

# Comparison of Farmer Events from 1869 through 1893 – and to the End of the 1890s

Anyone can read something and say “I understand it.” The question is do you know it enough to use the fact. Test yourself with the self-test version of this PDF.

Date	Situation	Farmer Events
1867-12	Farming requires equipment, more land than the Homestead Act Problem: 25% interest charged in Mid-West	Grangers or Patrons of Husbandry - Begins as non-partisan.
1874	Continuing problems	States - 11 farmer parties, called the Farmers' Alliance – Becomes political.
1877	South out of Reconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cotton up in quantity, down in price</li> <li>▪ Cash poor; trend is to sharecropping and tenant farming</li> <li>▪ 50% interest in South <b>Tip:</b> See above the lower interest rate in the Mid-West. Why that difference? Ask if you don't know. Compare that interest rate for loans (or a credit card) today. What does that tell you?</li> </ul>	
1886	Southern situation harder for blacks	Colored Farmers National Alliance
1887	West blizzard	
1890-11	Republican losses; Farmers' Alliance victories – National move looks promising.	
1890-12		<p>Ocala, Fla. meeting = labor + Southern Alliance + Colored Farmers' Alliance, Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association</p> <p>Advocate economic changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish subtreasury plan – Too complex for students to have to write about, but do know its purpose: is to solve the problem of all crops coming to market at the same season and thus getting a low price.</li> <li>▪ End private banks</li> <li>▪ Regulate transportation</li> <li>▪ Unlimited/free coinage of silver</li> </ul> <p>Advocate governmental changes - Not covered in some of the textbook editions but I have details BELOW to help those of you whose edition does not cover this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income tax</li> <li>▪ Direct election of Senators - <b>SCROLL or PAGE down for information.</b></li> </ul>
		1891 – strike – Colored Farmer's Alliance – 15 lynched – NOTICE THE WORD.
1892-11	Approach through the state legislatures is insufficient – turn to national politics as a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party	James B. Weaver v. Harrison v. <b>Cleveland Populist v. Republican v. Democrats - Amazing climb for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.</b>
1896-11	Bryan's “Cross of Gold” speech at Democratic Convention corners Populists into having to back the Democrat	William McKinley vs. William Jennings Bryan Republican v. Democrat/Populist – <i>And amazingly quick decline</i>

## **Comment on the farmers and the two amendments they want:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition hardback of the Ayers' text listed these two as part of the Ocala demands. It remains an issue (and a test question) because it is key to understanding the farmers and the Populist Party.

The farmers had been the heroes of America since its founding. The idea from Jefferson's time was that a free farmer could say no to power because they were able to support themselves. For the republic to exist, they had to have voters who were not dependent on the rich and therefore could vote their conscience and not what they were ordered to do. Think about that a bit.

In this window of time, they are trying to save America, not just themselves. They are trying to stop monopoly and the use of legal power to do things many of us would call a corrupt use of power. They are even calling for amendments to the Constitution

- Look at the reasons for the income tax. At this time, what was our chief source of national income and who paid it? Who would pay the income tax they planned (not what happened later) and that did happen INITIALLY? If you don't know, ask.
- Look at the reasons for direct elections of senators instead of having the state legislatures choose them. If you don't know, ask.

The Populists and the farmers were ridiculed and—in my understanding—mislabeled. By the 1920s they are poorer and less well educated than the rest of the population and they were discredited. The reality is that many of the things they advocated happened and they made a difference at that time—including those 2 amendments.

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