1. What a political machine? What is its main goal?

2. How did the “political machine” system work? Use the building of the New York City courthouse as an example.

3. What valuable services did political machines provide to immigrants and poor people?

4. If political machines were engaging in corruption, what two activities were they usually engaging in?
   a. 1.
   b. 2.

5. What two major scandals rocked the federal government in the 1870s? Provide a brief summary.
   a. 1.
   b. 2.
Gilded Age Politics

By: Ms. Susan M. Pojer
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The "Politics of Equilibrium"
1. A Two-Party System

Elections of 1876–1892

- Voted Republican 4–5 times
- Voted Democratic 4–5 times
- Voted more irregularly
Two-Party “Balance”
2. Intense Voter Loyalty to the Two Major Political Parties
3. Well-Defined Voting Blocs

Democratic Bloc

- White southerners (preservation of white supremacy)
- Catholics
- Recent immigrants (esp. Jews)
- Urban working poor (pro-labor)
- Most farmers

Republican Bloc

- Northern whites (pro-business)
- African Americans
- Northern Protestants
- Old WASPs (support for anti-immigrant laws)
- Most of the middle class
4. **Very Laissez Faire Federal Govt.**

- From 1870-1900 → Govt. did very little domestically.

- **Main duties of the federal govt.:**
  - Deliver the mail.
  - Maintain a national military.
  - Collect taxes & tariffs.
  - Conduct a foreign policy.

- **Exception** → administer the annual Civil War veterans’ pension.
5. The Presidency as a Symbolic Office

★ Party bosses ruled.
★ Presidents should avoid offending any factions within their own party.
★ The President just doled out federal jobs.

- 1865 → 53,000 people worked for the federal govt.
- 1890 → 166,000

Senator Roscoe Conkling
Pendleton Act (1883)

- Civil Service Act.
- The “Magna Carta” of civil service reform.
- 1883 → 14,000 out of 117,000 federal govt. jobs became civil service exam positions.
- 1900 → 100,000 out of 200,000 civil service federal govt. jobs.