

but somehow, owing to no matter what circumstances, to a man who unites both into a leading place in the government is a work of such difficulty that most people have given it as (for the present at least) a bad job, and are willing to content themselves with any man who, for whatever motive, will do good work. It so happens, too, that the work to be done at this moment is not work which calls either for the highest order of genius or the highest aspirations. A man may do it very well without being a MOSES or a WASHINGTON—without, in short, being either a prophet or a hero. He has neither to lead a race out of obscurity nor call a nation into existence. The task before the American politician of to-day is the simple and somewhat homely one of preventing public officers from stealing and dividing the public money, and of preventing the government from cheating its creditors; and when a man offers himself for this work, there is no general disposition to ask whether he is a statesman of the first rank, or whether his political judgment has always been sure or his advice has always been heard on the right side. In fact, they go so far to say that to make capital in this way is a good thing to do, and they wish all politicians to engage in it. They are ready to forbear curious inquiries into the motives or antecedents of men who will undertake to put an end to cheating and stealing. In fact, the voters of the country are sticking notices up offering the highest offices in their gift, and "no questions asked," to any body who will bring in a few plunderers of the state. Mr. TILDEN has achieved his present success simply owing to his having, before any body else of his class, understood the exact nature of the situation. He perceived sooner than his competitors that the time had come to stop preaching, and to begin making arrests and drawing up indictments. He now finds, and his competitors find, that his acuteness has rendered him the best service, and his enemies actually play into his hands."—*The Nation*, October 7, 1875.

WANTED REFORMERS
EDUCATED IN THE
TAMMANY HALL
SCHOOL
OF REFORM.

NO QUESTION
ASKED.
ANYBODY WHO WILL BRING
A FEW PLUNDERERS OF THE
STATE
TO JUSTICE (?)
WILL BE REWARDED BY
THE HIGHEST OFFICE
IN THE
GIFT
OF THE
PEOPLE.
G.D. LORD CONVICT
ONE OF THE
CANAL RING
TAMMANY HALL
SCHOOL OF REFORM
SCHOLARS WANTED
FOR
REFORMERS.
REWARD TO THOSE
THAT HAVE ASSOCIATED
WITH THIEVES, AND
WILL ONE STATE
EVIDENCE.



REWARD
TO ALL
PUBLIC THIEVES
WHO HAVE ENOUGH
AND
CAN STOP OTHERS
FROM CHEATING
AND
STEALING.
THEY WILL BE REWARDED
BY HONORABLE POSITIONS
AND
FAT OFFICES.

IT TAKES
A THIEF
OR ONE
WHO HAS
ASSOCIATED
WITH
THIEVES
TO CATCH
A
THIEF.

BOSS TWEED, TAMMANY HALL, & POLITICAL MACHINES

POLITICAL CARTOON
ANALYSIS

Political Machines & Boss Tweed: Cartoon Analysis

CARTOON 1: 'THE TAMMANY TIGER LOOSE'



Cartoon Title: "The Tammany Tiger Loose"

Caption: [The Tammany Tiger Loose] "What are you going to do about it?"

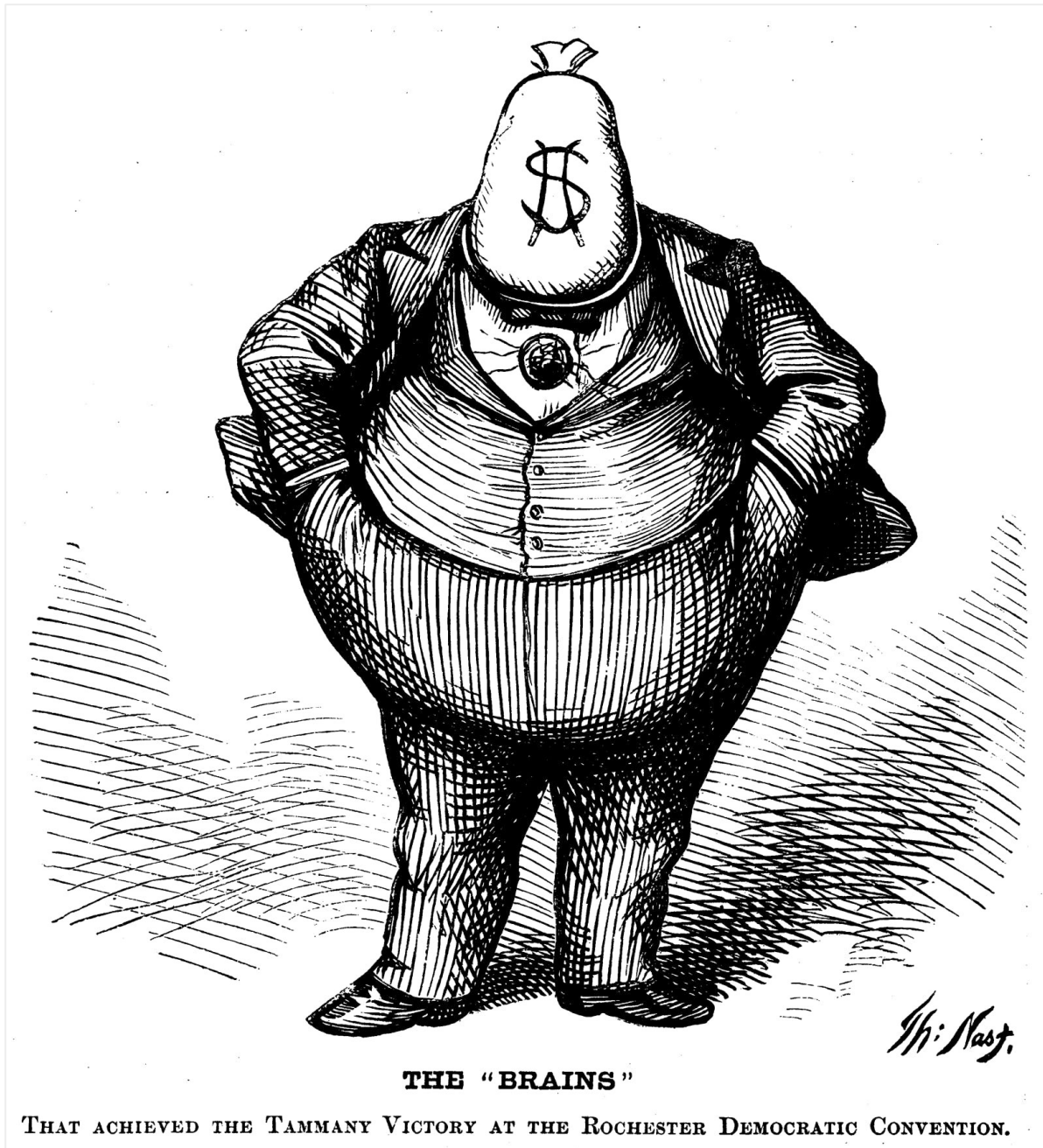
Summary: The tiger became the symbol of Tammany Hall, the political machine that ran New York City politics and social services in the late 1800s. The leader of Tammany Hall, Boss Tweed, is shown as a Roman emperor, watching an arena scene.

In the arena, a tiger has harmed a woman--and there are two others harmed in the background. These women represent government, justice, and commerce. Near the violent scene are other items in tatters: a sword labeled "power," a piece of paper labeled "law," and a bowl labeled "ballot."

Tammany Hall supported many low-income residents of New York City during hard times. However, the political machine was also known for its corruption, as Tammany Hall officials (most famously Tweed) made lots of money off the system.

Artist: Thomas Nast

CARTOON 2: 'THE 'BRAINS''



Cartoon Title: "The 'BRAINS'"

Caption: [The Brains] "that achieved the Tammany victory at the Rochester Democratic Convention"

Summary: Political machine leader Boss Tweed represented as having a money-bag for a face. He also is wearing a \$15,500 diamond stickpin. He has his hands stuffed into his pockets.

Tweed, who controlled New York politics for years, made a profit off his work. He was well-connected to iron, gas, and banking corporations. He could promise voters jobs and take kickbacks.

Artist: Thomas Nast

CARTOON 3: 'In Counting There is Strength'



Cartoon Title: "In Counting There is Strength"

Caption: "That's what's the matter" says Boss Tweed. "As long as I count the votes, what are you going to do about it? Say?"

Summary: "Illustration shows Boss Tweed leaning on a voting stand labeled 'The ballot' and 'In Counting there is strength' (Library of Congress). The caption refers to the "questionable counting procedures" used in New York politics in the late 1800s (University of Texas).

The Tammany Hall political machine greatly assisted residents in poverty in New York with jobs, food, and other social services. In return, the political machine expected its voters, especially immigrants, to show up and vote for their candidates on election day. For instance, Tammany leaders would send cards to voters' homes if they hadn't voted by late afternoon.

Artist: Thomas Nast

CARTOON 4: 'UNDER THE THUMB'



Cartoon Title: "Under the Thumb"

Caption: "The Boss: 'Well, what are you going to do about it?'"

Summary: Cartoon shows a massive thumb that belongs to Boss Tweed. Notice the cufflink on his sleeve is labeled with his name!

Underneath Boss Tweed's thumb is a smashed New York. In the front of the cartoon, New Jersey is shown thriving with lots of homes and businesses. New Jersey is the example of a Tammany-free government. Tweed famously challenged his critics by saying, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" when people tried to confront him for his corruption.

Tweed, as the leader of the Tammany Hall political machine, ruled New York. While he gave food, fuel, and jobs to poor residents in New York, his antics cost the public tens of millions of dollars.

Artist: Thomas Nast

CARTOON 6: 'THE BOSS STILL HAS THE REINS'



Cartoon Title: "The Boss Still Has the Reins"

Summary: Cartoon shows Boss Tweed holding the reins of two horses. One is labeled "Democrat" and one is labeled "Republican." In addition to the reins, Tweed is holding and waving a whip in the air. There are men in his carriage. One is the mayor of New York City. The carriage says "Tammany" on the side and has a tiger (the symbol of Tammany Hall) on it.

This cartoon was published right before an election.

Artist: Thomas Nast

Political Machines & Boss Tweed: Cartoon Analysis

CARTOON 7: 'TO THE VICTOR BELONGS THE SPOILS'



Caption: "What are you laughing at? To the Victor Belongs the Spoils."

Summary: For years, the *New York Times* and *Harper's Weekly* published articles and political cartoons (like these by Thomas Nast) to reveal the corruption of the Tammany Hall political machine. These publications damaged and weakened the political machine. The cartoon shows a "chastened" Boss Tweed in front of his collapsing organization. (Notice the broken pillars.)

According to the Ohio State University, "Boss Tweed, the beleaguered gladiator, pretends bravado, insisting that the spoils—in this case the treasury of New York City—still goes to the victor, no matter how battered. Nast's cartoon is both a crow of victory and a warning that the battle is not finally won."

Artist: Thomas Nast

Name: _____ Date: _____ Pd: _____

Political Machines & Boss Tweed: Cartoon Analysis

DIRECTIONS: Pick **two** of the cartoons provided. With a partner, analyze the cartoon and fill out the charts.

WHICH CARTOON ARE YOU ANALYZING? _____

Identify the cartoon caption or title.	List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.
Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why?	Which of the objects in the cartoons are symbols? What do they symbolize?
List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon. <i>(Are there facial expressions? Body language? Emotive words?)</i>	Explain the message of the cartoon.
How might Boss Tweed respond to this portrayal of corruption during the Gilded Age?	

Political Machines & Boss Tweed: Cartoon Analysis

Analyze your SECOND cartoon on this page!

WHICH CARTOON ARE YOU ANALYZING? _____

<p>Identify the cartoon caption or title.</p>	<p>List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.</p>
<p>Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why?</p>	<p>Which of the objects in the cartoons are symbols? What do they symbolize?</p>
<p>List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon. <i>(Are there facial expressions? Body language? Emotive words?)</i></p>	<p>Explain the message of the cartoon.</p>
<p>How might Boss Tweed respond to this portrayal of corruption during the Gilded Age?</p>	

Political Machines & Boss Tweed: Summary Questions

DIRECTIONS: Based on your understanding of the Gilded Age, political machines, and Boss Tweed, answer the questions below.

1. Based on what you learned, how did political machines operate during the Gilded Age? *What did they do to keep their power? What tactics did they use?*
2. How might a resident of New York City feel about Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall? How might a citizen of New York City feel about politics in general during this time period?
3. If you were a leader in New York City during the time of Tammany Hall, how would you propose stopping Boss Tweed? What opposition might you face?
4. When the *New York Times* and *Harper's Weekly* exposed Boss Tweed, he allegedly said, "I don't care a straw for your newspaper articles; my constituents don't know how to read, but they can't help seeing them [darned] pictures!" How might cartoons be a surprisingly effective way to expose corruption during this time period?

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

Use this activity to help students understand how political machines (like Tammany Hall) functioned.

- Introduce the terms political machine, Boss Tweed, and Tammany Hall.
- Have students work in partners or alone.
- Give students access to all of the cartoons.
- Instruct them to complete the analysis chart for two of the provided cartoons.
 - I like to let students choose the ones they are most interested in. I normally see that students view all of the cartoons and pick up on the overall themes right away.
- If you desire, have students complete the summarizing questions at the end.
- Some years, I have students present the cartoons. Or, we go over some of the cartoons as a class.

Note: The cartoons are from Library of Congress.

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