

POLITICS OF THE GILDED AGE

Republicans & Democrats

1. Party differences blur during this period with loyalties determined by region, religious, and ethnic differences.
2. Voter turnout for presidential elections averaged over 78 percent of eligible voters; 60 to 80 percent in non-presidential years.
3. Both parties were pro-business.
4. Both parties were opposed to any type of economic radicalism or reform.
5. Both parties advocated a "sound currency" and supported the status quo in the existing financial system.
6. Federal government and, to some extent, state governments tended to do very little.
7. Republicans dominate the Senate; Democrats dominate the House of Representatives.
8. Republican Party splinter groups during this period: Stalwarts, Halfbreeds, Mugwumps.
 - **Stalwarts**: traditional republicans who favored Grant for a third term; against Hayes and his civil service reform; in favor of political machines and patronage (spoils system)
 - **Halfbreeds**: moderates who favored Hayes; against political machines and patronage, favored civil service reform and merit system; they wrote the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act signed by President Arthur, ending the spoils system
 - **Mugwumps**: republicans who left the party to vote for the Democrat in the 1884 election, Grover Cleveland, opposed Republican nominee, Blaine, due to his alleged corruption.

Greenback Party

1. Also known as the **Independent Party**, the **National Party**, and the **Greenback-Labor Party**, active 1874 and 1884
2. Anti-monopoly ideology
3. Established as a political party whose members were primarily farmers financially hurt by the Panic of 1873.
 - Its name referred to paper money, or "greenbacks," that had been issued during the American Civil War and afterward. The party opposed the shift from paper money back to a bullion coin-based monetary system because it believed that privately owned banks and corporations would then reacquire the power to define the value of products and labor.
 - It also condemned the use of militias and private police against union strikes.
 - Conversely, they believed that government control of the monetary system would allow it to keep more currency in circulation, as it had in the war. This would better foster business and assist farmers by raising prices and making debts easier to pay.
4. Succeeded by the **Populist Party**

Populist Party

1. Formed in 1891 by remnants of the **Farmers' Alliances & Greenbacks**.
2. Big government party with a healthy list of demands that included:
 - o free coinage of silver,
 - o government ownership of the railroads, telegraphs, and telephone lines,
 - o graduated income tax,
 - o direct election of U. S. senators,
 - o the use of initiative, referendum, and recall
3. The party eventually fades because farmers' situation improved in the late 1890s and because their political agenda was assumed by the major parties.

RECONSTRUCTION (1865-1877)

Gilded Age

CHARACTERISTICS: Gilded Age (1865-1900) Reconstruction, materialism, corruption, conservatism, racism, inequality between classes, violence, decline in morality, rapid economic growth (the Industrial Revolution), technological advances, high immigration.

Andrew Johnson 1865-1869 Republican	Seward's Folly, 1867/Purchase of Alaska Amnesty Proclamation 13th and 14th Amendments adopted 1866 Civil Rights Act (adopted over veto) Radical Reconstruction, Tenure of Office Act, Impeachment
Ulysses Grant 1869-1877 Republican	Transcontinental Railroad completed, 1869 15th Amendment adopted Whiskey Ring, Tweed Ring, Credit Mobilier, Indian Ring, and more! Battle of the Little Big Horn Hayes-Tilden election/End of Reconstruction Force Acts Carnegie builds huge steel mill, Rockefeller forms Standard Oil

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND EXPANSION (1877-1900)

CHARACTERISTICS: Gilded Age, Industrial Revolution, but dramatic boom and bust cycles, business consolidation, labor militancy, farmers protest, materialism, corruption, conservatism, racism, violence, decline of morality, Social Darwinism, high immigration, expansionist foreign policy.

Rutherford Hayes 1877-1881 Republican	Compromise of 1877 End of Reconstruction/Return White Supremacy Indian Wars on the Plains Exploitation of mineral wealth and land Cattle Kingdom and Open Range ranching
James A. Garfield 1881 Republican	Assassinated by a disappointed office seeker Republican party splits (Stalwarts, Half-Breeds)
Chester A. Arthur Republican 1881-1885	Pendleton Civil Service Act Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882
Grover Cleveland 1885-1889 Democrat	Dawes Act (1887) Interstate Commerce Act, 1887 U.S. gets right to naval base at Pearl Harbor
Benjamin Harrison 1889-1893 Republican	Sherman Antitrust Act, 1890 Sherman Silver Purchase Act McKinley Tariff, 1890 Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis Homestead Strike, 1892
Grover Cleveland 1893-1897 Democrat	Pullman Strike E.C. Knight Case <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , 1896 Cross of Gold Speech, 1896 U.S. arbitrated border dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana, 1895 Queen Liliuokalani deposed by resident US in Hawaii, 1898
William McKinley 1897-1901 Republican	Height of business influence in government Gold Standard Act of 1900 Dingley Tariff Spanish American War, 1898 Teller Amendment, Platt Amendment Acquisition of Hawaii Open Door Policy (China)