

Farming

- Homestead Act of 1862: 160 acres free if farmed for 5 years
- Exodusters: African Americans who moved West for more freedom
- Mexicans want rights protected

Oklahoma Land Rush

- Native American land was sold, open for land claims
- "Sooners" claimed land early

Life on the Plains

- Sod houses due to scarcity of trees
- Sod busting plows, other farm equipment and windmills for pumping water helped the farmers
- Dry climate: fires, dead crops
- Women took on roles of teachers, medical care

Financial Issues

- Low grain prices hurt farmers
- National Grange formed: money pooled to buy supplies wholesale, warehouses for cheap storage, political power

The Populist Party

- Farmers and labor unions
- What they wanted from the gov't:
 - Raise farm prices, regulate railroad rates
 - Income tax
 - 8 hour work day
 - Limits on immigration
 - Increase the money supply by coining silver mined in the west ("free silver")

- Opposition: increasing the money supply will cause inflation; money should only be backed by gold
- Populists gain power in Congress
- Election 1896 William Jennings Bryan runs for the Populists--loses to Repub. William McKinley
- Populist party breaks up when Democrats take on some of their causes and when people gain prosperity