

## Ch. 23 Study Guide

## AP US History

### *Political Paralysis in the Gilded Age 1869-1889*

**Theme:** Even as post-Civil War America expanded and industrialized, political life in the Gilded Age was marked by ineptitude, stalemate, and corruption. Despite their similarity at the national level, the two parties competed fiercely for offices and spoils, while doling out “pork-barrel” benefits to veterans and other special interest groups.

**Theme:** The serious issues of monetary and agrarian reform, labor, race, and economic fairness were largely swept under the rug by the political system, until revolting farmers and major economic depression beginning in 1893 created a growing sense of crisis and demands for radical change.

**Theme:** The Compromise of 1877 made reconstruction officially over and white Democrats resumed political power in the South. Blacks, as well as poor whites, found themselves forced into sharecropping and tenant farming; what began as informal separation of blacks and whites in the immediate postwar years evolved into systematic state-level legal codes of segregation known as Jim Crow laws.

#### **Summary:**

After the soaring ideals and tremendous sacrifices of the Civil War, the post-Civil War era was generally one of disillusionment. Politicians from the White House to the courthouse were often surrounded by corruption and scandal, while the actual problems afflicting industrializing America festered beneath the surface.

The popular war hero Grant was a poor politician and his administration was rife with corruption. Despite occasional futile reform efforts, politics in the Gilded Age was monopolized by the two patronage-fattened parties, which competed vigorously for spoils while essentially agreeing on most national policies. Cultural differences, different constituencies, and deeply felt local issues fueled intense party competition and unprecedented voter participation. Periodic complaints by “Mugwump” reformers and “soft-money” advocates failed to make much of a dent on politics.

The deadlocked contested 1876 election led to the sectional Compromise of 1877, which put an end to Reconstruction. An oppressive system of tenant farming and racial supremacy and segregation was thereafter fastened on the South, enforced by sometimes lethal violence. Racial prejudice against Chinese immigrants was also linked with labor unrest in the 1870s and 1880s.

Garfield’s assassination by a disappointed office seeker spurred the beginnings of civil-service reform, which made politics more dependent on big business. Cleveland, the first Democratic president since the Civil War, made a lower tariff the first real issue in national politics for some time. But his mild reform efforts were eclipsed by a major economic depression that began in 1893, a crisis that deepened the growing outcry from suffering farmers and workers against a government and economic system that seemed biased toward big business and the wealthy.

#### **Key Terms:**

Ulysses S. Grant	James G. Blaine	Stalwarts
Jay Gould & Jim Fisk	Thomas Reed	Half-Breeds
“Ohio Idea”	James Garfield	Pendleton Act
Gilded Age	Chester Arthur	Mugwumps
The “bloody shirt”	Charles Guiteau	Jim Crow Laws
Tweed Ring	Grover Cleveland	Chinese Exclusion Act
Credit Mobiler	Benjamin Harrison	Billion-Dollar Congress
Whiskey Ring	Resumption Act	Farmer’s Alliance
Rutherford B. Hayes	“Crime of 73”	The Homestead Strike
Samuel Tilden	Bland-Allison Act	Sherman Silver Purchase Act
Compromise of 1877	Greenback Labor Party	McKinley Tariff
Roscoe Conkling	GAR	

#### **Key Questions:**

1. Why do you suppose that **politicians during the Gilded Age** avoided major issues and were so prone to corruption? Provide examples.
2. What caused the rise of the “money issues” in American politics? What were the backers of “greenbacks” and silver money trying to achieve?
3. Consider the **Compromise of 1877** in relation to race and sectional conflict. Might America’s racial history have been considerably different if Tilden had actually been declared the winner?
4. What were the causes and political results of the rise of agrarian protest in the 1880s and 1890s? Why were the **Populists’** attempts to form a coalition of white and black farmers and industrial workers ultimately unsuccessful?
5. White laborers in the west fiercely resisted Chinese immigration, and white farmers in the South turned toward race-baiting rather than forming a populist alliance with black farmers. How and why did race “trump” the apparent economic self-interests of these lower class whites?

### **Identification**

*Supply the correct identification for each numbered description*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The symbol of the Republican political tactic of attacking Democrats with reminders of the Civil War
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Corrupt construction company whose bribes and payoffs to congressmen and others created a major Grant administration scandal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Short-lived third party of 1872 that attempted to curb Grant administration corruption
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Precious metal that “soft-money” advocates demanded be coined again, after the “Crime of 73”
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. “Soft-money” party that polled over a million votes and election fourteen congressmen in 1878 by advocating inflation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mark Twain’s sarcastic name for the post-Civil War era, which emphasized its atmosphere of greed and corruption
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Civil War Union veterans’ organization that became a potent political bulwark of the Republican party in the late nineteenth century
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Republican party faction, led by Senator Roscoe Conkling, that opposed all attempts at civil-service reform
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Republican party faction led by James G. Blaine that paid lip service to government reform while still battling for patronage and spoils
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The complex political agreement between Republicans and Democrats that resolved the bitterly disputed election of 1876
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Asian immigrant group that experience discrimination on the West Coast
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. System of choosing federal employees on the basis of the merit rather than patronage, introduced by the Pendleton Act of 1883
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Sky-high Republican tariff of 1890 that caused widespread anger among farmers in the Midwest and the South
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Insurgent political party that gained widespread support among farmers in the 1890s
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Notorious clause in southern voting laws that exempted from literacy tests and poll taxes anyone whose ancestors that voted in 1860, thereby excluding blacks

### **Putting Things in Order**

*Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 U.S. 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

### Matching People, Places and Events

Match the person, place or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ____ 1. Ulysses S. Grant        | <b>B.</b> Bold and unprincipled financier whose plot to corner the U.S. gold market nearly succeeded in 1869                   |
| ____ 2. Jim Fisk                | <b>C.</b> Winner of a contested election in 1876 who presided over the end of Reconstruction and a sharp economic downturn     |
| ____ 3. Boss Tweed              | <b>D.</b> Great military leader whose presidency floundered in corruption and political ineptitude                             |
| ____ 4. Horace Greeley          | <b>E.</b> Term for racial segregation laws imposed in the 1890s  |
| ____ 5. Jay Cooke               | <b>F.</b> Eloquent young Congressman from Nebraska who became the most prominent advocate of “free silver” in the early 1890s  |
| ____ 6. Denis Kearney           | <b>G.</b> President whose assassination after only a few months in office spurred the passage of a civil service law           |
| ____ 7. Tom Watson              | <b>H.</b> Irish-born leader of the anti-Chinese movement in California   |
| ____ 8. Roscoe Conkling         | <b>I.</b> Radical Populist leader whose early success turned sour, and who then became a vicious racist                        |
| ____ 9. James G. Blaine         | <b>J.</b> Wealthy New York financier whose bank collapsed in 1878, setting off an economic depression                          |
| ____ 10. Rutherford B. Hayes    | <b>K.</b> Imperious New York senator and leader of the “Stalwart” faction of Republicans                                       |
| ____ 11. James Garfield         | <b>L.</b> First Democratic president since the civil war; defender of <i>laissez-faire</i> economics and low tariffs           |
| ____ 12. Jim Crow               | <b>M.</b> Enormously wealthy banker whose secret bailout of the federal government in 1895 aroused fierce public anger         |
| ____ 13. Grover Cleveland       | <b>N.</b> Colorful, eccentric newspaper editor who carried the Liberal Republican and Democratic banners against Grant in 1872 |
| ____ 14. William Jennings Bryan | <b>O.</b> Charming but corrupt “Half-Breed” Republican senator and presidential nominee in 1884                                |
| ____ 15. J.P. Morgan            |  |
- A.** Heavyweight New York political boss whose widespread fraud landed him in jail in 1871

### Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

**Cause**

- \_\_\_1. Favor-seeking business-people and corrupt politicians
- \_\_\_2. *The New York Times* and cartoonist Thomas Nast
- \_\_\_3. Upright Republicans' disgust with Grant administration scandals
- \_\_\_4. The economic crash of the mid-1870s
- \_\_\_5. Local cultural, moral, and religious differences
- \_\_\_6. The Compromise of 1877 that settled the disputed Hayes-Tilden election
- \_\_\_7. White workers' resentment of Chinese labor competition
- \_\_\_8. Public shock at Garfield's assassination by Guiteau
- \_\_\_9. The 1890s depression and the drain of gold from the federal treasury
- \_\_\_10. The inability of Populist leaders to overcome divisions between white and black farmers

**Effect**

- A.** Created fierce partisan competition and high voter turnouts, even though the parties agreed on most national issues
- B.** Caused anti-Chinese violence and restrictions against Chinese immigration
- C.** Led to the formation of the Liberal Republican party in 1872
- D.** Induced Grover Cleveland to negotiate a secret loan from J.P. Morgan's banking syndicate
- E.** Forced Boss Tweed out of power and into jail
- F.** Helped ensure passage of the Pendleton act
- G.** Caused numerous scandals during President Grant's administration
- H.** Led to failure of the third party revolt in the South and a growing racial backlash
- I.** Caused unemployment, railroad strikes, and a demand for "cheap money"
- J.** Led to the withdrawal of troops from the South and the virtual end of federal influence

**ANSWERS:**

**Identification**

- |                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| 1. (waving the) bloody shirt | 11. G |
| 2. Credit Mobiler            | 12. E |
| 3. Liberal Republican party  | 13. L |
| 4. silver                    | 14. F |
| 5. Greenback Labor party     | 15. M |

**Putting Things in Order**

- 4, 1, 5, 3, 2

**Cause and Effect**

- |                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 6. Gilded Age                  | 1. G |
| 7. Grand Army of the Republic  | 2. E |
| 8. Stalwarts                   | 3. C |
| 9. Half-Breeds                 | 4. I |
| 10. Compromise of 1877         | 5. A |
| 11. Chinese                    | 6. J |
| 12. civil service              | 7. B |
| 13. McKinley Tariff            | 8. F |
| 14. Populists (People's Party) | 9. D |
| 15. grandfather clause         | 10.H |

**People, Places, Events**

- |       |      |
|-------|------|
| 1. D  | 10.H |
| 2. B  |      |
| 3. A  |      |
| 4. N  |      |
| 5. J  |      |
| 6. H  |      |
| 7. I  |      |
| 8. K  |      |
| 9. O  |      |
| 10. C |      |