The Progressive Era, Part I
The People of Washington

- With the arrival of the Great Northern Railroad and the “Selling” of Washington, people began to migrate to Washington State
- This is the part of a period of intense migration to the United States
- As a whole, the country becoming more diverse
- Washington shares in this trend; already 25% are foreign born or children of foreign born residents
- This percentage will continue for the first part of the 20th century
- Washington’s population was overwhelmingly Caucasian
- But this Caucasian population was ethnically diverse
- 3 types of Caucasian residents in Washington
  1.) Descendants of White pioneers
  2.) U.S. Citizens from other parts of the United States
  3.) Foreign born residents (or children of foreign born residents) from Europe
- Washington State seeing a rise in people from Eastern Europe and Southern Europe
- Although overall, the largest European immigrant group were Scandinavians
The People of Washington

• Still, Washington a very diverse place and peoples from outside of the United States and Europe came to the region
• In spite of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the anti-Chinese movements, there was a Chinese population in Washington
• However, other groups growing; particularly the Japanese and Filipino communities
• These groups faced the same prejudice and discrimination as the Chinese
• During the 20th century, we see the development of laws targeting and restricting the lives and opportunities for these groups; in particular the development of covenants
• In addition, African-Americans came in larger numbers to Washington State; but never enormous numbers
• Primarily settled in urban centers
• Faced prejudice and discrimination as well
The People of Washington

- The diverse nature of Washington’s population gave the state a cosmopolitan quality.
- Remember, Washington’s population since territorial days had been mostly urban; this trend continues.
- Washington cities some of the most diverse places in the United States.
- But so too are rural areas.
- Immigrants change the characteristics of Washington society.
- Development of fraternal orders and culture clubs/societies.
- Language schools develop to teach and pass on language.
- New religious communities develop to spiritually serve immigrant communities.
- Festivals and celebrations develop to bind communities together and to remind people of their ancestral homelands.
- Native language newspapers, businesses, services, and the like develop.
American Society in the Gilded Age

• This period in American history is one of tremendous economic growth; rapid industrialization
• Growth is driving immigration and migration
• Period in which enormous wealth is generated
• But economic growth and wealth is not distributed evenly; disproportionate amount at top
• 1% percent of society controls about 35% of the economy
• This leads to a substantial wealth gap; The Gilded Age
• Wealth gap is most intense in Eastern United States; although present in the West – including Washington State
• Immigration provided low cost labor to feed the industrial economy
• Gap between poor immigrants and wealthy industrial magnates most obvious in Eastern cities
• People in the United States and outside the United States sold on the “American Dream”
• But “Dream” increasingly looks impossible to attain in Eastern U.S.; so people migrated West
• Western states wanted to attract migration; advertised themselves as a place of new beginnings and opportunities
• Reality is that the West –including Washington State – is no different than anywhere else in U.S.
• The hope is a bit of an illusion; this will have consequences
The Economy of Washington

**Timber**
- 1890-1900: 5\(^{th}\) largest in USA
- Grows even larger in the early 20\(^{th}\) century
- Development of large timber and logging companies
- 1900: Frederick Weyerheuser established company
- Logging a difficult and dangerous profession
- Wages low; live in logging camps – “Company Towns”

**Agriculture**
- Agriculture grew as a consequence of the Great Northern
- Also there were two technological improvements
  - 1.) Irrigation – Irrigation techniques growing in sophistication; size of irrigation projects growing as well
  - 2.) Mechanization – Machines aiding cultivation and processing; will only grow during the century
The Economy of Washington

**Fishing**
- The canning industry declines
- Other regions in the world emerge as cheaper competitors
- However, with Washington’s growing population, the fresh fish industry grows
- Also, the use of ice in railroad cars assists the growth of the market for fresh fish

**Mining and Manufacturing**
- Mining grows in the coal industry – supply the railroads
- Mining one of the most dangerous jobs in Washington
- New to the state in manufacturing
- Steel and iron works develop
- The start of a shipbuilding industry