

ELECTION OF 1896

In 1892, James Weaver ran for President under the Populist Party. He did not win, but it did reflect that Populist ideas were gaining a place in the political world. Economic hardships and high unemployment became a central component of the political arena due to the Financial Panic of 1893, the worst financial crisis in American history to that point. This resulted in a surge of Americans (unemployed), joining in support of Populist ideas.

Coxey's Army is one example of industrial workers demanding relief from their federal government. Jacob Coxey (an Ohio business man who ran a san quarry), led a march of 200 men to Washington DC in the Spring of 1894. They demanded that the government assist the masses of unemployed workers by placing them in public works jobs. President Grover Cleveland refused and Coxey was arrested, and protesters dispersed. This protest reflected that extreme financial troubles that the United States was facing.

Farmers also felt the pain of economic hardship. Many were in severe debt as they had borrowed to buy land and farm equipment, but the economy was so poor that they were unable to get a profitable return on their crops. Farmers demands are what ultimately shaped the platform for the Populist party.

Read through the growth of the farmers voice into one that gained in political strength, ultimately gaining an advocate in the Presidential Election of 1896, with William Jennings Bryan.

1867 Grange

A secret organization that tried to combat the social isolation associated with farm life with community dances and other gatherings. It was at these gatherings that they discovered they shared the same economic hardships.

1. Granger Laws, 1874 - state laws that set a maximum amount for shipping rates on railroads
2. Collectivism - pool resources to buy elevators to store grain rather than rely on expensive railroads

1889 Farmers' Alliance

They came to the political arena with the same issues as the Grangers. They won seats in state legislatures across the Great Plains, reflecting their growing political influence.

1. Debt Relief - monetary system should allow an increase in the money supply so that farmers can more easily pay off debt
2. Inflation - In 1873, Congress backed all federal money by gold (gold standard), which would limit the money supply and benefit the rich, not farmers. Farmers pushed for an increase in the money supply, not limited by gold.

Example: Farmer Debt = \$3,000

- If it a farmer can sell wheat for a \$1 per bushel , he must sell 3,000 bushels
- Inflate the cost of money (devalues the dollar so that the consumer must pay more for a product)
- Farmer can then sell wheat for \$3 per bushel and only have to sell 1,000 bushels

Greenback Party and Greenback Labor Party 1876, 1880, 1884 (ran candidates for President)

Goal - produce more money or greenbacks and cause inflation

Silver - back money with both gold and silver to increase money supply (bimetallism)

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/41d.asp>

1892 Populist Party (grew out of Greenback Labor Party)

- Free Coinage of Silver
 - Graduated Income Tax
 - Direct Election of US Senators (rather than by state legislatures)
 - Initiative: citizens can directly introduce issues to state legislatures
 - Referendum: allows citizens, rather than representatives to vote on a bill that may become law
 - Recall: citizens of a state can end a public officials term before it expires if they felt he/she is unfit for the job
 - Secret Ballot
 - 1 term President
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William Jennings Bryan: Democratic and Populist Candidate SILVER

- Attorney from Lincoln, Nebraska / Democrat who came to also represent Populist ideas
- "Great Orator" and "Great Commoner" because of his emotional speeches drawing large crowds and because he came to represent the common man.
- Bryan's Cross of Gold Speech - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354/>

1896 Chicago Democratic Convention:

- "Boy Orator" nominated by Democratic Party
- "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" - campaign slogan
- Populists also nominate William Jennings Bryan
- Whistle Stop Campaign - 20-30 speeches a day

William McKinley: Republican Candidate GOLD

- support moneyed eastern establishment
- Stayed home and made speeches from his front porch
- Marc Hanna (wealthy Cleveland industrialist) successfully managed McKinley's campaign, expressing that free coinage of silver would bring financial ruin to America

WINNER: McKinley <http://www.indiana.edu/~libsalc/cartoons/1896.html>

WHY: Bryan did not win the populous states of the Northeast (city versus country)
Laborers feared free silver idea as much as industrial bosses
Inflation: HELP debt ridden, mortgage paying farmers
HURT wage earning, rent paying factory workers

RESULT: Populist Party falls apart with Bryan's loss and the free silver ideas do too

REFORMS that survive and are taken up by the Progressive Party:

- graduated income tax
- direct election of US Senators
- Initiative, Referendum, Recall
- Secret Ballot

Political Cartoons: View all three cartoons and write a sentence(s) that explains its message.

<http://www.authentichistory.com/1865-1897/4-1896election/>

a) Gulf of Poverty - Democratic Campaign Poster

b) "The Sacrilegious Candidate" Judge, Sept. 19, 1896 by Grant Hamilton

c) "He Must Be Kept Out" Puck, 1896, by Joseph Keppler -