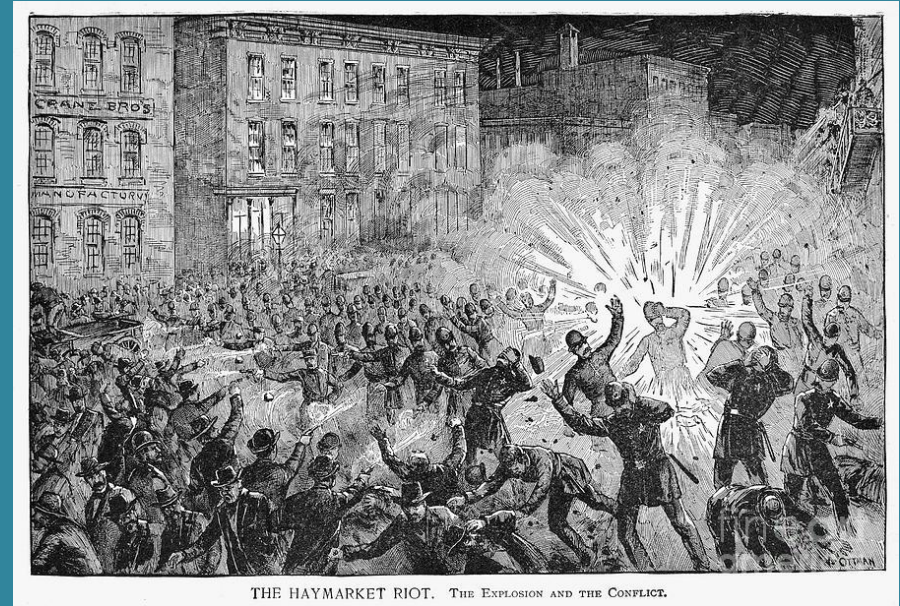




Edith Wharton 1862-1937

- Part of the New York intellectual elite
- In 1885 marries Edward Wharton
- 1908 begins an affair with Morton Fullerton
- 1913 Divorces Edward Wharton
- 1921 wins the Pulitzer for *Age of Innocence*

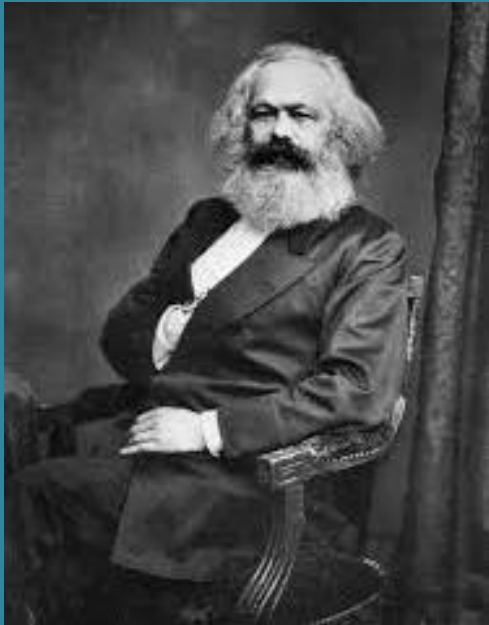
“In what aspect could a society of irresponsible pleasure seekers be said to have, on the ‘old woe of the world,’ any deeper bearing than the people composing such a society could guess? The answer to my musings was that a frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideals. The answer, in short, was my heroine, Lily Bart.”



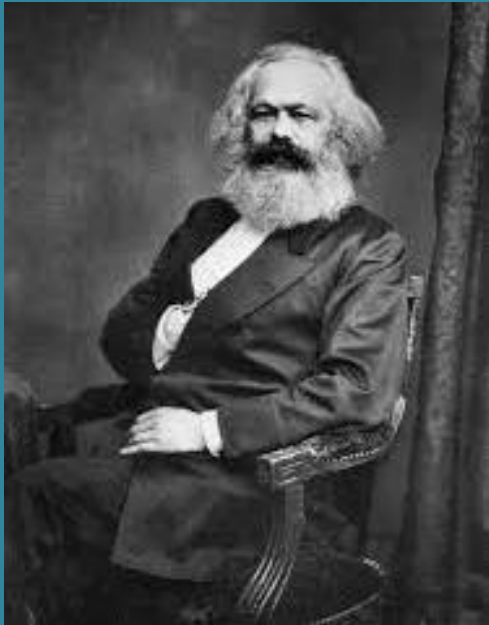
THE HAYMARKET RIOT. THE EXPLOSION AND THE CONFLICT.

## Gilded Age 1870s - 1900

- Standard Oil established by John D Rockefeller 1870
- Panic of 1873
- Long Depression 1873-1896
- Hayes-Tilden election of 1876 (End of Reconstruction)
- Great Railroad Strike of 1877
- Great Southwestern Railroad Strike/Haymarket Affair 1886
- Panic of 1896



“the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor, and that for the men of labor, with their hopes for the future”



“But this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war [...] as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American Antislavery War will do for the working classes”



“Let them have a clear idea of the rights of the soul, and I’ll venture next week they’ll strike for higher wages. That will be the end of it”  
-Mitchell



“The scenes were taken from old pictures, and the participators had been cleverly fitted with characters suited to their types [...] Indeed, so skilfully had the personality of the actors been subdued to the scenes they figured in that even the least imaginative of the audience must have felt a thrill of contrast when the curtain suddenly parted on a pictures which was simply and undisguisedly the portrait of Miss Bart. Here there could be no mistaking the predominance of personality – the unanimous ‘Oh!’ of the spectators was a tribute, not to the brush-work of Reynolds’s ‘Mrs Lloyd’ but to the flesh and blood loveliness of Lily Bart [...] It was as if she had stepped, not out of, but into, Reynolds’s canvas, banishing the phantom of his dead beauty by the beams of her living grace” (132)

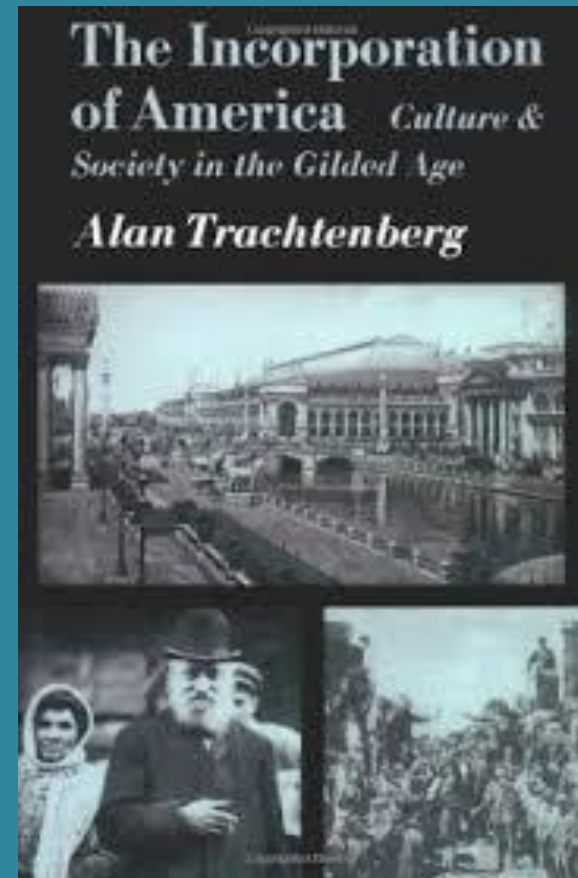
“There was in Lily a vein of **sentiment**, perhaps transmitted from this source, which gave an idealizing touch to her most prosaic purposes. She liked to think of beauty as a power for good, as giving her the opportunity to attain a position where she should make her influence felt in the vague diffusion of **refinement** and **good taste**. She was fond of pictures and flowers, and of **sentimental fiction**, and she could not help thinking that the possession of such tastes ennobled her desire for world advantage. She would not indeed have cared to marry a man who were merely rich: she was secretly ashamed of her mother’s crude passion for money. Lily’s preference would have been for an **English nobleman** with political ambitions and vast estates” (36)



“The advertisement is a construction, like a work of art, in which a good stands forth, displays itself as an object for use (it makes no difference whether its claims for beauty or health are true or not), an object with a distinct name that passes as a true name of qualities”

-Alan Trachtenberg

*The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*



“Ah well, there must be plenty of capital on the lookout for such an investment. Perhaps you’ll meet your fate tonight at the Trenors” (Selden, 14)

“It was characteristic of her that she always roused speculation, that her simplest acts seemed the result of far-reaching intentions” (5)

“In sending her the cheque, Tenor had explained that he had made five thousand for her out of Rosedale’s ‘tip’, and had put four thousand back in the same venture, as there was the promise of another ‘big rise’; she understood therefore that he was now speculating with her own money, and that she consequently owed him no more than the gratitude which such a trifling service demanded” (86)

“Lily understood that beauty is only the raw material of conquest, and that to convert it into success other arts are required. She knew that to betray any sense of superiority was a subtler form of the stupidity her mother denounced, and it did not take her long to learn that a beauty needs more tact than the possessor of an average set of features” (35)

- “Finery laid off is as unappetizing as the remains of a feast, and it occurred to Lily that, at home, her maid’s vigilance had always spared her the slight of such incongruities” (164)
- “Lily had an odd sense of being behind the social tapestry, on the side where the threads were knotted and the loose ends hung” (268)
- “There were twenty of the men in the work-room, their fagged profiles, under exaggerated hair, bowed in the harsh north light above the utensils of their art [...] Their own faces were sallow with the unwholesomeness of hot air and sedentary toil, rather than with an actual signs of want” (274)
- “She had known Nettie Crane as one of the discouraged victims of over-work and anaemic parentage: one of the superfluous fragments of life destined to be swept prematurely into that social refuse-heap of which Lily had so lately expressed her dread” (304)

“It was this moment of love, this fleeting victory over themselves, which had kept them from atrophy and extrinction; which, in her, had reached out to him in every struggle against the influence of her surroundings, and in him, had kept alive the faith that now drew him penitent and reconciled to her side. He knelt by the bed and bent over her, draining the last moment to its lees; and in the silence there passed between them the word which made all clear” (320)

“In what aspect could a society of irresponsible pleasure seekers be said to have, on the ‘old woe of the world,’ any deeper bearing than the people composing such a society could guess? The answer to my musings was that a frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideals. The answer, in short, was my heroine, Lily Bart.” –Edith Wharton