

Chapter 11

Politics & Reform 1877-1896

Section 1—Stalemate in Washington

- Spoils System or patronage—gov't. jobs going to supporters of winning party
- Pres. Rutherford Hayes attacked practice causing Republican party to split into. Stalwarts liked spoils system. Half-breeds were reformers who didn't.
- Election 1880 Republican James Garfield (half-breed) Vice Pres. Chester Arthur (stalwart)
- Charles Guiteau shoots and kills Garfield
- Congress passed Pendleton Act creating Civil Service Commission. Pres. Arthur signed bill put 14,000 jobs under their control
- 2 political parties evenly matched. Republicans—Civil War vets, big business and farmers seen as party of reform. Democrats—dominated in South, strong support in cities with Catholics and immigrants, seen as party of personal liberty.
- Election 1884—Republican James G. Blaine v. Democrat Grover Cleveland. 1st campaign of personal mudslinging.
- Cleveland wins, tries to balance spoils system makes everyone angry. Economic issues soon overshadow everything else.
- People angry at Big Business afraid of their abuse of power
- Railroad got lots of criticism—Congress finally passed 1st federal law to regulate interstate trade. Interstate Commerce Act led to ICC.
- Protective tariffs another economic problem area
- Election of 1888—tariffs main issue. Republican Benjamin Harrison defeats Cleveland. He is for protective tariff.
- McKinley Tariff raised tariff to highest level and lowered federal revenue
- Congress increased veterans pensions and increased number of vets to get pension with lower revenue and more spending led to federal deficit.
- Sherman Anti-trust Act made trusts and large combinations of companies illegal

Section 2—Populism

- Many felt 2 party system was not working
- Populism movement to increase farmers political power
- Specific problem for farmers money supply
- Inflation—more money in circulation—value of money goes down—prices go up
- After Civil War gov't. takes greenbacks out of circulation and stops minting silver coins