners to protect the general public, the coal operators were met with no choice. The President had used the "Big Stick" of the military against the corporations rather than the workers.⁵⁰ With the upper hand secured, Roosevelt advanced what later became known as the Square Deal. The deal rested on three principles: conservation, consumer protection, and corporate regulation.⁵¹ These principles reflected Roosevelt’s effort to institutionalize federal authority as a mediator between business, labor, and the public.⁵²

These pillars were implemented through a series of reforms beginning in 1901 and continuing until 1909. Measures such as the Elkins and Hepburn Acts strengthened federal regulation of railroads.⁵³ For the first time, the federal government, not the "Robber Barons" had the final say in the cost of American trade.⁵⁴ Roosevelt also expanded consumer protections through the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act.⁵⁵ Together, these reforms marked a shift toward active federal oversight of industry. Roosevelt summarized this approach in

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Becky Little, "How Teddy Roosevelt Redefined America's Place in the World," History, A&E Television Networks, last modified May 5, 2022, <https://www.history.com/articles/theodore-roosevelt-important-foreign-policy-big-stick>.

⁵¹ Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, "What Was the Square," Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ PBS, "Interstate Commerce Act," American Experience, last modified 2003, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/streamliners-commerce/>.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Food and Drug Administration, ed., "Part I: The 1906 Food and Drugs Act and Its Enforcement," FDA, last modified April 24, 2009, <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/changes-science-law-and-regulatory-authorities/part-i-1906-food-and-drugs-act-and-its-enforcement>.

a speech at the Grand Canyon: “All I ask is a square deal for every man. Give him a fair chance. Do not let him wrong anyone, and do not let him be wronged.”⁵⁶

The 1902 strike provided the political momentum for these reforms. Workers received a 10% pay increase and a reduction in working hours.⁵⁷ These benefits were not exclusive to just miners, however, other industries began to adopt fairer wages and better hours as well.⁵⁸ These reforms established a lasting precedent for federal intervention in labor disputes, union rights and economic regulation.

The Theodore Roosevelt presidency was a turning point between the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, marked a decisive shift in American governance, and redefined the executive as an active steward of public welfare.⁵⁹ His response to the 1902 Coal Strike established a precedent for federal intervention in times of crisis, reshaping expectations of presidential responsibility and federal economic oversight.⁶⁰

This model of executive authority shaped later reforms of the 20th century.⁶¹ This can be seen through Woodrow Wilson’s “New Freedom” legislations, which established the Federal Trade Commission⁶² and further restricted large corporations through anti-trust laws.⁶³ Later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, further expanded federal intervention during the Great Depression.⁶⁴ Reinforcing expectations of federal responsibility during national crises, suggesting

⁵⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, "Remarks at Grand Canyon, Arizona" (speech, May 6, 1903).

⁵⁷ Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, "What Was the Square," Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

⁵⁸ Kirsten Smith, "The Square Deal: Theodore Roosevelt and the Themes of Progressive Reform," Gilder Lehrman, last modified 2008, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/essays/square-deal-theodore-roosevelt-and-themes-progressive-reform>.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ “The United Mine Workers’ Strike.” 2022. PBS LearningMedia. The Roosevelts. 2022. <https://wqed.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/united-mine-strike/ken-burns-the-roosevelts/>.

⁶¹ Klein, "How Gilded," History.

⁶² National Archives, "Sherman Anti-Trust Act," National Archives, last modified March 15, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/sherman-anti-trust-act>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Yoo, John. "Franklin Roosevelt and Presidential Power." *Chap. L. Rev.* 21 (2018): 205.

that the principles associated with the Square Deal shaped later understandings of presidential power.⁶⁵

This precedent of intervention continues into the progressive era. Whenever the nation faces labor disputes of the mid-20th century to the financial bailouts and pandemic-era stimulus programs of the 21st,⁶⁶ leaders look back to the precedent set in the Pennsylvania coal fields. Roosevelt's legacy remains a testament to the idea that the Constitution belongs to the people, reinforcing the expectation that, in times of crisis, the presidency serves as a mediator between private power and the public good.

⁶⁵ Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, "What Was the Square," Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

⁶⁶ David S. Brown, "The Groundbreaking Political Legacy of Theodore Roosevelt," Literary Hub, last modified December 16, 2025, <https://lithub.com/the-groundbreaking-political-legacy-of-theodore-roosevelt/>.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

“Address of President Roosevelt at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Lewis and Clark Memorial, Portland, Oregon, May 21, 1903 - Theodore Roosevelt Center.” 2026. Theodore Roosevelt Center. April 2, 2026.
<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o289898/>.
 The Roosevelt Center, is a primary resource that holds a significant portion of Roosevelt’s personal journal pieces as well as letters. This particular page on the database holds a letter written by Senator Breaker who describes Roosevelt’s persistence and courage as “superhuman”. I used these descriptions in my paper in order to include different perspectives on Roosevelt.

Becker, Joseph. "Pennsylvania - the Mining Troubles in the Schuylkill Region." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), 1888. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98511383/>.
 This newspaper, appearing in appendix B illustrated the heightened tensions between coal workers and the general public. This helped me better understand the escalation of conflict, and why it eventually led President Roosevelt to intervene.

Berfield, Susan. "The Coal Strike That Defined Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency." *Smithsonian Magazine*. Accessed 2020. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-roosevelt-and-jp-morgan-fixed-coal-mine-strike-180975311/>.
 This article from the Smithsonian explained how the Coal Strike defined President Roosevelt's policies and placed into perspective how the Square Deal's conclusions impacted the rest of policies, both in President Roosevelt's time and beyond. Further, the connection between how the strike impacted Americans beyond Pennsylvania was also made clearer because it explained how Coal was such a valuable commodity during the Industrial and Gilded era.

Berfield, Susan. "The Hour of Fate: Theodore Roosevelt, J.P. Morgan, and the Battle to Transform American Capitalism." Columbia Alumni. Last modified 2014.
<https://www.alumni.columbia.edu/content/hour-fate-theodore-roosevelt-jp-morgan-and-battle-transform-american-capitalism>.
 In this source, Professor Berfield analyzed how the relationship between JP Morgan and Theodore Roosevelt evolved throughout time. Originally, JP Morgan was a leading Titan, and President Roosevelt did not wish to have any connection to the Titans in order to maintain his record as free from influence from industry leaders. However, as the coal

strike went on and President Roosevelt needed financial backing, a relationship began to form. Professor Berfield's analysis was crucial in my understanding of the complicated, shifting relationship.

Britannica Editors. "Muckraker." Britannica. Last modified January 20, 2026.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/muckraker>.

This source defines how a "muckraker" is a term for a journalist who investigates their own stories, and how the rise of muckrakers changed the media's role in politics and spreading information. This shift in journalism identified issues of America, which in turn forced political leaders and industrialists to alter laws and fall within moral guidelines.

Brown, David S. "The Groundbreaking Political Legacy of Theodore Roosevelt." Literary Hub. Last modified December 16, 2025. <https://lithub.com/the-groundbreaking-political-legacy-of-theodore-roosevelt/>.

This source shows how the laws and reforms that President Theodore Roosevelt passed still act as a guideline for new labor restrictions today. It also highlights how other presidents have adopted Roosevelt's belief that the Constitution should be loosely interpreted in order to pass key legislation that developed minimum wages, created health care insurance, and other benefits to improve the quality of life.

Gilman, Bradley. *Letter Received Bradley Gilman to Congress*. Photograph. Harvard Archives. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ois:HOU>.

This letter written by Bradley Gilman featured his description of President Roosevelt as a "powerhouse". Gilman was a classmate of Roosevelt's at Harvard, and a close correspondent and advisor to Roosevelt throughout his presidency. Many letters written back and forth from Gilman and Roosevelt helped to understand President Roosevelt's most personal thought processes, and reactions to events like the White House meeting with the Coal Strike workers.

Harvard College Library, ed. "Theodore Roosevelt: A Presidency." Theodore Roosevelt Center. Last modified 1902. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/quotes/>.

This document, compiled by the Harvard Library features notes on things that Roosevelt has said or written. Particularly from this primary source, I took the quote about his interpretation of the Constitution. This was important to understanding the justification behind Roosevelt's intrusion into stopping the Coal Strike.

"Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970." United States Census Bureau. Last modified 1977.

https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1975/compendia/hist_stats_colonial-1970.html.

This census that was done and stored was useful in providing specific numbers on wages that industrial workers received, as well as average prices for renting in settlement homes and purchasing food. This was useful in understanding the economy and contextualizing how large of a wealth gap there was.

"Homelessness." In *How the Other Half Lives : Studies among the Tenements of New York : with Related Documents*, by Jacob A. Riis and David Leviatin. 2nd ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.

This is the full collection of Jacob Riis. Riis was a prominent photo journalist who used his platform to share and take images of what life was like for the lower classes. Within this broader collection, is the image that I featured in Appendix A.

"Interpretations of Law as Part of the President's Take Care Duties | Constitution Annotated | Congress.gov | Library of Congress." 2025. Congress.gov. 2025.

https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artII-S3-3-5/ALDE_00000102/.

This copy of Article 2 section 3 of a Supreme Court's decision was digitized by the Library of Congress. This court decision explains what the Constitution holds a president to which helped me compare this with Roosevelt's journals and his opinions and view of the population.

Keppler, Udo J. *Next!* 1904. Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001695241/>.

This political cartoon portrayed leading industrial companies, particularly Standard Oil as giants who were overtaking other industries and people. This helped me analyze public opinion not on Roosevelt, but of private sectors.

Library of Congress Manuscript Division. "Monday Evening, June 2nd 1902." *The Commercial Advertiser*, May 2, 1902.

This manuscript collection featured a newspaper report that was published just hours after the Coal Strike of 1902. This provided me with a primary source of information recounting what occurred in the strike, and also public questions and opinions surrounding the event.

Library of Congress Manuscript Division. "Anthracite Coal Strike: letters and telegrams." Theodore Roosevelt Center. Last modified 1902.

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o283788>.

These telegrams that were digitized by the Library of Congress came directly from eastern Pennsylvania, just hours after the Coal Strike started. This was one of the most helpful sources in understanding public opinion and the initial issues with the strike. It also marked the beginning of protests and the escalation of violence.

Library of Congress Manuscript Division. "Letter from Joseph Benson Foraker to Theodore Roosevelt." Theodore Roosevelt Center.

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/collection/library-of-congress-manuscript-division>.

This letter from Senator Foraker was written to Roosevelt after he initially proposed his plan for the Square Deal in Congress. Although I was not able to find a copy of the direct address Roosevelt gave the Senate, this provided me some insight into what he said and the direction that Congress was headed in regards to the bill.

Lovejoy, Owen R. *In the Shadow of the Coal Breaker*. Photograph. Law Library University of Minnesota, 1907.

https://librarycollections.law.umn.edu/riesenfeld_images/darrow/photos/Working_in_Breaker.jpg.

This is another example of the media playing a role in journalism and public opinion. This image in particular, was taken in the Anthracite Coal Strike, less than a year before the strike occurred. After the strike continued for more than 2 months, this image resurfaced in many newspapers and brochures in order to show the oppressive mining conditions sustained for extended hours.

McCutcheon, John T. *Next on the Waiting List of the Roosevelt Club*. Illustration. Library of Congress, 1908. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2013651701/>.

This is a political cartoon of Roosevelt standing as a giant on a map with many small businesses representing the monopolies. This cartoon portrays Roosevelt in a positive light, as a supreme activist for equality and fair wages.

National Archives. "Sherman Anti-Trust Act." National Archives. Last modified March 15, 2022. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/sherman-anti-trust-act>.

This document, which was digitized by the Library of Congress, is a copy of the Sherman Antitrust Act. Through this, I was able to understand how this bill became the baseline and the first time that the government regulated monopolies on businesses. Roosevelt mentioned this Act multiple times, so being able to read the original version helped me to understand the standard of what Roosevelt wanted to build on.

Newspaper article on the Anthracite Coal Strike. [June 2, 1902]. Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/digital-library/o282683>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

Written by The Commercial Advertiser, a prominent newspaper primarily in New York, but also distributed across the nation, reports and photographed a line of individuals standing outside a building in New York City, with the segment being about how individuals were waiting to purchase coconut shells in order to make their own fuel source due to growing fears of a coal shortage.

Office of the Historian. 2019. "U.S. Diplomacy and Yellow Journalism, 1895–1898."

History.state.gov. 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/yellow-journalism>. From this government sponsored website, I sifted through this specific newspaper reporting on President Roosevelt and this journalist, in particular, was an investigative journalist who did a report on Theodore Roosevelt's past. The point of his report was to undermine the president's connection to lower class workers by noting his wealthy past and upbringing.

Presidential Library. "The Speech That Stopped a Bullet." *New York World*, October 14, 1912. <https://www.trlibrary.com/bullet-speech>.

This primary source is the speech that Roosevelt gave after John Schrank attempted to assassinate Roosevelt. This manifested his unwavering public support, as well as how strong he was in advocacy and where his saying "as fit as a bull moose" derived from.

Riis, Jacob. *Lodgers in a Crowded Bayard Street Tenement - "Five Cents a Spot."* Photograph. International Center of Photography, 1870.

<https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/jacob-riis>.

This image was cited in Appendix A. By reading about the conditions that industrial workers had to live in, it did not provide me with the same understanding as seeing the images that Jacob Riis curated. This further showed how journalism and media influenced understanding and helped to bridge the divide between the upper and lower classes.

Riis, Jacob A. "A Young Men's Hero." In *The Citizen*. New York: The Outlook Company, 1904. https://archive.org/details/gri_33125007074715.

This is another image taken by Jacob Riis, this image does not deal with living conditions. Rather, this source is a photograph of the factor that industry workers would toil in for sometimes more than ten hours a day. By being able to see these photographs, and also analyze what the different public reactions were, helped to better contextualize the different sides.

Roosevelt, Theodore. "Remarks at Grand Canyon, Arizona." Speech, May 6, 1903.

This speech, given by Theodore Roosevelt was documented not just on video, but also his writing. This speech is credited with giving the momentum needed to help pass the first parts of the Square Deal. It also helped to illustrate how President Roosevelt was incredibly energetic, and a President of the people. This helped particularly with my paper because it marked the turning point of when the Square Deal became widely supported by the public.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Theodore Roosevelt Papers: Series 1: Letters and Related Material, -1919; 1913, July 1-Aug. 1. July 1, - August 1, 1913*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss382990178/>.

This series of journals recovered and digitized by the Library of Congress are copies of Roosevelt's own notes. The specific page I utilized was the one explaining what Roosevelt hoped to accomplish with meeting with coal miners and factory workers.

St. Paul Pioneer Press. *"A Glimpse Into the Future - Fast and Tight."* 1906. St. Paul, MN.

This political cartoon served as a visual example of President Roosevelt's "war" on anti-trusts. Analyzing this image and similar cartoons helped to strengthen my argument because so much of my piece is about the public's perspective of certain policies in the Square Deal.

"The Family Man - Theodore Roosevelt Association." n.d. www.theodoreroosevelt.org.

https://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=991271&module_id=339339.

The Theodore Roosevelt Association was a database that provided me a lot of significant information, particularly because they were easy renderings of journal entries that

Roosevelt himself wrote. This particular site within the database provided more information of Theodore Roosevelt's family, and his upbringing. This research and information was used frequently by yellow journalists to make him appear as one of the elite, and not of the common man.

"The Square Deal Speech." n.d. Americanliterature.com.

<https://americanliterature.com/history/theodore-roosevelt/Speech/the-square-deal-speech>. A copy and transcript of Roosevelt's speech at the Grand Canyon was retrieved by the American Literature Association. This website shows the transcript of Roosevelt's speech. By being able to read Roosevelt's own address to the American Public, I became exposed to his view point of what the Square Deal stood for and I was also able to quote specific sections of his speech in my paper.

Theodore Roosevelt - His Life and Times on Film. Produced by Library of Congress. 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL907E60DC86957669>.

This is a YouTube collection of Roosevelt's speeches and meetings. Roosevelt was the first president for whom film and audio were readily available. This played a significant role in promoting President Theodore Roosevelt throughout the country because he did not shy away from cameras, but rather embraced them and even in some cases, posed for them.

"U.S. Department of Labor -- History -- the Coal Strike of 1902; Turning Point in U.S. Policy." 2026. Stanford.edu. 2026.

<http://large.stanford.edu/publications/coal/references/grossman/>.

Recovered and digitized by Stanford University, this transcript recovered of the meeting with Roosevelt and the coal mine operators is where the first-person quote of why the industrial owners believed that Roosevelt, and in extension, the Federal government had no right to intervene with the strike. This shows the growing tension between business owners and workers during the Gilded Age, and more specifically, Roosevelt's presidency.

Zongker, Brett. "Papers of President Theodore Roosevelt Now Online." Library of Congress. Last modified October 17, 2018. <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-18-132/papers-of-president-theodore-roosevelt-now-online/2018-10-17/>.

This collection, compiled by the Library of Congress, houses letters and journal pages from President Theodore Roosevelt. This was instrumental for being able to include words of Roosevelt himself in my paper, but also to better understand the relations that Roosevelt had with members of Congress, and his own frustrations with attempting to pass the Square Deal.

Secondary Sources

Editors of Encyclopaedia, ed. "Cornelius Vanderbilt." Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica. Last modified February 26, 2026. <https://www.britannica.com/money/Cornelius-Vanderbilt-1794-1877>.

Britannica's summation of Vanderbilt helped to define who the industry leaders were and how they grew their businesses to being worth more than 90% of the average American's salary during the Gilded Age. The source also defined some of the nicknames used throughout my paper, such as "Titan" and "Robber Baron". Overall, this source helped to understand the business and industrialists' perspective.

Fine, Sidney. "Anarchism and the Assassination of McKinley." *The American Historical Review* 60, no. 4 (1955): 777–99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1844919>.

This academic research paper examined President McKinley's presidency, but more importantly for my research, why McKinley chose Theodore Roosevelt, a man who differed vastly from his perspective on government, to be his vice president. The piece also examined the assassination of President McKinley and how the power was transferred to then-President Roosevelt. Further, McKinley was a prime example of a presidency that was run by industry capitalists, and not the people. Something that Roosevelt would not stand for.

Food and Drug Administration, ed. "Part I: The 1906 Food and Drugs Act and Its Enforcement." FDA. Last modified April 24, 2009. <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/changes-science-law-and-regulatory-authorities/part-i-1906-food-and-drugs-act-and-its-enforcement>.

This account from the FDA explained the policies that President Roosevelt passed in the health and nutrition part of the Square Deal. It explained its effects, but also crucially mentioned that the laws that Roosevelt passed are still in effect today, with some additional limits.

Foner, Eric. "America's Gilded Age." *Give Me Liberty! : an American History*, 6th ed. W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

This section of Professor Foner's book provided information on the wealth inequalities during the Gilded Age. It highlighted the way that the wealthy lived in comparison to the majority of American workers in big cities.

Friedman, Jordan. "The President and the Press Corps." Jstor. Last modified November 6, 2025. <https://daily.jstor.org/the-president-and-the-press-corps/>.

This analysis of journalists and the relationship that they had with both political leaders and the public helped me to identify and isolate which policies or public opinions were a result of investigative journalism, especially during the rise of the media in President Theodore Roosevelt's time.

Grossman, Jonathan. "The Coal Strike of 1902: Turning Point in U.S. Policy." U.S. Department of Labor. Last modified 2003.

<https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/coalstrike#:~:text=On%20Friday%2C%20October%203%2C%201902,to%20peacemaker%20in%20industrial%20disputes>.

This short article, published by the US Department of Labor, provides context on why the Coal Strike of 1902 was unlike any other labor strike in American History. It tied the concept not just to President Roosevelt's unprecedented actions, but also because of how it was such a massive and organized strike right before the season when coal would be needed the most.

HISTORY.com Editors. 2010. "Theodore Roosevelt Shot in Milwaukee | October 14, 1912 | HISTORY." HISTORY. February 9, 2010. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/october-14/theodore-roosevelt-shot-in-milwaukee>.

Written by History.com, this source provided me information on Roosevelt's attempted assassination. Most importantly, it gave me the line of Roosevelt's famous "fit as a bull moose" which I then included in my paper.

Kahle, Trish. 2023. "Coal Mining and Labor Conflict – Energy History." Energyhistory.yale.edu. 2023. <https://energyhistory.yale.edu/coal-mining-and-labor-conflict/>.

Professor Kahle, who teaches economics at Yale wrote and compiled this data in her paper. This research paper helped to contextualize why coal was such a significant mineral that almost all industrial era industries relied on. This also helped to explain why the potential of this strike to run into the winter months became a national cause for concern.

Klein, Christopher. "How Gilded Age Corruption Led to the Progressive Era." History. A&E Television Networks. Last modified February 4, 2021.

<https://www.history.com/articles/gilded-age-progressive-era-reforms>.

This article from History provided a summation of all of the reforms that were put into place during the Gilded Age, and those not just present in the Square Deal. This really helped to emphasize how much of an issue the growing wealth of the upper class was becoming and how much government intervention was necessary in order to make sure that the average American was able to survive and improve the quality of their life.

Klein, Christopher. 2020. "How the Gilded Age's Top 1 Percent Thrived on Corruption | HISTORY." HISTORY. January 27, 2020. <https://www.history.com/articles/gilded-age-corruption-corporate-wealth>.

This was the second article I read in part of History journalist Christopher Klein's series on the Gilded Age. This article was particularly useful for me in order to explain why the government had such a strong backing on business leaders and corporate powers. By keeping the business Titans happy, it would ensure that more jobs were available for the lower classes which would in turn also earn their support. This circular system was explained in easy terms in this article.

Little, Becky. "How Teddy Roosevelt Redefined America's Place in the World." History. A&E Television Networks. Last modified May 5, 2022.

<https://www.history.com/articles/theodore-roosevelt-important-foreign-policy-big-stick>.

This article, written by Professor Little, explained how the economy during the Gilded Age placed America as one of the key players on a global stage in terms of production and economy. I used these statistics and information primarily in the introduction of my paper.

Loyola, Mario. 2019. "What Made America Great in the Gilded Age." The Heritage Foundation. 2019. <https://www.heritage.org/trade/commentary/what-made-america-great-the-gilded-age>.

This source gave specific data on unemployment rates, GDP, and statistics on the amount of production within the country versus received through imports. These were crucial primary data numbers given in a secondary manner through a proper article.

National Archives. "Theodore Roosevelt." White House Archives.

https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/theodore-roosevelt/?utm_source=link.

This source from the White House gave a quick summation of who President Theodore Roosevelt was. This is also the source where I took some of his nicknames and soft policies such as "Big Stick Democracy". Overall, this source was useful in giving a short summation of Roosevelt, not for his policies but more for his personality and how his outspoken, outgoing nature helped him gain favor of the public.

Patterson, James T. 1976. "The Rise of Presidential Power before World War II." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 40 (2): 39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1191370>.

Patterson's research paper analyzes past president's and their roles and where the majority of their votes originated from. Patterson's comprehensive research helped to shape and understand what made Roosevelt's presidency so significant and different from his previous predecessors.

PBS. "Interstate Commerce Act." American Experience. Last modified 2003.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/streamliners-commerce/>.

This article explained what the Interstate Commerce Act was and why setting limits on ticket prices and wages for railroad workers was so important to Theodore Roosevelt. His policies over railroads were the first regulations that were in place that set the theme for the rest of the legislation in the Square Deal.

Pollock, Thomas. "Progress and Poverty: Industrial Capitalism in the Gilded Age, 1877-1893."

Who Built America? 2, no. 1. <https://www.whobuiltamerica.org/book/wba/part-i-monopoly-and-upheaval-1877-1914/progress-and-poverty-industrial-capitalism-in-the-gilded-age-1877-1893/#:~:text=Before%20the%20Civil%20War%2C%20eight,find%5D%20a%20bank%20unlocked.%E2%80%9D>

This research journal provided insight into how the leading 4 titans of industry were able to accumulate such great wealth, and also how they ran their factories and set their minimum wages. This helped to make my paper more multifaceted because it allowed me to consider the sides and opinions of industrialists.

Queen, Debbie. Telephone interview by the author. Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. January 8, 2026.

I reached out to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library because so many of my primary sources were housed and digitized there. I got connected to Debbie Queen, the director of Participant Experience. By speaking to her, I got directed to specific letters and journals to examine, which helped me narrow the focus of my piece and helped my research process as a whole.

Smith, Kirsten. "The Square Deal: Theodore Roosevelt and the Themes of Progressive Reform."

Gilder Lehrman. Last modified 2008. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/essays/square-deal-theodore-roosevelt-and-themes-progressive-reform>.

In this short article, Professor Smith highlighted not President Roosevelt's policies, but the political and social situation surrounding Roosevelt's presidency. She highlights the specific tensions between labor unions and industry owners. This helped to contextualize the time period of the Coal Strike and the other protests surrounding the time.

"The Bully Pulpit." 2026. Google Books. 2026. https://books.google.com/books?id=4W7Q-qr_TSAC&printsec=copyright#v=onepage&q&f=false.

This source, specifically chapter 4 referred and explained Roosevelt created a presidency where the minority, and workers were the ones influencing ideas. Whether or not he intended to, his use of journalism influenced the public's perception.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. 2019. "Square Deal | United States History."

In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Square-Deal>.

This Britannica sources provided a quick overview of what the Square Deal is, which helped me better summarize and explain the source. Further, it gave me background information which allowed me to better understand some harder sources and research papers on the topic.

"The United Mine Workers' Strike." 2022. PBS LearningMedia. The Roosevelts. 2022.

<https://wqed.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/united-mine-strike/ken-burns-the-roosevelts/>.

Created by PBS, this short five minute video explained why the 1902 coal strike was so significant in establishing unions, and setting a precedent of what Federal authority can be used for while remaining constitutional. Primarily, this helped me understand the future consequences of the specific moment in history.

"Theodore Roosevelt Ends Major Coal Strike | History." Video, 12:35. YouTube. Posted by History, June 1, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWKIpRcVppl>.

This video, created by the History channel is one of the first sources I examined when beginning my research. It gave me a background on who President Theodore Roosevelt is and how he came to power. Watching visuals of his speeches and marches also helped me understand the amount of public attention that he had and commanded.

Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. "What Was the Square Deal?" Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. <https://www.trlibrary.com/tr/square-deal>.

This source from the Theodore Roosevelt Library better explained what the Square Deal was, and the different bills that were composed of it. This source also provided a timeline on the political speeches, and revisions that Roosevelt had to make in order to pass the Square Deal.

Twain, Mark, and Charles Dudley Warner. "Front Matter." Introduction to *The Gilded Age : A Tale of Today*. Floating Press, 2011.

Twain's novel of the Gilded Age was not used in any particular section of my research, but it is a novel that I read over the summer which made me get interested in this time period.

Its primary characters, who are rich industrialists during the Gilded Age, helped me to understand just how large the wealth gap and standards of living were during the time.

United States Department of State. "Biographies of the Secretaries of State: William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925)." Office of the Historian. Bureau of Administration.
<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/bryan-william-jennings>.

This article, published by the Federal Bureau of Administration, helped me understand the background of William Jennings Bryan, who, although he does not come up in my paper, was mentioned many times in the various sources I was analyzing. Understanding Bryan as a populist and a newer version of an American politician helped me to better understand some of the more challenging sources.

White, Richard. "The Rise of Industrial America, 1877-1900." Gilder Lehrman. Last modified 2011. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/essays/rise-industrial-america-1877-1900>.

This analysis, done by Richard White and fact-checked by Gilder Lehrman, provided specific statistics on America's rise of industry and how it became a global powerhouse. It also analyzed the wealth gap with numbers, which helped to solidify journal reports and some of the primary source journals I was analyzing.

Yoo, John. "Franklin Roosevelt and Presidential Power." *Chap. L. Rev.* 21 (2018): 205.

This particular section of Dr. John Yoo's longer book about the Gilded Age particularly describes the issues with nutrition and food during the Gilded Age. It explained how clean water was a rare commodity, so more people began to indulge in alcohol. It also highlighted how increased use of pesticides fed harmful chemicals to industrial workers, which is one of the main reasons that the death toll was so high, along with harsh working conditions.