

## Topic #18 Overview

### **Main Themes:**

1. How evenly balanced the Democratic and Republican parties were during the late nineteenth century, and how this balance flowed from differing regions and socioeconomic bases.
2. The inability of the political system to respond effectively to the nation's rapid social and economic changes.
3. How the troubled agrarian sector mounted a powerful but unsuccessful challenge to the new directions of American industrial capitalism, and how this confrontation came to a head during the crisis of the 1890s.

### **Objectives: [You should be able to explain each of these in some detail]**

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 position of the two major parties on the tariff question, 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 election of 1896.
9. The reasons for the decline of agrarian discontent after 1898.