

AP US History

Chapter 19 - From Crisis to Empire

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Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- **6.1.I.E** - Businesses, foreign policy → outside borders for influence over Asia, Latin America, Pacific rim
- **6.1.III.B** - Agricultural market consolidation, heavy dependence on railroad → farmers formed organizations
- **6.1.III.C** - Economic instability → agrarian People's/Populist Party seeking ↑ govt. regulation
- **6.3.1.C** - Artists/critics like agrarians, utopians, socialists, Social Gospel advocates emphasized different visions for U.S. society
- **6.3.II.A** - Major political parties divided along Civil War boundaries; fought over tariffs/currency despite reformers arguing greed/self-interest was corrupting govt.
- **7.3.I.A** - Imperialists stressed econ. opportunities, racial theories, Euro. competition, 1890 idea of "closed" frontier to stress importance of expanding American culture across globe
- **7.3.I.B** - Anti-imperialists stressed self-determination, contrasting racial theories, isolationism to argue no need to extend territory
- **7.3.I.C** - Amer. win in Sp.-Amer. war → U.S. acquired Carib./Pacific territories, suppressed Filipino nationalism

The Politics of Equilibrium

What factors altered the equilibrium of the partisan system?

The party system, split relatively equally along regional, ethnic, gender, and class lines, was characterized by strong party loyalty. The federal government did relatively little; presidents had to appease factionalism within their parties inspired by Hayes. Garfield and Arthur were greatly weakened by their actions' angering a significant part of the Republican party, both seeking civil service systems; Democrat Grover Cleveland sought to fight machine politics and cut tariffs; he served two terms with a one-term interruption from Republican Benjamin Harrison, who failed to rally public opinion in raising protective tariffs. Public opinion rallied toward antitrust reform as well as federal restriction of railroad fares.

How was the party system divided along regional, ethnic, gender, and class lines?

- End of Reconstruction → 1890s: electorate divided betw. Republicans (sixteen northern states) and Democrats (fourteen Southern states) w/ four undecided states
 - Repub. typically won presidency, Senate; Dems. won House
 - Party loyalty v. strong w/ voter turnout ↑ 78% of eligible; most blacks/women disenfranchised
- Loyalty to parties often result of undebated faith w/ white Southerners → Democrats, northerners → Republicans
- Ethnic diffs. w/ most Catholics, immigrants, impoverished → Democrats; middle class, Protestants, older citizens → Republicans
 - Republicans generally sought temperance (against Catholics) and anti-immigration laws while Democrats aligned w/ pro-Catholic views
- Party selection generally to favor economic desires or to align w/ traditions of ancestors/relatives

The party system was divided relatively equally among Republican and Democrat lines. Southern whites, northern Catholics, immigrants, and the lower classes usually aligned with the Democrats; northern Protestants, middle classes, and African Americans typically aligned with the Republicans. Party alignments were often primarily due to economic interest.

What was the relation of the federal government to partisan ties?

- Federal govt. generally did little: mail, military, foreign policy, taxes
- Several exceptions mainly in national econ. development
 - Railroad subsidies, land grants, brought up military to put down strikes
 - Pensions for retired Union Civil War veterans to pay majority of male citizens and several women; ultimately failed due to corruption
- Pol. parties far more influential than nat. govt.

The federal government kept stability by doing relatively little in the grand scheme of things; however, their industrial subsidies, land grants, and pensions ultimately made a significant economic impact. Ultimately, political parties and machines as well as federal courts were most powerful.

What was the significance of the presidential office during the Gilded Age?

- Party bosses → presidency generally symbolic w/ ↑ task distributing appointments (≈ 100k)
 - Had to avoid angering factions w/in parties → generally careful
- Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881) created great factionalism w/in party: **Stalwarts** competed for Republican power w/ **Half Breeds**
 - Stalwarts: traditional political machines, Half Breeds: reform; neither satisfied by Hayes
 - Hayes' attempt at civil service system not supported by either; wife's temperance reform angered many
- Repubs. compromised w/ James A. Garfield (Stalwart) for president, Chester A. Arthur for vice president
 - Won both houses of Congress against Democrat Hancock
 - Garfield initially favored civil service reform, Half Breeds → direct defiance of Stalwarts → great conflict, assassinated four months after inauguration
- Chester A. Arthur, successor, closely allied w/ Stalwart leader; attempted reform against Stalwarts w/ civil service measure **Pendleton Act** to require merit for job appointment

Gilded Age Presidents had to cater directly to factions within their parties; Rutherford B. Hayes inspired great Republican factionalism between the traditional Stalwarts and the reforming Half Breeds. Garfield, a Half Breed, won the presidency but was assassinated for his defiance of the Stalwarts; his successor, Arthur, continued Garfield's reform against the Stalwarts, with significant focus on a civil service program.

How did tariffs play a role in the presidencies of Cleveland and Harrison?

- 1884: Repub. candidate (James G. Blaine) represented epitome of partisan divisions → group of Republicans supported Democrat candidate, **Grover Cleveland**
 - Blaine suffered religious hit after Protestant spokesman supporting Blaine denounced Catholics → Cleveland won tight last-minute victory
- Cleveland known for strong opposition to machine politics, willingness to veto (particularly tariffs) due to belief that high federal revenues corrupted legislation
- 1888: Democrats nominated Cleveland, supported lowered tariffs; Republicans selected **Benjamin Harrison** w/ clear diff. betw. parties → decisive victory for Harrison

Democrat Grover Cleveland won the 1884 election thanks to a religious controversy which put Republicans out of Catholic favor; he was known particularly for his opposition to high tariffs. The tariff issue became a critical issue in the 1888 election, allowing Republican Benjamin Harrison to clinch a decisive win.

What were significant public issues emerging during and after Harrison's presidency?

- Harrison generally passive w/ little attempt to influence Congress; public influence became far more powerful force
- Mid-1880s: 15 western/southern states banned combinations that reduced competition → most corporation went to NJ/Delaware to bypass
 - **Sherman Antitrust Act** in 1890 widely supported, having limited impact but passed as a symbolic attack against corporations
- Republicans focused on tariff (believed to be winning factor of election) w/ **McKinley Tariff** sent to Congress in 1890
 - Misunderstood public opinion: 1890 midterms saw destruction in House, reduced majority in Senate
- 1892 elec.: Harrison continued to fight for tariffs, Cleveland opposed it, People's Party wanted more major reform
 - Repubs. too badly weakened w/ Dem. majority in both houses, Cleveland winning presidency
 - Cleveland passed tariff production; made it through but greatly weakened by Senate/
- Public pressure for railroad regulation from Midwest farm organizations
 - Midwest state legislatures passed several legislations in 1870s; Supreme Court ruled one unconstitutional in 1886 bc. represented control of interstate commerce
 - * Supreme Court later displayed power even more w/ limitation of state's power to reg. commerce w/in boundaries
 - Regulation had to come from fed. govt. → 1887 **Interstate Commerce Act**
 - * Banned rate diffs. betw. long/short hauls; required published rate schedules w/ govt.; required all rates to be fair
 - * Interstate Commerce Commission/ICC would administer but relied on judicial support → little effect

After Harrison took control, he passed high protective tariffs in the McKinley Tariff as well as the Sherman Antitrust Act as a symbolic show of power against corporations, but his misinterpretation of public opinion cost the Republicans the next election, putting Cleveland back in power. Furthermore, federal regulation of railroads became increasingly desired; the Interstate Commerce Act aimed to accomplish this but lacked practical effect.