

## Objectives

- Understand the segregation and social tensions that troubled the nation during the late 1800s.
- Identify the political and economic challenges that existed during the Gilded Age.
- Analyze the effects of the Populists' programs and activities.



## Terms and People

- **Gilded Age** – period during the late nineteenth century when a façade of prosperity covered underlying problems
- **Jim Crow laws** – Reconstruction era laws passed in the southern states that separated blacks and whites
- **graft** – bribery and corruption
- **Pendleton Act** – law that created a civil service system for the federal government

## Terms and People (continued)

- **gold standard** – economic system in which money is backed by gold
- **Populist Party** – People's Party; political party that favored the coinage of silver and several political and economic reforms
- **William Jennings Bryan** – Populist candidate for President in 1896



## What challenges arose for the nation during the Gilded Age?

With the rapid pace of industrialization and the boom in the West, it seemed the nation was experiencing a new golden age.

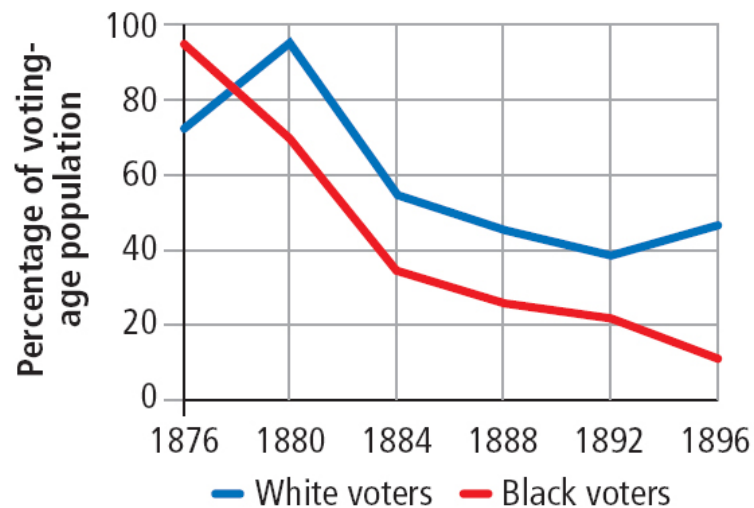
Beneath the glittery surface, however, lurked many serious problems.

**The issue of racial inequality continued to trouble the nation.**

- Southern states passed **Jim Crow laws** to separate blacks and whites.
- In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court upheld segregation as long as states maintained "separate but equal" facilities.

The separate facilities for African Americans, however, were **rarely equal**.

**Voter Turnout in South Carolina, 1876–1896**



SOURCE: *The Shaping of Southern Politics*, J. Morgan Kousser

At the same time, southern states passed **poll taxes** and **literacy tests** that prevented blacks from voting.

**African American leaders responded to discrimination in different ways.**

**W.E.B. Du Bois**  
became a vocal  
activist for civil  
rights.

**Booker T.  
Washington**  
built Tuskegee  
Institute  
as a symbol of  
black self-help.

**Ida B. Wells**  
campaigned  
against  
lynching.



## Members of other minority groups also struggled against discrimination.

Mexican  
Americans fought  
to maintain their  
property rights.

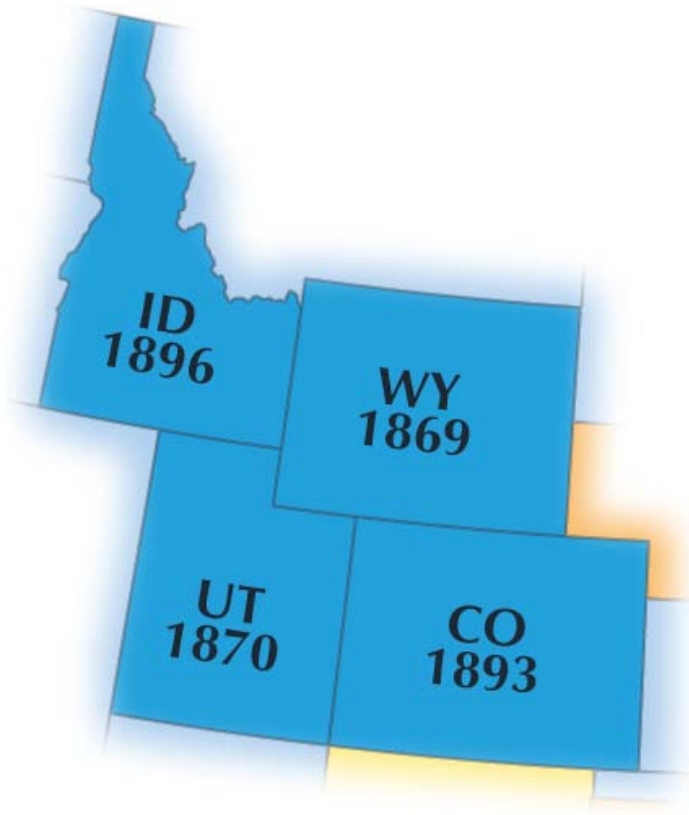
*Las Gorras Blancas*  
resorted to warlike  
tactics to protect  
their lands.

Asian immigrants  
were terrorized  
for taking white  
workers' jobs.

The Chinese  
Exclusion Act  
banned Chinese  
immigration.



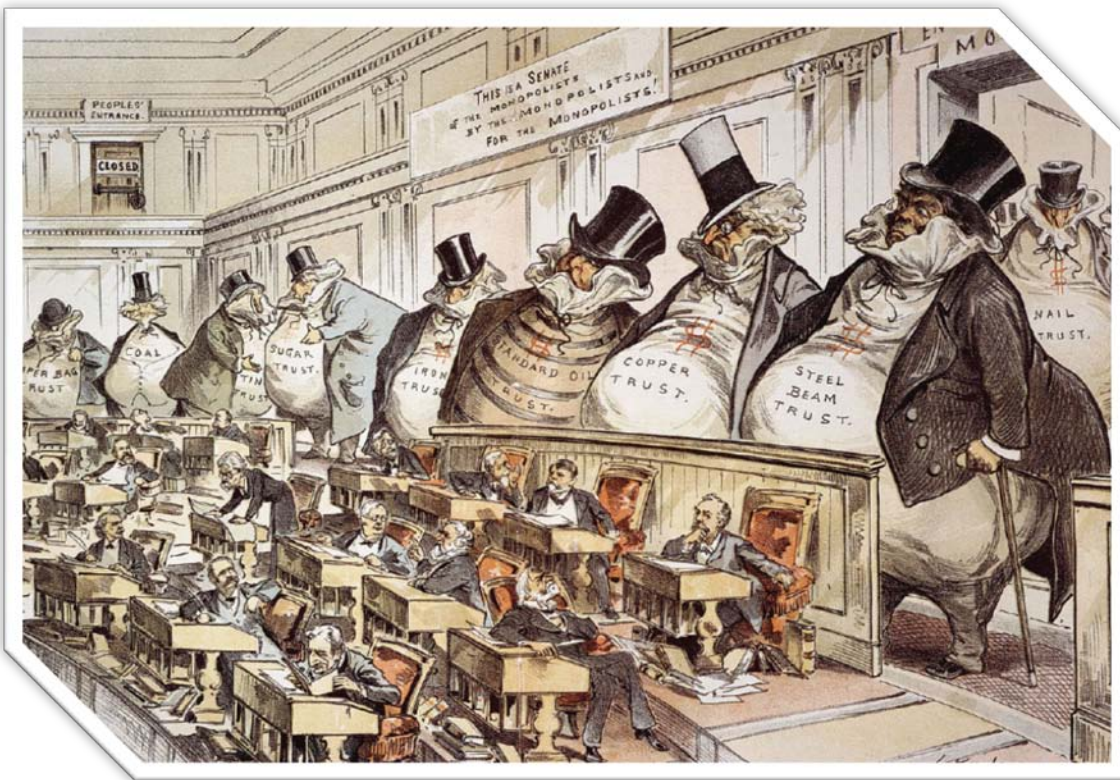
Though they made important gains in education, women still fought for the right to vote.



Several western states allowed women to vote, yet the fight for a [national suffrage amendment](#) stalled.

Inspired by [Susan B. Anthony](#) and [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](#), women continued to campaign for equality.

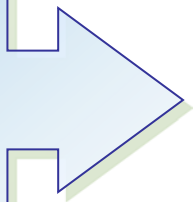
Adding to the nation's problems was government corruption.



Dishonest politicians gained power by giving government jobs to those who promised political support.

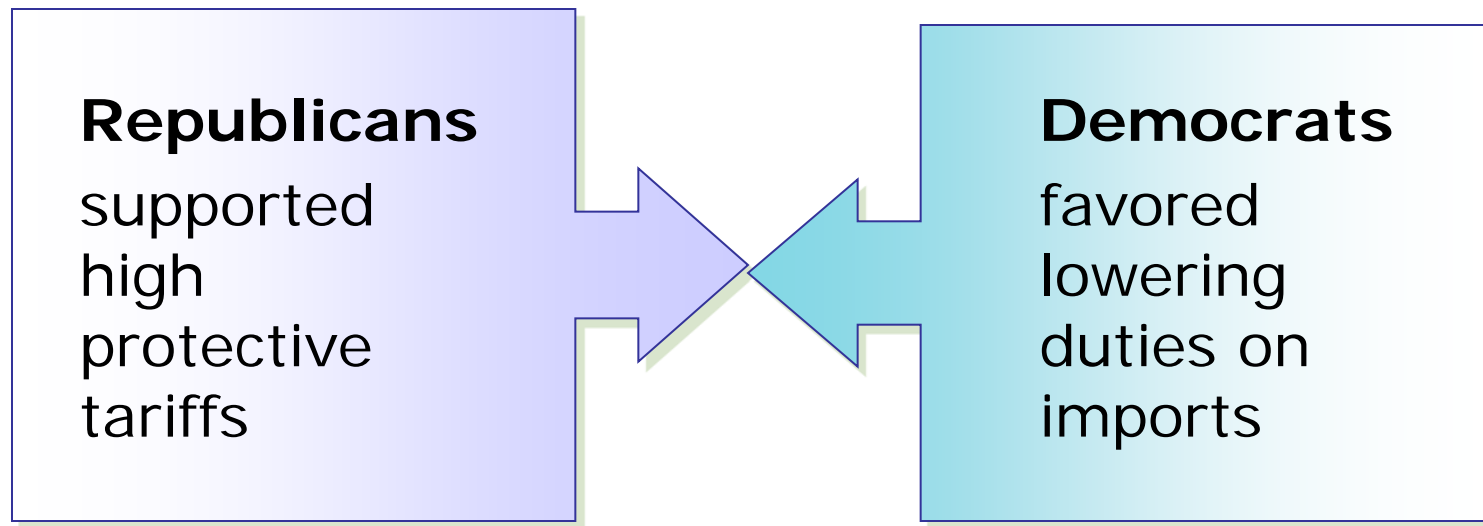
**Graft** was rampant.

Congress passed the **Pendleton Act** to help control government corruption.



- Created a federal **civil service system**
- Awarded jobs to those scoring the highest on **written exams**

Tariffs were a key political issue of the time.

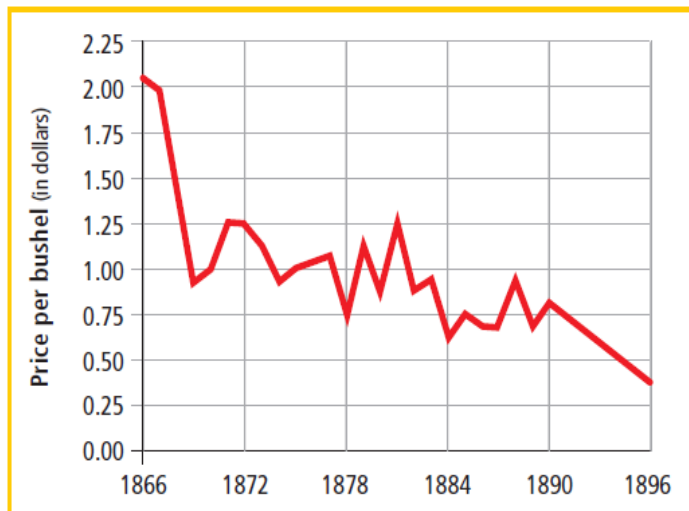


**While the two parties argued over tariffs, however, other issues developed that would soon lead to the creation of a third party.**



Given the nation's many problems, some Americans had become angry with the government.

■ Wheat Prices, 1866–1896



SOURCE: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

Farmers were among those expressing this anger.

With crop prices falling and debts mounting, many feared they would lose their land.

Farmers joined together to form organizations to push for reforms.

- The Grange
- The Farmers' Alliance



Members of the Farmers' Alliance soon formed the **Populist Party**, or People's Party.



- Sought government ownership of the railroads
- Called for the creation of subtreasury banks
- Favored the coinage of silver
- Supported reforms such as the secret ballot, the direct election of senators, and a graduated income tax

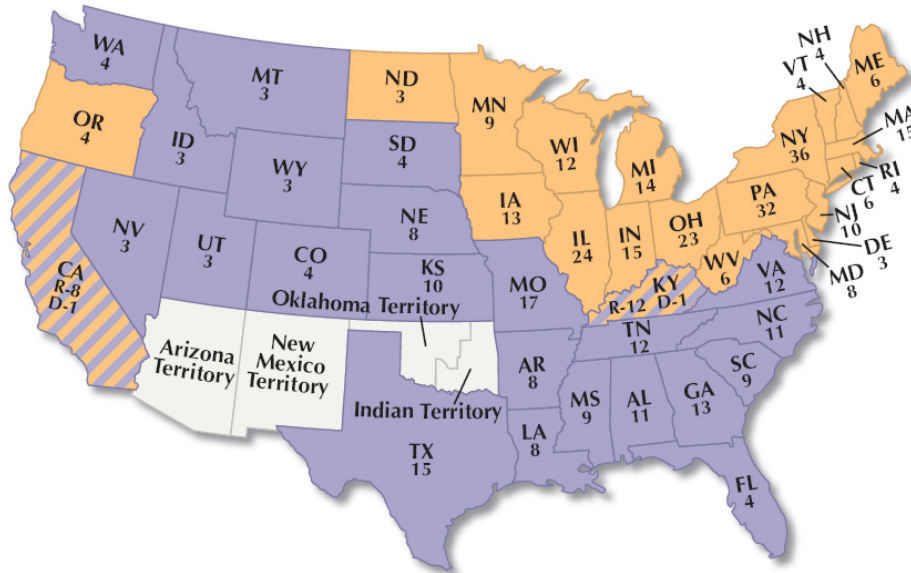


In 1896, the Populists supported Democrat  
**William Jennings Bryan** for President.

In a hard-fought campaign, Bryan took his case directly to the American people.

- Championed the cause of the American farmer
- Denounced the **gold standard**
- Made “free silver” the centerpiece of his campaign

## The Presidential Election of 1896



Despite his support in the South and the West, Bryan lost the election to Republican William McKinley.

Candidate (Party)	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	% Electoral Vote	% Popular Vote
William McKinley (Republican)	271	7,104,779	60.6	51.0
William Jennings Bryan (Democratic)	176	6,502,925	39.4	46.7
Other	—	314,226	—	2.3

**Though the Populist Party soon faded away, it had a lasting impact on the political system.**

- Several **Populist proposals**, such as the graduated income tax, eventually became law.
- Bryan's **style of appealing directly to voters** became the norm in American politics.

