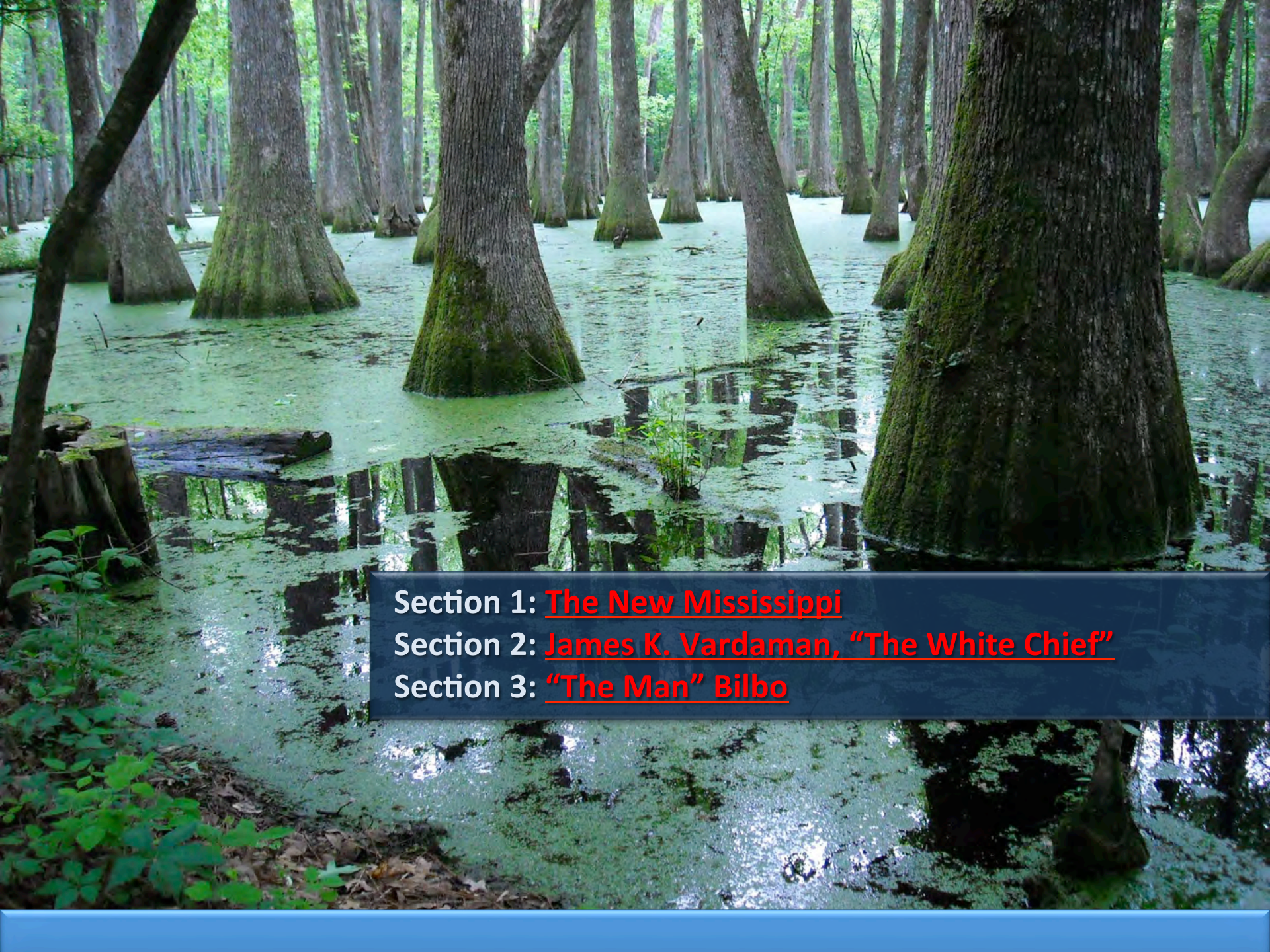




A Place Called Mississippi

Chapter 8: Revolt of the Rednecks, 1900-1932
STUDY PRESENTATION



Section 1: [The New Mississippi](#)

Section 2: [James K. Vardaman, "The White Chief"](#)

Section 3: ["The Man" Bilbo](#)

Section 1: The New Mississippi

- Essential Question: How did the direct primary affect elections in Mississippi?



Section 1: The New Mississippi

➤ What terms do I need to know?

- inaugural address
- charter
- New Capitol
- direct primary



A New Governor: Andrew H. Longino

- Andrew Longino was the first governor elected after the Civil War who was not a Confederate veteran.
- Longino was the last governor to be picked by the elite Democrats who once ruled the state. He represented the end of an era.
- In his first speech as governor, he advised Mississippians to be ready for the big changes that were coming.



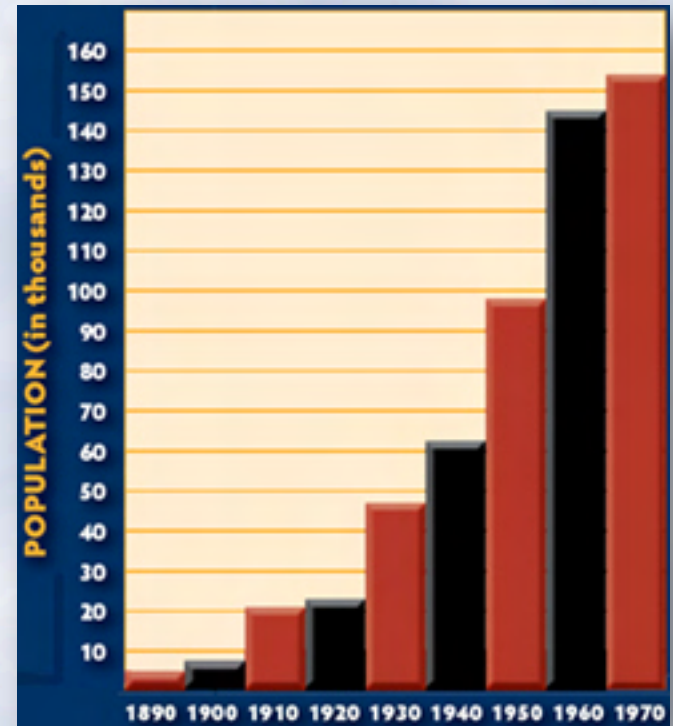
A New Governor: Andrew H. Longino: New Industry for Mississippi

- Longino believed that Mississippi's success depended on industrial variance.
- He asked the legislature to give tax breaks to new industries. Longino was successful at bringing new industries to the state.
- During Longino's term, 1,312 new businesses were started.
- The economic growth might have gone even further if Longino's successor kept up the program.



A New Governor: Andrew H. Longino: A New Capital

- The success of Longino's program was very conspicuous in Jackson.
- The population of Jackson tripled during his term and \$2.1 million worth of construction projects were underway.



A New Governor: Andrew H. Longino: A New Capitol

- The old capitol building needed a lot of repair, so Longino suggested the construction of a new one.
- Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new capitol were on January 1, 1901.
- The \$1 million project was completed on June 3, 1903.
- In September of that year, state officials moved into a the new, beautiful, capitol.

[Link to Old Capitol Museum](#)

[Link to Mississippi State Capitol](#)



A New Governor: Andrew H. Longino: A New Electoral System

- A new system of nominating and electing public officials came with the turn of the century.
- Before this time, only the wealthy could get their candidates nominated even though they were vastly outnumbered.
- In 1900, the demand for a new system was overwhelming.
- Governor Longino created a direct primary where everyone could vote on the candidate of their choice.
- The Mississippi Democratic party made it legal for only white Democrats to vote in the primary.
- Candidates now made their speeches to the citizens rather than a few party leaders. A new kind of candidate came out of this. They used flashing things and family history to win the approval of the voters.
- Until the 1960's, the Democratic Party did not have any real competition.



New Politics: The Election of 1903

- In August of 1903, the first direct primary was held.
- Vardaman did not like blacks. He said they were lazy, dishonest, and not fit for citizenship.
- He promised to “keep blacks in their place” and to close black schools.
- He said that if black schools were closed, there would be more money for white schools.
- Vardaman said that the wealthy had no sympathy for the poor and that they would make big business heavily regulated.
- Vardaman claimed that because of his humble beginnings, he was the only one who could truly represent the people of Mississippi.



Section 2: James K. Vardaman, “The White Chief”

- Essential Question: How did attitude toward blacks change during the Vardaman administration?



Section 2: James K. Vardaman, “The White Chief”

➤ What terms do I need to know?

- white cappers
- lynching
- Piney Woods School
- centennial
- armistice
- women’s suffrage



Section 2: James K. Vardaman, “The White Chief”

- Vardaman was the model redneck politician.
- Among his supporters, he was called “The White Chief.”
- He was born in Texas in July of 1861. His family moved back to Mississippi when he was eight where he eventually studied law.
- As a lawyer, he became the advocate for the typical poor white man.
- Vardaman was elected to the Senate in 1911, but lost in the next two races.
- After his second loss, he moved to Alabama.



Administration of James K. Vardaman, 1904- 1908

- Vardaman became governor on January 19th, 1904.
- He was the first governor inaugurated at the new capitol.
- He promised reform and progress for white Mississippians.



Administration of James K. Vardaman, 1904- 1908: Improved Conditions for Blacks

- Vardaman ended the various forms of the convict lease system, and he established state farms where prisoners were taken to work.
- Black prisoners were treated better than they had been under private control. The actions of white cappers ceased.
- As governor, Vardaman refused to allow any black man to be lynched. On several occasions, he sent the national guard in to protect a man from being lynched, even though he had said during his campaign that he would lynch any black man who was thought to have raped a white woman.



Administration of James K. Vardaman, 1904- 1908: Laurence C. Jones and the Piney Woods School

- Laurence C. Jones graduated from the University of Iowa in 1908.
- Instead of taking a position at Tuskegee University, he decided to come to Mississippi and found his own school called the Piney Woods School.
- He founded the school with \$2 that was given to him by a former slave.
- The first schoolhouse was a shed that he and his student fixed and painted.
- The school is the most prestigious of the nation's four remaining historically black boarding schools.



Administration of James K. Vardaman, 1904- 1908: Improvements for Poor Whites

- In the early 1900's, it was not uncommon to see children working ten to twelve hour days in a factory.
- Vardaman put in motion the plan to end child labor.
- Vardaman also created a school textbook commission, separate school districts for black and white children, and included a 30% teacher pay raise.



Administration of James K. Vardaman, 1904 - 1908: Other Reforms

- Before he left office, Vardaman recommended other policies that were taken up by his successors.
 - elected judges
 - reduced power of banks
 - regulation of interest rates and railroad companies
 - a state-run hospital
 - a home for elderly women
 - a place for the mentally ill
 - a teacher's college



The Senatorial Election of 1907

- While Vardaman was still governor, he ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate.
- He lost the election to John Sharp Williams.
- When his term for governor expired, he stayed in Jackson to edit the *Jackson Issue*.



The Senatorial Campaign of 1911

- The winner of the primary election would fill the Senate term beginning in 1913.
- Theodore Bilbo, who was rising in popularity, endorsed Vardaman.
- Political speeches began in 1910 even though the seat wouldn't open until 1911.
- Vardaman's competitor eventually ended up yelling at Vardaman's supporters, who were being loud and teasing him. He called them "cattle" and "rednecks."
- This was the first time "redneck" took on a political meaning.
- Bilbo was elected lieutenant governor and Vardaman won.
- For a while, Vardaman was the most popular politician, but soon Theodore Bilbo took over as most popular.



World War I

- In 1917, while Mississippi was getting ready to celebrate its one hundredth year of statehood, America entered World War I.
- About 56,700 people from Mississippi were in the military during this time.
- The war only had a small impact on the state's economy.
- The most direct impact of World War I on Mississippi was the defeat of Senator Vardaman.
- Vardaman was not in favor of World War I.



Vardaman Defeated

- Vardaman lost reelection because he opposed President Wilson's war policies.
- Vardaman became one of the most outspoken critics of President Wilson.
- President Wilson wanted Vardaman to be defeated at reelection.
- When he was defeated a second time for senator, he moved to Alabama where he lived until he died.



Women's Suffrage

- The constitution did not allow women to vote or hold public office.
- Strong support for the rights of women began in 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention.
- Ida. B. Wells, Belle Kearney, and Nellie Nugent were three active Mississippi suffragettes.
- In 1920, women won the right to vote.
- Mrs. Theodore Bilbo may have been the first woman in Mississippi to participate in the political process when her husband campaigned.
- In the first state election, Belle Kearney was elected to the Senate and Nellie Nugent was elected to the House.



Section 3: “The Man” Bilbo

- Essential Question: How was the Bilbo administration able to improve life in Mississippi?



Section 3: “The Man” Bilbo

➤ What terms do I need to know?

- bribe
- protégé
- property assessment
- dipping
- Great Migration



Section 3: “The Man” Bilbo

- Governor Bilbo was a powerful and important figure in Mississippi’s history.
- For forty years he was called “The Man” by everyone in the state.
- He was one of Mississippi’s greatest and most controversial politicians.
- His political career was riddled with scandal and bribery and yet, he had loyal followers.



Early Life

- He was the youngest of several children.
- His father became president of a small bank in Poplarville.
- He graduated from high school in 1896.
- Although he was “authorized” to be a Baptist minister, he decided to become a teacher instead.
- He lost his first political campaign to a one-armed Confederate veteran in 1903.



State Senator Bilbo

- In 1907, Bilbo ran for Senate in Poplarville.
- After he won the election, he was admitted to the bar to practice law.
- Bilbo claimed that the supporters of LeRoy Percy had paid him a bribe so that he would vote for Percy, who won the election.
- The Senate charged Bilbo with accepting the bribe.
- Although he was not expelled, he was asked to resign.
- He refused to resign and told the Senate he would take his political future to the people and allow them to decide.



Lieutenant Governor Bilbo

- Bilbo ran for lieutenant governor in 1911.
- He campaigned furiously.
- “The fight between the classes and the masses is on,” Bilbo said of his campaign.
- During the campaign, Bilbo wore a red necktie and suspenders to keep up his pants and his courage.
- Bilbo was often involved in physical confrontation with those who opposed him.
- Bilbo won the election by 23,000 votes.



Bilbo and Bribery Charges

- Matte Plunkett, the state librarian conducted her own investigation to see if Bilbo was guilty of accepting a bribe.
- She used her tape recorder to collect evidence from Bilbo and his law partner.
- Her evidence was a recording of the two talking about a bribe they had accepted from a woman who wanted help establishing a new county near the Delta.
- He announced he would run for governor in 1915.



Governor Bilbo's First Administration, 1916-1920

- Fred Sullens, editor of the *Jackson Daily* disliked Bilbo.
- Despite the opposition from the state's most powerful newspaper editor, Bilbo beat out all four candidates in the first primary.
- Bilbo's protégé, Lee Russell was elected lieutenant governor.
- Bilbo became governor in 1920.
- As governor, he inherited a \$1 million dollar gap in funds. To pay off the state, he said that all real estate should be assessed at its actual value.
- He wanted the rich to pay higher taxes and the poor to pay lower ones. This act allowed the state to balance its budget for the first time in years.
- He enacted several programs in education and health.
- In 1918, he ran for U.S. House of Representatives, but lost.



Administration of Henry L. Whitfield, 1924-1927

- In 1923, the former President of the Mississippi State College for Women, Henry Whitfield, became governor.
- Since this was the first election for governor since women gained the right to vote, it is likely that was a reason for his victory over Theodore Bilbo.
- He had several broad concerns during his term as governor:
 - better mental healthcare
 - introducing Mississippi to new industries
 - improvements in the quality of life for blacks
- He established a program to bring industries to Mississippi.
- His progress was shortened by his death in 1927.



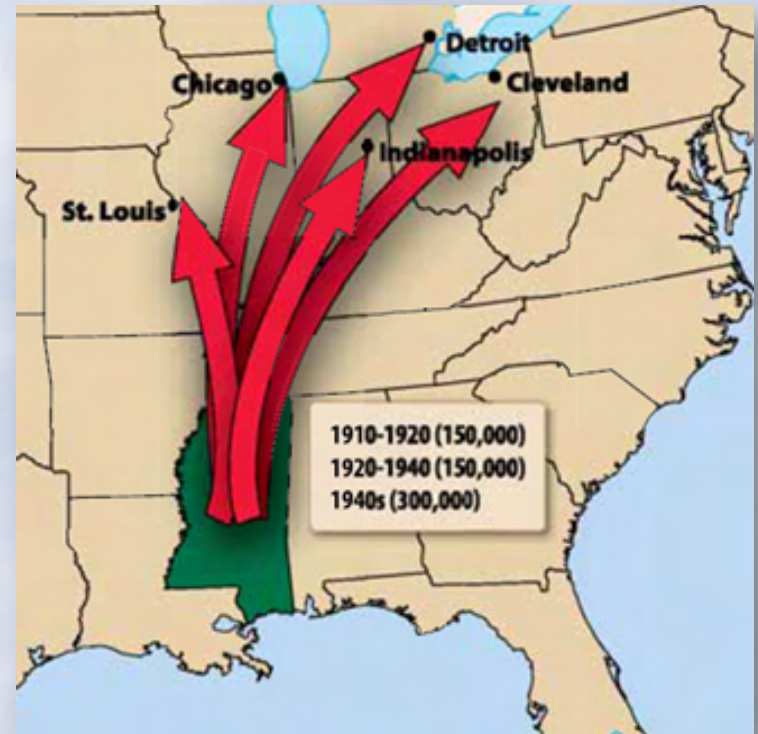
The Great Migration

- During the 1920s, poverty increased, and racial violence rose.
- Public lynching and mob violence became a national concern.
- Everyone from doctors to schoolchildren were encouraged to try to stop lynching.
- Police officers were encouraged to arrest anyone who participated in mob behavior.
- After World War I, the black population began moving north in search of a better life.
- White officials discouraged this because it left them with a labor shortage.
- Police and other officers used forceful tactics to keep blacks in the fields. This made them more determined to leave the South.
- Some black leaders said that people would stay in the South if the violence stopped. White officials attempted to drive the KKK and other groups out of the Delta.



The Great Migration (continued)

- Black leaders also encouraged friendly whites to extend the college curriculum so blacks didn't have to go out-of-state for their education.
- Despite all of these efforts, little was done to change the lives of blacks in Mississippi.
- By 1965, the Great Migration had ended and many blacks began to return to the South.



Governor Bilbo's Second Administration, 1928-1932

- Bilbo's campaign for governor was delayed by the Flood of 1927.
- Most politicians promised to build a levee system to prevent further disasters. Bilbo also wanted to establish a state-owned printing press to create free textbooks for schools.
- A highway construction program projected to cost \$82 million was also on his agenda.
- He called for the merging of Mississippi A&M and the University of Mississippi.
- He was elected, but his agenda fell through.
- Bilbo was unable to help the state when the Great Depression occurred.
- When he left office in 1932, he believed his political career was over.



Bilbo's Senatorial Career

- In 1934, Theodore Bilbo ran for U.S. Senate and was elected (he was reelected twice).
- He spent most of his career as a senator opposing civil rights bills, antilynching laws, and the Fair Employment Practices Commission.
- The Senate attempted to deny him his seat because a large number of blacks had not been allowed to vote in the 1946 election.
- Bilbo became ill before charges could be brought. He did not recover from his illness and died on August 21, 1947 in New Orleans.



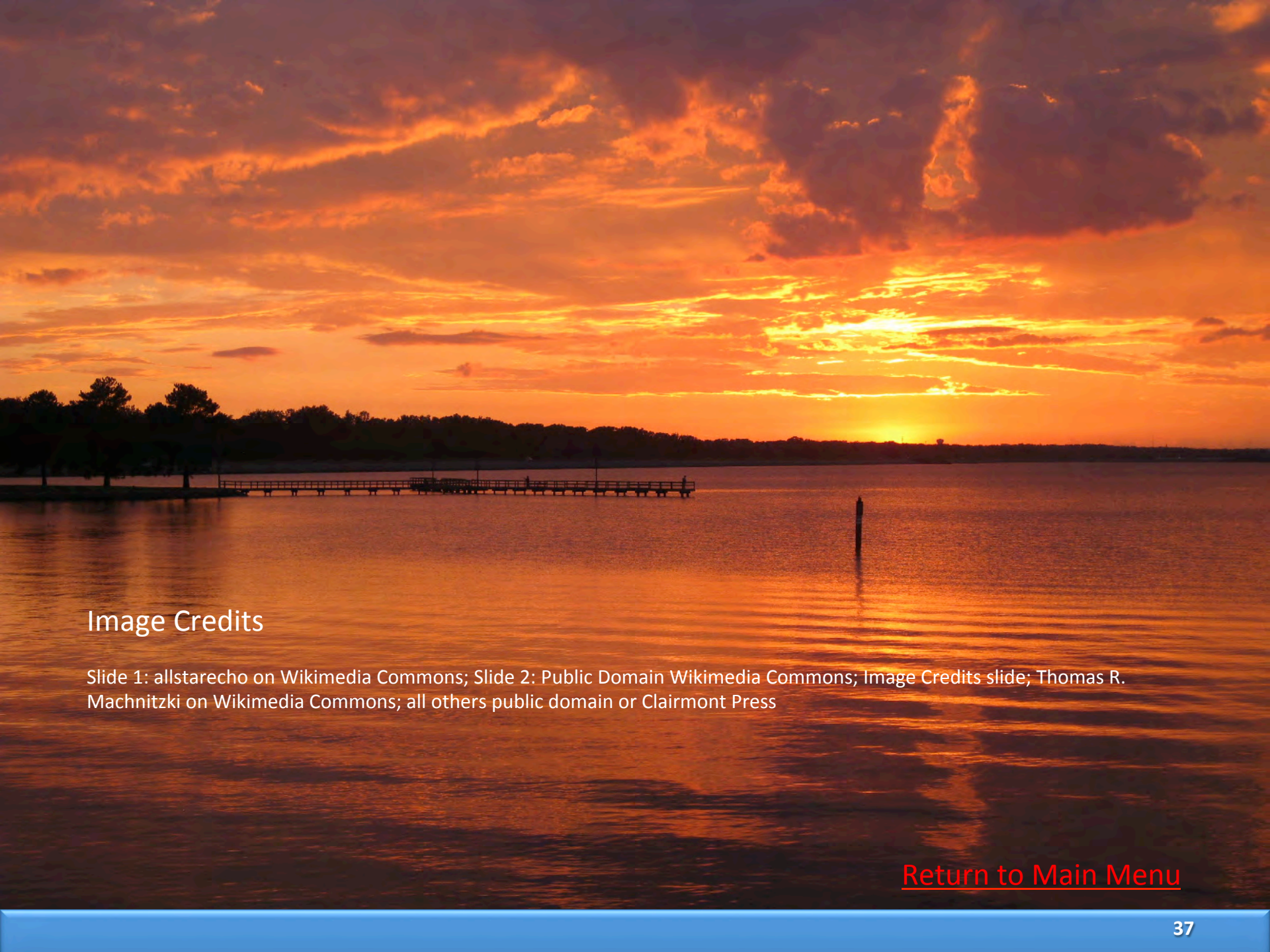


Image Credits

Slide 1: allstarecho on Wikimedia Commons; Slide 2: Public Domain Wikimedia Commons; Image Credits slide; Thomas R. Machnitzki on Wikimedia Commons; all others public domain or Clairmont Press

[Return to Main Menu](#)