

APUSH

Unit 6 Student-Created Review Notes (1865-1900)

Reconstruction (1865–1877)

Reconstruction During the War

- Believe it or not, the North began thinking about Reconstruction as early as **1863**. There were four basic problems that really bothered them: (1) local rulers for the South, (2) nat'l gov't control of the South [should it be the President or Congress], (3) freedom [or lack thereof] for former slaves, and (4) should they reestablish the old system or make it another revolution?

- The two main competing viewpoints on these issues were as follows...

- * **Lincoln**: Lincoln personally favored leniency, as he feared the South would continue resistance otherwise. This was reflected in his **Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction** [December 1863], which introduced the **10% Plan** – i.e. once 10% of a state's population as established by the 1860 election took an oath of loyalty they could establish a gov't. This was applied in Louisiana, Tennessee and Arkansas in 1864 ["Lincoln Gov'ts"].
- * **Congress**: Congress felt the South deserved more of a punishment. Radical Republicans, led by **Thaddeus Stevens** and **Charles Sumner**, even proposed the theory of **state suicide** [the Southerners had destroyed their status as states through rebellion and had to be treated as conquered foreign lands]. This was incorporated into the **Wade-Davis Bill** [July 1864], which demanded that, to be readmitted, states had to have: (1) a majority of white citizens participating in the new gov't, (2) all voters/delegates under an oath declaring they never helped the Confederates, and (3) no votes for lieutenants and above and officials.

- Lincoln pocket-vetoes the Wade-Davis Bill, prompting the Radical Republicans to issue the "Wade-Davis Manifesto" to the papers [attacking Lincoln]. The debate was in full swing.

- Nevertheless, in early 1865 Congress and Lincoln joined in passing two key measures. One was the **Thirteenth Amendment** [January 31], which abolished involuntary servitude and gave Congress the power to enforce the law. Then on **March 3, 1865** Congress created the **Freedmen's Bureau**, a federal aid agency that was to deal with the mess created by the war. This later became controversial, as the Southerners hated it and there was a question as to its constitutionality.

Johnson Takes Over Reconstruction

- After Lincoln's assassination, **Andrew Johnson**, a Southerner, white supremacist, states rights supporter, and Unionist [he was the only senator from a seceded state to stay in the Union], took over the Reconstruction process w/o Congress [it had recessed shortly before he took over]. Basically, Johnson's whole policy can be summed up w/his slogan – "The Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was."

- But even though Johnson's plan was aiming for continued denial of black civil rights [it included the policy that black suffrage could never be imposed on the Southern states by the federal gov't], it initially seemed to favor a change of leadership in the South that would eliminate the old planter aristocracy.

- This was b/c it was stated that certain people [officers, officials, and *all Southerners w/property worth more than \$20,000] were not allowed to take the oath of loyalty that would allow them to gain amnesty. Instead, they had to apply personally to the President for a pardon.

- But the whole idea of this plan went out the window when Johnson began issuing thousands of pardons, which let many planters return to the newly created state gov'ts. Most likely, this was b/c he hoped to make Reconstruction quick [end it before the Radicals get a chance to do anything].

- So after only 8 months, Johnson declared Reconstruction complete, allowing many former Confederates to return to Congress in December 1865.

Congress Challenges Johnson's Authority

- Congress was not too thrilled about Johnson's plan, especially b/c many of the planters had begun establishing black codes on the local and state levels. Consequently, the Republican majority simply decided to directly challenge Johnson by refusing to admit the ex-Confederates.

- Congress justified its new role in Reconstruction by pointing out that the Constitution had given them the main power to admit new states. Still, there were many other Constitutional issues to sort out, such as the ever-present question whether the Union had been broken or not.

- Lincoln believed it had not; Johnson agreed but admitted the people responsible for the rebellion had to pay [in theory]; moderates favored Congressional supervision; and radicals argued that the Union was broken and the South was a conquered nation.

- Anyway, all of Congress knew that they had to have an alternative to Johnson's program ready for the 1866 elections. Since a conservative coalition was out of the question after Johnson and the Democrats insisted that Reconstruction had already ended, it all came down to the moderate and radical Republicans.

- First, they attempted another compromise w/Johnson in spring 1866 – the Johnson policy would continue w/only 2 modifications: extension of the life of the Freedmen's Bureau and the passage of the **Civil Rights Bill of 1866**, which would force Southern courts to practice equality before the law by allowing the federal gov't to take over unfair cases [but only in public acts of discrimination]. But this flopped when Johnson vetoed both bills, revealing his racism. The bills overrode his veto and passed anyway, though.

The Fourteenth Amendment and the Beginning of Congressional Reconstruction

- After that, all chances of cooperation between Johnson and Congress were dead, so Congress went ahead and began its own program, urged on by the increasing reports of anti-black violence in the South.

- The result was the **Fourteenth Amendment**, which had four key elements: (1) the freedmen were given citizenship and the states were prohibited from denying their rights, (2) the Confederate debt was void, but the US debt remained, (3) Confederate leaders were barred from holding office, and (4) if S. states didn't let blacks vote, they were to have their representation reduced proportionally. *The last part irritated supporters of the women's rights movement [we're being ignored] and encouraged leaders like **Stanton** and **Anthony**.

- Naturally, Johnson tried to block the Fourteenth Amendment in both the North and the South, urging Southern state legislatures to vote against ratification and organizing a Nat'l Union Convention in the North and going around giving really bad speeches criticizing the Republicans ["traitors"]. To make a long story short, he wasn't exactly Mr. Popularity.

The Congressional Reconstruction Acts

- Meanwhile, the Republicans dominated the 1866 Congressional elections, which they saw as a mark of approval for their plan. Nevertheless, nothing could be done w/the planter dominated "Johnson Governments" still in the South. Therefore, Congress decided that the states would have to be reorganized.

- This decision led to a series of Reconstruction Acts passed through 1867 and 1868. The basis of the plan was established in the first **Reconstruction Act** [March 1867], in which Union generals assumed control in the five different military districts that were established in the South. The troops were charged w/supervising elections, among other things.

- The act also guaranteed freedmen the right to vote and forced S. states to ratify the 14th Amendment, to ratify their new constitutions by majority vote, and to submit them to Congress for approval. The rest of the acts, passed between March 1867 and March 1868, dealt w/the details.

- The Reconstruction Acts successfully limited Johnson's power, but some of the Radical Republicans were still unsatisfied, as their proposal for land redistribution, which they felt would provide much needed economic equality, did not win popular support b/c the North liked a limited gov't.

Johnson and Congress Struggle for Control

- Johnson continued to oppose Congressional policies, so Congress began to pass a series of laws to extend its influence. For instance, it set the date for its own reconvening [unheard of] and limited Johnson's power over the army by forcing him to issue orders through Grant alone, who couldn't be fired w/o their approval. Most important was the **Tenure of Office Act**, which gave the Senate power to approve changes in the Cabinet [designed to protect Secretary of War **Stanton**]. All of this was passed over Johnson's vetoes.

- In response, Johnson issued orders to commanders in the South limiting their powers, removed some of the best officers, and gave the governments he created in 1865 more power. Lastly, he tried to fire Stanton, which was the last straw as far as Congress was concerned.

- Consequently, Congress impeached Johnson, indicting him for violating the Tenure of Office Act. He was tried in the Senate, where the Radicals tried to prove that he was guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, but the measure failed to pass by one vote. Johnson stayed with only a few months left in his term.

The Presidential Election of 1868 and the Fifteenth Amendment

- In the **Presidential Election of 1868** Union general **Ulysses S. Grant** ran against and defeated the New York Democrat **Horatio Seymour**. Although Grant was not a Radical, he supported Congressional Reconstruction and black suffrage. On the other hand, the Democrats ran a white supremacist campaign.

- Both sides used the war as a campaign tactic [waving the "bloody shirt"], but the Democrats unwisely associated themselves w/Johnson and the rebels, which contributed to their defeat. Additionally, black voters helped Grant emerge victorious.

- But once in office, Grant was not the big time supporter of Reconstruction many had hoped he would be, as he never insisted on a full military occupation of the South.
- Still, during his term the Radicals were able to pass the **Fifteenth Amendment** [ratified in 1870], which attempted to write equality into the constitution by forbidding states to prohibit the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of slavery. The problem w/the law was that it allowed states to restrict suffrage on many other grounds [sometimes using bogus "literacy" exams].
- After the 15th Amendment, the North began to lose interest in Reconstruction, as most considered that it had been completed.

The Reconstruction Governments in Power

- So what did all these laws actually do? Well...e/t many white Southerners tried their best to sabotage black civil rights and participation in government, the new Southern Republican party came to power in the constitutional conventions of 1868 to 1870 [due in some part to enthusiastic black voting].
- As a result, the new southern state constitutions were more democratic. Furthermore, at least initially, the Republicans [some blacks, too] were elected to serve in their new governments.
- In power, the Republicans strove for legitimacy by being lenient on ex-Confederates and not going beyond equality before the law with regard to rights for blacks. This would eventually lead to their downfall as it failed to secure white support and simultaneously alienated black voters.
- The one area where all sides in the South found agreement was economics: Reconstruction laws encouraged investment/industrialization, which helped in some cases but also increased corruption and drew money away from other programs.
- Not all areas of economics were as easy to settle, however, as the question of land redistribution was very important to blacks but was not attended to by the Republicans.

The Conservative Response to Reconstruction

- Sadly, w/o a stable base of support, it didn't take very long for white supremacists to once again begin to dominate Southern government. Conservatives exploited several aspects of Reconstruction in order to regain control, such as:
 - * The myth of "Negro Rule" – to unite whites, conservatives represented the new Republican gov'ts as oppression of whites by ignorant blacks. This was far from true, as e/t blacks participated, they were by no means a majority and were very effective.
 - * "Carpetbaggers" & "Scalawags" – conservatives attacked the allies of black Republicans by denouncing whites from the North as **carpetbaggers** [greedy, corrupt businessmen trying to take advantage of the South] and labeling cooperative Southerners as **scalawags**.
 - * Tax policies – b/c the civil war destroyed much of the South, Reconstruction gov'ts had to raise taxes substantially, a fact the conservatives used to draw support away from the Republicans, especially among the yeoman farmers.
 - * Corruption – this one was often true, for there were many fraudulent schemes going on all through the country during Reconstruction. However, conservatives made it seem like it was all the fault of the Republicans and blacks.
 - * Violence – white supremacist organizations like the KKK [Ku Klux Klan] persecuted blacks and Republicans in order to sabotage Reconstruction gov'ts and reestablish the power of the planter aristocracy.
- Additionally, the Republicans suffered from factionalism along racial and class lines.

The Election of 1872 and Grant's Second Term

- In response to increasing violence in the South Congress passed two **Enforcement Acts** and an **Anti-Klan Law** in 1870/1871. But e/t the laws made actions against the civil rights of others criminal offenses and provided for election supervisors, martial law, and the suspension of habeas corpus when necessary, prosecutors didn't really use the laws very much.
- Therefore, Klan violence continued [even after the organization officially disbanded, others took its place] and some Democrats even challenged the laws on the basis of states' rights.
- Another problem for the Republicans was that in 1872 a part of the party split off into the **Liberal Republicans** and nominated **Horace Greeley**. The LRs were united by their lack of support for intervention in the South and an elitist, anti-regulation/free-market attitude. The Democrats also nominated Greeley, who ran on a North-South reunion type platform.
- Nevertheless, in the **Presidential Election of 1872** Grant won out, but his popularity plummeted rapidly into his second term, largely due to a series of poor appointments and corruption scandals involving high

ranking administration officials. Consequently, in 1874 the Democrats took over in the House. This was the beginning of the end for Reconstruction...

The Reversal of Reconstruction

- Even prior to the Democratic recapture of the House, several laws had been passed that severely weakened Reconstruction. For instance, in **1872** an **Amnesty Act** had been passed which pardoned most of the remaining ex-Confederates. And e/t a **Civil Rights Act** was passed in 1875, it had no provisions for enforcement and was later destroyed by the SC anyway.
- For reasons discussed above, Democrats regained control of the South pretty quickly and even won major influence in the North b/c by the 1870s the North was losing interest – a nice way of saying that they didn't give a crap anymore, esp. after the market crash in 1873, which brought another whole set of issues up and made class conflict overshadow some of the existing racial issues.
- Another thing that had a big impact on the ultimate failure of Reconstruction was the Supreme Court. In several cases the SC ruled against Reconstruction...
 - * The *Slaughter-House Cases* (1873) – in these cases, the SC basically killed off the 14th Amendment by declaring that state and nat'l citizenship were two different things and that the law only dealt w/a few particular rights. So, the nat'l gov't was not allowed to oversee civil rights in the states, which had been the whole point of the law in the first place!
 - * *Bradwell v. Illinois* (1873) – this case dealt w/a female attorney who claimed that the 14th Amendment defended her against discrimination. However, the SC did not agree and made (hear this!) an argument about the “woman's place in the home.”
 - * *US v. Cruikshank* (1876) – this ruling hurt the enforcement clause of the 14th Amendment by once again declaring that the duty of protecting citizens' rights was the states' alone.
- Reconstruction was finally put out its misery after the disputed **Presidential Election of 1876**, which pitted NY Democrat **Samuel J. Tilden** against Republican **Rutherford B. Hayes**. Votes in several states were disputed, so an electoral commission was established that was to be balanced between Democrats and Republicans. But after one independent refused his appointment, a regular Republican took his place.
- Therefore, if Congress accepted the commission's results Hayes was obviously going to be the next President. Southerners even threatened to fight, but they finally agreed based on a deal that Hayes would be President if Reconstruction would end and the North would give the South economic aid.

The Machine Age (1877 – 1920)

Famous Inventors and Their New Technologies

- From 1860 to 1900 a second, more complete wave of industrialization swept the country, this time focusing on new inventions such as electricity rather than the already explored steam power. Some memorable people involved in this were...
 - * **Thomas Edison** [“The Wizard of Menlo Park”] – Edison first set up his lab in Menlo Park in **1876**, and in **1878** he formed the **Edison Electrical Company**, which was responsible for the invention of the **light bulb**, the **generator**, and many other appliances that utilized electricity. Edison was also memorable for his self-promotion and publicity efforts.
 - * **George Westinghouse** – Westinghouse discovered how to use alternating current and transformers to transmit electricity over long distances. This made Edison's generators feasible power sources. Westinghouse also devised an air break for RRD cars.
 - * **Granville Woods** [“The Black Edison”] – Woods patented 35 electronics/communications things, including the electromagnetic brake and automatic circuit breaker. He sold them to GE.
 - * **Henry Ford** – In the 1890s Ford experimented w/the internal combustion engine (i.e. car). But his biggest achievement was his manufacturing scheme – the mass-production of identical cars for mass consumption. Ford created the **Ford Motor Company** in **1903** and, by doing so, democratized the car.
 - * **Du Pont Family** – The DP's applied Ford's techniques to the chemical industry, resulting in great innovations in plastics (**1911**) and new forms of efficient management.
 - * **James Bonsack** – Bonsack revitalized the tobacco industry by inventing a machine for rolling cigarettes in **1876**. His invention was popularized by **James B. Duke**, owner of the American Tobacco Company.
- These developments encouraged general optimism, even in the South, where mills began to use automatic looms [fewer skilled workers] and electric lighting [longer hours]. These mills, like Southern steel and iron manufacturing, were developed by Northern investors in the 1880s. But e/t the South was improving, it would not really emerge until after WWI.

- Remember: new marketing techniques and new inventions went hand in hand. The key thing about the successful inventors was that they knew how to sell their stuff. The rise of the machine also led to changes in the economy that made large-scale production more profitable and desirable [**economies of scale**] and created a new focus on **efficiency**, as advocated by **Frederick W. Taylor** [efficiency = science].

The Effect of the Machine on the Economy

- Industrialization implied that factories had to be large and operate at capacity to make profits; but they also had to sell, which meant prices had to remain low. To make this possible, businesses had to expand production and reduce wages. This required loans, and loans required more production, and so on. This cycle effectively wiped out small firms.

- Consequently, to deal with the constant uncertainty of the market conditions, businesses began centralizing to control their corners of the market. Some consolidating techniques included...

- * **Corporations:** Under corporation laws, anyone could start a company and raise money by selling stock to investors, who would face no personal risk other than the money they invested. Corporations gained more power due to SC rulings in the 1880s and 1890s that gave them the same 14th Amendment protections as individuals.
- * **Pools:** Basically, pools were "Gentlemen's Agreements" between companies that set limits on production and agreed to the sharing of profits. Since they depended on honesty, though, their usefulness had already died by the time they were outlawed among RRDs in **1887**.
- * **Trusts:** Originated by Rockefeller, trusts relied on the principle that one company could control another by forcing it to yield control of its stock to the bigger company's board of trustees. This allowed for **horizontal integration**, which was pioneered by **Rockefeller** in **1882** w/Standard Oil [ex. take over all oil refineries].
- * **Holding Companies:** In **1888** New Jersey allowed corporations to own property in other states and own stock in other corporations. This led to the holding company, which owned interest in other companies and could help merge them. This led to **vertical integration** like **Gustavus Swift** achieved w/meat processing [ex. take over all meat related industries].

- So mergers were answer to the search for order and profits in the business world. The biggest corporation of the time was the **US Steel Corporation**, created by **J.P. Morgan** in **1901**. Speaking of J.P., the merger movement created those wonderful people we all know and love, the brokers, who specialized in engineering mergers. Everyone joined the investing frenzy; regulations were loosened, laissez-faire, etc.

The Effect of the Machine on Labor

- Mechanization obviously meant big changes for workers, who were forced to acclimate themselves to new factory conditions that minimized their independence. Some significant trends included:

- * *The replacement of the producer by the employee:* most workers no longer were their own bosses. Instead, they were paid for time on the job.
- * *Specialization and the devaluation of skilled labor:* workers in mass-production assembly lines found themselves doing the same stupid little task over and over again instead of making their own decisions about techniques, starting and stopping times, etc.
- * *Increased company control:* in efforts to increase worker efficiency, employers tried to establish temperance/reform societies and control workers' social lives. Other employers began paying per item produced rather than by hour.
- * *Employment of women and children:* as the need for skilled workers decreased, employers cut costs by hiring women and children for assembly lines. Women also worked in the service sector and in sales/secretarial positions. By 1900, some state laws limited the employment of children, but many companies still got away with it.
- * *Decreased independence:* in addition to finding their actual jobs more constricting, workers found that their wages were largely beyond their control and were often unable to find steady work – i.e. they were trapped by the system.
- * *New threats at the workplace:* workers encountered industrial accidents, etc.

- So basically the machine gave the workers the crap end of the deal. Worse still, they weren't allowed to organize effectively as a result of a series of anti-labor decisions, and free-market views made it difficult for legislation dealing with working hours and conditions to be passed.

- Supreme Court cases dealing with labor regulation:

- * *Holden v. Hardy (1896)* – Court upheld regulation on miners' working hours
- * *Lochner v. New York (1905)* – Court rejected regulation on bakers' working hours b/c job not considered to be dangerous, interference w/contract = violation of Fourteenth Amendment
- * *Muller v. Oregon (1908)* – Court upheld regulation on women laundry workers' working hours, claiming that women needed special protection, led to laws banning women from occupations

- Generally, though, workers did not make much progress, which led to the...

The Union Movement

- Important **strikes/events** relating to the Unions:

- * **1877**: In July, Unionized RRD workers struck to protest wage cuts [b/c of **Panic of 1873**]. The strikes led to violence, which was broken up by state militia companies hired by the employers. Strikebreakers were also hired. Finally Hayes sent federal troops to quell the unrest. After 1877, the union movement really began picking up speed. Trade unions, which specialized in skilled workers in particular crafts, had been around for years, but no real organizations of nat'l scope survived the panic except for the **Knights of Labor**.
- * **Haymarket Riot** [May 1, 1886]: In Chicago, several groups joined for the campaign for an 8-hour workday and organized mass strikes and labor demonstrations. Workers involved included the craft unions as well as anarchists. Consequently, in response to an outbreak of police brutality a bomb was set off in Haymarket Square [presumably by anarchists], resulting in the arrest of 8 immigrant radicals, some of who were pardoned. The HR led to increased paranoia with respect to anarchism and labor.
- * **July 1892**: AFL-affiliated Iron and Steelworkers Association went on strike in Pennsylvania, causing **Henry Frick** to close the plant and hire Pinkerton detectives to defend it. Although the strikers eventually gave in, it gave the union more bad PR due to workers attacking, etc.
- * **Pullman Strike** [1894]: To protest Pullman's policies in his company town, workers walked out at the factory. Pullman would not negotiate, so workers for the American Railway Union called a strike. Pullman closed the factory; the Union [**Eugene V. Debs**] refused to handle Pullman cars; and finally a court injunction was used to stop the strike.

- Important workers' organizations:

- * **Knights of Labor**: Founded in **1869** by **Terence V. Powderly**, the KOL welcomed all unskilled and semiskilled workers on a nat'l level. The basic ideology of the KOL was pretty utopian: i.e. they wanted to get rid of capitalism in favor of a "cooperative workers' alliance" in which workers worked for themselves. Consequently, the KOL refused to strike, b/c it would go against the "cooperative" idea. As a result of their cooperative policies, the KOL lost influence, esp. after, in **1886**, a strike began among a sector of the KOL against RRD boss Jay Gould to protest cut wages. Powderly met with Gould and called off the strike, but Gould would not concede, so the militant unions began to quit the KOL, seeing it as weak.
- * **American Federation of Labor**: The AFL emerged as the major organization after **1866**. Led by **Samuel Gompers**, it avoided the KOL idealistic rhetoric, concentrated on concrete goals [higher wages, shorter hours, right to bargain collectively], and excluded unskilled workers and women. The AFL also avoided party politics.
- * **Industrial Workers of the World** [IWW, "Wobblies"]: The IWW, which aimed to unite all workers, was basically a socialist/anarchist organization that believed violence was justified to overthrow capitalism. The organization finally collapsed in WWI.

- *Women in the Union movement*: most Unions rejected women due to a fear of competition [women would work for lower wages] and sex segregation. Still, some women formed their own Unions, and in **1903** the **Women's Trade Union League** was founded. The WTUL encouraged protective legislation, education, and women's suffrage – it was an important link between labor and the women's movements.

- *Immigrants/AA in the Union movement*: most Unions also rejected immigrants and African Americans b/c of lower wages, and prejudices were reinforced when blacks worked as strikebreakers.

- REMEMBER only a portion of workers were in unions; job instability really made it hard for organizations to form effectively. Fraternal societies were also prevalent during the time.

Standards of Living

- Industrialization created the beginnings of the monster we now know as our fully commercialized society. Formerly isolated communities began to, through electricity and communications, get access to good and services. Status became more based on \$ [more mobility]; but the gap between rich and poor grew.

- Incomes rose a lot, but then again so did prices. Working class families could hypothetically afford new stuff, but they would have had to find additional sources of income [i.e. subletting, child labor]. Overall, though, paid employment became more prevalent, leading to the growth of our commercial society.

- *Some symptoms of commercialization*: higher life expectancy due to advances in medical care and better diets, more upwards mobility [education became key], flush toilets, processed and preserved foods, ready-made clothing, department and chain stores, and my personal favorite, advertising.

Ideologies of the Time

- So what do you say when many small businesses are being ruthlessly crushed by mega-big moguls? It's easy! **Social Darwinism**, originally advocated by **Herbert Spencer**, was taken over by Yale professor **William Graham Sumner** and stated that the survival of the fittest implied that the gov't should stay out and let the rightful winners take their share. Monopolies = natural accumulation of power.
- To add on to that, there was the **Andrew Carnegie Gospel of Wealth** concept: wealth carries moral responsibilities, and it's good we moguls have it all b/c that way we can be the guardians of society. Gimme a break! Still, some industrialists did give a lot to charities.
- It's important to note that, though laissez-faire was the big concept, business leaders still pressed the gov't for assistance, which it provided in the form of tariffs on foreign goods [allowed them to raise prices], subsidies, loans, and tax breaks.
- Naturally, all this activity didn't go by unnoticed, and some people certainly spoke out against it, portraying corporations as greedy and voicing fears of monopolies.
- Some favored gov't regulation or even socialism: in **1883** sociologist **Lester Ward** appealed for gov't intervention and a cooperative philosophy in *Dynamic Sociology*, in **1879** writer **Henry George** asked for a tax on the rise in property values in *Progress and Poverty*, and in **1888** novelist **Edward Bellamy** wrote of a utopian, council of elders controlled city where jobs were managed by a small elite in *Looking Backward*.
- As a result of popular pressure, states began to prohibit monopolies. But a nat'l level of legislation was needed, and it only came in **1890** with the **Sherman Anti-Trust Act**, which was left vague but made illegal anything that was in "restraint of trade." Ironically, through, the act was used against striking workers more than it was against trusts.
- A short list of SC cases regarding trusts:
 - * *Munn v. IL (1877)* – RRDs discriminated against farmers, so IL passed pro-farming legislation in the *Grange Laws*. This was challenged by the corporations, but the SC ruled in favor of state regulation b/c it had a direct effect on the general public.
 - * *Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific RR Co. v. IL (1886)* – Reversal of 1877 decision, only the federal gov't was declared able to regulate interstate commerce.
 - * *US v. EC Knight Co. (1895)* – Sugar company had monopolized industry, so Cleveland ordered a case against the trust, but the SC ruled that the sugar people were in manufacturing, not commerce, so it was okay.

The Gilded Age (1877 – 1900)

General Characteristics of Gilded Age Politics

- The Gilded Age (1877 – 1900) was defined by industrialization, urbanization, and the commercialization of agriculture. Inevitably, the turbulence of the era made for a dynamic political climate, as illustrated by the fact that...
 1. Public interest in politics was at a peak – sort of like a spectator sport – and there was intense party loyalty [often on religious/ethnic lines] as follows:
 - * **Democratic Party** – opposed interference by gov't w/respect to personal liberty, restrict gov't power, mainly Catholic immigrants
 - * **Republican Party** – gov't as agent of moral reform, direct gov't action, mainly native-born Protestants
 2. Elections were also extremely close on both the local and nat'l levels; the two parties were split almost perfectly. *At the state level, though, one party usually ruled via the state boss, who was usually a Senator. The boss wielded huge powers until the **Seventeenth Amendment** (1913), which provided for direct election of Senators.
 3. Still, there was a significant amount of factionalism within both parties. The Democratic Party divided into white-supremacy Southerners, immigrants, working-class city dwellers, and business types who liked low tariffs. As for the Republican Party, there were the:
 - * *Stalwarts* – led by NY Senator and party boss Conklin, heavy reliance on spoils system
 - * *Half-Breeds* – led by Blaine, supposed idealists but really just out of power
 - * *Mugwumps* – true idealists, tended towards Democratic side
- On a broader level, the Gilded Age resulted in three main things: the rise of special interests, some major legislative accomplishments, and the continuation of political exclusion for minorities/women.

The Main Issues of Gilded Age Politics

- Some key legislation was passed during the Gilded Age, mainly relating to the following issues...

1. *Sectional Issues* – yes, the Civil War was still a problem, and both sides continually blamed e/o for the war and tried to invoke war memories for their own advantage. This led to a super costly veterans' pension thing.
 2. *Civil Service Reform* – reformers began to advocate civil service reform (promotion based on merit rather than on party loyalty) as a means of restricting corruption. In **1881** the **National Civil Service Reform League** was formed, and in **1882** the **Pendleton Civil Service Act** was passed, which created the Civil Service Commission to oversee exams for positions for 10% of jobs. This was only the beginning, though, b/c the Constitution still stopped state corruption from being restricted.
 3. *Railroad Regulation* – to kill competition, RRDs developed several nasty habits: raising and lowering rates, making pricing dependent on competition rather than on distance, and playing favorites for big corporations. Farmers demanded regulation, resulting in commissions in 14 states by 1880. *Munn v. Illinois* reinforced the state regulation deal, but the 1886 *Wabash* case showed states couldn't regulate interstate lines. In 1887, though, the **Interstate Commerce Act** was passed, which created the ICC to investigate RRD practices but didn't provide for its enforcement – so the pro-business SC limited its powers through the *Maximum Freight Rate* case (1897 – ICC can't set rates) and the *Alabama Midlands* case (1897 – RRDs can give higher rates for shorter distances).
 4. *Tariffs* – e/t they started out as measures to protect industries, tariffs were being abused by big companies to charge excessively high prices. Tariffs became a big party issues, as Republicans made protective tariffs part of their platform while Democrats pushed to lower rates (reduce the surplus by cutting taxes/tariffs, gov't shouldn't be making \$). In the end, Republicans won out w/the **McKinley Tariff of 1890** and then the **Dingley Tariff** of 1897.
 5. *Monetary Policy* – when prices fell after the Civil War, farmers got into trouble b/c their debts were worth the same, but their products were worth less. As a result, they went for silver while creditors favored a more stable gold-backed money supply. The whole deal even turned into a sort of class conflict and moral/religious thing. By 1870 the sides were clear – creditors (gold) and debtors (silver) – and when silver dollars were taken away after their value went up in respect to gold it was referred to as the "Crime of '73." The **Bland-Allison Act** (1878, allowed the Treasury to buy \$2-4 million of silver) and **Sherman Silver Purchase Act** (1890) were concessions, but the silver side remained unsatisfied.
- Overall, corruption notwithstanding, many important acts were passed during the Gilded Age.

The Gilded Age Presidents

- After the scandals of Grant's administration and the election of 1876, Gilded Age Presidents attempted to reestablish the legitimacy of the Presidency. They also began initiating legislation and using the veto more.
- **Rutherford B. Hayes** (Republican, 1877 – 1881) was a quiet compromiser who emphasized nat'l unity, opposed violence, and attempted to get rid of the spoils system by battling Conklyn (he fired Chester Arthur, Conklyn's protégé, from NY Customs).
- **James Garfield** (Republican, 1881) aimed to reduce the tariff and maintain an independent position, but he was assassinated by a rebuffed patronage seeker and was succeeded by former Conklyn protégé **Chester Arthur** (Republican, 1881 – 1885), who actually became a prudent leader: he passed the Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883), supported RRD regulation, and used the veto to control business.
- **Grover Cleveland** (Democrat, 1885 – 1889) expanded civil service, vetoed private pension bills, and tried [and failed] to lower tariffs. Cleveland was defeated in 1888 by **Benjamin Harrison** (Republican, 1889 – 1893) b/c he was better at cheating.
- Through various methods, **Harrison** influenced the legislation that was passed, resulting in more bills than usual; issues dealt w/included civil service reform and the Dependents' Pension Act [Union veterans]. Consequently, though, the budget exploded, giving the Democrats another opportunity.
- **Cleveland** ran again and won, during his second term (1893 – 1897) he attempted to deal w/currency, tariffs, and labor problems but ended up having to rely on big business, esp. b/c of the panic of 1893.

Limits of Gilded Age Politics

- Not everyone was included in Gilded Age politics, both in the North and the South. Race was of particular relevance in the South, though, where poor whites tried to squash the freedmen in order to preserve their own real or imagined social superiority.
- Race violence became commonplace in the South, as did disenfranchisement via poll taxes and bogus literacy tests [this was permitted b/c of *US v. Reese*, which ruled that Congress couldn't control voting rights outside of the explicit conditions mentioned in the 15th Amendment].

- Worse still, as a result of a series of decisions by the SC in the 1870s that climaxed in 1883 when the 1875 Civil Rights Act [prohibited segregation in public facilities] was struck down, blacks were stuck w/ "separate but equal" facilities. This was upheld in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Commins v. Board of Education* (1899), and was followed by the proliferation of **Jim Crow** laws.
- To cope, blacks tried to get educations, and black women often joined with white women to push for reform, especially reform relating to nat'l suffrage. Two major organizations led the fight: the **NWSA** [militants Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony wanted overall rights] and the **AWSA** [suffrage only].
- At first, the NWSA concentrated on a nat'l amendment, and the AWSA worked on the state level, but they merged in 1890 to become the NAWSA. Still, e/t they were successful in training leaders, raising awareness, and getting individual states to cooperate, nat'l suffrage was to come later.

The Agrarian Revolt

- Even before the advent of Populism, angry farmers were getting organized. At first, the "agrarian revolt" took the form of the **Grange Organizations** of the early 1870s, and then the **Farmers' Alliances** in Texas and the Great Plains. So why were they so pissed off? Hmm...think about it.
- Economic woes faced by the farmers:
 - * **Sharecropping** [the "crop lien" system] – if farmers [usually in South] were unable to pay their debts [for supplies], they had to promise to pay with their crops. The crops would rarely be worth enough, so they would borrow more, etc.
 - * **Economic Change** – in the South, yeoman farmers were being pushed into cotton raising b/c of the debts incurred during the war [it was no longer practical to grow own food]. This made the debt situation worse and put them at the mercy of merchants. In the Midwest, the problem involved dropping prices [due to technological advances] that necessitated increases in production. But since costs weren't dropping, many farmers got stuck big time.
 - * **Price Inflation/Interest Rate** - to make matters worse, merchants took advantage by charging insane interest and inflating prices.
 - * **RRD Exploitation** – see above
 - * **Weather/Bugs** – well, the industrialists also played a part by making mail order bugs that farmers could let loose on competitors, as well as portable hurricanes. Haha...just kidding!
- **Grange Movement** (1870s) – farmers formed a network of Granges w/elected officers and membership oaths. E/t they began as social things, Granges soon turned to economics/politics. This didn't work so well, though [they elected people, but couldn't fight the corporations], so Granges declined in the late 1870s. In the Southwest, Mexican farmers also organized into the **White Hats** ["Gorras Blancas"], who were against the encroachment of English ranchers on their traditional lands, but this failed too.
- **Farmers' Alliances** (1890s) – there were two (Great Plains & South). They began in Texas, and were generally groups of small farmers that were trying to combat big money, esp. RRDs. Like the Granges, they held rallies, educational meetings, and had cooperative buying and selling agreements.
- **Subtreasury Plan** – proposed by the FA, this was a plan to help indebted farmers that called for the federal gov't to build warehouses where farmers could keep crops [and receive loans at 80% of the market price] while they waited for higher prices. Also, the gov't would give low-interest loans to land buyers. This was meant to inject cash into the economy and raise crop prices while keeping others the same.
- E/t early attempts at merging were sabotaged by sectional differences, both Alliances eventually formed a third party in Omaha 1892 – the Populist Party. The Populists nominated **Weaver** for the 1892 election, and he ran on the **Omaha Platform**, which called for gov't ownership of utilities and RRDs, gov't ownership of land, farm loans, expansion of the currency, an income tax, direct election of Senators, and a shorter wkday.
- Of course, Weaver lost to Cleveland, but the Populists gained support through their wild speeches, etc.

The Depression of the 1890s

- The Depression of the 1890s really started in 1893 with the collapse of the Nat'l Cordage Company, which, like many other RRDs and manufacturers, had borrowed too much and was unable to pay its debts. To try to make up for their debt, companies bought more equipment and worked people harder – but all that did was make workers lose money as well. So companies closed, banks closed...overall, it sucked.
- The worst of it was between 1893 and 1895...people lost money, so they didn't want to buy things, so prices dropped more, so wages dropped more...you get the picture. Currency was still a problem, as the gold reserves were dropping due to a silver boom, and the more the gold dropped, the more people tried to redeem their securities.
- As a result, the Sherman Act was repealed in 1893, but people STILL didn't stop, which forced Cleveland to accept an offer from J.P. Morgan (in return for bonds, which they resold for profit). This got Cleveland in trouble with his fellow Democrats and wasn't even that beneficial, as the economy crashed again in 1895 before it began to rise back up due to gold discoveries in Alaska, good harvests, and industrial growth.

- Strangely enough, the Depression was the last element in cementing the new national economy, b/c it wiped out lots of the weaker industries, I guess.

Depression Era Protests

- The first real protests were in 1877 [the RRD strikes], and they were followed by the Haymarket Riot (1866), Carnegie Steel strikes in 1892, violence at a silver mine (also in 1892), etc. These events scared the crap out of many well-off people, who thought, "Oh my GOD ...the ANARCHISTS are behind it all."
- This actually wasn't true at all, though. There were some socialists in America, but it didn't work out so well b/c of factionalism and the constant temptation to get ahead via the capitalist system. The biggest socialist leader, **Eugene V. Debs**, emerged in the aftermath of the 1894 Pullman car strike – but e/t he did form the **Socialist Party of America**, not much came of it until the next century.
- In 1894, another popular movement, **Coxey's Army**, got a lot of attention. Coxey, who advocated public works projects and low-interest gov't loans, led a huge number of farmers/unemployed people on a march to the capital. On the day of the demonstration, however, police stopped the protestors and arrested Coxey.

The Election of 1896

- The Populists prepared to run again in the **Presidential Election of 1896** – they were doing well, but their biggest problem was lack of organization, and the effects of racism. The big issue, as they saw it, was the coinage of silver, which they promoted as the obvious sol'n to the country's economic problems.
- But Populists still faced one decision: should they semi-join one of the major party factions, or should they stay totally independent (and not win as many votes)? Republicans were obviously out of the question, as they supported big-business and the gold standard, but union w/the Democrats didn't seem that bad.
- Anyhow, the Republicans went ahead and nominated **William McKinley** [at the suggestion of **Marcus Hanna**, an Ohio industrialist] w/o any problems; their only crisis was that, in response to their gold policies, a small group of silver Republicans walked out.
- The Democrats, on the other hand, became obsessed w/silver and nominated big orator guy **William Jennings Bryan**, who wrote the famous convention pro-silver speech [of course, some gold Democrats had to go and walk out, but who cares about them].
- As a result, the Populists decided to go w/Bryan and the Democrats, only w/a different VP nominee. So, the campaign began. Bryan went on an all out speaking tour full of emotion, evangelicalism, and all that. McKinley sat at home on his butt and waited for the press to come to him so he could tell them about the new jobs he'd make w/his protective tariffs.
- What happened? McKinley killed Bryan, partially b/c the urban-rural coalition the Populists wanted hadn't happened b/c of their silver obsession [took away from other reforms, and urban workers thought it would lower the value of their wages].
- Naturally, McKinley signed the **Gold Standard Act** (1900), which required that all paper money had to be backed by gold; he also raised tariffs and encouraged imperialism. The economy improved, but mainly b/c of the gold discoveries in Alaska, not b/c of McKinley. Nobody cared though, so they elected him again.