

Presidential Political Era 4 1896-1928 Use [PDE](#) for color printing.

Progressive Populism Ends the Gilded Age But Business Power Returned After WW I

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The 1896 campaign is often considered a [realignment election](#) as republicans forged a conservative coalition of businessmen, professionals, skilled factory workers and the prosperous. There would be much opposition causing two unsettled decades. The 1890-1920 [Progressive Era](#) was a period of social activism. A goal of the [Progressive Movement](#) was political reform by eliminating corruption by exposing [political machines](#) and their bosses.

Progressives sought monopolistic corporation regulation through [antitrust laws](#) which were seen as a means to promote fair competition and benefit consumers. Election reform was also high on the agenda. An increase post WW I Communist and Union activities caused a fear of anarchy and a desire for a more peaceful [Democratic Federalist Capitalistic Republic](#). from [textbooksfree.org](#)

Elections

[Election of 1896](#) went Republican as voters blamed Democrats for the [Panic of 1893](#). Moralistic rhetoric and Cross of Gold crusading for easy money by [W. J. Bryan](#) alienated conservatives. Over 90% turned out in some districts.

[Election of 1900](#) was close but a strong economy and a popular [Battle of San Juan Hill](#) victor VP T. Roosevelt was too much for easy money [Free Silver](#) candidate W. Bryan. Anarchist [Leon Czolgosz](#) assassinated Prescient McKinley making progressive TR president. The [Election of 1904](#) was a landslide with TR for protective tariffs, increased foreign trade, a pledged to uphold the gold standard, expansion of the merchant marine, a strong navy, and an imperialist Caribbean and Pacific foreign policy..

[Election of 1908](#) had Bryan replace [Free Silver](#) with a progressive platform attacking "government by privilege".

[Election of 1912](#) was a rare four-way contest after former President TR failed in his Republican Party nomination attempt and joined the new [Progressive "Bull Moose" Party](#). Socialist labor leader [Eugene Debs](#) was also a factor. Wilson won with 42% of the popular vote while Roosevelt's had 27%, Taft's 23% and union leader Deb's had 6%. Wilson allowed business credits to warring WW I belligerents which helped exports and ended the 1914 recession. When the Allies [ran out of money](#) and hoping to foster economic growth he allowed a Morgan led bank group to loan to loan them \$500,000,000,000. German and Irish Americans were not happy. [Election of 1916](#) still narrowly went to Wilson as "He kept us out of war." [Segregated government](#) meant Wilson like TR and T. Jefferson felt the American people were not ready for integration.

[Election of 1920](#) was affected by a [post WW 1 recession](#), [postwar labor strife](#), and the [First Red Scare](#). Harding easily won with an isolationist policy. His conservative wing would win a decade-long battle with bankers who wanted U.S. international trade dominance. The Treasury insistence on foreign loans eventually led to banking trouble. [Think](#) German industry. Excessive eating, drinking, and smoking may have contributed to Harding's 1923 death.

[Election of 1924](#) gave Coolidge an easy victory because of a strong economy and a split between liberals and conservatives Democrats. Coolidge more than doubled the democratic vote and they doubled the Progressive Party vote. Some feel the election marked the "high tide of [American conservatism](#)," as both major candidates campaigned for limited government, reduced taxes, and less regulation.

[Election of 1928](#) was a booming economy landslide as Hoover easily beat Democrat Smith who had [anti-Roman Catholic](#) and [Tammany Hall](#) issues. [Think](#) J. Kennedy and then B Obama.

Republicans

Democrats

"And Now the Rest of the Story"

[W. McKinley](#) led conservatives well but has a fluctuating [legacy](#). The [Spanish-American War](#) began with a dubious [USS Maine](#) attack as U.S. business and political leaders wanted an empire. [Think](#) [Gulf of Tonkin Incident](#). A [Dingley Tariff Act](#) promoted industry, high prices while a [gold standard](#) protected savers causing hard economic times. Political controversy over the money supply in relation to growth and inflation continued.

[T. Roosevelt](#) arguably our most popular president. [Most egoistical?](#) The 1903 [Panama Canal acquisition](#) eventually resulted in improved transportation. The [Roosevelt Corollary](#) to the Monroe doctrine expanded the US sphere of influence in the Caribbean to protect Panama Canal interests. [Panic of 1907](#) required liquidity and the Treasury deposited \$25,000,000 into New York banks. J.P. Morgan with [John D. Rockefeller](#) and other wealthy men had provided all [Panic of 1893](#) liquidity. Eventually the [Federal Reserve System](#) was the new [Lender of Last Resort](#). Designed by Wall Street bankers the FED would continue under their influence until 2016 and counting!

[W. Taft](#), a better Supreme Court Chief Justice than President, expanded ["Dollar Diplomacy"](#) to promoted Latin American and East Asian economic development using bank loans and U.S. [Companies](#). [Think](#) Russia's 2014 [annexation of Crimea](#).

[Woodrow Wilson](#) had progressive agenda successes but his

[League of Nations failure](#) was monumental. The [19th Amendment](#) gave women voting rights with little support from the South, among Republicans, and some conservative women. [Think](#) [women terrorists](#). Federal involvement in agriculture began with the very successful [Federal Farm Loan Act](#) though many debate the continued need for [agricultural subsidies](#). Federal revenue boosted by [income tax](#). Some states have replaced it with a [consumption tax](#). The [Keating-Owen Act](#) restricting child labor abuses was ruled unconstitutional by [Hammer v. Dagenhart](#) as courts ruled regulation belonged to the states. Wilson did not let Republicans join in WW1 peace discussions so US did not join the League of Nations. Fair treatment of Germany was not possible as of WWI carnage and colonial needs of both England and France meant opposition to Wilson's [self-determination](#) push.

[W. Harding](#) began the second conservative run of this political era.

[Tight Monetary Policy](#) and a major federal spending decrease caused the forth most [severe U.S. Recession](#). It began the [FED effectiveness debate](#). [Think](#) [Rand Paul](#). The [Emergency Quota Act](#) of 1921 continued U.S. [immigration restrictions base on race](#). [Think](#) [D. Trump](#). The act brought pro-Western Europe quotas as revolution in Eastern Europe brought unwanted immigrants. [Think](#) [European immigration crisis](#).

[C. Coolidge](#) restored public confidence after [Harding's political](#)

[scandals](#). He left office with considerable popularity. [Think](#) seven years of an expanding economy. [World War Adjusted Compensation Act](#) or "Bonus Bill" was passed over a Coolidge veto. [Think](#) austerity in good times and later Hoover would not pay early in bad times causing the 1932 [Bonus Army](#) riots. [Immigration Act of 1924](#) excluded Asians and Arabs and limited Africans. The [Great Mississippi Flood of 1927](#) led to [Flood Control Act of 1928](#).

[H. Hoover](#) was a 19th century politician done in by Classical

Economics and his support for [prohibition](#) though he did more to alleviate the [Great Depression](#) than history purports.

