Politics in the Gilded Age
1869-1896

Objective & Essential Question
DATE: 1/14/13

IWBAT
- Describe political corruption of the Grant Administration and the various efforts to clean up politics in the Gilded Age

EQ
- In what ways did the political conflicts of the Gilded Age still reflect the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction?

PUT THINGS IN ORDER
Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5. (5 mins.)

- A bitterly disputed presidential election is resolved by a complex political deal that ends Reconstruction in the South.
- Two unscrupulous financiers use corrupt means to manipulate New York gold markets and the US Treasury.
- A major economic depression causes widespread social unrest and the rise of the Populist Party as a vehicle of protest.
- Grant administration scandals split the Republican Party, but Grant overcomes the inept opposition to win reelection.
- Monetary deflation and the high McKinley Tariff lead to growing agitation for “free silver” by Congressman William Jennings Bryan and others.

PUT THINGS IN ORDER
Put the following events in correct order by numbering the from 1 to 5.

- A bitterly disputed presidential election is resolved by a complex political deal that ends Reconstruction in the South. The Hayes – Tilden Standoff – P.509
- Two unscrupulous financiers use corrupt means to manipulate New York gold markets and the US Treasury. The Era of Good Stealing – P. 503
- A major economic depression causes widespread social unrest and the rise of the Populist Party as a vehicle of protest. The Drum beat of Discontent – P.521
- Grant administration scandals split the Republican Party, but Grant overcomes the inept opposition to win reelection. The Liberal Republican Revolt of 1872 – 504
- Monetary deflation and the high McKinley Tariff lead to growing agitation for “free silver” by Congressman William Jennings Bryan and others. Cleveland and Depression – P.524

The “Bloody Shirt” Elects Grant
- Presidential election of 1868
  - Republican – Gen. Ulysses S. Grant
  - Democrat – Gov. Horatio Seymour

- Grant had no political experience, but the idea of a war hero would carry him to victory.
  - Grant waved around a bloody shirt
- Seymour a New York Governor took a hit when he said that he did not support redeeming greenback money at full value

As soon as Lincoln took office the old Whig coalition finally controlled the entire government. It immediately tripled the average tariff rate, began subsidizing the building of a transcontinental railroad in California even though a desperate war was being waged, and on February 25, 1862, the Legal Tender Act empowered the Secretary of the Treasury to issue paper money (“greenbacks”) that were not immediately redeemable in gold or silver.
Election of 1868

**Gen. Ulysses S. Grant**

**Gov. Horatio Seymour**

Grant won with 214 electoral votes to 80
Popular Vote 3,013,421 (Grant) to 2,706,829 (Seymour) a difference of 306,592 votes

Political Map of 1868

The Era of Good Stealings

Corruption became all too common in the post-Civil War years.

The corruption often came via the railroads, meddling with stock prices, and through corrupt judges.

- **Financiers Jim Fisk & Jay Gould**
  - Came up with a scheme in 1869 to corner the gold market to themselves.

- **Boss Tweed ran Tammany Hall - a local political district.**
  - Used bribes, graft, and rigged elections to mooch money and ensure continual power for himself and his buddies.

The Face of Corruption

Jim Fisk  
Jay Gould  
William M. Tweed

Thomas Nast Cartoons

With your neighbor

- Discuss why Boss Tweed wanted Nast to stop publishing his cartoons.

Thomas Nast Cartoons

Because his illiterate followers could not help seeing “them damn pictures.”

- Nast’s cartoons brought down Tweed.
- New York attorney Samuel J. Tilden headed the prosecution, Tweed later died behind bars.
A Carnival of Corruption

• Grant was an honest man but there was much corruption in his administration.
  • Credit Mobilier scandal – 1872
    ▫ Union Pacific Railroad insiders formed a construction company and then hired themselves at inflated prices.
    ▫ Government officials were paid to stay quiet
    ▫ A newspaper finally exposed the scandal
  • Whiskey Ring – people stole tax money from the government.
    ▫ Grant’s own secretary was involved, Grant helped exonerate the thief

Questions
With your closest neighbor answer these questions...

• The symbol of the Republican political tactic of attacking Democrats with reminders of the Civil War
• Great military leader whose presidency foundered in corruption and political ineptitude

The Liberal Republican Revolt of 1872

By the 1872 election, many people had had enough. Reformers started the Liberal Republican Party to clean things up.

• Liberal Republican - Horace Greeley
• Democrat Party – Horace Greeley
• Republican Party – President Grant

The Liberal Republican Party caused Congress to pass

  ▫ An Amnesty Act – which removed restrictions to Southerners.
  ▫ Reduced high Civil War tariffs
  ▫ Clean up/out Grant administration

Political Map of 1872

Grant won with 286 electoral votes to 66
Popular Vote 3,596,745 (Grant) to 2,843,446 (Greeley)

Panic of 1873

• Panic of 1873
  ▫ Over spending with borrowed money (railroads & factories.) Growth was too fast and over-extended what the market could sustain.
  ▫ Sparked when banks and businesses began to go bankrupt. The situation snowballed from there.
  ▫ Grant lead the nation into a period of “contraction.” This meant that the amount of money in circulation per person, decreased.
  ▫ The effect was that the Democrats took over the House of Representatives in 1874

Depression, Deflation, and Inflation
Pallid Politics in the Gilded Age

• The Gilded Age largely tight and hotly contested political races, much corruption, and shady business deals.
  ▫ Phrase coined by Mark Twain
• Few significant economic issues separated the two parties.
  ▫ Republicans tended to stress strict codes of personal morality and believed government should play a role in regulating the economy and the moral affairs of society.
  ▫ Democrats believed in toleration of differences in an imperfect world. They also opposed the government imposing a single moral standard on the entire society.

The Hayes-Tilden Standoff, 1876

• Step One - Read this section of Chapter 23
• Step Two – Brainstorm with partner and pull out the key ideas.
• Step Three – Make an outline of this section describing what happen during the election of 1876.

The Hayes-Tilden Standoff, 1876

• Republican – Rutherford B. Hayes
  ▫ Called the Great Unknown
• Democrat – Samuel J. Tilden
  ▫ Claim-to-fame was that he’d nailed Boss Tweed
• In the election Tilden won the popular vote, but was 1 vote shy from winning the Electoral College.
• 20 votes were hanging in the balance due to questionable returns.
• Which branch of Congress would count the states’ votes?

Political Map of 1876

Hayes won with 185 electoral votes to 184
Popular Vote 4,284,020 (Hayes) to 4,036,572 (Tilden)
Questions

With your closest neighbor answer these questions...

• Heavyweight New York political boss whose widespread fraud landed him in jail in 1871

• Winner of the contested 1876 election who presided over the end of Reconstruction and a sharp economic downturn

• Imperious New York senator and leader of the “Stalwart” faction of Republicans

The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction

The North...
• Got Rutherford B. Hayes elected as President

The South...
• Got a pledge that Hayes would remove military occupation in the South
• Civil Rights Act of 1875
  ▫ Supreme Court had struck much of it down
• Money to be spent on Texas & Pacific Railroad

The Birth of Jim Crow in the Post-Reconstruction South

• White Democrats resumed their political power in the South and began to exercise their discrimination upon blacks.

• Blacks were forced into sharecropping and tenant farming.

• They farmed the land they didn’t own. Then paid hefty fees to the landlord come harvest time.

Questions

With your closest neighbor answer these questions...

• Term for the racial segregation laws imposed in the 1890s

• Winner of the contested 1876 election who presided over the end of Reconstruction and a sharp economic downturn

• Imperious New York senator and leader of the “Stalwart” faction of Republicans
What is the relevance of this picture?

The Birth of Jim Crow in the Post-Reconstruction South

Segregation

- Jim Crow laws – state-level legal codes of segregation
- To ensure the denial of voting for the South’s black population they enacted:
  - Literacy requirements
  - Voter-registration laws
  - Poll taxes

**Segregation**
The separation of the races

Class Conflict and Ethnic Clashes

- Following the Panic of 1873 and the resulting depression, railroad workers went on strike after their wages were cut by President Hayes
- The strike failed, exposing the weakness of the labor movement.

Class Conflict and Ethnic Clashes

- Masses of immigrant came to United States in hopes of finding riches... ... but they didn’t
- People attributed declined wages and economic troubles to the hated Chinese workers.
- To appease them, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, halting Chinese immigration into America
Garfield and Arthur
Election of 1880
• Republican – James A. Garfield
  • dark-horse candidate who came from Ohio
• Democrat – Winfield Hancock
  • Civil War hero

Garfield won the election, but found himself trapped in the middle of the Republicans feud. Stalwarts vs. Half-Breeds

Garfield was assassinated
As vice president, Chester Arthur became president

The Blaine-Cleveland Mudstingers of 1884
James G. Blaine – Republican
• Mudwumps - Reform-minded Republican’s didn’t like this choice and went over to the Democrats (their mug on one side and their wump on the other)

Grover Cleveland – Democrat
• The mudslinging reached the worst level.
  • Cleveland’s affair and the child he fathered.
Cleveland won the election

“Old Grover” Take Over
Question were raised about whether Cleveland and the Democratic Party could be trusted to govern the Union.
• Awarded jobs based on merit
• Cleveland replaced thousands of federal employees w/ Democrats
• He vetoed a bill in 1887 to provide seeds for drought-ravaged Texas farmers. Stating government should not support the people
• He also vetoed many of the thousands military pension bills.

Cleveland Battles for a Lower Tariff
• Cleveland had an unusual problem – a budget surplus.
  • Couldn’t justify the gov’t profiting off of the people by taking in more than the gov’t needed
• Two ways to get rid of surplus
  • Increase the spending by inventing things to spend it on.
  • Taking in less by cutting taxes.

Cleveland Battles for a Lower Tariff
• Extra surplus came in from the tariff
  • People wanted to lower it
  • Businesses wanted to keep it high
  • Pres. Cleveland asked Congress to reduce the tariff
  • Democrats favoring the lower tariff
  • Republicans began building their “was Chest” of money for the next presidential campaign
Cleveland Battles for a Lower Tariff

• Tariff issue came to a head of steam in the election of 1888
  ◦ Cleveland was up for re-election by Democrats
  ◦ Benjamin Harrison – Republican

• Harrison WON! – in a very close race.
• Cleveland (22nd) became the first president voted out of office since Martin Van Buren 1841 (8th)

The Billion-Dollar Congress

• After being out of the White House for 4 years, the Republicans were eager to assert their power in Congress.
  ◦ Speaker of the House “Thomas “Czar” Reed – he ran the House like a dictatorship.
  ◦ Democrats fought back by not answering roll call and thus not achieving a quorum.

The Billion-Dollar Congress

• With Quorum met, Reed got down to business and had many bills passed...
  ◦ The 1st “Billion Dollar Congress.”
  ◦ Pensions to veterans
  ◦ Silver was purchased
  ◦ The McKinley Tariff 1890 – rates increased to 48% (approx.)

The Drumbeat of Discontent

• The Populist Party emerged in 1892
  ◦ The People’s Party – made up of unhappy farmers
  ◦ Demanded included
    ◦ Inflation through “cheap money” policies
    ◦ Graduated income tax
    ◦ Government regulation
      ◦ Railroads
      ◦ Telegraph & Telephone
      ◦ Shorter work day
      ◦ Immigration restrictions
      ◦ Direct elections of US Senators

They won 22 electoral votes

• South was reluctant – race reasons
• They reached out to blacks and the whites pulled away.
• After election: whites implemented.
  ◦ Literacy tests
  ◦ Poll taxes
  ◦ Grandfather clauses

Cleveland and Depression

• “Old Grover” Cleveland won again
• Depression of 1893
  ◦ First recession or depression during the industrial age.
  ◦ Nearly 8,000 US businesses went out business in 6 months.
  ◦ Railroads went under
  ◦ Soup Kitchens popped up
Cleveland and Depression

- “Other Money Problems
  - Cleveland now had a budget deficit
  - Nation’s gold supply was low
    - Sherman Silver Purchase Act 1890 had created a cycle: the gov’t had to but silver and print paper money to pay for it, the people could then in the paper money for gold, which they did.
    - Nations gold dipped below $100 million
    - Congress rebated repealing the Sherman Act

Cleveland Breeds a Backlash

- The Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1894
  - Democrats had promised:
    - lowered tariffs
    - allowed for a 2% income tax over $4,000.
    - Supreme Court ruled income taxes are unconstitutional in 1895.
    - The Tariff caused the Democrats to lose positions in Congress, giving the Republican an advantage.

Cleveland Breeds a Backlash

- Forgettable Presidents
  - Grant – Hayes - Garfield - Arthur - Harrison
  - and now Cleveland