

## Section

# 3

## Agricultural Industries and Workers

### Main Ideas

1. In the late 1800s, lumber, flour milling, and cottonseed oil were major industries in Texas.
2. Labor unions in Texas had some success, but public support decreased greatly by the end of the century.

### Why It Matters Today

New inventions helped Texas industries grow and become even more productive. Use current events sources to learn more about recent inventions.

### Key Terms

- labor unions
- Knights of Labor
- strike

## The Story Continues

In 1876 a newspaper owner named Colonel A. H. Belo left his Galveston home for an exhibition in Philadelphia. He was eager to see all the new inventions that would be on display there. At the exhibition Belo and many others saw Alexander Graham Bell's new invention—the telephone. Thoroughly impressed, Belo decided that he had to have one. The telephones that he had installed at his home and at his office at the *Galveston News* were among the first in the United States.



**TEKS:** 6A, 13A, 20C, 20D, 21A, 21B, 21D, 22A

### myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on major industries in Texas and the problems labor unions faced at the end of the 19th century.

## ★ Leading Industries

New inventions like the telephone helped newspapers report on the state's expanding industries. The most important Texas industries continued to be ones that helped turn farm goods into products. Flour milling was the state's leading industry after agriculture. By 1870 there were more than 530 flour mills in Texas, and mills in Dallas County alone produced nearly \$3 million worth of flour.

By the 1890s lumber had overtaken flour milling in value. Between 1870 and 1900 the production of lumber in Texas increased more than eightfold to more than \$16 million. Much of the cutting and processing of timber in sawmills was done in the Piney Woods region. The growth of railroads created greater demand for lumber. Railroads used timber for rail ties and bridges and for fuel. Railroads also provided cheap transportation for timber products, which were used for building



*The Lutcher and Moore Lumber Company in Orange, Texas, operated from 1877 until the 1930s and was a major employer in the town.*

in the treeless frontier of western Texas and in other parts of the United States. Timber was also transported to port cities such as Galveston, where it could be shipped by boat to national and international markets. International demand for Texas lumber boosted the state's economy. One Texas businessman recognized this trend.

#### TEXAS VOICES

“Three large [lumber] mills at Beaumont . . . [have] built up an enormous trade. . . . They will go after the foreign trade harder than ever, when they have a surplus of stock and they expect to bring to Texas for the enrichment [benefit] of this section [region] and especially of the toilers [laborers] who seek their fortunes in this business, the trade and the cash of other countries.”

—Jerome Swinford, quoted in *The Road to Spindletop*,  
by John Stricklin Spratt

#### Analyzing Primary Sources Identifying Points of View

**View** How does Swinford think international trade will affect the lumber industry in Texas?

Other industries also developed. By 1900 Texas was the number-one producer of cottonseed oil for the U.S. market. Meatpacking was another leading Texas industry. Stockyards and meatpacking plants were built near railroad junctions to take advantage of refrigerated railroad cars that could transport beef across great distances.

The mining industry in Texas developed in the 1880s, when railroad locomotives began to use coal instead of wood as fuel. Coal burned more efficiently, and trains could run faster with this fuel. Railroads in Texas continued to grow as the 1800s drew to a close.

**Reading Check Analyzing Information** How did the growth of railroads affect Texas industries and the use of natural resources?

## ★ Industrial Workers

Although these growing industries created new job opportunities, most Texans still worked in agriculture. In 1900 less than 2 percent of the population worked in manufacturing. Wages and hours for industrial workers varied from job to job. Some workers joined **labor unions**—organizations that supported the interests of workers. Unions pushed for improvements in the hours, wages, and working conditions of laborers.

The first national labor union arrived in Texas in 1882. The **Knights of Labor** organized to support skilled and unskilled workers of almost every trade, including large numbers of farmers. Unlike most national unions, membership in the Knights was open to women and African Americans. Local chapters of the group were established in several cities, including Houston, Galveston, Waco, Fort Worth, and Austin. There were more than 300 local Knights groups in Texas by the mid-1880s.

In Texas the Knights organized railroad workers. The railroad union led a successful **strike** against Jay Gould's Wabash Railroad in 1885. A strike occurs when workers refuse to do their job until a company meets their demands. In 1886 the Knights were defeated in the Great Southwest Strike against Gould's Texas and Pacific Railroad. This defeat led to violence in Fort Worth. Labor unrest continued until Governor John Ireland sent the state militia and Texas Rangers to restore order. Texans, as well as people around the country, were upset by the violence, and many believed that strikes and other labor actions threatened the production and transportation of goods. As a result, support for unions decreased in Texas.

**Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect** Why did labor unions grow in Texas, and what led to their decline?

**That's Interesting!**

### **Mutualistas**

Because of discrimination and segregation, many Mexican American workers formed their own mutual aid societies. These *mutualistas* were modeled after the ones that developed in Mexico in the 1870s. These organizations were a source of support for workers and provided social services and allowed for the exchange of ideas. Some *mutualistas* also functioned as trade unions.

## ★ Section 3 Review



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**ONLINE QUIZ**

### **1. Define and explain:**

- labor unions
- strike

### **2. Identify and explain**

the significance of:

- the Knights of Labor

### **3. Categorizing**

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to describe how agricultural industries contributed to the growth of the Texas economy.

Industry	Effect on Agriculture	Effect on Economy
Flour milling		
Lumber		
Cottonseed oil		

### **4. Finding the Main Idea**

- a. What were the leading manufacturing industries in Texas for 1870 and 1890?
- b. List two reasons why labor unions did not succeed in Texas.

### **5. Writing and Critical Thinking**

**myWriteSmart**

**Analyzing Information** Imagine that you are traveling through Texas in 1870 looking for industries in which to invest money. Write a memo to other investors on the effect of national and international markets on Texas. Consider the following:

- the growth of railroads
- the demand for natural resources