

Commonwealth and Empire Chapter 20 Notes

- Growth of Government
 - Government expanded greatly after the civil war
 - Government agencies were created or grew in response to the growth of the federal government during the Civil War and Reconstruction
 - Dept of Agriculture 1862
 - Dept of Interior 1849
 - Dept of the Treasury
- Interstate Commerce Commission
 - Nation's first independent regulatory agency
 - Created in 1887 to bring order to the state laws concerning railroads
 - 5 member commission appointed by the president approved freight and passenger rates set by the railroads
 - ICC took public testimony, examine company records and oversee enforcement
- Gilded Age Presidents
 - Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-81)
 - James A. Garfield (1881)
 - Chester A. Arthur (1881-1885)
 - Grover Cleveland (1885-1889; 1893-97)
 - Benjamin Harrison (1889-93)
- Machinery of Politics
 - Both the Republican and Democratic parties had roughly equal power in the last 25 years of the 19th Century
 - Presidents during this time period yielded power to Congress
 - Only 1 percent of the popular vote separated the presidential candidates in three of five elections between 1876 and 1892
 - Democrats usually held the House and Republicans held the Senate
- Issues
 - Tariffs – taxes on imported goods
 - Manufacturing regions supported a protectionist policy
 - Agricultural regions opposed high tariffs because farmers bought imported necessities
 - Most parties focused on a state or local level
- Political Machines
 - Election paraphernalia became a major expense for both parties
 - Partisans embraced the Democratic donkey or the Republican elephant as symbols of party fidelity
 - Participation in presidential elections peaked at nearly 80% of those eligible to vote
 - Thousands of people voted multiple times on the same day
 - Dead people voted
 - People who had never existed voted
- Spoils

- Winning parties handed out jobs to pay off those who helped the campaign
- Legislators who supported government subsidies for railroad companies often received “gifts” of stock or cash
- More than 50% of federal jobs were patronage positions – that could be awarded as part of the “spoils” of the winner
- Decisions about patronage filled 1/3 of all legislators’ time
- Political bosses dominated the parties gave jobs and food to loyal voters
- Examples:
 - William “Boss” Tweed dominated NY’s Tammany Hall
 - Michael “Hinky Dink” Kenna of Chicago
- Reform
 - Republican representative Thomas Jenckes of Rhode Island proposed a bill for civil service reform in 1865
 - Most in Congress were fearful that it would hurt them and other candidates in getting elected
 - Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act was passed by Congress in 1883
 - It allowed the president to create, with Senate approval, a three-person commission to set guidelines for executive and legislative appointments and standards for federal jobs
- Farmers and Workers Organize
 - Grange Movement
 - “Grange is a word for farm
 - Granger movement spread rapidly
 - Patrons of Husbandry was formed in 1867
 - Grangers blamed hard times on railroads and banks that charged exorbitant fees
 - Banks charged high interest rates to purchase farm equipment and seed/other materials
- Granger Laws
 - 1874 – some Midwestern states passed a series of “Granger laws” establishing maximum shipping rates
 - 1873 – Illinois legislature passed the Warehouse Act to establish a maximum rate for storing grain
 - Munn v. Illinois – the Supreme Court upheld the Warehouse Act Saying that states could regulate privately owned businesses.
 - Grangers created cooperatives that purchased supplies and marketed crops
- Farmer’s Alliance
 - By the late 1870s, depression wiped out most cooperative programs
 - By 1880, Grange membership fell to 100,000
 - Supreme Court overturned most legislation regulating railroads
 - Southern Farmer’s Alliance, Colored Farmer’s Alliance, and Northern Farmer’s Alliance formed in the Great Plains
- Alliance Political Activity
 - Alliances drafted political platforms seeking:

- State ownership of railroads
 - A graduated income tax
 - Lower tariffs
 - Easier access to money
- Workers
 - The Panic of 1873 produced 25% unemployment in many cities
 - After this period of time, workers struck many times
 - Great Uprising of 1877 was the first nationwide strike – trains stopped running until wages were restored after a wage cut of 10%
- Populism
 - In Feb of 1892, 1,300 representatives from the Farmer's Alliance, the Knights of Labor, and the Colored Farmer's Alliance met in St. Louis and formed the People's Party
 - They called for government ownership of railroads, banks, telegraph lines, and 8 hour workday, and restriction of immigration
 - Populists became a factor in American Politics
- Depression of 1893
 - Major railroad lines went bankrupt, causing a depression
- Election of 1896
 - Populists joined behind the Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, a Nebraska lawyer, who won a congressional seat in 1890
 - Bryan made an argument about silver being a basis of the American dollar instead of gold
 - This would make money worth less, and help those in debt