

Crisis Character Biographies

With the Committee starting on February 1, 1892, delegates will represent these political and commercial figures attending the Chicago Business Summit of 1892. While there were many important players in America around the turn of the century, we have chosen to have these individuals in this committee as the breadth of their careers give delegates an easier time to find information on them and makes it easier for us to bring them to life through crisis updates.

For delegates struggling to find information on their assigned character, our recommendation is to read more into the history of the gilded age, the country's politics from 1880-1900, and the development of labor and union efforts that coincides with this era. We want this committee to be difficult, but fun—if you develop an understanding of the time period you will do just fine in the committee!

J.P. Morgan-- Born in the 1830s, JP Morgan has become one of the leading American financiers by the 1890s. Early in his career, Morgan became involved in the banking sector, working his way up through various banks owned by his father. After his father's death in 1890, Morgan took full control of the bank. In his ascension to the top job, Morgan invested heavily in the railroad industry in the United States—helping muscle out competitors and improve efficiency. This consolidation provoked Congress to pass the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 which outlawed price discrimination for shipping rates between the Eastern and the Western States; and mandated railroad rates be reasonable and just—though the Act prevented the government from price fixing. This regulation forced Morgan to frequently convene major railroad companies in order to negotiate and set prices that allowed them to turn a profit, but did violate the law—or anger American citizens.

Andrew Carnegie-- Born in Scotland in 1835, Andrew Carnegie came to the United States with his family in 1848. Carnegie started by working in a mill, before taking jobs in the telegraph and railroad industries. He started to make his most prominent impact in the railroad industry with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, where his relationships and abilities allowed him to pursue inside deals that made him immensely wealthy. Convinced of the importance of heavy industry after the American Civil War, Carnegie began to invest heavily in the iron and steel industries. In the steel sector, Carnegie's adoption of the Bessemer Process and the vertical integration of the steel supply chain allowed the production of steel more efficiently, and, therefore, affordably. By 1892, Carnegie's steel empire produced the most amount of steel in the world and he officially launched the Carnegie Steel Company in that year. Carnegie maintains a close relationship with one of his employees, Charles M. Schwab.

Charles M. Schwab-- Born in 1862, Charles M. Schwab is an up-and-coming industrialist working in the steel industry. Schwab is currently the manager of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works and Furnaces in Pennsylvania—which is owned by Andrew Carnegie. As a manager, Schwab is responsible for helping maintain harmony with the workers, while ensuring that steel output increases and costs are reduced. Schwab is a natural ally of Andrew Carnegie.

Andrew Mellon-- Born in 1855, Andrew Mellon grew up in a prominent Pittsburgh family. Mellon started his career by working in his father's bank, T. Mellon & Sons. Through this work, Mellon met and befriended Henry Clay Frick. By 1882, Mellon took full control of his father's company. Mellon's bank became an important source of funds for industrialists, with his loans and investments helping jumpstart numerous companies. In addition to his business interests, Mellon was a conservative Republican and played a role in the disastrous Johnstown Flood, which killed 2000 people. Mellon was close to Henry Clay Frick and Philander C. Knox.

Henry Clay Frick-- Born in 1849, Henry Clay Frick is a lifelong friend of Andrew Mellon and an industrialist deeply involved in the American steel industry. Frick went into the metals business in his 20s where he set up a furnace to turn coal into coke—an important component in the development of steel. Frick's companies were positioned at a key location in the steel supply chain. Frick met Andrew Carnegie in the 1880s, but the two had a contentious relationship despite going into business together and becoming business partners. Frick felt that Carnegie was always trying to cut him out of business deals. Frick was able to keep costs down throughout the steel industry as he was virulently anti-union. Frick has a close relationship with Andrew Mellon and Philander C Knox.

John D Rockefeller-- Born in 1839, Rockefeller has been working continuously since he was 16—first as a bookkeeper in a small company dealing with the logistics of farm supplies and products and then in his own food transport company. While business boomed during the Civil War, the conflict created new markets and demands, including for oil. Rockefeller founded Standard Oil in 1870. Standard Oil made several crucial process changes that made it more efficient and cost effective than its competitors, including negotiating fiercely with freight railroads to ensure that Standard Oil had preferentially shipping rates. Rockefeller's wealth and competitiveness led him to successfully run most other oil producers out of business by undercutting their prices, buying them out, and making side deals. By the 1880s, Standard Oil was a monopoly and provided 90% of the country's oil—and by some estimates—85% of world oil production. Through the Interstate Commerce Commission and Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, Congress is making efforts to slowly eliminate Standard Oil's unfair business practices and, potentially, break-up the company.

Philander C Knox-- Born in Pennsylvania in 1853, Knox was a lawyer with various business interests throughout his life. He was a close associate of Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Mellon, and, occasionally, Andrew Carnegie. This included successfully defending the trio in the aftermath of the Johnstown Flood, which had killed 2000 people in 1889 after an artificial dam constructed by the industrialists' private club collapsed. Earlier in his career, Knox had developed a close relationship with William McKinley, a prominent U.S. Representative from Ohio (and now governor of Ohio) and Knox had also served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania—a role that gave him important connections throughout the U.S. legal system.

Grover Cleveland-- The 22nd President of the United States, Grover Cleveland was elected president in 1884, before losing reelection in 1888. Cleveland was the first Democrat elected President since the Civil War. Previously the Mayor of Buffalo and Governor of New York, Cleveland was considered a pro-business Democrat, he narrowly won the election of 1884. Once in office, Cleveland fought to reduce tariffs on imports; maintain the gold standard; and investigated the railroad industry. Cleveland was defeated by Benjamin Harrison in 1888, despite winning the popular vote. Cleveland has been alarmed by Harrison's pursuit of protectionist tariffs and movements towards a silver standard. Cleveland is currently planning to seek the Presidential nomination of the Democratic Party at the 1892 convention.

Benjamin Harrison-- The grandson of a previous president, Benjamin Harrison was elected president in 1888. Harrison, a Republican, had been a senator from Indiana—a state which was crucial to his victory in the electoral college in 1888, despite his loss in the popular vote to then-incumbent President Grover Cleveland. As President, Harrison signed The Tariff of 1890 (known as the McKinley Tariff) which raised taxes on imports in the United States to some of the highest levels ever in order to protect American industry from foreign competitors. The tariffs also raised funds for the federal government that Republicans used to spend on internal improvements. Additionally, on currency issues, Harrison tried to find a compromise between the gold and silver standard—advocating a mix of the two. Harrison is currently running for reelection in 1892—and he might face off against Grover Cleveland, his opponent from 1888.

James B Weaver-- Considered the founder of the Populist party, James B. Weaver is interested in becoming the populist party's presidential nominee in the 1892 presidential election. He was also previously the Greenback-Labor Party's nomination for president in 1880. His book, *A Call to Action*, which he published in the wake of his second presidential campaign, outlined the principles of the newly formed Populist Party. Weaver's platform maintained a support of ambitious economic and political reform. Calling for a graduated income tax, public ownership of railroads, government issued currency, and unlimited coinage of silver, Weaver was considered radical for his time. As a threat to Conservative Democrats and an outspoken leader, James B. Weaver made it his mission to have a far-reaching campaign. He went on speaking tours in the North, South, and on the Pacific Coast. These tours made Weaver's legacy in politics not only his stances, but also his ability to drive American politics to a new, more open, political conversation involving the people. Thomas E Watson could be a potential ally for Weaver as the two share a similar pro-agrarian point of view.

Collis Potter Huntington--Born in the early 1800s, Collis Potter Huntington is one of the Big Four railroad magnates. Huntington collaborated with Leland Stanford (and others) to create the Central Pacific Railroad company in 1861, which ultimately helped connect the Eastern and Western United States on the Transcontinental Railroad. Working with Stanford, Huntington expanded the railroad through the Southern Pacific Railroad. For the first time ever, people could board a train in New York, stop in New Orleans, and ride all the way to California. These railways were a major facilitator for the industrial revolution aiding players such as Andrew Carnegie in his transport of steel and John D. Rockefeller with his oil. Huntington was known to try to block federal support for other railroad companies in an effort to prevent competition to his railroad lines. Recently, the relationship

between Huntington and Stanford has fallen apart, making it more difficult for the two to lead their railroad company coherently together.

Leland Stanford--Leland Stanford has worked closely with Collis Potter Huntington to establish the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads, linking the United States by rail from coast to coast. Stanford is one of the country's major railroad magnates. Outside of business, Stanford is a Republican politician, serving as governor of California and now one of the state's senators. He also helped found Stanford University. Huntington's and Stanford's relationship is struggling with Stanford's immense wealth and reputation making him the more popular of the two. Despite being a republican, Stanford has occasionally supported ideas advanced by the Populist Party.

Samuel Gompers-- Gompers was an English immigrant, cigar maker, and union leader. He helped found the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1881 and in 1886, reorganized it into the American Federation of Labor, for which he was the president. He spoke out against issues such as poor wages, little to no benefits for workers, long hours, and dangerous working conditions. By 1892, his organization represented over 1 million workers including child laborers. The American Federation of Labor was also very influential in passing anti-immigration legislation in the 1890s. Gompers was an avid supporter of legislation such as the Chinese-Exclusion Act (1880) which barred immigration from Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s. Gompers was typically a supporter of Democratic candidates for office, but would sometimes support Republicans.

John Elbridge Hudson--Since 1889 John Elbridge Hudson has been the President of American Bell Telephone Company (later known as AT&T). Known for his high intelligence, he graduated from Harvard as Valedictorian in 1862 and was admitted to the Boston bar becoming an attorney in 1865. Before becoming President of American Bell, he was chief legal counsel of the company. Hudson was also involved in many organizations and learned societies throughout his life. He was a scholar of the Arts and Sciences taking part in organizations such as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The British Association for the Advancement of Science, and the New England Historic Genealogical Society where he became vice-president. He was a socialite on the East Coast as a member of high society and many historical societies, so he had ties everywhere.

Eugene Debs-- Eugene Debs was a former member of the Indiana House of Representatives and at this time, a Democrat. (He would later be the founder of the Socialist Party of America). His work with labor movements has taken the United States by storm. Although he was once against strikes for improving wages and working conditions of Americans, in 1888 Debs led a strike against CB&Q Railroad that lasted ten months, later dubbed the Burlington Railroad Strike. His plans at this time include establishing an American Railway Union, which would be one of the first industrial unions in the United States, much to the dissatisfaction of big railway magnates such as Collis P. Huntington and Leland Stanford. He is also attempting to expand his political career with hopes of eventually running for President.

Thomas E. Watson-- A leading populist, Thomas E. Watson was a Georgia native who had an agrarian political viewpoint that often led him to criticize big business, bankers, and the Democratic Party. He was especially critical of railroads, even going as far as resigning from his seat in the Georgia state legislature when a bill to subject the railways to county property taxes was voted down. He often attacked the viewpoints of President Grover Cleveland and called upon the poor to unite against societal and economic elites. Since the beginning of the 1890s he has been working on creating the Georgia Populist Party and passing legislation that would require the United States Post Office to deliver mail to remote farm families—believing the farmers are at a huge social and economic disadvantage without this process. James B Weaver is a natural political ally for Watson given their pro-agrarian views.

Henry Villard-- An immigrant from Germany, Villard was a prominent journalist and public figure in the early 1890s. He was President of the Northern Pacific Railway from 1881-1884 and was the first to connect the Northwest United States to the Transcontinental railroad. He also owned the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation* newspapers. Villard also worked closely with Thomas Edison to establish the Edison General Electric Company. Villard was President of this company until he was recently forced out after J.P. Morgan influenced a merger of the company with the Thomas-Houston Electric Company to establish General Electric. Villard has international connections and can also help dig-up dirt on politicians and robber barons, and given his newfound grudge against J.P. Morgan and Thomas Edison, he might want to put those talents to good use.

Thomas Edison-- Inventor of the lightbulb, phonograph, and the motion picture camera, Edison was one of the most influential inventors of his time. Always erring on the side of non-violence, Edison was a very passive man. This attitude led to many of his patents being stolen out from under him. Also, much of his work in the late 1880s involved creating a “more humane” electric chair using special electrical currents. Edison was very popular in the public eye and he worked hard to keep it that way. Many see him as a media manipulator of sorts. Because so many thought of him a genius and loved his work, he could easily convince people in business and politics. For example, his many business dealings led him and J.P Morgan to create General Electric, the biggest electric company in the late 1800s. However, his dealings came at the expense of some key players during that time such as Henry Villard.

James J Hill-- James Hill was a Canadian-American railroad director. During the panic of 1873, he and several others bought the bankrupt St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (StPM&M). Over the next decades, he built many railroads across Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Montana. Along the railroads, he sold land to immigrants and bought out companies to relocate them along his railroads to make sure there was enough industry along them. These business practices ensured there was consistent demand on his railroad lines for transporting people and goods. To avoid governmental intervention, Hill invested much of the profits back into the railroad. He became the president of StPM&M, and oversaw the expansion of their railroads throughout the 1880s. Hill was also a conservative Democrat, supportive of some of President Cleveland’s more pro-business policies and largely opposed to the ideology of the Populist Party. Hill had a friendly relationship with S. H. H. Clark, even though their companies could compete for the railroad business.

S. H. H. Clark--S. H. H. Clark was an American railroad conductor originally from New Jersey who worked his way up the ranks of the railroad industry. He eventually became a Vice President for the Missouri Pacific Railroad and helped the firms expand its railroad networks in the Western United States. Clark's railroads were competitors of Leland Stanford's and Collis Potter Huntington's railroad companies—and though he competed with James J Hill in the railroad business, the two had a friendly relationship and could collaborate with one another.

John Sherman-- John Sherman was an American canal project engineer, lawyer, and Representative in the American House of Representatives from Ohio. He was elected to the House in 1864 as a Republican, and served there until he was elected to the Senate in 1861. After a stint as President Hayes' Secretary of the Treasury, Sherman returned to serve in the Senate in 1881. Sherman has sought the Republican Presidential nomination on several occasions. During his current time in the Senate, Sherman voted against various bills to prevent immigration from China and pushed for the passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, which tried to regulate monopolistic corporations, such as Standard Oil. Sherman, while pro-business, is opposed to illegal business practices that constrained competition. George F. Hoar is a natural ally for Senator Sherman.

George Frisbie Hoar--George F. Hoar was Republican and a representative in the American House of Representatives for the state of Massachusetts from 1869-1877. After his 4 terms in the House, he went on to serve in the Senate for the rest of his life. While he avoided heavy partisanship, and never hesitated to criticize other members of the party he believed were wrong, Hoar had been a vocal opponent of slavery and a radical republican during the Civil War. During his long career he had also served as the chairman of the 1880 Republican National Convention. He was an avid supporter of capitalism, and believed it was God's plan for the process of civilization. Senator Sherman is a natural ally for Hoar.

Thomas Nast--Thomas Nast was born in 1840 in Bavaria, Germany, and moved to New York City with his mom and siblings in June 1846. After studying at the *National Academy of Design* Nast began working as a draftsman for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. His drawings first began to appear in *Harper's Weekly* for the first time as well. As his career continued to take off Nast became popular for his political cartoons and their biting commentary on the leading businessmen, politicians, and issues of the time. In 1892 Nast took control of the *New York Gazette*, renaming it *Nast's Weekly* and using it as an outlet to regularly publish his and others' work. Nast has the power to sway public opinion through his work and can help individuals improve their public reputations.

Ida B. Wells--Initially born into slavery, Wells was first educated at Rust University in her hometown in Mississippi and then in 1884, she attended Fisk University in Nashville over several summer sessions while teaching at a local school. In 1887 the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled against her after she sued the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad for forcibly removing her from her seat after she refused to leave and go into a "colored-only" car. Following this ruling Wells picked up the pen name "Tola" and began to publish newspaper articles to initially criticize the educational resources available to African American children. When her teaching contract was not renewed after 1891, she dedicated her time to focusing on the unique social and economic plight of African Americans. Wells

is a tenacious reporter who can investigate the corruption and inequities throughout the United States in 1892.

The Pinkerton Estate¹

Around 1850, the Pinkerton Detective Agency was founded by Allan Pinkerton and Edward Rucker. Following Alan's death, his sons took over as heads of the Detective Agency. Pinkerton initially gained a reputation in security after claiming to have saved President Lincoln from assassination in 1861 and working as Lincoln's personal security and directed Espionage against the Confederacy during the Civil War. In 1871, the Pinkertons were hired by Congress to be specifically devoted to "the detection and prosecution of those guilty of violating federal law." However, Pinkerton security agents were frequently used and therefore had a strong association with being involved in labor disputes and breaking strikes, occasionally facing public backlash for their use of violent tactics. The Pinkertons can help dig-up dirt on different members in the committee, potentially embarrassing them.

¹ Little is known about Allan Pinkerton's sons and their leadership following Allan's death, so for simplicity in the crisis simulation the Pinkerton estate will be acting as the individual with direction over the Pinkerton Detective Agency