SSUSH13C
Political & Economic Reforms of the Late 1800's
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Patronage and Reform

• 1877: Rutherford B. Hayes was elected president and immediately began internal political reforms.
  ✓ Appointing Reformers to his Cabinet
  ✓ Removing Officials who were connected to Party Bosses in the Republican Political Machine.

• Local Republican Bosses who defended their spoils system became known as “Stalwarts” in the local newspapers.

• In Turn, Republican Reformers who opposed patronage and supported the President’s policies became known as “Halfbreeds” by the Party Bosses.

• By 1880: President Rutherford B. Hayes announced his intention not to run for re-election.
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Patronage and Reform

• 1880: Republicans nominated a mixed ticket for the Presidential Election.
  ✓ James A. Garfield (a “Halfbreed”) for President
  ✓ Chester A. Arthur (a “Stalwart”) for Vice-President

• The split ticket helped to guarantee President James A. Garfield’s election.

• Spring 1881: Political job-seeker Charles J. Guiteau was upset when the president didn’t give him a position.

• 2 July 1881: Charles J. Guiteau shot the president believing he’d have a better chance with the new president.

• 19 Sep 1881: President James A. Garfield died and Vice-President Chester A. Arthur became the 21st President.
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Patronage and Reform

• 1883: President Garfield’s assassination and public opinion against the “Spoils System” caused Congress to pass the Pendleton Act.
  ✓ Targeted Federal Government Jobs
  ✓ Created a Merit System for appointments
  ✓ Required Competitive Exams to qualify
  ✓ Protected Officials from Unfair Dismissal
  ✓ Enforced by a Bipartisan Civil Service Commission

• Although he was a “Stalwart,” President Chester A. Arthur supported the new law.

• His appointment of 14,000 Civil Service positions helped the government to reduce the “Spoils System.”
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Patronage and Reform

• 1869 - 1884: Although Republicans gained the Presidency, they had to constantly deal with a Democratic House and Republican Senate.

• 1884: Republican division over political reforms provided the Democrats with an opportunity.
  ✓ New York Governor Grover Cleveland was the Democratic nominee for President.
  ✓ He was also an opponent of New York's political machine of Tammany Hall.

• Republican Reformers unhappy with their party's nominee changed parties.

• These renegade Republican Reformers who were more concerned with helping the nation than party politics were nicknamed “Mugwumps.”
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Patronage and Reform

• 1885: When President Grover Cleveland took office he angered both parties by dividing his appointments between the old “Spoils Systems” and the new “Merit System.”

Economic Problems and Reform

• 1886: Industrialization, Labor Problems, and Strikes peaked with the bombing in Haymarket Square.
  ✓ American concerns over the power of large Corporations increased.
  ✓ Many Americans believed the Railroads were cheating customers.

• 1887: President Grover Cleveland signed an act creating the Interstate Commerce Commission.
  ✓ First law to regulate interstate trade
  ✓ Not very effective regulating industry
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Economic Problems and Reform

- Dec 1887: Congressional failure to pass moderate tariff reductions had an impact on Presidential election.

- 1888: Political elections gave the Republicans control of both the House and Senate, as well as electing Benjamin Harrison as the 23rd President.

- 1890: Congress and the President passed several laws that caused concerns by many Americans.
  - The McKinley Tariff designed to protect American manufacturing by adjusting duties on imported foreign made goods.
  - The Sherman Antitrust Act was the first federal legislation to limit monopolies and investigate trusts, companies, and corporations.
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Economic Problems and Reform

- Sherman Silver Purchase Act designed to increase coin circulation and reduce inflation to help struggling farmers.

- Dependent and Disability Pension Act created to provide pensions to all Union Veterans, Widows of Veterans, and their Children.

- Unfortunately, these acts did not provide the desired results.

- McKinley Tariff and the Pension Act lowered the Federal Revenue and created and increased Federal Deficit.

- McKinley Tariff and the Antitrust Act deceived the American public into thinking that the Republicans were actually trying to solve their economic debts.

- Silver Purchase Act backfired by depleting Federal Gold Reserves when investors traded in new silver coins for gold dollars.
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Economic Problems and Reform

• Many Americans concluded that the two party system that divided Congress was unable to solve the nation’s problems.

• This belief was strongest among American Farmers due to several reasons:
  ✓ Inflation due to the issuance of Union Greenbacks after the Civil War.
  ✓ Congress’s decision to stop making silver coins that resulted in high interest rates on loans and increased deflation known as the “Crime of 1873.”
  ✓ Failure by Farm Cooperatives to negotiate better crop prices or improve shipping rates with the nation’s railroads.
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The Rise of Populism

- 1866 - 1890: A movement to increase farmer’s political power grew.
  - 1867 - 1880: The first national farm organization known as the Grange was formed.
    - Pressuring legislatures to regulate railroad rates.
    - Joining the new National “Greenback” Party.
    - Created Cooperatives by pulling their resources.
  - 1877 - 1890: The Farmers' Alliance was created as the power of the Grange declined.
    - Established larger Cooperatives known as Exchanges to force farm prices up and grant low interest loans.
    - Formed a new People’s Party also known as the Populists.
    - Called for the adoption of a Subtreasury Plan for crops.
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The Rise of Populism

• Most Southern leaders of the Alliance opposed the idea of a third party because it might undermine control of the south by the Democrats.

• 1890: Members of the Farmers’ Alliance met in Florida and issued what became known as the Ocala Demands.

  ✓ Adoption of a Subtreasury Plan
  ✓ Increased coinage of Silver
  ✓ End of Protective Tariffs
  ✓ Tighter Railroad Regulations
  ✓ Direct Election of Senators by voters

• 1890: Midterm elections proved that the strategies of the Farmers’ Alliance succeeding in gaining pro-alliance support in several states.
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Populists and Presidents

• 1892 Presidential Election:
  ✓ The Populists nominated former Union General James B. Weaver.
  ✓ The Democrats nominated former President Grover Cleveland.
  ✓ The Republicans maintained their support behind President Benjamin Harrison.

• The Populist Party tried to appeal to many American Democrats by:
  • Supporting a return to Silver Coinage and a Graduated Income Tax.
  • Calling for Federal Ownership or Stricter Controls of Railroads.
  • Promoting the Eight Hour Workday and Immigration Restrictions.

• However, most Democrats remained loyal, electing Pres. Grover Cleveland.
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Populists and Presidents

• Shortly after President Grover Cleveland’s inauguration, the nation plunged into a great economic crisis known as the Panic of 1893:
  ✓ Philadelphia Railroad and Reading Railroad declared bankruptcy.
  ✓ The Stock Market on Wall Street crashed.
  ✓ Numerous Banks closed their doors.
  ✓ 4.6 Million were unemployed and 700,000 went on strike.

• The economic crisis split the Democratic Party into two factions:
  ✓ “Goldbugs” believed that currency should be based only on gold.
  ✓ “Silverites” believed that coining more silver would solve the crisis.

• June 1893: President Grover Cleveland tried to reduce the drain of U.S. gold reserves by having Congress repeal the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.
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Populists and Presidents

- 1896 Presidential Election:
  - Populists and Democrats nominated a stronger supporter of silver named William Jennings Bryan.
  - Republicans, who supported the gold standard, nominated former Ohio Governor William McKinley.

William Jennings Bryan
- Waged an energetic campaign
- Was a powerful speaker
- Traveled thousands of miles
- Made over 600 speeches
- Strongly Defended use of Silver

William McKinley
- Preferred to stay at home
- Conducted a “Front Porch” Campaign
- Blamed Cleveland for Depression
- Promised workers a “Full Dinner Pail”
- Showed tolerance toward immigrants

- By embracing Populist ideologies, Bryan lost the election to Wm. McKinley.
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The African-American Struggle Continues

- After Reconstruction, many African-Americans in the South were still living in poverty:
  - As Tenant Farmers
  - As Sharecroppers
  - Due to Debt Bondage

- 1879: Former Slave, Benjamin “Pap” Singleton organized a mass migration by Southern African-Americans to Kansas.
- These migrants became known as “Exodusters.”

- 1886: African-American farmers gathered in Texas to form the Colored Farmers’ National Alliance and establish large cooperatives.
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The African-American Struggle Continues

- 1891 - Many African-American farmers joined the Populist Party for two reasons:
  - Unite their efforts with the poor white farmers
  - Challenge the power of the Southern Democrats

- To win back the poor white voters, Democrats used Racism as a weapon.
  - Warning that the south could return to “Black Republican” rule.

- Although the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited voting restrictions based on race, Southern Governments found ways to get around the law (loopholes).
  - Many States required literacy and a $2 “Poll Tax” for all citizens to register to vote (which most African-Americans could not fulfill).
  - While some States created a “Grandfather Clause” to allow poor white voters the chance to vote if they had a ancestor on the 1867 polls.
The Rise of Segregation

• The Jim Crow Laws: Anti-African American Laws between (1876 - 1965)
  ✓ 1883: U.S. Supreme Court repealed the Civil Rights Act of 1875.
  ✓ 1887: African American Rev. W. H. Heard filed a complaint against the Georgia Railroad on the grounds of discrimination and lost.
  ✓ 1896: The U.S. Supreme Court Case of *Plessy versus Ferguson*.

  ➢ 1890: Louisiana passed a Separate Car Act requiring “equal, but separate” railroad cars for white and black passengers.
  ➢ 1892: African American, Homer Plessy, was arrested, tried, and fined $25 for trying to ride in a white’s only car.
  ➢ 1896: The Supreme Court upheld Louisiana Judge John H. Ferguson’s ruling, endorsing the “Separate but Equal” policy in the State of Louisiana.
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Racial Violence and Compromise

• The Supreme Court decision of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* established a legal basis for discrimination in the United States that lasted more than 50 years.

• 1890 – 1899: White mobs carried out an average of 187 lynchings each year across the South. As a result, strong African American leaders suggested different actions:
  
  • Ida B. Wells launched a fearless crusade against lynchings and mob violence.
  
  • Booker T. Washington also spoke against violence, but suggested that African Americans should become more educated about the nation’s laws.
  
  • In Contrast, W. E. B. Dubose argued that African Americans should demand their Civil Rights and continue to protect and exercise their right to vote.