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THE WAY WE SAW IT

THE POPULIST REVOLT

IN ILLUSTRATION AND ART

A Teacher's
Resource Booklet
with Lesson Plans and Reproducible
Student Activity Assignments



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CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

Agrarian Unrest in the Gilded Age

Up to the end of the last century, the United States was still an agrarian nation. Even its early Industrial Revolution was largely shaped by its agricultural markets. Roads, canals, and railroads grew up mainly to get settlers to new farm lands and to get their crops to new markets.

Then suddenly, in the late 1800s, a new urban and industrial America emerged. Transcontinental railroads tied the country together into one huge national market. Powerful new corporations enjoying near-monopoly power came to dominate many industries. Farmers often felt left out of this new, more organized industrial society. And the more productive these farmers became, the greater their problems seemed — such as steadily falling prices for crops and livestock, rising debts, steep costs for storing and shipping produce, and more. Out on the vast prairies, the isolation of farm life only added to the farmer's loneliness and sense of helplessness. Farmers often felt trapped in the grip of a conspiracy of powerful corporate interests. This discontent led to organizing, and, in time, to political action. The result was the Populist revolt. After 1896, this uprising faded rapidly. Yet it had lasting impact on the political life of the United States.

The twelve illustrations in this booklet focus on several aspects of the story of Populism. The illustrations are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of the illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The American Farmer in an Industrial Age

The illustrations for this lesson set the American farmer in the context of an emerging industrial nation. Mechanization in agriculture took pace as huge corporations and transcontinental railroads turned America into a single nationwide marketplace

Populist Discontent, Populist Protest

In the new industrial order, farmers often felt at the mercy of economic forces far beyond their control. The illustrations in this lesson focus on this problem, and on some forms of agrarian organization and protest that farmers developed to deal with it.

The Campaign of 1896

The People's Party emerged as a significant force for reform in the early 1890s. In the election of 1896, the Democratic Party gave the Populists an even more powerful voice. But in so doing, it may also have helped to weaken the movement's long-term staying power.

The Fate of Populism

After 1896, the return of prosperity and the U.S. victory in the Spanish-American war seemed to take the steam out of the Populist revolt. And yet many reforms first demanded by the Populists soon became a part of the progressivism adopted by the two major parties. In this sense, then, the agrarian revolt of the late 1800s did have a lasting impact on the nation.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Most textbooks today are full of colorful visuals. But all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. But only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

CD-ROM WITH IMAGES The ImageXaminer allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions. The CD-ROM also includes a folder containing all of the discussion questions and follow-up questions in pdf format. All of the images are also in pdf format, should you wish to create overhead transparencies.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR EACH ILLUSTRATION

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the images in the ImageXaminer. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small group or all-class activities.

The Populist Revolt

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand the problems American farmers faced as the nation became more industrial and urban.
-

The American Farmer in an Industrial Age

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

In the 1800s, millions of farmers moved to the Midwest and the prairies of the Great Plains. Many arrived with little money and only a few simple tools. However, most of them hoped to produce crops for sale. And they wanted to be as up-to-date as they could. By the late 1800s, all kinds of new machines began to make farming more modern. This drawing of a huge, mechanized wheat farm presents a favorable view of this change. However, not all farmers could afford new machinery, railroad charges, or other costs of modern agriculture. Most had to borrow heavily to pay for these things. As their debts mounted in the late 1800s, farmers came to doubt that the new industrial order would help them that much.

Illustration 2

In the late 1800s, a truly national economy emerged as railroad lines, telegraphs, and canals linked every part of the U.S. New large-scale businesses were now able to use the latest industrial techniques to sell goods all across America. Some businessmen earned huge fortunes from companies that enjoyed near-monopoly power. Among them was John D. Rockefeller, shown in this cartoon. Others were J.P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, and Cornelius Vanderbilt. Many Americans admired these men for helping to make the nation the wealthiest on earth. But many also feared them because of the economic and political power they enjoyed. This cartoon shows Rockefeller as a giant with enormous power compared to the puny White House in the palm of his hand and the Capitol Building labeled “Standard Oil Refinery.”

Illustration 3

Many farmers felt left out of the new, more organized industrial society that developed in the late 1800s. To buy machinery, grow crops, and find markets in which to sell their produce, farmers had to deal with many businesses — railroads, banks, grain elevator operators, etc. Most farmers felt these producers had more control over prices and markets than they did. Yet these producers all needed what the farmer provides. Why should they have so much control? In this illustration, a larger-than-life farmer is surrounded by all kinds of other people, both productive and unproductive. The suggestion is that these people all need the farmer far more than the farmer needs them.

Illustration 1



Courtesy of Dover Publications

Discussing the Illustration

1. This is a large wheat farm in the Dakota territory in 1878. In the center of the drawing is a hugethreshing machine. What part of farm work does a threshing machine do?
2. The use of modern farm machinery in the West became more common in the late 1800s. In part, that was because of the flat lands of the plains. How might this have made it easier for farmers to begin using modern farm machinery?
3. Machinery helped farmers in the West produce much more than ever before. But the growing supply of crops actually hurt many farmers, since it pushed down the prices they could earn for their crops. Can you explain why a big increase in the supply of a product often pushes down its price?
4. Do you think this drawing presents a mostly favorable or a mostly unfavorable view of the changes taking place in farming in the late 1800s? Explain your answer.

Follow-up Activities

1. Use your library to learn more about changes in farming tools and techniques in the 1800s. Find out more about the following:

Jethro Wood's plow
John Deere's steel plow
Mechanical seeders
The McCormick reaper
Mechanical threshers
Combines
Tractors

As part of your research, make photocopies of drawings of these tools and the ways the farmers of the western plains used them. Create a bulletin board display called "The Industrial Revolution on the Plains."

2. Barbed wire was one simple but very important invention in the history of the West. Read more about this invention and write a brief essay about its effect on farming and ranching in the West.

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

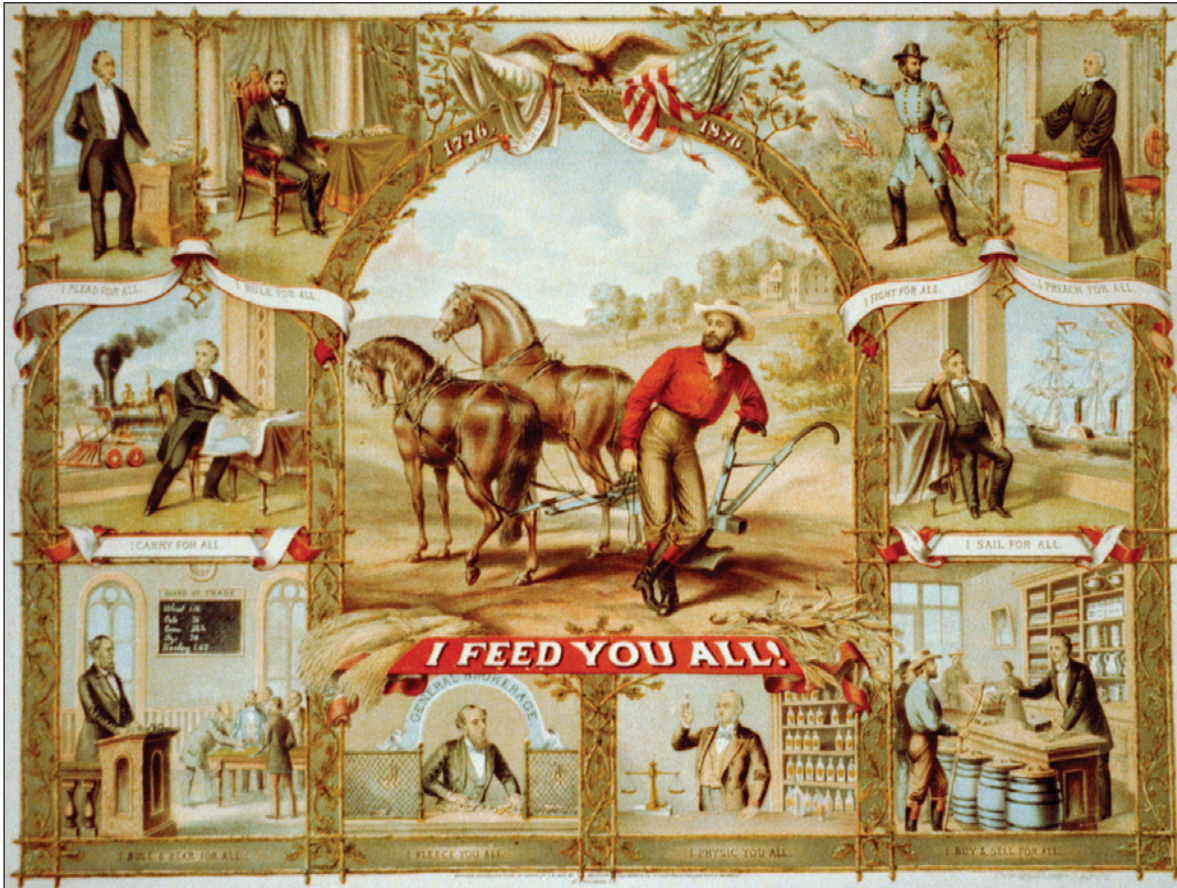
Discussing the Illustration

1. The “giant” in this cartoon was actually a famous American businessman in the late 1800s. Can you name him?
2. Many people probably did think of John D. Rockefeller as a kind of giant. Can you explain why?
3. Rockefeller was only one of several powerful American business owners in the late 1800s. Who were some others?
4. The tiny building in Rockefeller’s palm here is famous. Can you identify it? The building behind Rockefeller is also famous. What is this building, and what part of the U.S. government works in it?
5. What point about Rockefeller do you think the cartoon is making by showing him as a huge giant with the White House in the palm of his hand? The Capitol Building here is labeled “Standard Oil Refinery.” How does this add to the point the cartoon makes? Was this a fair point to make about Rockefeller and other big business owners of that time? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Rockefeller was only one of several powerful industrialists of the late 1800s. Some others are Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan and Henry Ford. Read more about one of these men. Prepare a brief talk about this business leader. In your talk, describe this man’s life and his key accomplishments. Also find out as much as you can about this business leader’s political views and his influence, if any, on public officials of his day. Finally, explain why you think it would or would not be fair to substitute this figure for Rockefeller in the above cartoon.
2. Small Group Activity: As a group, read more about John D. Rockefeller and the four men listed in the first activity described above. Some people admired these men as “Captains of Industry.” Others feared them and called them “Robber Barons.” Discuss the meaning of these two labels. Then as a group, hold a discussion with the class to decide which term best describes these five businessmen.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. The man in the center of this illustration is a farmer. The words beneath him describe the work he does. Read the words under the other figures in this illustration. From these words, identify the job or key life activity of as many of these figures as you can.
2. Compare the way the farmer is drawn to the way the other figures in the illustration are drawn. What point about farmers does this help the illustration make?
3. Do you suppose the artist who drew this illustration thinks highly of the other figures as compared with the farmer? Why or why not? Which figures does he seem to admire most? Which does he admire least?
4. Farmers in the late 1800s were not happy about their place in society. How does this illustration help to show what they felt? Do you agree with this illustration's view of the farmer and of other types of people in society? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Pretend you are one of the smaller figures in this illustration. Write a long letter to the farmer in it describing your work and the farmer's work. Also, give your opinion of the illustration shown above. Now, pretend you are the farmer in the illustration and write a long letter replying to the first letter.
2. Small Group Activity: Your task is similar to the first activity described above. In this case, each member of the group should read more about one of the following kinds of people shown in the illustration:
 - Railroad owner ("I carry for all")
 - Financier ("I bull and bear for all")
 - Merchant or store owner ("I buy and sell for all")
 - Politician ("I rule for all")
 - Farmer ("I feed you all").

After researching these people and the work they do, have a discussion in front of the class about the Populist movement. In the discussion, each group member should play the part of one of the five types of people listed here.

The Populist Revolt

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Students will better understand some of the factors the led farmers in the late 1800s to form national organizations.
 2. Students will debate the fairness of the complaints farmers had about America's industrial society.
-

Populist Discontent, Populist Protest

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

After the Civil War, the rich farmlands of Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas filled up rapidly. Farmers throughout the country faced many problems — falling prices for crops and livestock, rising debts, costs for storing and shipping produce, etc. But on the vast prairies, the isolation of farm life often added to the farmer's loneliness and sense of helplessness. In the 1860s, starting with the Patrons of Husbandry (known as the "Grange"), new farm organizations arose. At first, these groups mainly helped farmers socialize and share ideas. But over time, they took on a variety of economic tasks. And finally they began to demand political reform and seek ways to achieve it. This drawing shows a local Grange meeting in a schoolhouse.

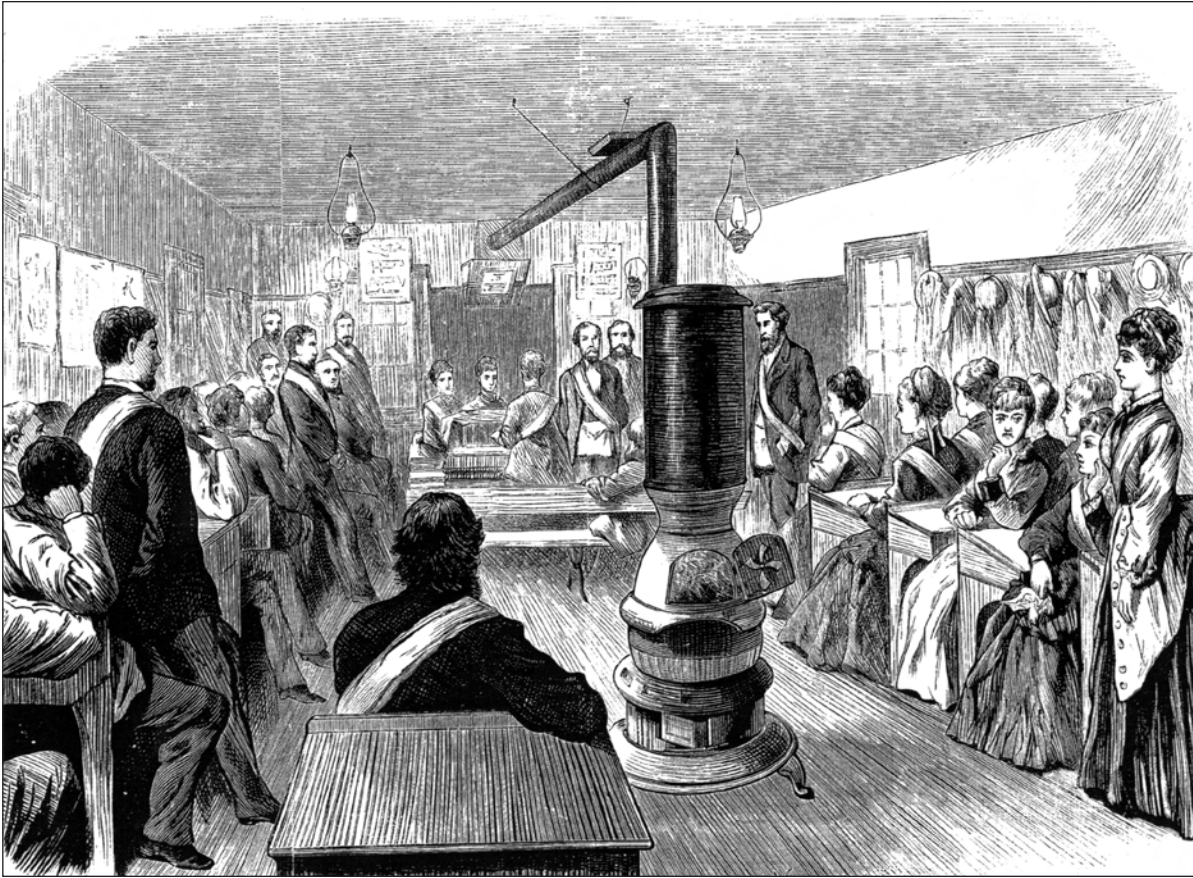
Illustration 2

In the late 1800s, farm production rose rapidly. Yet the huge harvests also caused crop prices to drop. At the start of each growing season, farmers had to borrow money to pay for land, tools, seeds, and other supplies. At harvest time, they were often unable to pay these debts especially if the prices they earned for their crops had fallen further. Farmers also faced charges by so-called "middle men," such as grain storage operators, railroads, etc. Many farmers believed they were in the grip of a conspiracy of powerful corporate interests — especially banks and railroads. This cartoon shows a farmer battling a railroad monster that already has the nation's lawmakers firmly in its control.

Illustration 3

The Grange faded in the 1870s. But it was followed by several other farm organizations, each putting more stress on political reform. In the late 1880s, the huge "Farmers' Alliances" in the South and the West began to organize a third political party — the Populists, or People's Party. In 1892, the People's Party held a national convention and chose James B. Weaver for president. Democrat Grover Cleveland won the election that year, but Weaver did manage to get nine percent of the vote. In the cities, political enemies of the Populists often portrayed them as ignorant country folk. The drawings on the right here are examples of this rather insulting attitude.

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This drawing shows a local meeting of members of the Patrons of Husbandry. This was a farmers organization with many local chapters like this one in the 1860s and 1870s. What shorter name was usually used for this group?
2. The Grange was especially popular in Midwest states like Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. At first, the Grange was set up for social and educational purposes. Why might that have been especially important to farmers in the Midwest and Great Plains states in the late 1800s?
3. This local meeting took place in Edwardsville, Illinois, early in 1874. The year 1873 had been an especially hard one for U.S. farmers. Can you explain why?
4. What kinds of farm problems do you think these people might have talked about at this meeting in the winter of 1874?
5. What else does this drawing help you to see about farm life in the Midwest in the late 1800s?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Your task is to pretend that you as a group are the local Grange shown in the above illustration. Read more about the Grange and its purposes. Based on what you learn, prepare an agenda for your Grange meeting. Create a flyer or newspaper advertisement announcing the meeting and its purposes. Then choose someone to lead the meeting. Describe the roles others in your group should play. Then hold your local Grange meeting in front of the entire class.
2. Many Granges tried to correct what they saw as abuses by setting up so-called cooperatives. These were stores, grain elevators and other businesses aimed at helping farmers lower their costs or get higher prices for their crops. Learn more about these early cooperatives. Prepare a brief talk to give in class explaining how one kind of cooperative worked. How was it supposed to help farmers? How did it in fact work in the late 1800s? What problems did it face?

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This 1873 editorial cartoon shows a farmer battling a huge monster. What does this monster stand for?
2. As late as the 1830s, there were few railroads in the United States and almost none in the western part of the country. But by the 1870s, farmers in the Midwest and on the Great Plains needed railroads badly. In fact, few of them could have farmed at all without the railroads. Can you explain why that was so?
3. Farmers needed the railroads. But they often felt the railroads were unfair in setting the rates they charged. What did farmers think was unfair about those rates?
4. From what you know about railroads in the late 1800s, why might railroad companies have seemed like monsters to many farmers and other Americans?
5. What point do you think the cartoon makes by showing this railroad monster with the nation's Capitol Building in its grip? Do you think the cartoon is fair to the railroads? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small Group Activity:** Many farmers in the late 1800s complained about the unfair power the railroads had over them. Specifically, they complained about the high rates charged, especially in certain farming areas. They said huge railroad corporations used their power to win political favors and make huge profits. On the other hand, railroad owners said they were providing very cheap transportation and were not making all that much profit. One historian who supports this view notes that between 1865 and 1900 average railroad freight rates were cut from 20 cents a ton-mile to less than 2 cents a ton-mile in 1900. So who was right in this argument? As a group ask your librarian to help you find out more about railroads and farmers in the late 1800s. Divide your group into two teams: "The Farmers" and "The Railroad Owners." Have each team prepare the best case for or against this statement: "*The railroads did not treat farmers fairly in the late 1800s.*" Hold a debate between the two teams in front of the class.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. By the late 1880s, farmer organizations in the South and the West were fighting hard for political reforms. Many of them helped form a third political party to elect candidates. This party chose a candidate for president at its convention in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1892. These drawings show some delegates at that convention. Can you name this new political party?
2. Why do historians usually call parties such as the Populists "third parties"?
3. Who was the Populist candidate for President in 1892? Who were the two major party candidates? Which candidate won the 1892 election?
4. These drawings are of delegates at the 1892 Populist convention. The drawings were done by an artist who disagreed with the Populists. In what way or ways do these drawings seem to be making fun of the Populists? From what you know about the People's Party, do you think these drawings are fair? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Read more about one of the following Populists: James B. Weaver, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, Mary Elizabeth Lease, Ignatius Donnelly. Suppose you could show the above drawings to this person. What would he or she say about those drawings? The drawings appeared in a magazine called *Frank Leslie's Weekly*. Pretend you are the Populist leader you have just read about. Write a letter to the editor of *Frank Leslie's Weekly* expressing your opinion of these drawings.
2. An important Populist leader in the South was Tom Watson of Georgia. Watson tried to deal with a big problem facing the Populists in the South. This was the problem of getting white farmers there to work together with black farmers in support of the Populist cause. Read more about Watson, and about the problems of black tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the South. In a brief talk in class, explain why this problem was such a difficult one for Populists in the South and what Tom Watson tried to do about.

The Populist Revolt

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Students will better understand why the election of 1896 was both a high point of the Populist uprising and the end of the road for Populism as an organized political force.
-

The Campaign of 1896

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

In 1893, a time of economic troubles began for the entire nation. Thousands of businesses closed down. Farmers were especially hard hit. Many Democrats began backing key Populist ideas, especially the call for the unlimited coinage of silver as well as gold. They hoped that increasing the money supply in this way would push up prices, including crop prices. That would give farmers more money to pay off old debts. At the 1896 Democratic convention, William Jennings Bryan gave his famous “Cross of Gold” speech in support of this idea. The speech caused such an uproar that the delegates chose Bryan as their candidate for president. This poster shows Bryan with the text of his speech and the phrase 16 to 1 — referring to his call for the government to buy silver at a rate of 16 ounces of silver equal to one ounce of gold.

Illustration 2

Along with the Democrats, the Populists also backed Bryan in 1896. This cartoon shows the Populists and Bryan busy swallowing up the Democratic Party. But some say it was actually the Democrats who swallowed the Populists in 1896. Silver coinage was only one Populist issue. Other Populist demands included reforms to make politics more open, to increase government regulation of railroads, banks, and certain other industries, to raise income taxes on wealthy people, and more. In 1896, the Democrats largely ignored these other issues. Yet after the Populists faded away, both major parties did adopt many Populist ideas. So in that sense, perhaps, the cartoon’s point is correct.

Illustration 3

Bryan lost the 1896 election to Republican William McKinley. Soon, new discoveries of gold increased the money supply just as silver coinage would have. Farmers began to do better. The economy began to grow again. McKinley’s support for high tariffs also pleased many business owners and workers. They said such tariffs helped them compete by making foreign goods more costly in America. And under McKinley, the U.S. became a world power. Quick victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898 gave the U.S. control over several overseas lands. As this cartoon suggests, most Americans took pride in their new role in the world. For all these reasons, the spirit of Populist revolt began to fade.

Lesson 3 — The Campaign of 1896

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This poster shows the Democratic Party's candidate for President in 1896 and his family. Can you name him?
2. The Democrats chose Bryan after a speech to the convention in which he warned the government: "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a Cross of Gold." What event in the New Testament was Bryan referring to with these words?
3. In his speech, Bryan supported a key Populist idea, the unlimited coinage of silver as well as gold. He compared the suffering of farmers under a gold-only money supply to the suffering of Christ on the cross. Why do you think he made this comparison?
4. Can you explain the meaning of the big "16 to 1" shown at the bottom of the poster? Why did Bryan think the unlimited coinage of silver would help farmers? Do you think he was correct about this? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech portrayed farmers as victims of an evil government and its powerful business supporters. In fact, it suggested these groups were "crucifying" farmers. Many historians say that this idea of a conspiracy of the powerful against the poor was a key Populist idea. For example, Populist Ignatius Donnelly told the 1892 Populist convention:

"The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated ... labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of the capitalists.... A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized."

Read what your history text or other history sources say about the causes of the farmer's troubles in the late 1800s. Do these sources agree with Donnelly's view? Do you agree with Donnelly's view? In a brief essay, answer these two questions and give your reasons for your answers.

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This editorial cartoon is about the 1896 election. It shows a giant python with a man's head swallowing a donkey. What does the donkey in this cartoon stand for?
2. The python in the cartoon is labeled "Populist Party." But its head is of a man who was not a member of the Populist Party. Who is this man?
3. The artist who drew this cartoon seems to have thought of Democratic candidate Bryan as a leader of the Populist Party as well. From what you know about the election of 1896, can you explain why he might have had this view?
4. The cartoon shows the Populists, with Bryan as their head, swallowing up the Democratic Party. What point do you think this is meant to make?
5. Some people did feel that the Populists had taken over the Democratic Party in 1896. Why might they have believed that? Do you think they were right? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

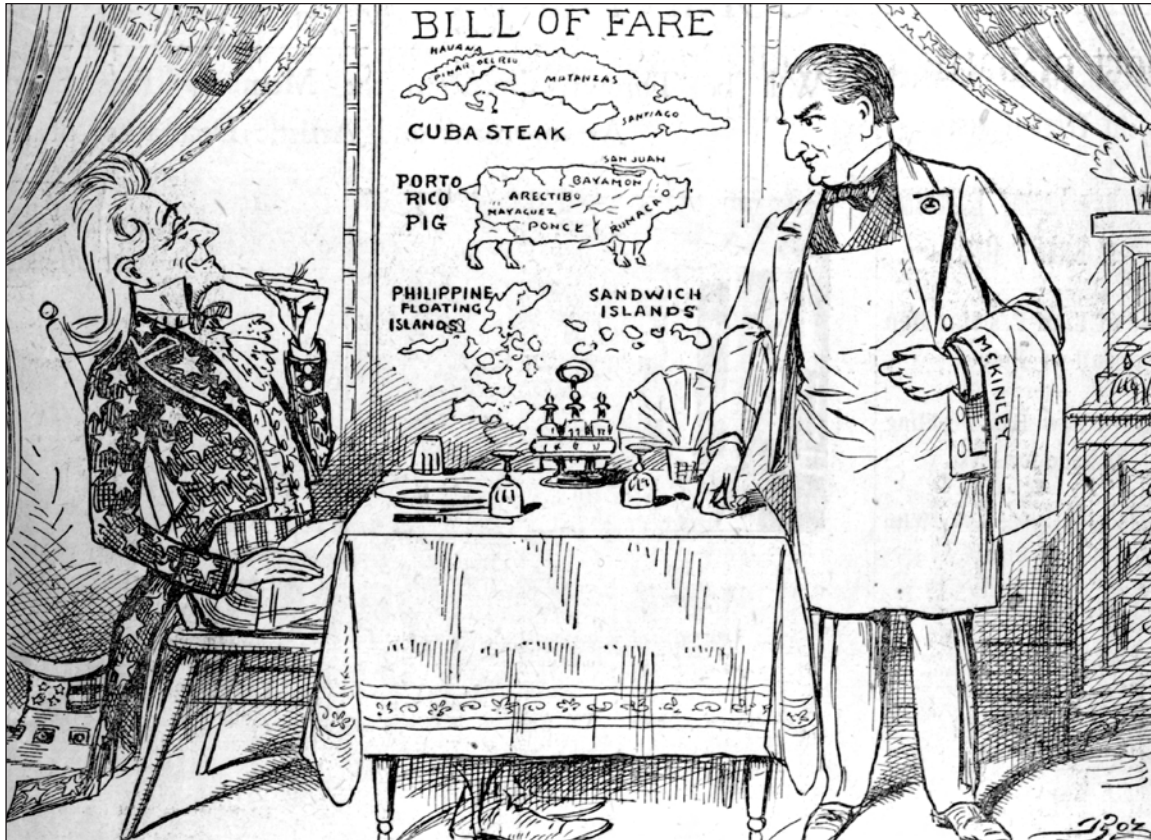
1. **Small Group Activity:** Ask your history teacher or librarian for help in learning more about the ideas and plans backed by the Populist Party in 1892. That was the year when the Populists nominated James B. Weaver as their candidate for President. Then find a copy of William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" Speech in 1896. Based on this research debate this statement within your group:

"This cartoon is dead wrong. It was actually the Democrats who swallowed up the Populist Party in 1896, not the other way around."

Summarize your group's views for the entire class.

2. This cartoon features a caricature of Bryan. Learn more about caricature as an artistic technique. Then compare the caricature of Bryan here to the image of him on the poster in Illustration 1 in this lesson (on page 13). Write an essay on the ideas that each illustration gives you about Bryan's personality and character. Which image is more accurate? Why?

Illustration 3



WELL, I HARDLY KNOW WHICH TO TAKE TAKE FIRST!

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. Bryan lost the election of 1896 to the man shown on the right in this cartoon. Can you name him and his political party?
2. McKinley became President just as the economy began to grow rapidly again. But this cartoon is about McKinley's dealings with other nations, not his plans for the economy. In the cartoon, he is shown as a waiter serving the "customer" on the left. Who is this customer, and what does this figure stand for when he appears in editorial cartoons?
3. In the cartoon, McKinley is offering Uncle Sam items on the menu on the wall. These items are actually lands outside of the U.S. But in 1898, the United States gained control over them. How did it gain control over these lands?
4. Most Americans were happy with the outcome of the Spanish-American War. What view of McKinley's leadership in the war does this cartoon take? Do you agree with that view? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Your group's task is to decide what a small group of well-known Americans would have said about this cartoon. Those Americans are the following:

William Jennings Bryan	William McKinley
Jane Addams	Henry Cabot Lodge
Theodore Roosevelt	Andrew Carnegie

The three people on the left supported Populism or other progressive reform ideas. The three on the right were conservative opponents of these ideas. Have each group member learn more about one of these people and how he or she felt about the Spanish-American war and the lands the U.S. took over after that war. Discuss your findings. Then have a debate about the above cartoon. But in that debate, have each group member play the part of the person they have researched. If you feel comfortable with these parts, repeat this debate in front of the entire class.

The Populist Revolt

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Students will better understand some of the factors that led to the fading away of Populism.
 2. Students will debate the lasting importance of the Populist revolt in the history of the nation.
-

The Fate of Populism

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

Even after 1896, Bryan continued to favor “free silver” — that is, the unlimited coinage of silver. In 1900, Bryan again ran against McKinley. And “free silver” was again a big issue, as this cartoon shows. McKinley said free silver would cause inflation, or a general rise in prices. He believed this would harm everyone, even farmers. Farmers might get higher prices for their crops, but they would also pay more for all the other goods they had to buy. McKinley got strong support and plenty of money for his campaign from many wealthy businessmen. But millions of workers in the cities also agreed with him about inflation. Their votes helped McKinley win the bitterly fought election of 1896. And he won by an even larger margin again in 1900.

Illustration 2

McKinley was popular with urban workers. But Bryan still tried to win their support in 1900, along with that of farmers. This 1900 campaign poster portrays Bryan as a champion of the workers in their battles against the power of big business. In it, the groups of huge corporations known as trusts are pictured as the tentacles of an octopus strangling the whole economy. However, in 1900 Bryan’s main focus was on a new issue — imperialism. That is, he spoke out against U.S. control of lands taken during the Spanish-American war. Men from some of these lands appear in the lower right of the poster telling the Statue of Liberty that they, too, will fight for their freedom. But most Americans seemed satisfied with McKinley’s record, both at home and abroad. In 1900, they re-elected him with an even larger share of the vote than in 1896.

Illustration 3

When President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt became President. Roosevelt had little in common with most Populists. But he was a reformer, and he favored some Populist ideas — especially the idea of greater government regulation of big businesses. This cartoon shows Roosevelt capturing the votes of Populists in support of his own progressive reform movement. In time, the Democrats also adopted many Populist ideas, such as the direct popular election of Senators, banking reform, greater regulation of railroads and other big corporations, and graduated income taxes.

Lesson 4 — The Fate of Populism

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

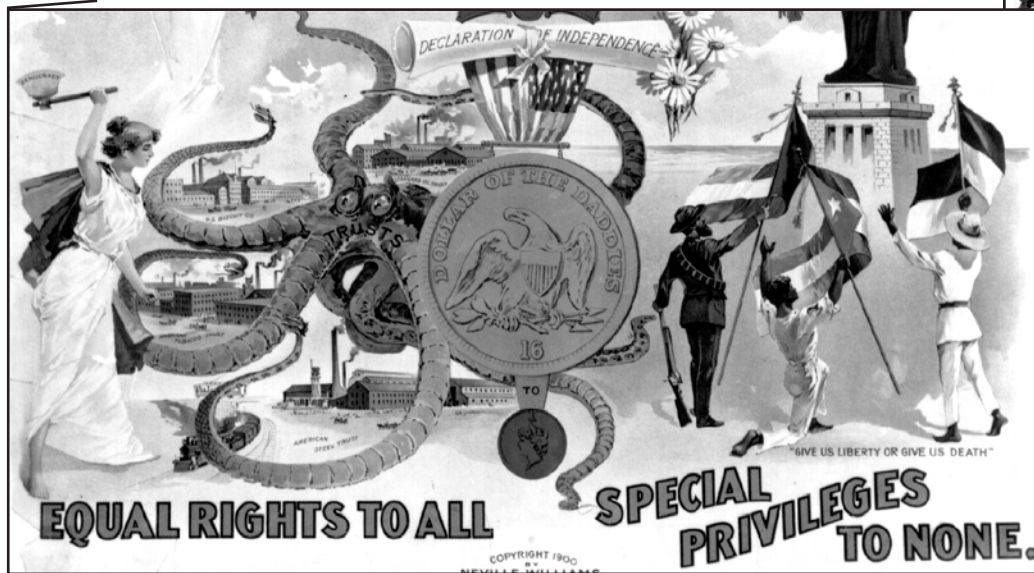
Discussing the Illustration

1. Bryan again ran for President in 1900. This magazine cover shows him and his main opponent in 1900. Can you name that opponent?
2. This magazine cover is actually an editorial cartoon in favor of McKinley. How do the drawings of each candidate's face help to make this clear?
3. Both in 1896 and again in 1900, Bryan backed the idea of adding to the money supply by coining silver as well as gold. The cartoon suggests this would cause inflation. What is inflation?
4. During a time of inflation, the prices of most goods go up. But inflation is also a time when the value of money goes down — since each dollar buys less as prices rise. How does this cartoon get across this idea about inflation?
5. Bryan might actually have agreed that his “free silver” dollar would be worth less. But he was in favor of that. Can you explain why?

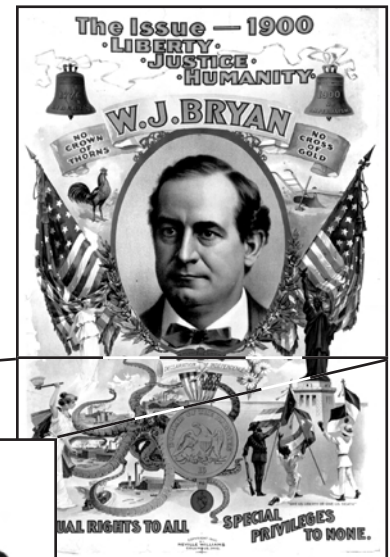
Follow-up Activities

1. **Small Group Activity:** The editorial cartoon on this cover makes a point in favor of re-electing William McKinley as President. Each group member should redesign this cover to turn the cartoon into one that favors William Jennings Bryan. Keep the two dollar bills, but alter them to help Bryan instead of McKinley. You may need to do some research. For example, find out what the meaning was of the pails at the top and the phrase “Full Dinner pail.” As a group, choose the three best redesigned cartoons to show the class, along with the original cartoon. Use the cartoons to give the class a brief report on the election of 1900.
2. The Populists had strong support among farmers. They also tried hard to win support from workers in the cities. But they were never all that successful at this. Why? Does your history textbook try to answer this question? In what way does this cartoon help to answer the question? Discuss this issue in class.

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



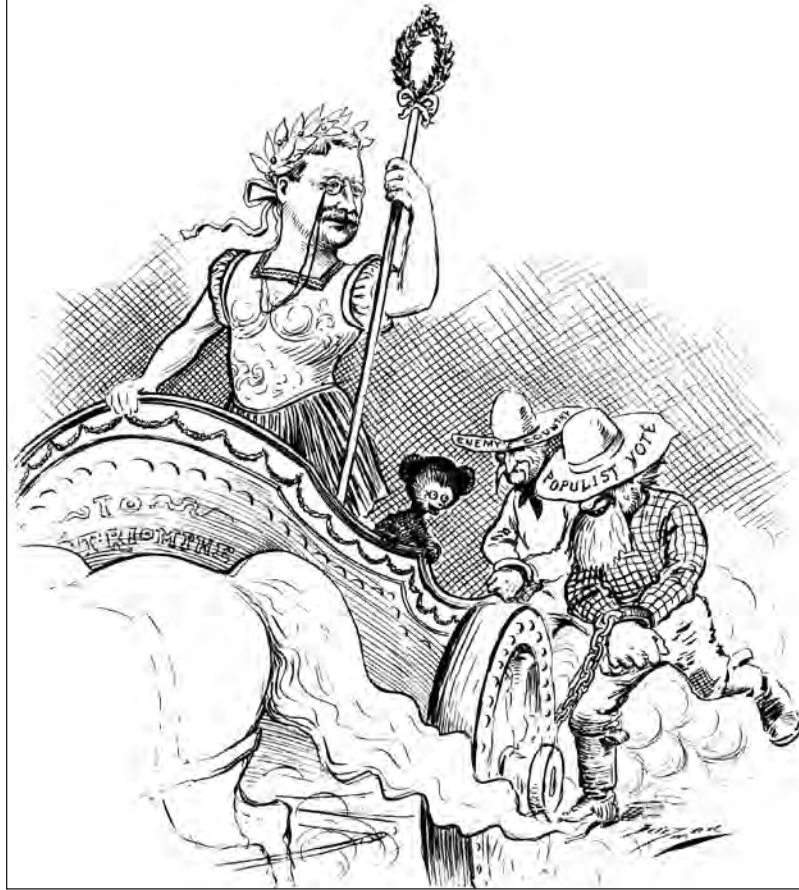
Discussing the Illustration

1. This illustration is of a campaign poster for Bryan from 1900. A close-up view of the bottom of the poster is shown. On the left is a huge octopus labeled "trusts." Each octopus arm is circled around a factory. From this and your knowledge of U.S. history, can you explain what "trusts" were?
2. Why do you think the artist chose an octopus as a symbol for trusts and big corporations in America in the late 1800s and early 1900s? Do you think this symbol was a fair one to use? Why or why not?
3. On the right in the close-up, three figures call out to the Statue of Liberty. The figures are from some of the lands the U.S. had recently fought in or taken over. The figures tell the Statue "Give us liberty or give us death." This phrase and the Statue of Liberty help the poster make a point about U.S. control over these foreign lands. What is that point? Do you agree or disagree with the point of view expressed by this poster? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. Pretend that you are William McKinley and that you have just seen this poster. Write a letter to Mark Hanna describing the poster. Also suggest ideas for a poster of your own to present your views about the issues this poster focuses on.
2. In the South, Populists had to deal with racial tension between poor white and poor black tenant farmers and sharecroppers. To learn more about how Populists dealt with this problem read a biography of the Georgia Populist leader Tom Watson. (One of the best is *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* by C. Vann Woodward, Macmillan, 1938). Based on your reading, pretend you are an African American in 1900 who supports the Populist Party. Write a letter to Bryan about the above poster. In the letter, express your views about the poster. Also suggest ways for him to add elements to the poster that will help it deal with the problems of poor blacks and poor whites in the South. If you wish, make a sketch of your poster idea to include with your letter.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. William McKinley was re-elected in 1900. But in 1901 the man pictured as a Roman emperor or military leader in the chariot in this cartoon became president. Can you name him and explain how he became president in 1901?
2. Theodore Roosevelt favored some of the political reforms backed by the Populists. But he disagreed strongly with Bryan about the lands the U.S. came to control after the Spanish-American war. What were Roosevelt's views about these lands? How does the way he is portrayed in this cartoon help to show what his views were?
3. This cartoon is about Roosevelt's 1904 presidential election campaign. Many Populists supported him in that election. How does the cartoon show this?
4. From what you know about Roosevelt's ideas, in what ways was he like the Populists? In what ways was he unlike them? How does the cartoon help to show the differences between Roosevelt and the Populists?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Newspapers and magazines pictured farmer protests and the Populists in a wide variety of ways. For example, study closely the following illustrations in this booklet:

Lesson 1, Illustration 3 (page 7)
Lesson 2, Illustration 1 (page 9)
Lesson 2, Illustration 2 (page 10)
Lesson 2, Illustration 3 (page 11)
Lesson 3, Illustration 2 (page 14)
Lesson 4, Illustration 3 (page 19, above)

As a group, read more about the Populists and the views others had of them. Then create a bulletin board display using the above illustrations. Call the display "Populist Stereotypes: Pro and Con" Write a paragraph for each illustration explaining why its view of the Populists is favorable or unfavorable. Then write a second paragraph for each illustration giving your own opinion of how accurate that illustration is in showing what farmers, farmer protests, and Populism were really like.

Answers to Factual Questions

(Answers provided only to questions
requiring a single correct answer)

Lesson 1

Illustration 1 Question 1: It separates the grain from the stalks.
Question 3: An increase in the supply means sellers will usually have to lower the price to attract enough buyers for the larger supply of the product they have.

Illustration 2 Question 1: John D. Rockefeller
Question 4: White House, where the president lives; the Capitol Building where Congress meets

Illustration 3 (no fact questions)

Lesson 2

Illustration 1 Question 1: The Grange
Question 3: In 1873, a recession slowed the economy. Farm prices fell. Many farmers were deep in debt and had to give up farming, etc.

Illustration 2 Question 1: Railroad corporations
Question 2: They needed railroads to get their crops to market.
Question 3: Some felt rates in general were too high; others said local rates in rural areas served by only one railroad were higher than elsewhere, etc.

Illustration 3 Question 1: The People's Party, or the Populist Party
Question 2: Because they are in addition to the two major parties.
Question 3: Populist: James B. Weaver; Republican: Benjamin Harrison, Democrat (and winner): Grover Cleveland

Lesson 3

Illustration 1 Question 1: William Jennings Bryan
Question 2: The crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
Question 3: Bryan wanted silver made into money at a rate of 16 ounces of silver equal in value to one ounce of gold.

Illustration 2 Question 1: The Democratic Party
Question 2: William Jennings Bryan
Question 3: The Populists also nominated Bryan. He supported several key Populist ideas, etc.

Illustration 3 Question 1: William McKinley, Republican
Question 2: Uncle Sam, who stands for the United States.
Question 3: Through its victory in the Spanish-American War.

Lesson 4

Illustration 1 Question 1: William McKinley
Question 3: A general or average rise in prices such that money loses its value.

Illustration 2 Question 1: A trust was a group of large corporations placed under the control of a single board of trustees.

Illustration 3 Question 1: Theodore Roosevelt, who as Vice President became president after McKinley was assassinated in 1901.
Question 2: Roosevelt was very strongly in favor of keeping control of the lands.

