

# How did government policy, technology

Technology



In government, the power of urban industry and big businesses overcame that of the pro-farming politicians. Technology, government policy, and economic conditions effectively declined agriculture politically, industrially, and economically. Impediments such as industrial issues, poor representation in government, and waning agricultural prices that the farmers were forced to face, made agriculture suffer greatly during the late 19th century. During this period, the U. S. Was technologically evolving at a rapid rate. New inventions and advancements made life easier for the working class.

Railroads, after spreading all over the nation, made any part of the country accessible and expanded the national market. Document B displays that the years 1870-1890, the number of railroads in the nation increased massively. Also, the number of railroads with major land grants grew as well. At first glance, this change seems to have benefited the farmers, but actually did the opposite. It is true that railroads allowed the farmers to expand and have a way to ship their harvest and cattle a lot faster to more markets.

However, greedy men like Cornelius Vanderbilt controlled the railroads. Extremely high freight rates made the farmers lose more than they expected. Likewise, the cost of shipping, taxes, low buying prices, overproduction, and cost of equipment, the farmer gained a mere profit. The technological advancements did make farming easier, but often were too expensive for the farmer to afford. In document D, a farmer during a wheat harvest preferred to use a team of about 30 horses instead of the possibly motorized mechanical harvester.

New agricultural technology TLD help much or not even as effective as old methods and also was too expensive so farmers chose to stick with the old methods. Technology seemed better when looked at, but to in reality when it was put to use. This is an example that can be characterized by the era named by Mark Twain, The Gilded Goethe nations government policy at the time was laissez-fare or hands-off government. The Republicans were in power during this period and favored industry and the big businesses. Consequently, farmers had a poor representation in government both in-state and nationally.

Agricultural process was made, but still were limited gains. For example, a law was carried through the Illinois legislature and then Supreme Court to limit the freight rates and it was passed (Document C). As you can see, it was a small victory for the farmers and others, but still limited to only Illinois. Furthermore, the ones that contributed to the growth of agriculture were those part of the Populist party. The party consisted of people who favored the rights of the farmers. Several the Farmers Alliance were organizations that allowed its members that shared common goals to organize and unite.

In document G Mary Elizabeth Lease delivers a speech to the people, telling them that the government lied to the people and achieved them. She proves her argument with the crop price reductions and claims of overproduction. Also, the government had problems dealing with the Indians and the settling of agricultural acres for Americans (Document I). A huge controversy during this period was the issue of the gold vs.. Silver standard. The Populists of course wanted the silver standard, for inflation and to flood the economy. This would help out the farmers and miners out west.

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William Jennings Bryan claimed that the country depended on farmers and without them the country would fall. Also, that the country should be in favor of the farmers because they provide for the nation and are more important than the cities (Document J). The hand-off policy of the Republicans did not allow for much improvement of the nation's economy and even let it suffer as did the farmers. Not only did the farmers suffer, but as well as the whole nation because of presidents such as Grant and Hayes. Economic conditions for the farmers were poor and no one was there to help them.

The farmers tried, but could not gain the silver standard they needed to improve their positions and finance themselves. Moreover, the big businesses and pro-wealthy Republicans were in the way of the farmers and holding them back. In document A, one can see that as the farmers produced more and more to make more money, the price of the crop dropped as well, thus, leading to overproduction and loss of money. Even if the farmer was successful, he would have to give up his success to the government and railroads with more power in the industry. Nevertheless, on occasion contracts were signed, for example the one in North

Carolina shown by Document E where the farmer would sign away half of his net proceeds, leaving him with hardly anything. The farmer was left crippled in a nettlesome cycle. Many times, the cattle and crops were shipped to far away markets such as Chicago, and the transit fare would increase as the distance increased (Document F). This struck hard at the pockets of the farmers. Many farmers were left to starve, out of work, and poor.

Additionally, the poor weather such as hail would ruin the crops or the businessmen would take the crops (Document H).

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Consequently, the economic conditions did not favor the farmer, even though they provided for the nation, they were ruined by the people they help feed. This period part of the Gilded Age, America suffered because of a weak government policy and the big businesses had the real power. Unfortunately, the farmers were struck with the negative side effects that occurred from all this. American agriculture greatly declined, even though at first it seemed to have been benefited, it was industrially, politically, and economically destroyed and left in a tormenting cycle.