CHAPTER 23: POLITICAL PARALYSIS IN THE GILDED AGE

Name:
Period:

The "Bloody Shirt" Elects Grant

Know: Ulysses S. Grant, Ohio Idea, Repudiation, Horatio Seymour, Bloody Shirt
1. Was General Grant good presidential material? Why did he win?
   Grant was not good presidential material in large part because of his lack of culture and social awkwardness. He won because people still believed that a good general would make a good president.
   Grant was the most popular Northern hero to emerge from the war, and the Republicans nominated him in 1868 on a platform of continued Reconstruction.

Know:
Ohio Idea - Many bonds had been purchased with badly depreciated paper greenbacks and the Ohio Idea called for redemption in greenbacks which would keep more money in circulation.
Horatio Seymour - Democratic nominee who repudiated the Ohio Idea.
Bloody Shirt - Republicans revived gory memories of the Civil War with “vote as you shot”

The Era of Good Stealings

Know: Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, Black Friday, Boss Tweed, Graft, Thomas Nast, Samuel J. Tilden
2. "The Man in the Moon...had to hold his nose when passing over America." Explain.
   Railroad promoters left gullible bond buyers with nothing, citizens dealt with unscrupulous stock-market manipulators and judges and legislators were up for hire. Fisk and Gould plotted in 1869 to corner the gold market and worked with Grant and his brother in law to make sure the treasury didn’t sell gold. On “Black Friday” Sept. 24, 1869, they bid the price of gold up while honest businesspeople went broke. Finally, the Treasury released gold.
   Boss Tweed (and his “Tweed Ring” political machine) employed bribery, graft and fraudulent elections to make $200 million. In 1871 the New York Times published evidence against him even though he offered them $5 million not to. Thomas Nast (a cartoonist) drew pictures for the illiterate to see what Tweed really was.

A Carnival of Corruption

Know: Credit Mobilier, Whiskey Ring, William Belknap
3. Describe two major scandals that directly involved the Grant administration.
   In 1872, the Credit Mobilier scandal erupted. Union Pacific Railroad insiders formed the Credit Mobilier construction company and then hired themselves at inflated prices to build the railroad, making a lot of money in the process. The company then gave shares of its stock to key congressmen so that they wouldn’t shut down the operation. An investigation showed two congressmen and the Vice President (Schuyler Colfax) accepted payments.
   In 1874-75, the Whiskey Ring robbed the Treasury of millions in excise-tax revenues. Grant’s secretary was among the culprits and he help exonerate the thief. Grant always supported his administration even if they were wrong.
   In 1876 Secretary of War William Belknap resigned after taking bribes from suppliers to the Indian Reservations.
The Liberal Republican Revolt of 1872
Know: Liberal Republicans (reform-minded citizens), Horace Greeley
4. Why did Liberal Republicans nominate Horace Greeley for the presidency in 1872? Why was he a less than ideal candidate?
They were a reform-minded party wanting to purify Washington and end military reconstruction so they nominated Horace Greeley. He was the editor of the New York Tribune, but he was emotional, petulant and unsound in his political judgments. He had also made many enemies from printing stories in his paper. The Republicans nominated Grant again and denounced Greeley as an atheist, communist, free-lover, vegetarian and friend of Jeff Davis. Democrats (and the Liberal Republicans) denounced Grant as a drunkard and a swindler but Grant won. The Republicans cleaned out their administration so they would not lose it and the Liberal Republican party died out.

Depression and Demands for Inflation
Know: Panic of 1873, Greenbacks, Hard-money, Crime of ’73, Contraction, Soft-money, Bland-Allison Act
5. Why did some people want greenbacks and silver dollars? Why did others oppose these kinds of currency?
Businesses went bankrupt as they could not pay back their loans and unemployment soared. African Americans were hard hit and lost over $7 million in savings. Hard times hit the debtors the most who intensified their clamor for inflation. Afflicted agrarian and debtor groups favored “cheap money” and wanted to reissue greenbacks. They reasoned more money meant cheaper money and hence rising prices and easier to pay debts. Creditors reasoned the opposite because they money they had lent would be repaid in depreciated dollars. The hard-money advocates won out by convincing Grant to veto a bill to print paper money along with the Resumption Act of 1875 which said the government would continue taking out greenbacks. Because the gov’t would only allow silver to be 1/16 of gold, silver miners stopped selling silver to the gov’t which meant the gov’t stopped coining silver in 1873. Silver promoters favored the same policies as greenbackers.

Bland Allison Act-1878 Congress required the US Treasury to buy a certain amount of silver and put it into circulation as silver dollars. The bill was vetoed by Hayes but Congress overrode his veto to enact the law.

Pallid Politics in the Gilded Age
Know: Gilded Age, Grand Army of the Republic, Stalwarts, Roscoe Conkling, Half-Breeds, James G. Blaine
6. Why was there such fierce competition between Democrats and Republicans in the Gilded Age if the parties agreed on most economic issues?
They had very different ethnic and cultural membership. Republicans tended to rely on their Puritan lineage and stressed strict codes of personal morality and believed the government should play a role in regulation the economic and moral affairs of society. Democrats were more Lutheran and Roman Catholic and took a less stern view of human weakness. They spurned government efforts to impose a single moral standard on the entire society. Democrats had a solid base in the South and in northern industrial cities (immigrants). Republican strength was in the Midwest and rural Northeast. Freedmen in the South continued to vote Republican. Both parties dispersed jobs for votes. The Stalwarts (led by Roscoe Conkling) embraced the system of swapping jobs for votes. The Half-Breeds (led by James G. Blaine) took
issue with the Stalwarts in who should run the spoils system.

The Hayes-Tilden Standoff, 1876

Know: Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel J. Tilden
7. Why were the results of the 1876 election in doubt?
Rutherford B. Hayes ran as the Republican candidate and Samuel J. Tilden the Democratic candidate. Tilden won 184 of the 185 needed electoral votes on the platform of defeating Republican scandal (he was the guy who prosecuted Boss Tweed). Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida were disputed states saying that both candidates won. If the speaker of the house counts the votes the Democrat would be chosen but if the president of the senate counts the votes it would go to the Republican. The Constitution was unclear on how this process should work.

The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction

Know: Compromise of 1877, Civil Rights Cases (1883),
8. How did the end of Reconstruction affect African-Americans?
The Compromise of 1877 allowed Hayes (Republican) to take office if he agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South and end military Reconstruction. By removing troops, the black freedmen in the South would pay the price. Republicans abandoned its commitment to racial equality. The Supreme Court declared that the 14th amendment prohibited the government from denying civil rights, but not individuals.

The Birth of Jim Crow in the Post-Reconstruction South

Know: Redeemers, sharecropping, tenant farming, Jim Crow laws, Plessy v. Ferguson
9. Explain the development of Jim Crow laws in the south. Be sure to include the “know” terms above.
Blacks who tried to assert their rights faced unemployment, eviction and physical harm once Reconstruction was over. Blacks (and poor whites) were forced into sharecropping and tenant farming. With white southerners back in power, by the 1890s there were state-level legal codes of segregation known as Jim Crow laws. Southern states also used literacy requirements, voter-registration laws and poll taxes to keep African Americans from voting. With Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 the Supreme Court ruled the separate but equal facilities were legal. A record number of blacks were lynched for the “crime” of asserting themselves as equals.

Class Conflicts and Ethnic Clashes

Know: Great Railroad Strike of 1877, Denis Kearney, Chinese Exclusion Act
10. What was the significance of the Great Railroad Strike of 1877?
Railroad workers faced tough times when wages were cut by 10% in 1877 so they went on strike from Baltimore to St. Louis. The Federal Government sent in troops to force the workers back to work and over 100 people died. The failure of the Great Railroad Strike exposed the weaknesses of the labor movement. Unions were fractured by racial and ethnic boundaries. For example, the Chinese on the West Coast. Denis Kearney and his followers resented the competition of cheap labor from the more recently arriving Chinese. The Kearneyites terrorized the Chinese by shearing off their hair and some were murdered outright. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which prohibited further immigration from China until 1943.
Makers of America: The Chinese
Know: Chinatowns, Chinese Exclusion Act
12. Why did most Chinese immigrants come to America?
Opportunity, gold, suffering in China, the European imperial powers forced their way into the unstable country.

Garfield and Arthur
Know: James A. Garfield, Charles J. Guiteau, Chester A. Arthur, Pendleton Act of 1883
11. What new type of corruption resulted from the Pendleton Act?
Garfield (Republican) won the presidency in 1880 but was shot by Guiteau and his VP, Chester Arthur became President (Guiteau was hoping for Stalwart spoils from Arthur). Garfield’s death showed politicians that the spoils system should be reformed. Arthur passed the Pendleton Act of 1883 which made compulsory campaign contributions from federal employees illegal and established the Civil Service Commission to make appointments to federal jobs on the basis of examinations. Because of the act, politicians were forced to look elsewhere for the money and they often turned to big corporations. It essentially helped drive politicians into marriages of convenience with big-business leaders.

The Blaine-Cleveland Mudslingers of 1884
Know: James G. Blaine, Tattooed man, Mugwumps, Grover Cleveland, Ma, ma where's my pa?, Rum, Romanism and Rebellion
13. Explain how character played a part in the presidential election of 1884.
James G. Blaine was linked to a corrupt deal involving federal favors to a southern railroad and some reformers joined the Democrats. They were nicknamed Mugwumps (Indian derivation menat to suggest they were “holier-than-thou”). Democrats chose Grover Cleveland known as “Grover the Good”. The Republicans found out that he had an affair with a Buffalo widow and she had an illegitimate son with him.(They sang the song “Ma, ma, where’s my pa?” Democrats sang back “Gone to the White House, ha, ha, ha!”) Personalities, not principles claimed the headlines. The Republicans also said the Democrats were the party of “Rum, Romanism and Rebellion” which insulted New York’s Irish American voters and led to Cleveland being elected.

“Old Grover” Takes Over
14. Assess the following statement: "As president, Grover Cleveland governed as his previous record as governor indicated he would."
Cleveland was a supporter of laissez-faire which made businesses and bankers happy. He supported big business and fired many Republican office holders to make way for deserving Democrats. He also attempted to fight pension-grabbers who were attempting to collect pensions from the Civil War. He vetoed several hundred of them.

Cleveland Battles for a Lower Tariff
15. What were the reasons behind Cleveland's stance in favor of lower tariffs?
Lower barriers would mean lower prices for consumers and less protection for monopolies. IT would also mean an end to the Treasury surplus. Cleveland saw it as his duty and overturned the tariff. The tariff
became the prime issue in the next election between Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison. Cleveland polled more popular votes but Harrison won the presidency.

**The Billion Dollar Congress**

**Know:** Thomas Reed, Civil War pensions, McKinley Tariff Act of 1890

16. Explain why the tariff was detrimental to American farmers.

The Republicans Congress passed the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890 which boosted rates to their highest peacetime level ever (48.4%). This tariff brought problems for debt-burdened farmers who had no choice but to buy manufactured goods from high-priced protected American industrialists, but then had to sell their own agricultural products into highly competitive, unprotected world markets. Republicans lost many of their seats in Congress due to the hated tariff and groups like the Farmer’s Alliance received some seats in Congress.

**The Drumbeat of Discontent**

**Know:** Populists, Andrew Carnegie

17. What was the most revolutionary aspect of the Populist platform? Defend your answer with evidence.

The Populists adopted the Omaha Platform that demanded inflation through free and unlimited coinage of silver at the rate of 16 ounces to 1 gold ounce. They also called for a graduated income tax, government ownership of railroads, telegraph and telephone, direct election of US senators, a one-term limit on the presidency, the adoption of initiative and referendum so that citizens can shape legislation, a shorter workday and immigration restrictions. The Populists made a good showing in 1892 and became one of the few third parties to break into the electoral column.

18. Describe the strike that occurred at Andrew Carnegie’s Homestead plant.

Officials called in 300 Pinkerton detectives in July to crush the strike by steelworkers angry over pay cuts. Defiant strikers forced their assailants to surrender after a battle that left 10 people dead and 60 people wounded. Troops were summoned and broke the strike and the union.

**Cleveland and Depression**

**Know:** Grover Cleveland, Depression or 1893, William Jennings Bryan, Sherman Silver Purchase Act

19. What could Cleveland have done to lessen the impact of the financial turmoil?

Cleveland was the only president reelected after defeat, but he was the same old Cleveland. Debtors were up in arms, workers were restless and the advance shadows of panic were falling. Businesses had been overbuilding and overspeculating and the agricultural depression was continuing. Free-silver agitation had also damaged American credit. Many American businesses collapsed within 6 months. Soup kitchens fed the unemployed and hobo’s wandered around aimlessly. Cleveland hoped to overturn the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 to stop draining the gold reserves. Cleveland then turned to JP Morgan, the captain of the banking industry and the banks agreed to lend the government 65 million in gold.

**Cleveland Breeds a Backlash**

**Know:** Wilson Gorman Tariff

20. Is the characterization of the Gilded Age presidents as the “forgettable presidents” a fair one? Explain.
Yes because many of their actions and policies did not help the nation, but instead put the nation into more financial turmoil. For example Cleveland’s dealings with JP Morgan scarred his reputation and he also passed the Wilson-Gorman Tariff in 1894 after pledging to lower tariffs. Cleveland failed to cope with the economic crisis in 1893. Grant was part of the Credit Mobilier Scandal and many other graft scandals. All of them collectively left mostly blanks-or blots-on the nation’s political record as issues like the tariff, free silver or gold and the rights of labor continued to grow.

**Varying Viewpoints: The Populists: Radicals or Reactionaries?**

21. Were the Populists romanticized, or were they truly “authentic reformers with genuine grievances?” Answers vary. Possibilities include: Populists were authentic reformers who wanted to change their society for the better. They wanted things like free coinage of silver, income tax, direct election of senators, secret ballots, etc. Many of their reforms are now law today.