

# *The Gilded Age* <sup>c.1</sup>

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American Popular Culture Through History  
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tographer in his own right and his photographs exhibited his ability to artistically frame a photograph so that it possessed its own aesthetics. Jacob Riis also added to the mystique of photographs by including them in *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) which chronicled the lives of the desperately poor in New York City (see Chapters 2 and 4). But by far the most influential and important photographer as artist was Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946), who demanded that photography be treated as an art form. He produced photographs that had aesthetic, artistic values. Stieglitz spread his ideas to a broad public as editor of *The American Amateur Photographer* magazine and would continue to be a major force in artistic photography well into the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

### CONCLUSION

American art during the Gilded Age reflected the growing economic and political power of the United States. There also was greater exchange between the United States and Europe as many artists studied abroad and brought European styles back to the United States. And even though there is little doubt that elite patronage was important to artists, high and popular arts seemed to blur during this era. Mass-market magazines demanded high-quality illustrations that lured some of the nation's most talented artists into commercial art even as chromolithography made high art accessible to millions of Americans. Further complicating the clear distinctions between "high" and "popular" art was the fact that many of the most famous illustrators studied art with some of the most famous painters of the Gilded Age, and there were several illustrators who went on to become famous painters or who straddled both the illustration and painting worlds. The Vanderbilts may have commissioned an original painting but chromolithography could make it available to the average American for \$2. While folk art had always been important to average Americans, high art and its aesthetics now made its way into American homes in ways heretofore impossible. Industrial mass production brought high art to the masses and made it popular.

## Cost of Products, 1890–1899

- Telegraph rates between New York City and San Francisco, 1895, 10 words or less, \$1
- Wholesale price of brick, 1895, \$5.31/1,000
- Wholesale price of coal, 1895, \$2.98/ton
- Median sales price of new homes, 1890, \$3,250
- Fire insurance for two wood frame houses in Columbia, SC, 1899, \$4.75/yr.
- Bricklayers in Massachusetts income, 1896, 50 hours/week, \$3.87/day
- Seamus Cavanah, manager of salmon cannery, salary, 1896, \$5,500/yr.
- Roger and Vivian Fairmont net worth, 1897, \$37 million
- Postal rate for first-class mail, 1895, \$.02
- Vaudeville ticket, 1890s, \$.10–\$.25
- Opera ticket, 1890s, \$1–\$7
- Broadway theater ticket, 1890s, \$1.50
- Three months of dance lessons in San Francisco, \$10
- Grand Hotel double room on Mackinac Island, 1890, \$54/week
- Summer cottage, 1890s, \$10–\$20/week
- Raymond and Whitcomb travel agency 25-day trip to Yellowstone, 1890s, \$275
- Tuition at the University of the City of New York Law School, 1896, \$200 for two years
- Large, ornate family Bible, 1895, \$3.45
- Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, 1895, \$1.05
- Library Editions of New Oxford and Princeton Series of 150 great books, 1895, \$.50/each



Tattered Tom series books by Horatio Alger, 1895, \$.88  
 BonBons, 1896, \$.60  
 Lang's Readymade chocolate icing, 1893, \$.20  
 Vernard's Eagle Chocolate, 1895, \$.20/lb.  
 Cleveland's Baking Powder, 1893, \$.15  
 Chapman's Grocer's Coffee, 1898, 11 lbs./\$1  
 Watermelon, 1898, \$.10  
 Whole chicken, 1898, \$.15  
 Fresh pork, 1898, \$.06/lb.  
 Ham and bacon, 1898, \$.10/lb.  
 Corn meal, 1898, \$.12/peck  
 Eggs, 1898, \$.12/dozen  
 Lard, 1898, \$.08/lb.  
 Milk, 1898, \$.06/quart  
 Starch, 1898, \$.05/lb.  
 Wheat flour, 1898, 12-lb. bag, \$.35  
 Sugar, 1898, \$.06/lb.  
 Cans of corned and roast beef, 1896, \$.10/lb.  
 Can of Leibig Company's beef extract, 1896, \$.10  
 Canned goods generally sold for \$.10  
 Extra fine cream cheese, 1896, \$.15/lb.  
 Perfection flour, 1896, \$2.50 half-barrel, \$4.75 barrel  
 Hershey's Chocolate penny bar, \$.01  
 Salada Ceylon Tea, 1898, \$.50/lb.  
 Molasses, 1896, \$.10/gal.  
 Smoked herring, 1896, \$.15/box  
 Florida palm tree, 1896, \$.20  
 Anti-Skeet mosquito pesticide, 1896, six wafers in a box, \$.10  
 Six rose plants, 1896, \$.25  
 Sweet pea seeds, 1896, ten packets, \$.10  
 Meat cutter, 1895, \$2  
 Three-tine hay fork, 1895, \$.30  
 Five-hoe grain drill, 1895, \$14  
 Circular sawing machine, 1895, \$16  
 Kemp's manure spreader, 1895, \$85  
 Wind mill, 1895, \$24.40  
 Wood plane, 1895, \$.80

Hammer, 1895, \$.28  
 Axe, 1895, \$.60  
 2-inch screws, 1895, \$.06/dozen  
 Kerosene, 1895, 52-gallon barrel, \$.10/gal.  
 Wallpaper, 1896, \$.10/roll  
 Paint, 1895, \$1.15/gal.  
 3-inch paint brush, 1895, \$.28  
 Axle grease, 1895, 1-lb. box, \$.05  
 12-gauge shotgun, 1895, \$35  
 Winchester rifle model 1892, 1895, \$11.86  
 Colt double-action 38-caliber pistol, 1895, \$10  
 Baseball glove, 1895, \$1.50  
 Baseball, 1895, league quality \$1, playground quality \$.25  
 Boxing gloves, 1895, \$4.75  
 Wooden fishing rod, 10½ feet long, 1895, \$.10  
 Fishing reel, 1895, \$1.50  
 Large tackle box, 1895, \$1.88  
 Oak upholstered parlor suite (arm chair, rocker, divan, two parlor chairs), 1895, \$33.70  
 Iron bed frame, 1895, \$4.75  
 English stone porcelain chamber set (washbowl, pitcher, chamber pot and cover, water pitcher, drinking mug, brush vase, soap dish), 1895, \$3.15  
 3-drawer dresser with beveled mirror, 1895, \$5.70  
 Sideboard, 1895, \$13.45  
 Infant cradle, 1895, \$3.50  
 Lemonoide Polish, 1896, \$.50  
 Linoleum, laid, 1896, \$.80/yard  
 Dr. Rose's Obesity Powders, 1890, \$.58  
 Dr. Williams Pink Pills for Pale People, 1890, \$.50  
 Morgan's Cod Liver Oil and Horehound Drops, 1898, \$.05  
 Electric Bitters, 1898, \$.50  
 Rikers Expectorant, 1895, \$.60  
 Cook's Cough Cure, 1895, \$.20/bottle  
 Lablanche face powder, 1896, \$.50  
 Modene hair remover, 1896, \$1  
 Wrinkleine lotion, 1896, \$1  
 Nail trimmer, 1899, \$.25

Forest Fringe Violet perfume, 1896, \$1  
 Shaving soap, 1895, \$.04/cake  
 Campbell's Safe Complexion Wafers face cleaner, 1896, \$1  
 Dr. Sheffield's Creme Dentifrice, 1898, \$.25  
 Copco Bath Soap, 1896, \$.05  
 Mrs. Hannah Cobb's Improved Laundry Soap, 1895, 100 12-oz. bars per box, \$3.35/box  
 Borax, 1895, \$.17/1-lb. package  
 Toilet paper, 1895, \$.06/roll  
 Texas rawhide saddle, 1895, \$7.75  
 The Winton Motor Carriage, 1899, \$1,000  
 Indiana Piano Box buggy, 1895, \$45.75  
 Surrey, 1895, \$99  
 White Star No. 1 bicycle, 1895, \$45  
 Baby carriage, 1895, \$3.70  
 Boys' wagon, 1895, \$.75  
 Autoharp, 1896, \$7.50  
 Banjo, 1895, \$2.75  
 Violin, 1895, \$4.45  
 Harmonica, 1895, \$.10  
 Piano, 1895, \$350  
 Cornet, 1895, \$5.10  
 Waterman's fountain pen, 1896, \$4  
 Travel trunk, 1895, \$4  
 Metcalf writing paper, 1893, \$.75  
 Ladies' umbrella, 1895, \$.65  
 Gentleman's umbrella, 1895, \$.50  
*Ladies' Home Journal*, 1893, \$.10/issue, \$1/yr.  
*Wall Street Journal*, 1890, \$5/yr.  
*New York World*, 1895, \$.01/newspaper  
*New York Times*, 1898, \$.01  
 New York telephone charges, direct line, 1895, \$90  
 New York to Boston boat fare, 1895, \$2  
 Cook Tours Nile Steamers, cruise ship New York to Egypt, 1895, \$675-\$1,225  
 Ravenna pattern china, 1895, 7 8-inch plates, \$1.17  
 Plain white English stone china, 1895, 100 pieces, \$8.75  
 6-quart tin coffee pot, 1895, \$.18

Iron tea kettle, 1895, \$.28  
 Windsor 5-pint sauce pan, 1895, \$.28  
 Steel teaspoons, 1895, \$.32/dozen  
 Silver teaspoons, 1895, \$6.60/dozen  
 Corn popper, 1895, \$.08  
 Potato masher, 1895, \$.08  
 Ladies' pearl-handled knife, 1895, \$.34  
 Singer sewing machine, 1895, \$13.50  
 Laundry wringer, 1895, \$2  
 Iron, 1895, \$.55  
 Mosley Improved Water Heater No. 3, 1895, \$15  
 Refrigerator (actually an ice chest), 1895, \$10.34  
 Grand Windsor stove, 1895, \$24.30  
 Bronze metal hanging lamp, 1895, \$3  
 Ornate wooden clock, 1895, \$3.90  
 Merritt typewriters, 1895, \$11  
 Hand camera, 1895, \$13.50  
 Microscope, 1895, \$4  
 Ladies' 14K gold pocket watch, 1895, \$25  
 Alpaca wool cloth, 1895, \$.08/½ yard  
 English tweed cotton cloth, 1895, \$.07/¼ yard  
 Wool brocade with Jacquard design, 1895, \$.35/yard  
 Outing flannel, 1895, \$.04/¾ yard  
 Black Bengaline silk, 21 inches wide, 1895, \$1.50/yard  
 Linen napkins, 1895, \$.60/dozen  
 Bleached damask towel, 1895, \$.27/each, \$3.12/dozen  
 Linen glass doilies, 1895, \$.20/dozen  
 Ladies' dress pattern, 1896, \$.30  
 Ladies' shoes, 1895, \$2.50  
 Ladies' cotton hose, 1895, \$.10/each, \$1.10/dozen  
 Ladies' night dress, 1895, \$.70  
 Ladies' shirt waist, 1895, \$.85/each, \$9.75/dozen  
 Ladies' ready-made dress, 1895, \$.59/each, \$6.65/dozen  
 Ladies' Newport suit, 1895, \$5.95  
 Ladies' ready-made dress skirt, 1895, \$2.75  
 Wash dress for 8-year-old girl, 1895, \$.55  
 Ladies' spring cape, 1895, \$2.35



Ladies' jacket, 1895, \$3  
 Ladies' Mackintosh coat, 1895, \$2  
 Men's shoes, 1895, \$4  
 Men's fancy dress shirt, 1895, \$1  
 Men's wool underwear with fleece lining, 1895, \$2  
 Men's sack suit, 1895, \$3  
 Men's full-dress suit, 1895, \$33  
 Men's wool trousers, 1895, \$3  
 Men's jeans, 1895, \$1  
 Men's fancy vest, 1895, \$.80  
 Men's Mackintosh coat, 1895, \$3.75  
 Infant cloak, 1895, \$2.75  
 Infant robe, 1895, \$.85  
 Children's reefer jacket, 1895, \$1.10  
 Boys' suit with knickers, 1895, \$.75/cotton, \$1.90/wool  
 Boys' and youth's suit with long pants, 1895, \$2.50  
 Children's Zouave suit, 1895, \$2  
 Boys' shirt, 1895, \$.30  
 Boys' summer underwear, 1895, \$.25  
 Cowboy hat, 1895, \$1  
 Men's fedora, 1895, \$.75  
 Boys' straw hat, 1895, \$.20  
 Authors card game, 1895, \$.10  
 The Game of Travel board game, 1895, \$.85  
 Doll with bisque head, 1895, \$.50  
 Magic lantern, 1895, \$1.15  
 Wooden soldiers, 1895, \$2.10/dozen  
 Steam train, 1895, \$3.50  
 Marbles, 1895, bag of 100 assorted sizes, \$.20  
 Wooden top, 1895, \$.35/dozen

## Notes

### CHAPTER 1

1. Robert G. Barrows, "Urban America," in *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America*, ed. Charles W. Calhoun (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), 92-93; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975): 1: 11-12, 22-37.

2. *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 1: 106; Roger Daniels, "The Immigrant Experience in the Gilded Age," in *The Gilded Age: Essays on the Origins of Modern America*, ed. Charles W. Calhoun (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), 63-89; Raymond A. Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1985), 22-25; Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 135-36, 139-40; Barrows, "Urban America," 97-98.

3. Mohl, *The New City*, 21-22; Glaab and Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 138-39; Barrows, "Urban America," 96-97.

4. Glaab and Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 112-33.

5. *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 1: 22-37; Mohl, *The New City*, 8-13; Glaab and Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 112-15; Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1975), 56; Barrows, "Urban America," 94-95.

6. Glaab and Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 152-76; Mohl, *The New City*, 35-39; Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 3rd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 142; Chudacoff, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 64-88.

7. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 199; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).