Chapter 18: The Politics of Late 19th Century America

Section 1: Politics of the Status Quo, 1877-1893

- During the late 19th century why did Congress, not the president, control the national agenda?
- Who were the 5 “passive presidents” and why did they acquire this title?
- Why between 1877-1893 did the traditional differences between the Democratic & Republican parties blur?
- What are some specific examples of dirty politics & mud-slinging in presidential campaigns of 1877-1893.
- How did Andrew Carnegie’s Gospel of Wealth reflect the ‘Ideology of Individualism’ that flourished during the late 19th century?
- What is Social Darwinism?
- How did the theory of Social Darwinism effect popular culture & politics of the late 19th century?
Section 2: Sources of Popular Participation

• Discuss how party affiliations were decided largely along lines of religion and ethnicity in late 19th century America. How has this shaped American party politics through the current era?

• What were the most hotly debated social issues of late 19th century America? How did these issues play into the ethno-cultural conflicts of the day?

• What was the organizational structure of both the Republican and Democratic parties during the late 19th century? How did this serve as a means of social mobility for talented political organizers?

• Although officially excluded from political life, how did women make an impact in politics during the late 19th century?
Section 3: Race & Politics in the New South

• Who were the redeemers? What was their goal?

• What was the significance of the 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*?

• What was the significance of the 1898 Supreme Court case *Williams v. Mississippi*?

• What was the Solid South? How did this phenomena effect presidential and Congressional elections in the late 19th through the middle of the 20th century?

• What did Booker T. Washington believe was key for African-Americans winning political & civil rights? Why was his vision seen as being ‘accommodationist’?
Section 4: The Crisis of American Politics: the 1890s

• What differentiated Populists from Republicans & Democrats?

• Why did the question of silver become a national issue?

• What was the bimetallic standard and who favored it?

• Why is the Presidential election of 1896 considered a ‘watershed’ election? What were the long term consequences of this election?
The Election of 1896

William Jennings Bryan vs. William McKinley
The Election of 1896

- Populists take over the 1896 Democratic Convention & Democrats accept Bryan as their candidate and merge with Populists.
- Democrats become the party of free silver, populism, women’s suffrage, & reform
- Whistle stop campaign
- Republican campaign organized by Ohio’s Mark Hanna—”McKinley’s brain”
- McKinley stood for status quo, waved the ‘bloody shirt’, high tariffs, honest money, & prosperity
- Front Porch campaign
The Election of 1896

Bryan's Cross of Gold Speech

http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354/
The Election of 1896