Steps Toward Unification

“Like Italy, Germany was not a unified nation in 1848. However, the patchwork of independent German states did have a common language and culture. In addition, Napoleon had nurtured nationalism when he united the German states into a confederation. Following Napoleon’s defeat in 1815, the leaders at the Congress of Vienna retained the organization but renamed it the German Confederation. Thus a group of 39 separate states with a common language and culture was poised for the movement to unite.”

~Human Legacy, page 719.
Revolution in Prussia

• Liberal revolt in 1848
  – German Unity
  – Some prefer constitutional monarchy
  – Others want a Republic

• Fredrick Wilhelm IV
  – Promises a constitution
  – Goes back on his word once unrest is quieted
  – Bans political organizations
  – Censors press
Economic and Cultural Unity

• Zollverein
  – Customs union formed in 1834
  – Removes tariffs and trade barriers
  – Fosters economic unity

• Nationalism
  – German Cultural movement
  – Richard Wagner
    • Opera glorifies German myths & traditions

“[I hate this fast growing tendency to chain men to machines in big factories and deprive them of all joy in their efforts - the plan will lead to cheap men and cheap products.]”

Richard Wagner
Bismarck’s Plan for Germany

“Otto von Bismarck, a conservative and a politician, was the leading force behind German unification. He became prominent in Prussian politics in 1847 when he gave a strongly conservative speech at the national Assembly. In 1862 Wilhelm I, the new Prussian king, chose Bismarck as Prussia’s prime minister.”

~*The Human Legacy*, Page 719.
Bismarck’s Philosophy

• Conservative
  – Does not favor a Republic
  – Supports the King of Prussia
  – Believed it was Prussia’s destiny to unify Germany

• Realpolitik
  – Politics based on practical considerations and power
  – Little or consideration of morals or ideology
  – Do whatever is necessary to strengthen the state

Politics is not an exact science
~ Otto von Bismarck ~

The great questions of the day will not be settled by means of speeches and majority decisions but by iron and blood.
~ Otto von Bismarck ~
German Leader
“Blood and Iron”

- Bismarck’s *Realpolitik*
  - Force is a political tool
  - German unity would be won by force, not by negotiation or vote
  - Need to increase Prussian military power
  - Dismisses German Liberal assembly when they refuse funds
  - Raises taxes & builds up Prussian Army

Even victorious war is an evil that must be prevented by the wisdom of nations

~ Otto von Bismarck ~
Bismarck’s First War

• Disputed territory
  – Schleswig & Holstein
  – Owned by Denmark

• Alliances
  – Allies with Austria in 1864

• Results
  – Defeats Denmark
  – Prussia takes Schleswig
  – Austria takes Holstein
    • Austria owns territory within borders of Prussia
    • Bismarck prepares for war with Austria
Unification and Empire

“Bismarck could not increase Prussia’s power as long as Austria was in the way. Austria was a leader in the German Confederation and it had influence over some of the German states that opposed Prussia’s leadership. With two short wars, Bismarck moved Austria out of the way and established a unified German Empire.”

~Human Legacy, Page 720.
The Austro-Prussian War

- **Diplomatic isolation of Austria**
  - Promises Italy territory of Venetia
  - Persuades Napoleon III to keep France neutral

- **Provocation of Austria**
  - Prussian troops enter Holstein
  - Austria declares war
  - Bismarck appeals to German nationalism

- **Course of the War**
  - Modern Prussian Army defeats Austria in 7 weeks

- **Results**
  - German confederation dissolved
  - All but three Southern German States unite with Prussia
The Franco-Prussian War 1871

- Dispute with France
  - Alsace & Lorraine had been part of the Holy Roman Empire
  - Now controlled by France
  - Dispute inspires nationalism in Southern German States
  - All German states side with Prussia
  - Austria remains neutral
  - Italy supports Prussia

- Outcome
  - France defeated
  - Germany unified
Creating the German Empire

- Wilhelm I becomes Kaiser of German Empire
- Bismarck appointed Chancellor
- Balance of Power Shifts
  - Napoleon III overthrown
  - France now weaker
  - Germany becomes dominant economic & military power in continental Europe
The Empire’s Growth and Change

“In the years after 1871, Germany prospered. Under the leadership of Wilhelm I and Bismarck, Germany developed into a strong empire. This period was known as the Second Reich, or empire, because Germans considered the Holy Roman Empire to be the First Reich.”

~Human Legacy, page 721.
A New Government

- Federalist form
  - Power shared between national government & 25 states
  - Suffrage for all males over 25
  - Many *de facto* restrictions on voters
The Government and the Church

• Church controlled many aspects of culture

• *Kulturkampf*
  – Struggle over culture
  – Bismarck passes laws to limit the Roman Catholic Church
  – State takes over education
Economic Growth

- France forced to pay war reparations
- German Economic growth
  - Build railroads
  - Fund businesses
  - Coal production increases 300% between 1890-1913
  - Steel production increases 800% between 1890-1913
The Path to Social Reform

• German Socialists call for Reforms
  – Improved working conditions
  – Government control of industries

• Bismarck’s Reaction
  – Tries to destroy Socialism
  – Blames socialists for assassination attempts on the emperor
  – Creates Social Security
    • Benefits for accidents, disability, health & retirement
Bismarck and Wilhelm II

• **Bismarck’s Alliances**
  – Austria-Hungary
  – Italy
  – Russia

• **Wilhelm II (pictured)**
  – Grandson of Wilhelm I
  – Becomes Kaiser in 1888
  – Fires Bismarck as Chancellor
  – Continues to build up German army