
The Populist Movement

Unit 3

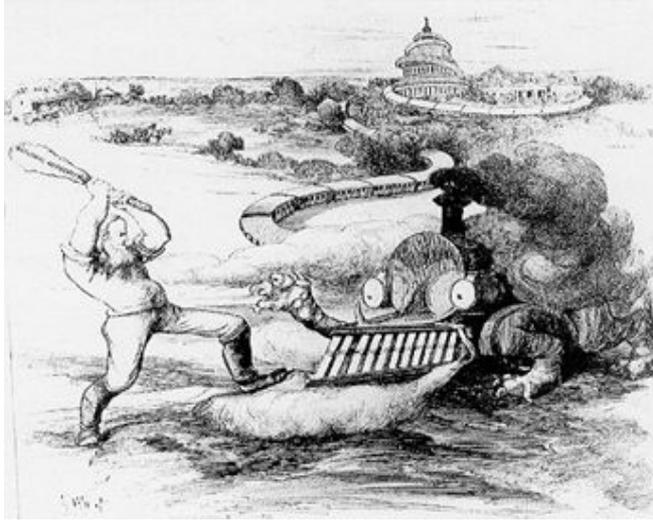
Standard:

US 10 Explain the characteristics and impact of the Granger movement and populism, emphasizing the conflicts between farmers and the railroads.

Problems for Farmers

- Farmers were becoming a minority in the USA
- Expenses were going up
- Revenue was going down
- Heavy taxes
- Dependent upon railroads and railroads overcharged the farmers

Railroad Abuses



There are three great crops raised in Nebraska. One is a crop of corn, one is a crop of freight rates, and one is a crop of interest. One is produced by farmers who sweat and toil the land. The other two are produced by men who sit in their offices...and farm the farmers.”

~ Nebraska Newspaper Editorial

- Railroads making secret deals- bribes
- Stock watering- livestock drink water to make weight increase
- Unfair pricing- long haul cheaper than short hauls
- Use of rebates for large customers

The Grange

- It was primarily a social and educational organizations for farmers and their families.
- It's greatest strength was in the Midwest
- Established cooperatives- businesses owned by farming
- Advocated for:
 - Reduced storage rates
 - Reduced freight rates
 - Improve living conditions for farmers
 - Improvement in health and safety conditions

The Granger Movement

- Its members called on state governments to establish fair freight rates and warehouse charges.
- Succeeded in the passage of Granger Laws:
 - Laws regulating storage and freight rates.
 - Some laws made it illegal for railroads to fix prices by means of pools and rebates to privileged customers.



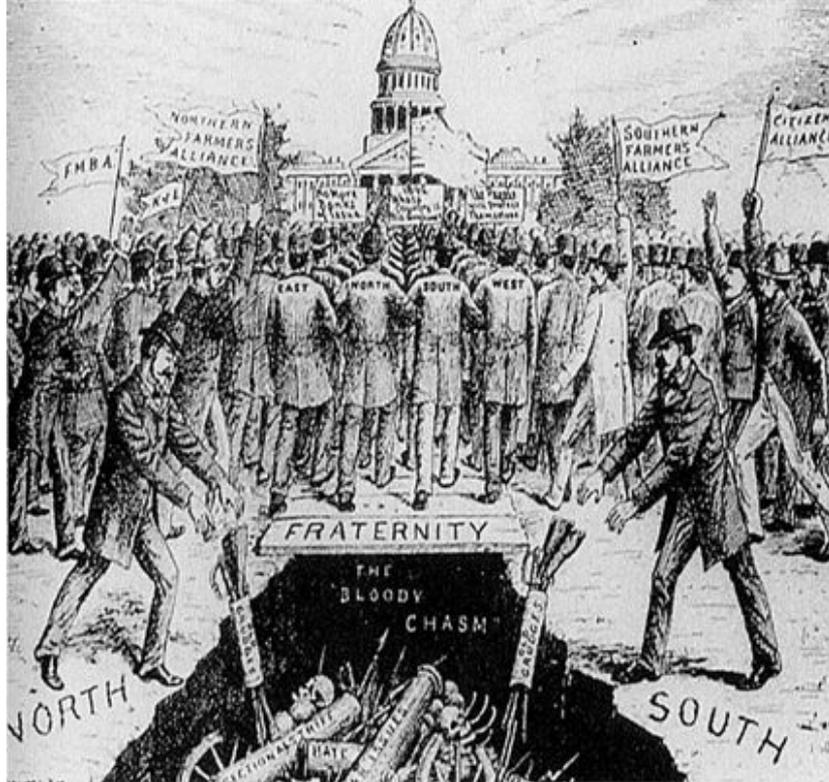
The People's Party

- Took the place of The Grange
- Leaders of the farmers organization realized they needed to build a base of political power
 - Midwestern farmers formed their own local parties known as "People's Parties"
- The party did not just attract farmers. It sought to speak for all the "producing classes"

Populist Party is Born

- **Populism** – the movement of the people – was born in 1892 with the founding of the Populist, or People's Party
- Influenced the Democrats
- Strong support of the farmers
- Reform based party, wanted change

Populist's Main Issues



- legal system placed too much emphasis on property rights
- monopolies were an economic and social evil
- Social Darwinism and laissez-faire were bankrupt ideologies
- wealth was unevenly distributed

The End of Populism

- With McKinley's election victory, Populism collapsed, burying the hopes of the farmer
- Many of the more liberal/progressive ideas of the Populist were absorbed by the two major parties