**Chapter 19**

From Stalemate to Crisis

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Nineteen should enable the student to understand:**

1. The nature of American party politics in the last third of the nineteenth century.
2. The problems of political patronage in the administrations of Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, and Chester A. Arthur that led to the passage of the Pendleton Act.
3. The circumstances that permitted the Democrats to gain control of the presidency in the elections of 1884 and 1892.
4. The origins, purposes, and effectiveness of the Interstate Commerce Act and the Sherman Antitrust Act.
5. The positions of the two major parties on the tariff questions, and the actual trend of tariff legislation in the 1880s and 1890s.
6. The rise of agrarian discontent as manifested in the Granger movement, the Farmers’ Alliances, and the Populist movement.
7. The rise of the silver question from the “Crime of ‘73” through the Gold Standard Act of 1900.
8. The significance of the presidential campaign and election of 1896.
9. The reasons for the decline of agrarian discontent after 1896.
10. The new Manifest Destiny, and how it differed from the old Manifest Destiny.
11. The objectives of American foreign policy at the turn of the century with respect to European, Latin America, and Asia.
12. The variety of factors that motivated the United States to become imperialist.
13. The relationship between American economic interests (especially tariff policy) and developments in Hawaii, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.
14. The causes of the Spanish-American War.
15. The military and political problems encountered in fighting the Spanish and, subsequently, the Filipinos.
16. The problems involved in developing a colonial administration for America’s new empire.
17. The motives behind the Open Door notes and the Boxer intervention.
18. The nature of the military reforms carried out following the Spanish-American War.

**Chapter 19**

**Pertinent Questions**

**The Politics of Equilibrium**

1. How well balanced were the two major political parties between the Civil War and the turn of the century – especially from the mid-1870s to the early 1890s?

2. What role did politics play for the typical eligible voter of the late nineteenth century? How does that compare with the importance of politics in the life of the present-day voter?

3. What regional, religious, and ethnic factors distinguished the two major parties? Despite basic issue agreement, what culturally related issues tended to divide the parties?

4. Aside from its providing Civil War pensions and the postal service, how significant was the role of the national government in the late nineteenth century?

5. How did the patronage system lead to dominance of national politics by local and state political organizations and factions in the national parties? What was the impact on the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes?

6. In what way was President James Garfield a martyr to civil service? How did Chester A. Arthur react?

7. How did the presidential election of 1888 differ from the typical fare of that period? What was the key issue, how did it become so and what was the result?

8. What led to passage of the Sherman Anti-trust Act? Why did it have so little impact?

9. What caused the significant Republican reverses in the 1890 and 1892 elections? What was the result of Cleveland’s effort to lower tariffs after his reelection?

10. How was the demise of the Granger Laws related to the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act? Why was the Interstate Commerce Commission so ineffectual?

**The Agrarian Revolt**

11. Explain how the emphasis of the Grange gradually shifted. Why did the organization eventually fade in importance?

12. What was the vision of the Farmers’ Alliance? What role did women play?

13. How did the Farmers’ Alliance transform into the People’s Party?

14. What kind of person was most attracted Populism? What were the leaders like?

15. What were the basic elements of Populist ideology, and how ere they reflected In the party’s platform? Why did the movement fail to obtain significant labor support?

**The Crisis of the 1890s**

16. What were the immediate and long-range causes of the Panic of 1893? How serious was the depression that followed?

17. What developments after 1873 led to the coalition of farmers and miners on behalf of silver coinage? Why did “free silver” seem to be the answer?

**A Cross of Gold**

18. Why did the gold-standard issue divide the Democratic Party?

19. How did William Jennings Bryan win the Democratic presidential nomination 1896, and how did his candidacy put the Populist in a dilemma?

20. How did President William McKinley handle the bi-metallism question? What happened during his administration to help resolve the issue?

**Chapter 19 (Part II)**

**Pertinent Questions**

**Stirrings of Imperialism**

1. What intellectual, economic, philosophical, and racial factors helped create a new national mood more receptive to overseas expansionism?

2. Describe Alfred Thayer Mahan’s thesis of national power. To what extend did the United States implement his ideas?

3. What were James G. Blaine’s objectives in promoting a Pan-American cooperation? How successful were his efforts?

4. How did Hawaii gradually get drawn into America’s economic and political sphere? What was the impact on the indigenous Hawaiian people?

5. How did the Venezuelan and Samoan incidents demonstrate that imperialism necessarily involved American in diplomatic maneuvers with European powers?

**War with Spain**

6. What were the causes of American involvement in Cuban affairs? Could the United States have achieved its objectives by means short of war?

7. What two incidents combined to finally pull the Untied States into war with Spain? What were the broader motives that led the United States into war?

8. Describe the American plans and preparations for the Spanish-American War. How effective as the effort?

9. Explain the importance of the action by the navy’s Asiatic fleet. How did such actin change the character of the war?

10. Explain how ground and sea forces combined for quick victory in Cuba. How intense was the Spanish resistance?

11. What role did African-American troops play in the United States’ war effort? What social conflicts arose?

12. Describe the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. What tensions emerged?

13. What arguments were raised for and against imperialism in general and annexation of the Philippines in particular? Why did annexation prevail?

**The Republic as Empire**

14. What forms of government did the United States establish for its newly obtained possessions other that Cuba? What particular challenges and conflicts did governing Cuba pose?

15. Were early American actions in the Philippines a repudiation of the ideals that had led the United States to help Cuba secure its independence? What happened in the longer run?

16. How was the Open Door policy calculated to provide maximum commercial and diplomatic advantage at minimum cost? What did the costs turn out to be?

17. Summarize the major military reforms instituted between 1900 and 1903. What were the problems that these changes were designed to solve?

**America in the World: Imperialism**

18. How did the new imperialism of the Nineteenth Century differ from the older style empires?

19. What were the justifications for imperialism put forth by its most ardent advocates?

20. Briefly describe the British Empire. How did it influence American thinking?

**Patterns of Popular Culture: Yellow Journalism**

21. What is meant by “yellow journalism?” How was it spurred by the Spanish-American War?

22. What was its legacy?

**Summary**

Close elections and shifting control of the White House and Congress characterized the politics of the period from 1876 to 1900. Regional, ethnocultural, and economic factors helped determine party affiliation, and elections often turned on considerations of personality. But there were real issues too. Tariff, currency, and civil-service questions arose in almost every national campaign and dominated key elections. Discontented farmers in the People's Party briefly challenged the Republicans and Democrats, but the two-party system remained intact.

The election of 1896, the great battle between the gold standard and the silver standard, firmly established the Republican Party as the majority party in the United States. Agrarian and mining interests were unable to convince voters that currency inflation through the free coinage of silver would lead the nation out of the depression of the 1890s. By fusing with the Democrats, the Populists ended any chance they might have had to become a major force in American politics. By the end of the nineteenth century, business forces had triumphed. They had secured a gold-based currency and a rigorously protective tariff. Efforts to regulate railroads and trusts had been half-hearted to begin with and were weakened even further by court decisions.

Turning its interest from the continental United States to the world at large, America in the years after the Civil War fought a war with Spain and acquired a far-flung empire. By 1900, American possessions included Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and a string of Pacific islands. In addition, Cuba was essentially an American protectorate. The nation was suddenly a world power with worldwide responsibilities and burdens. The empire had been acquired for economic and philosophical reasons. Expansionism could provide an outlet for a perceived glut of American goods and an arena in which to demonstrate the supposed superiority of Western civilization. To accommodate its new role, the nation had to devise ways to improve its military establishment and govern its overseas territories.