



Politics in the Gilded Age

1865-1900



Learning Objectives:

Explain the continuities and changes in the role of the government in the U.S. economy.

Some argued that laissez-faire policies and competition promoted economic growth in the long run, and they opposed government intervention during economic downturns.

Foreign policy makers increasingly looked outside U.S. borders in an effort to gain greater influence and control over markets and natural resources in the Pacific Rim, Asia, and Latin America.



The Tragic Death of President James Garfield

Discussion Questions

Examine the importance of each of the following:

- a. The Pendleton Civil Service Act
- b. The Interstate Commerce Act
- c. The Sherman Antitrust Act
- d. The McKinley Tariff

Thinking Ahead:

- What challenges did farmers face that would lead to a political revolution in the future? What was the importance of the political machines in America's cities?

Learning Objectives:

Explain the similarities and differences between the political parties during the Gilded Age.

Economic instability inspired agrarian activists to create the People's (Populist) Party, which called for a stronger governmental role in regulating the American economic system.

The major political parties appealed to lingering divisions from the Civil War and contended over tariffs and currency issues, even as reformers argued that economic greed and self-interest had corrupted all levels of government.

In an urban atmosphere where the access to power was unequally distributed, political machines thrived, in part by providing immigrants and the poor with social services.

FULL EPISODE



HISTORY

The Men Who Built America- Buying a President

Thought Questions

- Why did the Republican Party hold an advantage, even though it was a slim one, throughout the period from 1865-1900?
- Discuss the tariff issue. Why would Republicans during the period want a protective tariff? Why would Democrats and farmers oppose it?
- Discuss the currency issue. Why would farmers want to enlarge the money supply? Why was this a dangerous idea?
- Discuss the Populist Party platform. What made it unique for the time period? List three components of it that are still with us in the modern era.
- How did William Jennings Bryan lose the Election of 1896? What was the great advantage that the McKinley campaign had versus Bryan?