Alabama Moves Ahead

Chapter 8
Lesson 1 – Rights and Reforms

- The Bourbon Redeemers approved a constitution in 1875.
- Remember, they wanted to take away the right to vote from men who were poor and from African American men!
- Many leaders in Alabama wanted a new plan for government, so in 1901, Alabamians voted to write a new constitution.
Constitution of 1901

- Delegates met in Montgomery in May of 1901 to write a new constitution.
- They spent most of their time debating who in Alabama should have the right to vote:
  - Should it be allowed for all women, African American men, and poor men?
- After it was written, the new constitution still DID NOT give women suffrage.
- **Suffrage** is the right to vote.
Constitution of 1901

- Pattie Ruffner Jacobs was a woman who continued to work for woman suffrage.
- The delegates wrote new voting requirements in the constitution that made it almost impossible for African American men and poor men to vote.
- Alabama voters ratified the new state constitution on November 11, 1901.

**Ratified** means to approve.
Alabama Voting Requirements

- **Constitution of 1875**
  - Must be a male citizen
  - Live in Alabama for 1 year, a county for 3 months, and a section of the county for 30 days
  - Never have been convicted of a crime

- **Constitution of 1901**
  - Must be a male citizen
  - Live in Alabama for 2 years, a county for 1 year, and a section of the county for 3 months
  - Pay a poll tax
  - Own property worth at least $300 or 40 acres of land
  - Be able to read and write in English a part of the constitution
  - Be involved in a business
  - Never have been convicted of a crime
Governor Braxton Bragg Comer changed the tax system, which gave schools more money. He had more schools built in rural areas—at least one high school in each county, and he gave money to state colleges.

Governor Thomas Kilby organized school systems, and he helped fund a program to help people learn to read and write.
Lesson 2 – More Change

- By the late 1800s and early 1900s, new inventions and advances in technology were changing the way people lived.
- **Technology** is the use of scientific knowledge to solve practical problems.

![Electric light bulb](image1)
![Telephone](image2)
![Camera](image3)
![Electric typewriter](image4)
Electricity

- Electricity was one of the most important developments during this time period.
- It took hundreds of years to understand how to use it.
- In 1879, the electric light bulb was developed.
- By late 1800s, electric street lamps lit the streets of Mobile, Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery.
- [Thomas Edison Video (30 mins)]
More Electricity

- Life became easier because of electricity!
- People were now using refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, food mixers, electric typewriters, telephones, and smaller cameras in their homes.
- Neat website about the history of vacuum cleaners-shows dates, pictures, and pricing from 1900s
**New Transportation**

- Electric-powered streetcars replaced streetcars that had been pulled by horses in Mobile and Birmingham.
- Electric streetcars also carried people to the suburbs.
- A **suburb** is a town just outside or near a city.
- People started moving to suburbs because of the growing populations in the cities.
Soon the automobile became popular.

Alabama set up a highway department to build and keep up state roads.

By 1920 there were nearly 75,000 automobiles on roads in Alabama and more than 8 million cars in the United States!
A Great Place For Industry

- Alabama’s coal and iron industries continued to grow in the early 1900s.
- We also had the resources needed to make steel: coal, iron ore, and limestone.
- The city of Birmingham eventually became a steel-producing center.
- By the 1920s, Alabama had become the leading steel-manufacturing state in the South.
The quick growth of industry led to problems. For example, people were worried about children working in factories for long hours and with little or no pay, so they formed labor unions.

A labor union is a group of workers who join together to try to gain better pay and working conditions.
Farming Problems

- Even though other industries were growing, Alabama still remained a farming state.
- Farmers were growing more corn, wheat, and cotton than ever before!
- BUT cotton farmers were having problems.
- Remember, other countries were buying cotton from India and Egypt because it was cheaper than Alabama cotton...
- ...so farmers tried to save money by paying their workers less.
The Boll Weevil

- Just when it seemed that conditions couldn’t get worse, disaster struck!
- In 1915, the boll weevil destroyed cotton fields across Alabama.
- The boll weevil is a large beetle that lives inside the cotton boll and destroys the seeds.
This invasion actually changed farming in Alabama.

Before this incident, farmers had grown just one crop—cotton.

Now, instead of relying on just one crop, they began to grow a variety of crops such as peanuts and started raising dairy and beef cattle.
Most Alabama farmers were sharecroppers, so the boll weevil invasion made conditions worse for them.

Remember, sharecroppers work land that is owned by someone else.

They did not own land, they had little or no money to spend on new crops, and they moved a lot to farm new plots of land.

Many farmers were living in poverty.

Poverty is the condition of being poor, or not having enough money to meet your needs.