



# *Unit 10:* **Cotton, Cattle & Railroads**

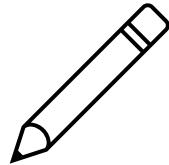
## *Lesson 8:* **The Problem with Cotton**

# Warm-up

Follow the directions to complete your warm-up



- Read the primary source excerpt on your warm-up.



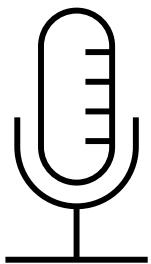
- Respond to the question based on the excerpt.



- Discuss with a partner



# Share with the class



The author's opinion of farmers  
and their role in the government is  
that \_\_\_\_\_

# Essential Question

What were the primary challenges facing farmers in Texas, and how did farmers work to address their concerns?

# In today's lesson...

1. **We will** identify the key challenges facing farmers in Texas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and examine how farmers attempted to address their concerns.
2. **I will** complete my guided notes worksheet, responding to questions about each topic.

# The Problem with Cotton, 1870 - 1900

- Cotton prices fell steadily
- Farmers received less money for their crop.
- Farmers grew MUCH MORE cotton to try to make up for lost profits.
- Too much cotton flooded the market, causing prices to drop lower.



Cotton bales in Bosque County,  
south of Fort Worth.  
*The Portal to Texas History.*



# Effects of Falling Cotton Prices

- Many farmers could not afford supplies, equipment, shipping, or property costs.
- Farmers often borrowed to pay for expenses, causing many to go into debt.
- 30,000 farmers turned to tenant farming during this period.
- By 1890, 42% of all Texas farms worked by tenants.



Tenant farmer house in Ellis County Texas  
*The Library of Congress*

Texas  
History  
for  
Teachers

# Farmers Organize



# The Grange

## What:

- Established 1867 by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to support struggling farmers.
- 1873 – First Texas chapter established in Salado.

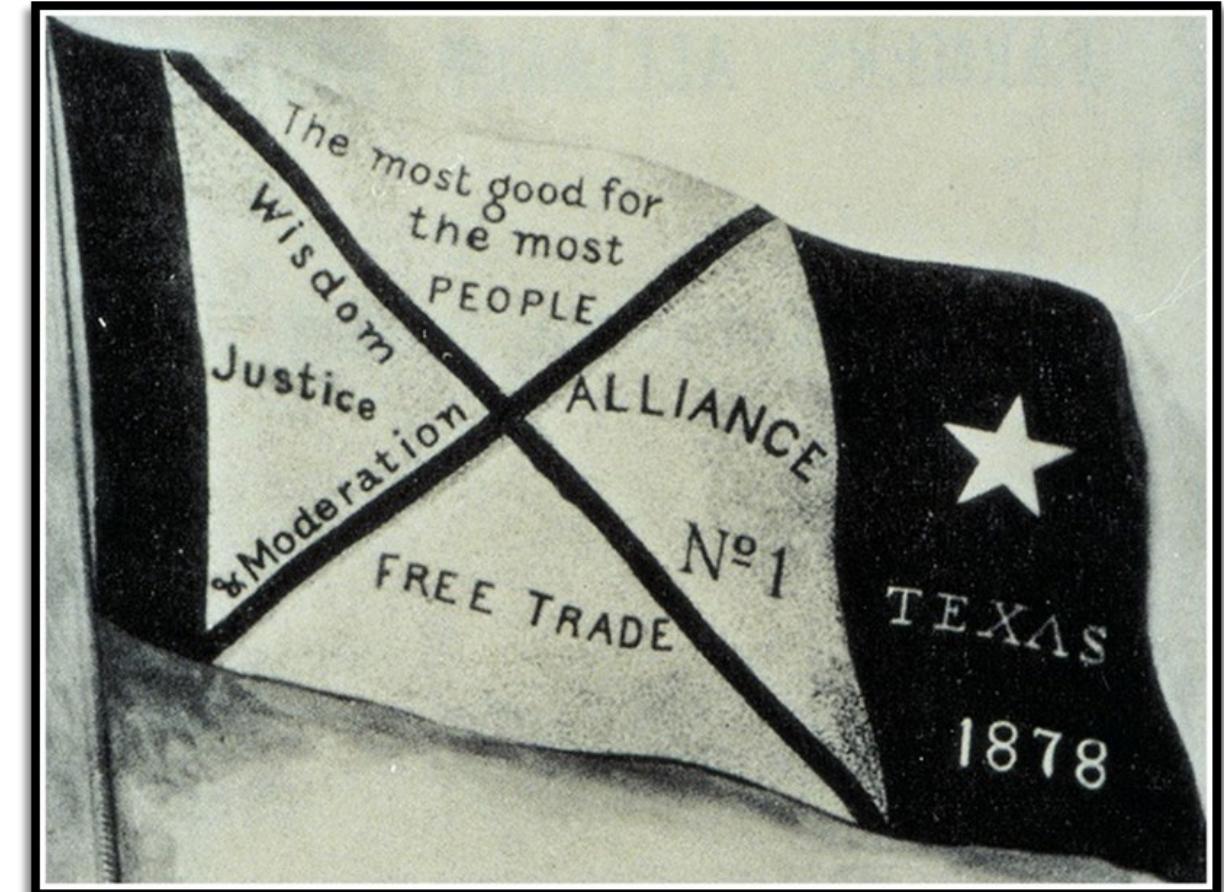
## Platform:

- Limit government spending and taxes.
- Government regulation of railroad rates
- Establish non-profit cooperative groups to sell crops for farmers without a fee.

# The Farmer's Alliance

## What:

- Established 1876 in Lampasas, TX to support struggling farmers.



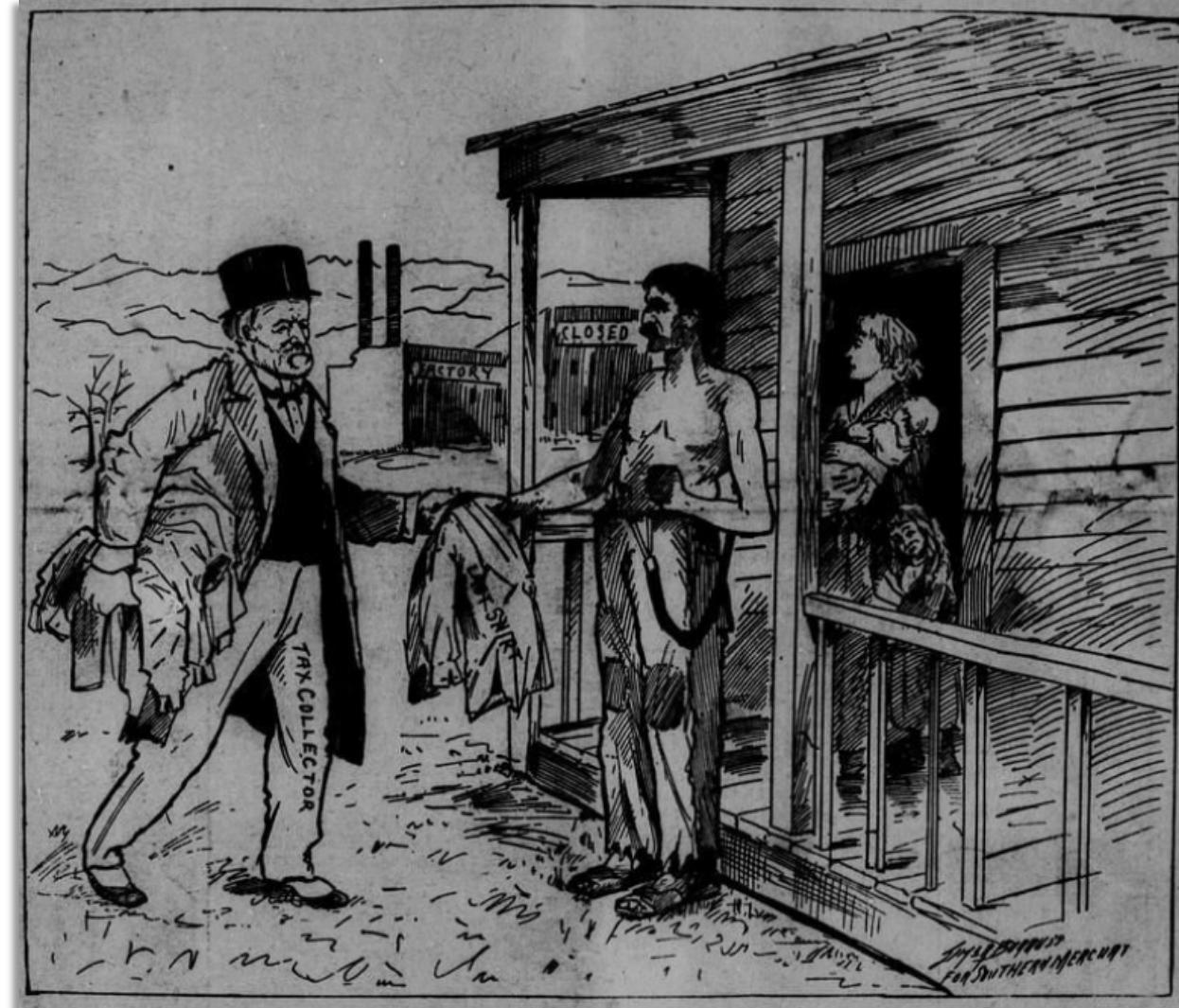
The Farmer's Alliance Banner

# The Farmer's Alliance Platform

- Establish non-profit cooperative groups to sell crops for farmers without a fee.
- Government regulation of railroad rates
- Abandon the gold standard and include “Free Silver” to expand the money supply.
- Subtreasury Plan: Government should establish warehouses to store surplus cotton to prevent flooding the market.

# The Populist Party

- Officially established in Omaha, Nebraska, 1892.
- “The People’s Party”
- Formed to support laborers across the U.S.



“Taking the last shirt off the back of the laboring man.”

The Southern Mercury, July 9, 1896.

*The Portal to Texas History.*

# The Populist Party Platform

- Abolish national banks
- Establish an income tax which taxes wealthier people at a higher rate than poorer people.
- Direct election of senators.
- Government control of transportation and communication companies.
- “Free Silver” – abandon gold standard.
- Government regulation of the economy.



# Effects of Labor Organizing

- Labor organizations were short-lived and never as strong as existing political parties, BUT . . .
- They highlighted issues important to farmers and laborers
- They encouraged the creation of the Texas Railroad Commission to regulate railroads.



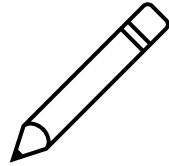
"The Gift of the Grangers"  
*The Library of Congress*

# Exit Ticket

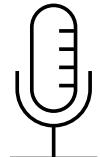
Follow the directions to complete your exit ticket



- Read the secondary source excerpt in your exit ticket.



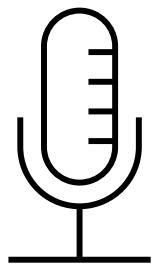
- Respond to the question based on the excerpt.



- Discuss with a partner



# Share with the class 2



One thing we can learn about  
the Populist Party based on the  
excerpt is \_\_\_\_\_