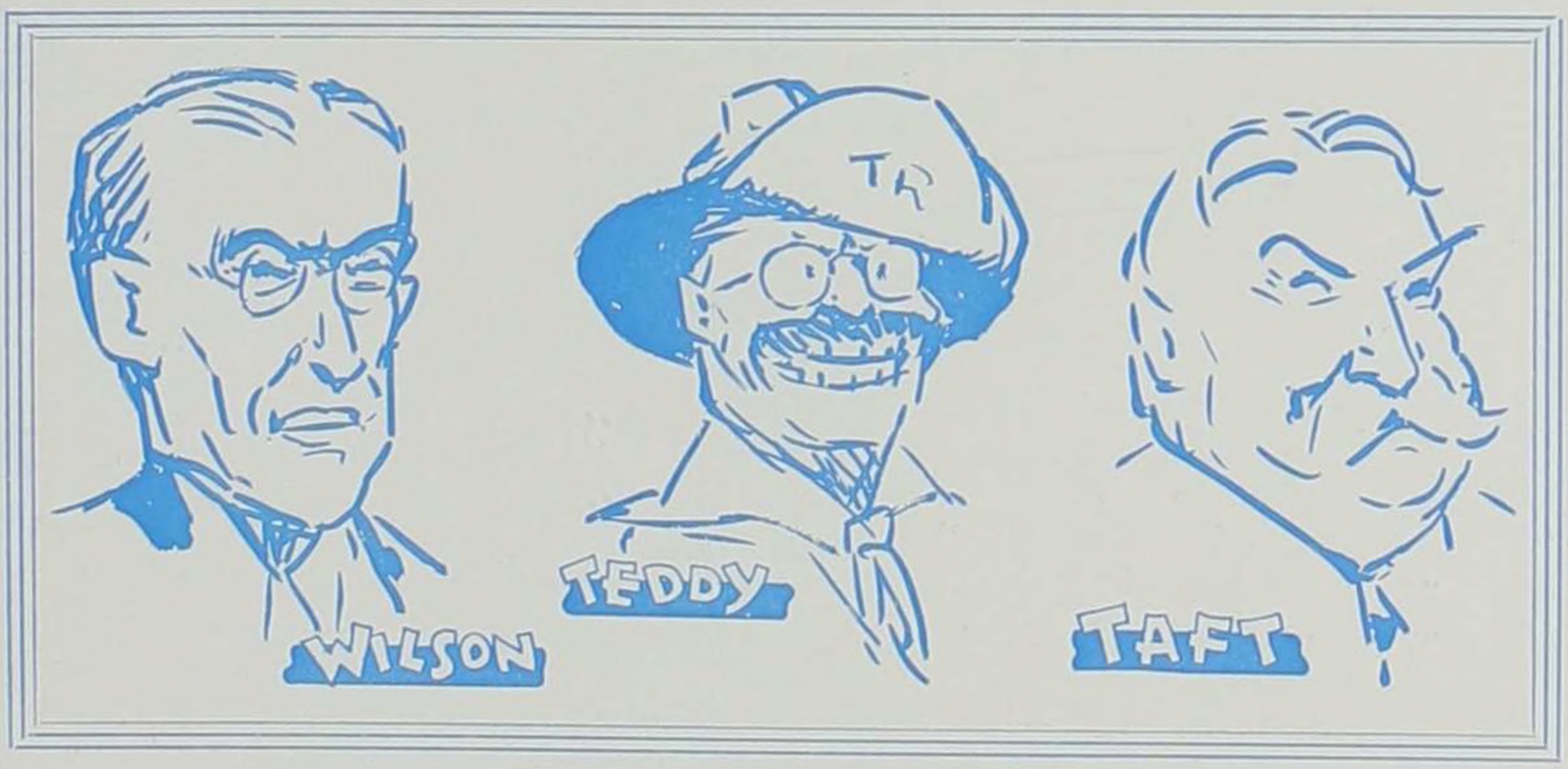
The PALIMPSEST



THE CANDIDATES IN 1912

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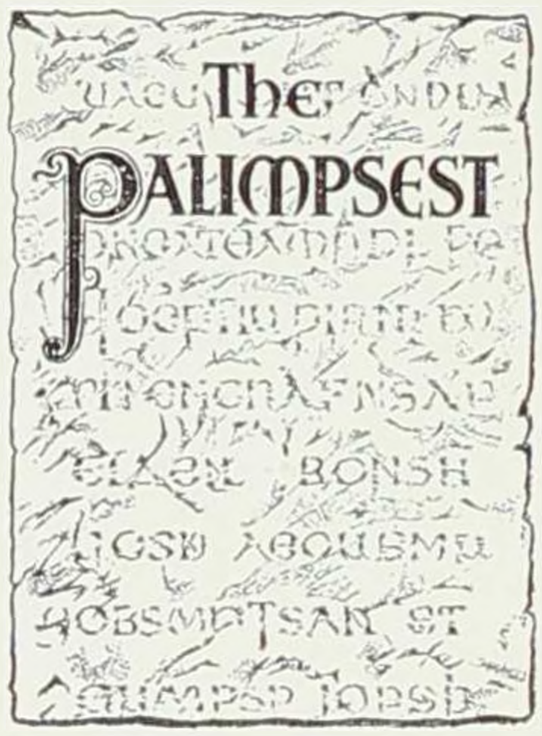

The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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Back — The Progressive Party Convention in Chicago, August 5, 1912.

Author

Dr. Mildred Throne is Associate Editor of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Iowa Politics, 1848-1908

There have been twenty-six presidential elections since 1848, the first year that Iowans had a chance to participate in this great American "game of politics." In twenty of these twenty-six elections, Iowa "went Republican"; the other six times, the Hawkeyes voted for a Democrat. But the first two Democratic votes can be discounted — from the point of view of tradition — since they were cast before the birth of the Republican party. Only four times since that historic birth has Iowa lapsed from conformity — in 1912, 1932, 1936, and 1948.

The nation as a whole has not been quite so stubbornly Republican as has Iowa; between 1848 and 1948 the United States has elected a Whig once, a Democrat eleven times, and a Republican fourteen times. Another study of statistics will also show that Iowa has been on the winning side — whether Republican or Democratic — nineteen times out of the twenty-six. One might almost say "As Iowa goes, so goes the nation."

Iowa's first two presidential ballots favored Democrats, Lewis Cass and Franklin Pierce. But between 1852 and 1856 the Republican party was born, and when Iowans went to the polls in the latter year they gave 8,000 more votes to John C. Fremont, Republican, than to the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, winner of the national election. By 1860 the nation joined Iowa in the Republican column and elected Abraham Lincoln.

From 1860 to 1880 Republican followed Republican in the White House without too much opposition from the Democrats. But in 1884, by a narrow margin, Democrat Grover Cleveland became President — without the help of Iowa voters, however. Political life returned to what had come to be considered "normal" in 1888, when the nation elected Republican Benjamin Harrison; but in 1892 Cleveland returned to office, Iowa again dissenting. In 1896, the Republicans, with William McKinley, came back into power by a safe majority. The White House was not again to welcome a Democrat until 1912.

Iowa voters endorsed the Republican victories of 1900, 1904, and 1908 — voting heavily for McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft. But change was in the air, and the Republican craft, so firm and steady in the past, broke on the issue of Progressivism — a break which brought Woodrow Wilson and the Democrats to Washington.

Of all the elections in which Iowa had played a part since 1848, that of 1912 was outstanding in many respects. An Iowan, Albert Baird Cummins, for a time "stood in the shadow of the White House." In that year, also, the traditional party of Iowa was split in two by a gigantic battle, and when the smoke had cleared Iowa had broken with tradition and voted for a Democrat for President of the United States for the first time in sixty years.

MILDRED THRONE

The Issues of 1912

From the close of the Civil War to 1912, presidential elections had followed each other with monotonous regularity, with colorless candidates, and with a minimum of party warfare. For a half century government and politics played only a secondary role in American life, while the growth of industry and finance held the center of the stage, and Wall Street, not Washington, determined the health of the American economy. Great fortunes were made and lost on that fabulous street, where men dealt in bits of paper representing coal, iron, steel, grain, miles of railroads, or — in later years — oil. A handful of men often held the destinies of worker and farmer in their hands; this same handful also manipulated the strings which determined the legislation — or lack of it — of the American government.

All this had not come about without protest, however. From time to time men demanded of the government that it assert itself, that it place the rights of the people above those of property. Financial panics — especially in 1873 and 1893 — increased these pleas for reform. Grangers and Anti-Monopolists in the seventies, Greenbackers and Alliance men in the eighties, and Populists in

the nineties were all asking for basically the same thing. Twice these reform movements had reached national proportions and a national presidential ticket: in 1880 with the Greenbackers and in 1892 with the Populists. And on both these occasions an Iowan — James B. Weaver — was the candidate of the third party of reform.

In the early twentieth century these political and intellectual stirrings culminated in the rise of a new movement — Progressivism. So strong was this movement that its followers in Congress came to be known as "Insurgents," as opposed to their opponents — the let-well-enough-alone "Stand-patters." Theodore Roosevelt's two terms as president coincided with this groundswell of reform, and his name became associated in the minds of the people with the popular Progressive movement. His war on the "trusts" won him a devoted following among the people, who feared the growing power of great business combinations; his colorful personality brought excitement to the White House, too long occupied by figureheads. He may have been "that damned cowboy" to political boss Mark Hanna; but to the American people he was "TR" or "Teddy," and they loved him.

Meanwhile, young men appeared on the national and local political stages who attacked the old ways, who pushed through needed reforms, and who fought for government action in the interest of the people, in contrast to government sub-

servience to the privileged few. Iowa Senators Albert Baird Cummins, James P. Dolliver, and William S. Kenyon were in the forefront of the Progressive movement. Their names stood high in the roster of Insurgents, along with those of Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, William E. Borah of Idaho, George W. Norris of Nebraska, Albert E. Beveridge of Indiana, Hiram Johnson of California, Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, and many others. For the first time Progressivism found expression in new legislation or in enforcement of old laws, and Washington began to regain its place as the center of American life.

When Roosevelt retired from political office in 1908, he left things in the good hands of William Howard Taft — or so he thought. But no sooner had Teddy's famous "Big Stick" been removed than the portly Taft succumbed to the influence of the Standpatters, led by Speaker Joseph Cannon and Senator Nelson W. Aldrich. In 1909 Congress, against the violent protest of the Progressives, passed the notorious Payne-Aldrich Tariff, whose authors interpreted the Republican platform's promise of tariff "revision" to mean tariff "increase." To the conservatives, the voice of the lobbyist spoke louder than that of the consumer who could see little advantage in paying high prices for the "protection" of the giant United States Steel trust, among others. Cummins and the other Insurgents, defeated in their battle

against privilege, went home to arouse the voters. But things went from bad to worse, in the light of Insurgent policies. In Congress "Uncle Joe" Cannon ruled with an iron hand, permitting only such legislation as he wished to come before the House of Representatives. Aroused at last, a coalition of Insurgents and Democrats finally took over the reins and stripped most of the powers from the Speaker of the House, and on election day in 1910 the voters spoke: for the first time in sixteen years Congress had a Democratic majority.

Democrats, however, were not Progressive enough to suit the Republican Insurgents, who felt that Democratic Progressivism did not go beyond reduction of the tariff. Thus, in order to give a stronger voice to the Progressive movement, the Insurgents, in December, 1910, formed the National Progressive Republican League under the leadership of Robert La Follette. "Insurgency had come of age." La Follette was an avowed candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1912, a nomination which would traditionally go to the incumbent, if he wished it. Having failed to control Congress by "minority bloc tactics," the Progressives now laid plans to capture the Republican party organization itself, over the protest and opposition of the Standpatters and their candidate, Taft. Thus was laid the groundwork for the breakup of the Republican party.

This breakup was further insured when Roosevelt, but recently returned from lion-hunting in Africa, seized the leadership of the Progressive movement from La Follette, its real founder, and set himself to do battle with his former friend, Taft.

As 1912 dawned, both major parties were set for the first real struggle in American politics since 1860. Nothing was cut-and-dried as in the past, and strong men fought desperately for control. Underlying the whole struggle was the issue of Progressivism, which was basically as old as the United States. According to one historian of the movement, Progressivism had three "tendencies" — the removal of minority influence in government; the demand that the many, rather than the few, control that government; and, lastly, an increase in the powers of government to enable the administration to relieve social and economic injustice and distress. Succinctly, the real core of Progressivism was, thus, "whether government was to be administered in the interest of privilege or of the people"; whether or not it was to be, in the words of Lincoln, a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Every issue of 1912 — government control of monopolies, the right to regulate railroads, a more equitable tariff structure, the initiative and referendum, the recall of judges — all these found a place in the Progressive philosophy. It was a demand for more, rather than less, democracy; a demand

which had begun in the days of Sam Adams and Thomas Jefferson, was heard again in the days of Jackson, of Lincoln, of the third party revolts in the late nineteenth century, and in 1912 under the banner of Theodore Roosevelt.

The party battle was lost in 1912, when Roosevelt went down to defeat; but the Progressive movement itself won in the election of Woodrow Wilson.

MILDRED THRONE

The Republican Convention

The struggle for the Republican nomination of 1912 actually began in May of 1910, when Theodore Roosevelt came home from his tour of Africa and Europe. Hardly had TR set foot on American shores before the political pots began to boil. Progressives, angered with Taft's stewardship of the Roosevelt policies, turned eagerly to the former president, urging that he step into the widening breach in Republican ranks. For a time Roosevelt held back and tried to remain neutral, but it was not in his nature to stay out of a fight for long. In August, at historic Osawatomie in Kansas, he outlined his "New Nationalism" in "the most radical speech ever given by an ex-president."

> The man who wrongly holds that every human right is secondary to his profit must now give way to the advocate of human welfare, who rightly maintains that every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community to regulate its use to whatever degree the public welfare may require it.

The reaction throughout the nation was spontaneous. "The West rose with a shout"; clubs were formed for "Roosevelt in 1912"; and Nebraska Progressive Republicans called for a ticket with

Roosevelt and Iowa's Jonathan P. Dolliver as his running mate. But while the Middle West and the West cheered, the conservative East trembled. Roosevelt was a Napoleon, cried the Standpat newspapers; he would destroy "for the sake of personal advancement"; he was "little short of a revolutionist." Thus Roosevelt's efforts to heal the breach in his party had succeeded only in widening that gap to frightening proportions.

In Iowa, at the 1910 Republican state convention, an attempt to endorse Taft for 1912 was met with "boos and catcalls," and every mention of the magic name of Roosevelt was cheered to the echo. The platform adopted by the convention, which was dominated by Cummins and Dolliver, was a strong Progressive document.

The primaries of 1910 highlighted the struggle within the Republican party. Taft forces in Iowa fought bitterly against the Progressives led by Senators Cummins and Dolliver; even powerful "Uncle Joe" Cannon spoke in Iowa in behalf of the Standpatters. But when the ballots were counted, Iowa had retired four Taft men from Congress, and offered four Progressives in their places. A small measure of comfort could be found for the Taft men in the fact that their candidate for governor, incumbent Beryl F. Carroll, had defeated the Progressive Warren Garst by a handful of votes. In similar fashion, the 1910 primaries through the land presaged the coming de-

feat of the Old Guard Republicans; the elections in the fall gave control of Congress to the Democrats for the first time in sixteen years.

Since peacemaking had failed, the Republican Insurgents now moved to take over the machinery of the party and oust the Taft forces from control. Late in December, 1910, Robert La Follette led in the formation of the National Progressive Republican League, and in June of 1911 he formally announced his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination — a year in advance of the convention.

Meanwhile Roosevelt, who did not like La Follette, remained in the background except for editorials in *The Outlook,* which became increasingly critical of the administration of Teddy's former friend, Taft. TR constantly resisted efforts of his supporters to put his name up for the nomination, but as time went on his resistance became weaker — although he still would not say "yes." In February of 1912, when La Follette, harried by overwork, broke down during a speech at Philadelphia, his supporters turned to TR with "indecent haste." Within a few days Roosevelt's "hat was in the ring."

That support for Roosevelt was stronger than for Taft was evidenced in the 1912 primaries in the thirteen states which had just inaugurated the presidential preferential ballot. On the basis of these votes, La Follette won 36 delegates; Taft,

48; and Roosevelt, 278. It would seem that TR had a clear majority of the Republicans behind him. Even Taft's home state of Ohio had declared for Roosevelt.

But the Taft forces were not idle. Long before the spring primaries, the administration forces had been at work, seeing to it that state conventions sent Taft delegates to the national convention, scheduled for Chicago in June. In the South, in particular, the well-worn political technique was followed. Officeholders, known or suspected as Roosevelt men, were threatened with dismissal should they fail to support the President. State conventions were held early — in February and March — before the Roosevelt forces could gather their strength, and solid Taft delegations were elected. Sensing their danger, Roosevelt men hurried southward and tried to block the Taft forces by leading bolts from various state conventions and nominating contesting delegations.

Similar programs were followed in many of the northern states where presidential primaries did not determine the makeup of the delegations. Iowa's state convention was held at Cedar Rapids on April 24, with Taft men in control. The struggle in Iowa, however, instead of being between Taft and Roosevelt, was between Taft and Senator Albert Baird Cummins, the leader of Iowa Republicans since the death of Jonathan P. Dolliver in October, 1910.

The appearance of Cummins and other "dark horse" candidates on the political scene this early was partly the traditional "favorite son" technique, and partly the result of the bitter war of words being waged by the two top Republicans, Taft and Roosevelt. Feeling that the two men, by a vulgar display of animosity, would eventually cancel each other out, many Republicans looked around for a compromise candidate who could bind up the party's wounds. La Follette would not do; he was too radical for the Taft forces, too "ultra-progressive" for the Roosevelt men. Cummins of Iowa, Charles Evans Hughes of New York, and Governor Herbert S. Hadley of Missouri were the men most often mentioned for this peacemaker role. Cummins' popularity at home should have swept him to a quick endorsement by a solid Iowa delegation, but such was not the case. Strong Taft men in Iowa manipulated and "steamrollered" the Cedar Rapids convention in much the same way that the national convention would later be controlled.

There were 1,481 delegates gathered in the city auditorium at Cedar Rapids on the morning of April 24. A thirty-foot square platform accommodated speakers and some 300 "distinguished guests." The hall was hung with the usual bunting and flags and adorned with the traditional pictures — Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley; Taft and Roosevelt; Cummins, Dolliver, and Allison.

It was a bitter fight from start to finish, but when the smoke had cleared the Taft forces, by a slim 41-vote margin, had forced through their platform and had elected the four delegates-at-large from the Taft ranks. Sixteen of Iowa's twenty-six delegates were pledged to Taft, only ten to Cummins.

This failure of his home state to endorse his candidacy hurt Cummins' chances considerably, but he refused to withdraw. Indication that the convention did not represent the true spirit of Iowa Republicans was at once evident. The Grinnell *Register* claimed that the convention "represented the politicians, not the voters," while the Odebolt *Chronicle* stated that anyone who thought the result reflected the attitude of Iowa Republicans was "a fit subject for consideration by the commissioners of insanity." The Des Moines *Register,* a strong Cummins paper, called it "The Last Convention," predicting that before 1916 a presidential preferential primary law would replace the "intimidation and flimflamming" of state and national conventions.

Similar situations in other states only served to widen the breach among Republicans, a breach which the invective of the two leading candidates did nothing to heal. Americans were being treated to the spectacle of a president and an ex-president of the United States engaged in a duel of name-calling which the Des Moines *Register* termed "common and vulgar." On one day Taft called

Roosevelt "a flatterer of the people," a "dangerous egoist," and a "demagogue." Not to be outdone, Roosevelt replied on the following day with such terms as "puzzlewit" and "fathead," and went on to characterize Taft's intellect "as little short of a guinea pig's." Such was the rough and tumble of politics in 1912.

Small wonder, then, that by the time the Republican national convention met in Chicago on June 18, tempers were boiling. The national committee, which had been holding hearings on contested delegations since June 7, had done nothing to relieve this animus; in fact, it was in these hearings that the Taft forces first showed their hand. There were 254 contested seats at the convention of 1,078 delegates. Sitting daily, from June 7 to the eve of the convention, the national committee, with scant ceremony and a bold display of partisan bias, awarded 235 of the contested seats to Taft, only 19 to Roosevelt. Juggling the evidence to suit their purposes, deciding one way in this contest, the opposite way in another, the stubborn men of the national committee defied the expressed wishes of the majority of the members of their party. Some fifteen members of the committee, including Chairman Victor Rosewater of Kansas, had not been re-elected to their positions by their states, but according to practice they retained their seats until the end of the convention. These "lame ducks" helped oil the Taft steamroller in the face

of an admission by an administration newspaper, the New York *Tribune,* that Roosevelt had 469½ pledged delegates to only 454½ for Taft.

Many must have wondered why the members of the national committee, in the face of certain defeat at the polls in November, worked so tirelessly to defeat the majority of their own party in the matter of the nomination. The answer was that these party men preferred success in the convention, and defeat in the election, to letting Roosevelt gain control of the party machinery. They therefore called up their steamroller tactics and overrode the wishes of the majority, while the nation watched in amazement and growing anger.

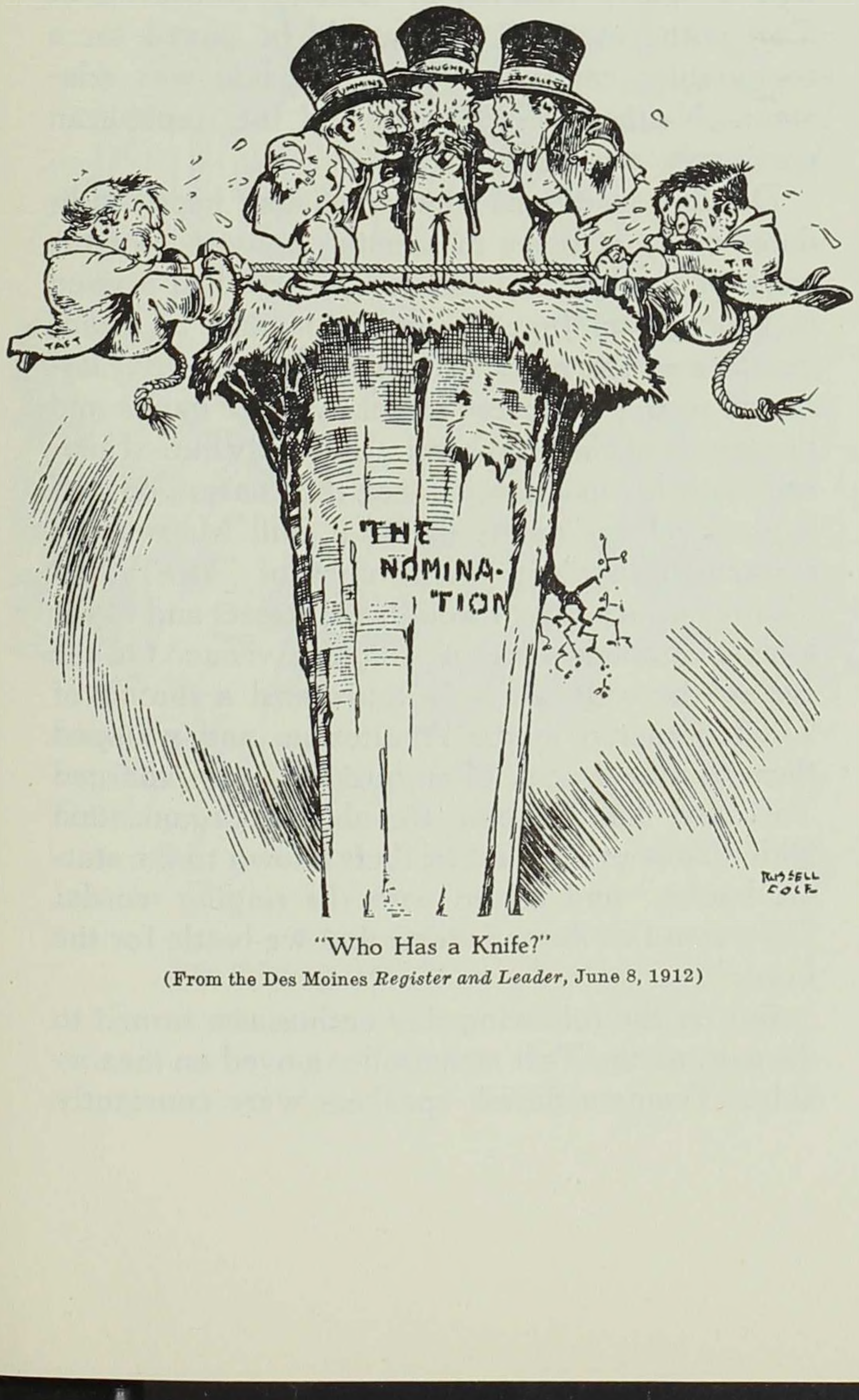
During these pre-convention contests, Roosevelt thundered in *The Outlook:* "The contest for the Republican nomination has now been narrowed down to a naked issue of right and wrong; for the issue is simply whether or not we shall permit a system of naked fraud, of naked theft from the people, to triumph." TR's editorial, after the convention had adjourned, was entitled, "Thou Shalt Not Steal."

That the Taft forces desperately needed every vote they could muster was shown on the first test of strength in the convention, the vote on the temporary chairman. In this vote, Taft's choice of Elihu Root was upheld by a vote of 558 to 502. Since it is conceded by historians who have made an objective study of these historic contests that at

least 30 and possibly 50 more seats should have gone to Roosevelt, it can be seen that a shift of only 29 votes would have given control of the convention to the Progressives. Therefore, the Taft men could not have afforded to let principle interfere with politics in their decisions on the contested seats. The steamroller had triumphed.

As the pre-convention struggle within the national committee ground on, the hopes of the various dark-horse candidates had risen. Iowa's William S. Kenyon, the spark plug of the Cummins boom, felt that he spoke for Iowa Progressives since he had just been nominated for the Senate by a plurality of some 75,000 votes over Standpatter "Lafe" Young. Kenyon therefore hurried to Chicago, opened rooms in the Congress Hotel as Cummins headquarters, and began buttonholing delegates. As the convention date neared, Cummins' chances seemed to blossom. By June 14 support was reported from many quarters. From New York came a former editor of the Des Moines *Register,* the famous "Ret" Clarkson. He "has sniffed the battle from afar," wrote the Des Moines paper, "and like an old war horse, cannot be kept from getting into the thick of it." On June 17, the day before the convention opened, the *Register* jubilantly reported support for their candidate from newspapers in Massachusetts and New York.

Similar movements were booming Hadley of



"Who Has a Knife?"

(From the Des Moines *Register and Leader*, June 8, 1912)

Missouri and Hughes of New York, as the delegates sought vainly for a solution to the snarled web of party dissension. Should Roosevelt or Taft withdraw, the way would be paved for a compromise candidate, but each side was adamant. Neither would yield, and the Republican party split asunder.

Defying tradition, which had long kept candidates coyly at home in seeming ignorance of the work of the national convention, TR had arrived in Chicago on June 15 and had taken up headquarters in the heart of convention activity. Escorted to the Congress Hotel by three bands and thousands of cheering admirers, Teddy hurled himself with his usual vigor into the convention turmoil. Feeling "as strong as a Bull Moose," he responded joyously to the cries of "We Want Teddy" which rang through the streets and in the lobbies of hotels along Michigan Avenue. On the eve of the convention he addressed a throng of 5,000 gathered in the Auditorium and whipped them to a new peak of enthusiasm. He "charged Taft and the Regular Republican organization with almost every kind of theft known to the statute books," and closed with the ringing words: "We stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord."

But on the following day enthusiasm turned to despair, as the Taft steamroller moved on inexorably. Tempers flared, speakers were constantly

"Man Is Only a Grown-up Boy"

(From the Des Moines *Register and Leader*, June 21, 1912)

interrupted by boos and hisses, fist fights were numerous. When Elihu Root was nominated for temporary chairman the speakers were almost drowned out by constant cries of "liar," "thief," and "swindler" from the Roosevelt supporters. Every move of the Roosevelt forces was neatly blocked by the Taft machine; a carefully packed committee on credentials upheld the decisions of the national committee; efforts of Roosevelt men to gain the floor for a hearing were quickly ruled out of order.

Sensing defeat, Roosevelt yet hesitated. Talk of a bolt, of the formation of a third party, had been heard for several days. At last after a long session in Roosevelt's rooms at the Congress, two men came forward with the magic words: "Colonel, we will see you through." They were Frank Munsey, millionaire newspaperman, and George W. Perkins of the United States Steel Corporation. Assured of financial backing, Roosevelt took the final step. On Saturday morning Henry J. Allen of Kansas rose in the convention and read a message from the Colonel which asked his pledged delegates to take no further part in the affairs of the convention. In concluding, Allen cried:

> We do not bolt, we merely ask that you do not, and we refuse to be bound by this Convention. We have been with you ten days; we have fought with you five days for a "square deal." We fight no more. We plead no longer.

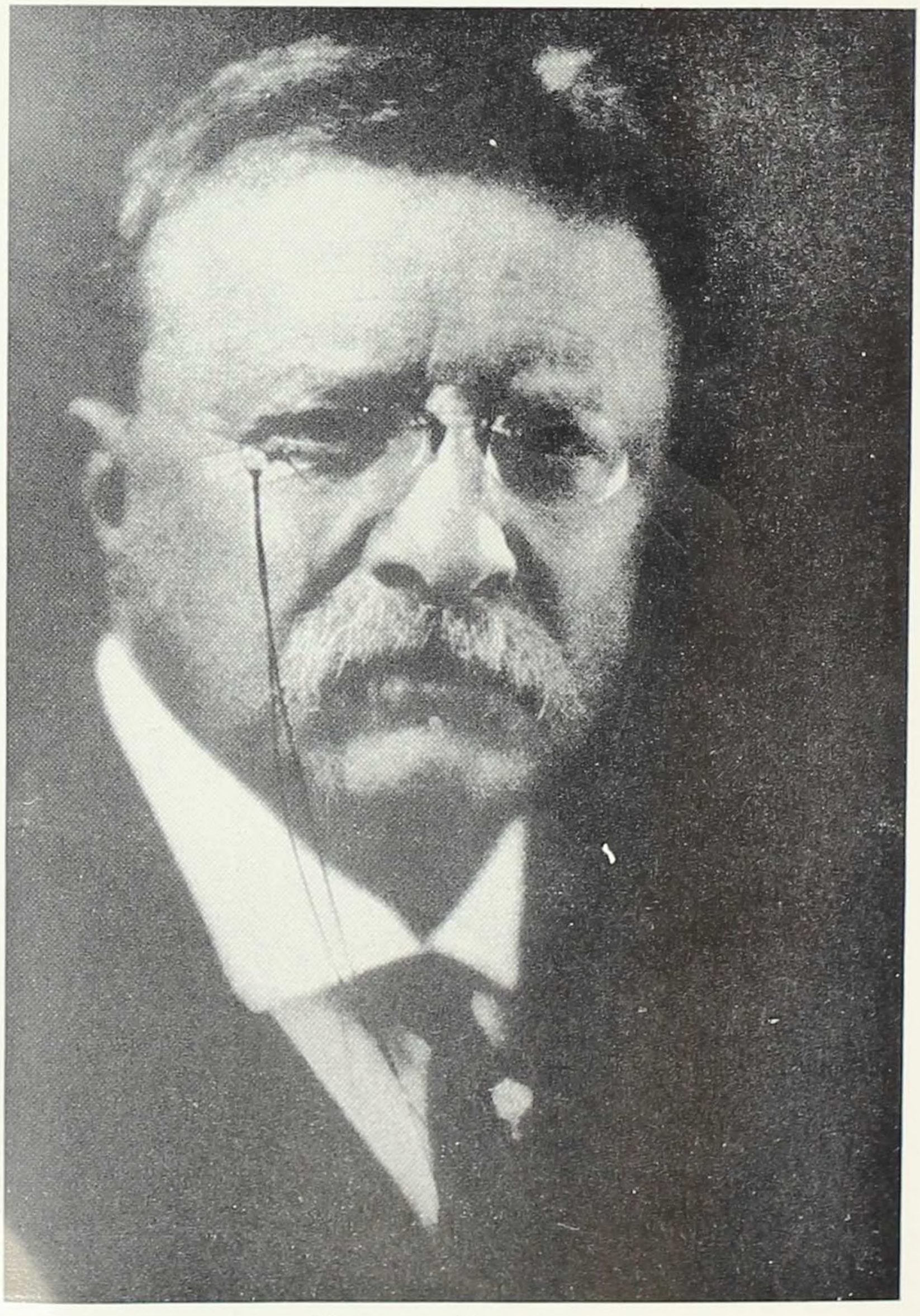
We shall sit in protest, and the people who sent us here shall judge us.

Dispirited, the convention ground on. Taft's name was placed in nomination by a then unknown Ohio politician, Warren G. Harding; numerous seconding speeches droned through the convention hall. Then came the vote: "Alabama" — "Alabama votes twenty-two for Taft, two not voting." So it went down the alphabet. California, where the national committee had fraudulently awarded two of the state's 26 votes to Taft, cried "California refuses to vote." Without a pause, the clerk shouted through his megaphone, "California votes two for Taft, twenty-four not voting." That the Taft men felt they must wring every vote possible from the convention was again evidenced when a Massachusetts delegate refused to vote during a roll call, and the clerk promptly called his alternate who, by a quirk in the state's primary law, was a Taft man. This obviously illegal procedure was upheld by Root, and in this way two additional votes were added to the Taft column. When it was over, Taft had been nominated by 561 votes — 21 more than he needed. In spite of the Roosevelt ban, 106 had cast their votes for him, while 41 had voted for La Follette, and 17 for Cummins; 344 were "not voting." After a perfunctory nomination of the Vice President, James Sherman, the convention adjourned in the deepest gloom.

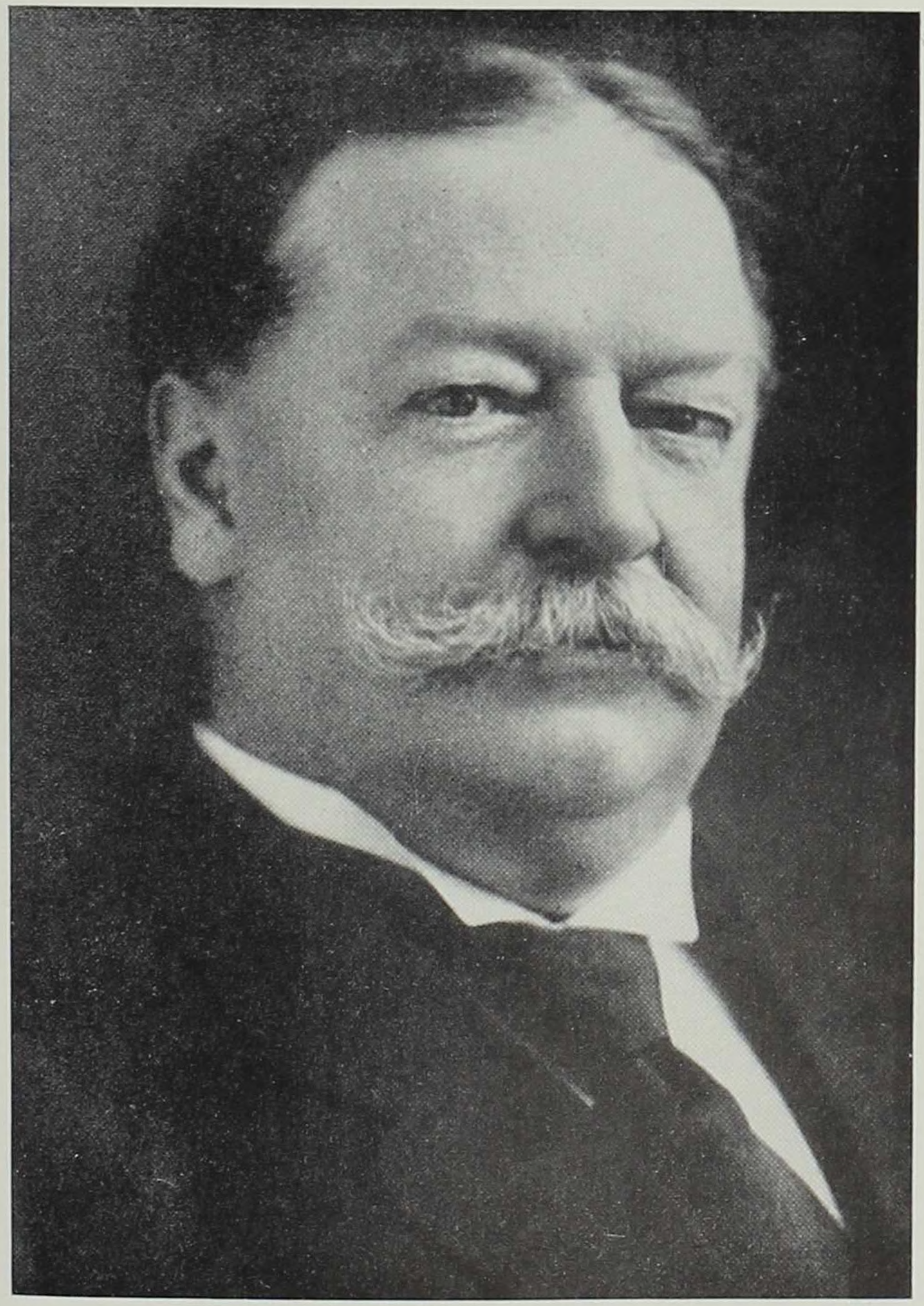
But all was not over in Chicago. That night, in Orchestra Hall on Michigan Avenue, Roosevelt "with narrowed eyes and snapping jaws" addressed a cheering mob of supporters, "renounced his Republicanism," and declared his willingness to accept a nomination from a new Progressive party "regularly called and regularly elected." The party of Lincoln had lost, if only temporarily, its most colorful and best-loved member.

MILDRED THRONE

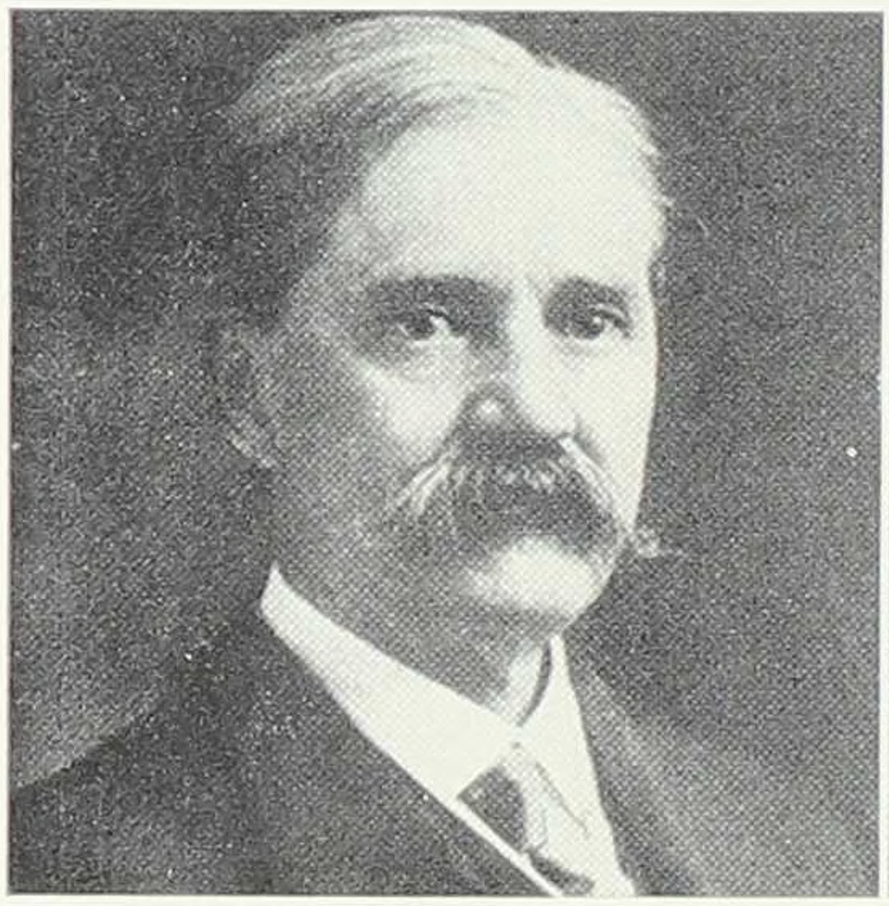
WOODROW WILSON



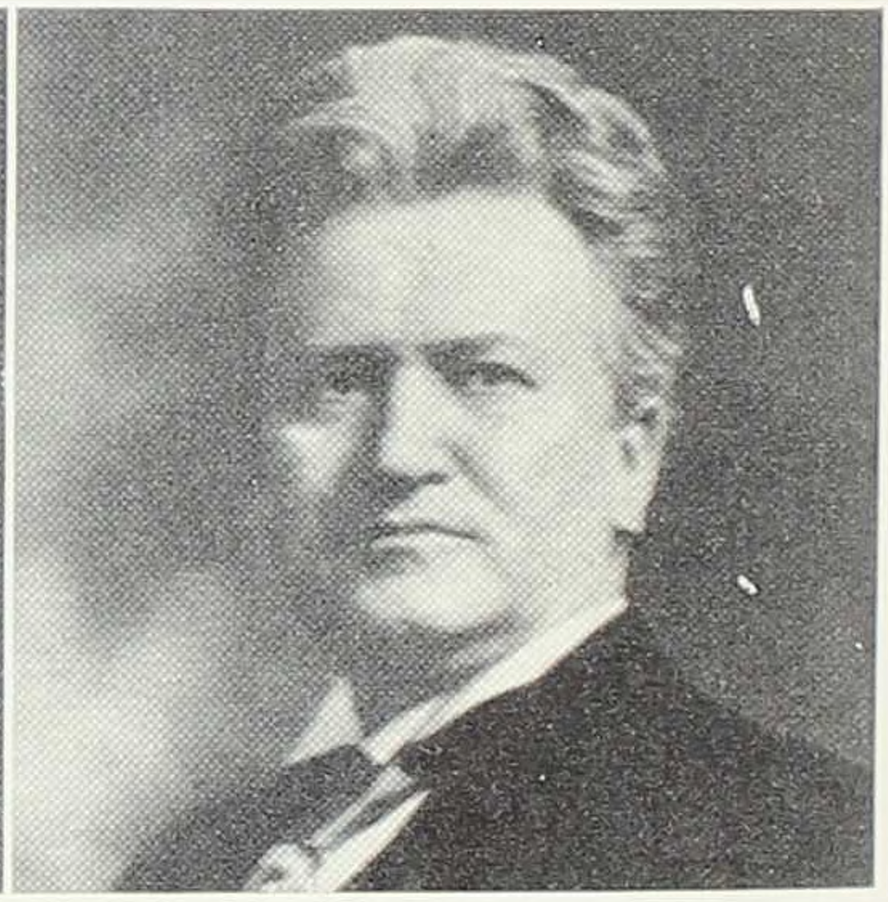
THEODORE ROOSEVELT



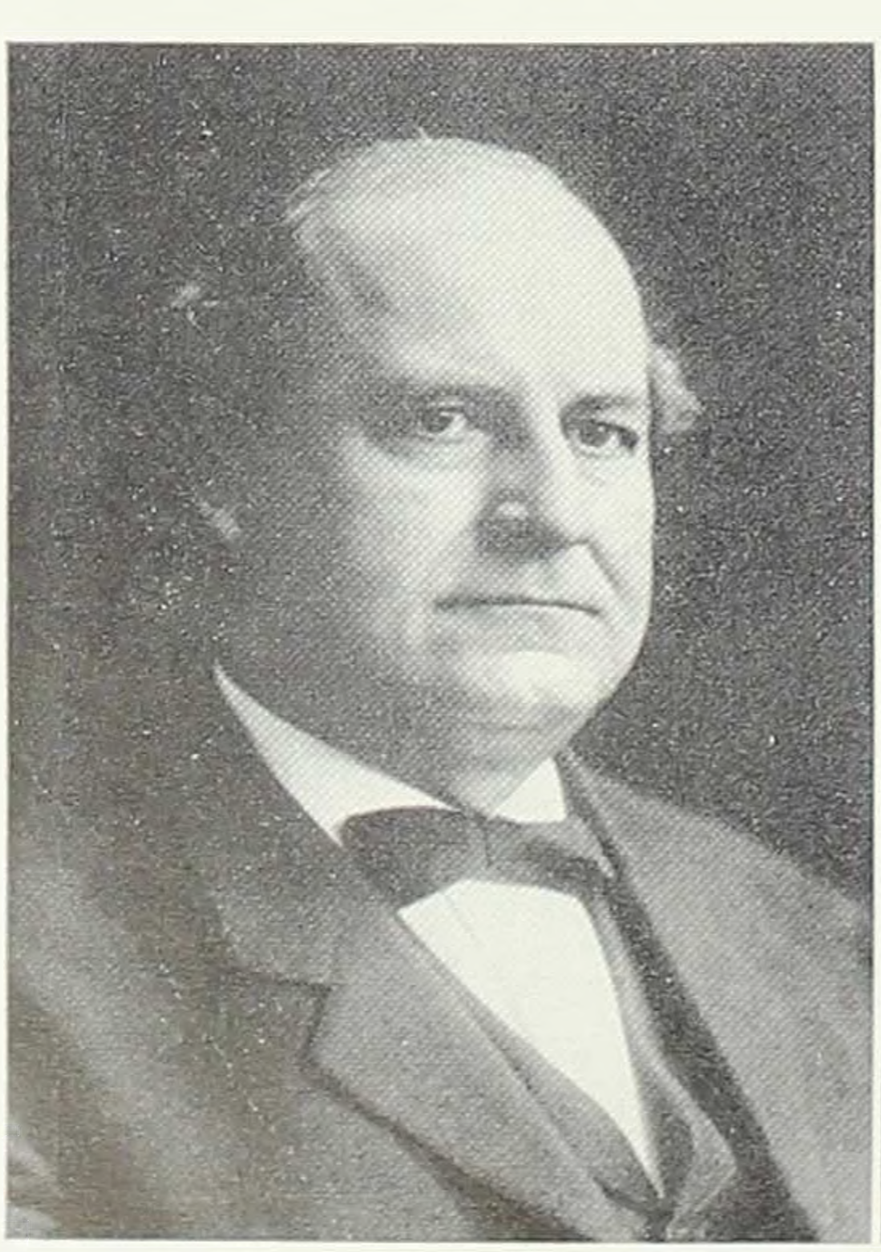
William Howard Taft



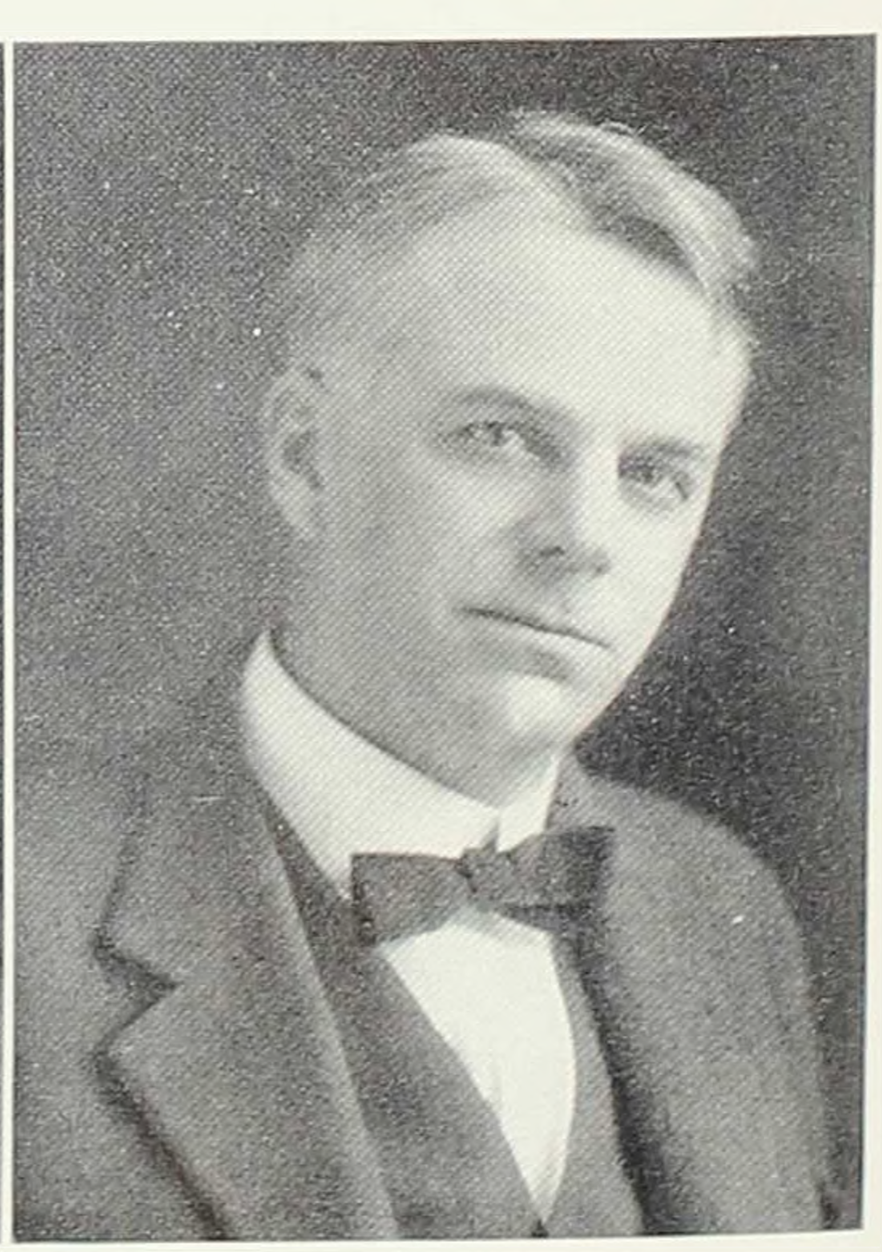
ALBERT B. CUMMINS
Iowa



ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE
Wisconsin



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN
Nebraska



WILLIAM S. KENYON
Iowa

The Democratic Convention

Democrats arriving in Baltimore for their national convention, called for June 25, were jubilant. Their ancient enemy, the Republican party, had split into two warring segments, and all indications were that 1912 was to be a Democratic year. They felt that any one of the leading contenders for the nomination could be almost sure of election in November, pitted as he would be against a divided opponent. Only one Democrat was sure that this time it must not be just "any one"; one man sensed that the American voter in 1912, be he Republican or Democrat, was also progressive. And that man was William Jennings Bryan, three times loser, but still a power in his party.

The Democrats had any number of candidates to choose from: there were four leading contenders and a great quantity of favorite sons. Champ Clark of Missouri, Democratic Speaker of the House, led the field, closely followed by Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, Representative Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama, and Governor Judson Harmon of Ohio. Clark entered the convention with more pledged delegates than any one of his opponents, but he was far from the two-

thirds required for nomination in the Democratic convention.

Iowa Democrats were divided in their enthusiasms between Clark and Wilson, with the edge going to Clark. In fact, Clark's support was strong throughout the Middle West, where he was better known than the New Jersey governor. However, Wilson had visited Des Moines in March, and had spoken to a crowd of some 4,500 at the Coliseum. He had also addressed a banquet in his honor at Davenport. Many Wilson Leagues had been formed throughout the state, but they could not combat the strong Clark sentiment among Iowa Democrats. The state convention was held in Burlington on May 16, and the twenty-six delegates to the national convention, bound by the unit rule, were instructed for Clark, in spite of efforts by the Wilson forces to send an uninstructed delegation.

As in Chicago, so in Baltimore, the conservative wing of the party planned to dominate the convention. Efforts of the Tammany forces to foist Alton B. Parker, the 1908 Democratic nominee, on the convention as temporary chairman ran headlong into the powerful William Jennings Bryan. Made aware of what was going on, Bryan wired each possible candidate, asking for support against the Tammany influence. Some did not reply, others were indefinite in their answers (including Champ Clark), but one man instantly came to Bryan's

side in the contest — Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey. It might be said that this action, if not determining, was at least influential in making Wilson President of the United States. Bryan alone seemed aware of the fact that the Democrats must nominate a Progressive; otherwise, there was a strong possibility that many Progressive Democrats would join the Roosevelt bandwagon in November.

The Democratic national convention was a series of battles, hard fought and hard won. Bryan lost the first round, when Parker became the temporary chairman; but he won the second with a resolution disavowing any support for the Democratic nominee from such monied interests as represented by J. P. Morgan, Thomas F. Ryan, and August Belmont. Another victory for Wilson came when the convention discarded the unit rule (whereby the majority of each state delegation determined the vote of the whole group) except in those cases where the states themselves had specifically provided for it. Bryan also won a measure of victory in the election of his choice, Ollie James of Kentucky, as permanent chairman.

All this was not accomplished without great bitterness. The conservatives fought Bryan at every turn, reported the Washington correspondent of the Des Moines *Register*. "They abuse him and curse him. All the vials of wrath are being poured out upon him. . . ." But the great mass of the

delegates listened to Bryan, and they followed him. As reports from the convention hall went out to the country, the mails and the telegraph wires brought back the word from the voters at home: "Stand with Bryan."

At eight o'clock on the evening of June 27, after two days of parliamentary skirmishing, the nominating speeches began. The first name to be placed before the delegates was that of Oscar W. Underwood of Alabama. His nomination set off a twenty-minute cheering spree. A Cleveland reporter described the scene:

> They shouted and sang, marched and blew horns. They stamped and clapped their hands. Various noise-making devices were called into action. They did all this for the purpose of impressing the Convention with the charm of their candidate and his power of making his friends eager to serve him and advance his interests.
>
> After so much noise had been made over Underwood . . . the candidates with more delegates . . . had to show how little twenty minutes of uproar meant when weighed in their scale. So the Clark partisans did an hour and five minutes what the smaller body of Underwood admirers had done for one-third of that period.
>
> And then it was up to Governor Wilson's followers to beat the Clark outbreak. They did it. The Wilson "demonstration" was kept going, somehow, for an hour and fifteen minutes, and when it was over the efforts of the admirers of three candidates to help their cause along had consumed two hours and forty minutes of a wild and weary night.

And a wild and weary night it was. At 7:15 on

the morning of June 28 the exhausted delegates finally adjourned. Observers were of one opinion: this sort of thing could not go on. It was "unworthy of grown men gathered for a serious purpose." How could such men, asked one newspaper, deny the vote to women because they were too prone to "emotional outbursts." The Springfield *Republican* likewise looked askance at convention habits, pointing out the folly of a "yelling match, with the participants each year trying to break the record." But, concluded the editor, such practices are already doomed — they will soon be replaced by presidential primaries. The Des Moines *Register* deplored actions which, if indulged in in private life, would commit men "to a retreat."

The exhausted delegates gathered at 4 P.M. on June 28 to proceed to the nomination of a president. On July 2 they were still balloting. In all, it took forty-six ballots to decide the 1912 Democratic presidential nomination. Part of this long struggle was the result of the Democratic two-thirds rule, part of it to the fact that the followers of the four leading candidates were stubborn men, unwilling to yield to the inevitable. On the first ballot Clark, the favorite, received 440½ votes; Wilson, 324; Harmon, 148; and Underwood, 117½. By the fifth ballot Clark had 443; Wilson, 351; Harmon, 141½, and Underwood, 119½. To win the nomination, 728 votes were needed.

New York, with its huge block of 90 votes, stayed with Harmon until the tenth ballot, when their votes were switched to Clark. No stampede followed, however, and the roll calls droned wearily on. On the fourteenth ballot William Jennings Bryan rose from his place with the Nebraska delegation (which supported Clark) and announced in an impassioned speech that he would henceforth withhold his vote from Clark as long as Tammany-controlled New York voted for him. Slowly the balance began to turn. The Iowa delegation was growing restive under a barrage of wires from home demanding that they stand with Bryan. On the twenty-fourth ballot, late on Saturday, the second day of balloting, a poll of the Iowa delegation still kept the state's vote in the Clark column. After two more ballots the tired delegates adjourned until Monday.

On Monday, July 1, eight more ballots were taken. On the second ballot of the day — the twenty-eighth of the convention — Wilson's total at last pushed ahead of Clark's. Two ballots later Iowa switched from Clark to Wilson. Clark, emulating Roosevelt, had left Washington for Baltimore to try to save his wavering campaign, but he arrived too late.

The record of vote after vote seemed dry enough, but they were actually taken in the midst of an almost constant tumult.

It was halloing, yelling, screaming, roaring, raised to the

nth power; they "hollered," simply hollered, for an hour at a time. When a telling speech was successfully shouted or a significant vote was cast, they carried banners up and down and around the aisles; they reared mammoth pictures of candidates against the galleries; they sent up toy balloons, and tossed pigeons into the air; . . . men and women shied hats through the air; horns, whistles, and infernal contrivances without name contributed to the diabolical din. . . . Uproar that shattered the voice of a new chairman every five minutes, and wore out fresh platoons of police every hour; the efforts of bands drowned under the vocal din, and the chromatic clamor of banners assailed the delegates and left them stubborn at their posts. At Chicago they stood pat to the end. At Baltimore they changed, but they refused to stampede.

On Tuesday, July 2, the end came at last. On the first ballot of the day Illinois switched from Clark to Wilson, thus dooming Clark's chances. But still the roll calls went on, with slight gains here, and slighter losses there, until in all there had been forty-five. As the clerk prepared to begin the forty-sixth ballot, a clamor rose from the floor. The delegates had seen Senator Bankhead of Alabama making his way to the platform. This could mean but one thing — Underwood was withdrawing. Bankhead was followed by Senator Stone of Missouri who withdrew the name of Champ Clark. One by one, the other contenders released their delegates. New York suggested that the nomination of Wilson be made by acclamation, but Missouri, determined to cast one more vote for

"old Champ Clark," refused. So one more roll call — the forty-sixth — was shouted through the megaphone of the clerk, and 990 of the delegates gave their votes to Woodrow Wilson.

It was a great victory for the New Jersey governor, but perhaps even a greater victory for Bryan. "Chicago was a battle; Baltimore has been a game," wrote a reporter in *The Outlook*. "At Chicago and at Baltimore there was the same oligarchy, employed on behalf of the same interests. At Chicago the methods of the oligarchy were those of the highwayman. At Baltimore they were the methods of the card-sharper." But no matter what the methods, the "special interests" and the "bosses" had lost at Chicago and at Baltimore. At Chicago, in winning, they broke their party and lost the election; at Baltimore, in losing, their party was saved and the candidate they had opposed became, in the well-worn political phrase, "the next President of the United States."

MILDRED THRONE

The Progressive Convention

American politics had never witnessed anything like the Progressive party convention which met in the Chicago Coliseum on August 5. A reporter, sent by an anti-Roosevelt paper to write articles ridiculing the convention, quit after the second day: "I can't do it and keep my self-respect," he said. Another replied, "I've experienced religion today." Even Roosevelt was awed and almost bewildered by the enthusiasm of his followers.

This was not the typical American political convention, with noisy demonstrations by "paid shouters" — a technique almost as old as the nominating conventions themselves. Rather it was a gathering of men dedicated to a new vision. Their theme song was the stirring *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Time after time that song rang through the Coliseum, where a few weeks before all had been bitterness and hatred.

There were lighter moments at the Bull Moose convention — such as the appearance of the California delegation bearing a banner reading:

I want to be a Bull Moose,
And with the Bull Moose stand,
With Antlers on my forehead,
And a Big Stick in my hand.

The Pennsylvania delegation sang "We'll hang Boies Penrose to a sour apple tree as we go marching on." Red bandannas were the symbols of the party, worn around the neck or on the hatband, and they were waved frantically at every excuse. It remained for the New York delegation to lead the convention back to the religious theme as it entered the hall singing *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

The delegates to the convention were of many classes and kinds. There were "cynical, hard-faced professional politicians," anxious to profit from the new movement; there were also men of wealth who preferred Roosevelt to Taft; and then there were the real Progressives — men, and women too, who were dedicated to a program of social justice, who thought they saw in the formation of the Progressive party a new hope for the future.

Many had at first been reluctant to deny their Republicanism. La Follette refused to follow Roosevelt into a movement which the Wisconsin Senator had helped to found; instead, he threw his support to Wilson. Governor Hadley of Missouri, William E. Borah of Idaho, George Norris of Nebraska, and other Progressives deserted Roosevelt in favor of the Republican party, if not of Taft.

The problem facing the Progressive Republicans was a local, rather than a national, one. If they supported Roosevelt nationally, and the reg-

"Wonder Who'll Be Nominated?"

(From the Des Moines *Register and Leader*, August 4, 1912)

ular party organization locally, it would be an admission that the aim of the new party was "to elect Roosevelt and nothing more." In order to make the Progressive party a reality, state tickets must be nominated and placed on the ballot, independent of the Republicans. All sorts of schemes were proposed to get around this problem, but none seemed feasible. As a result, most states with a strong Progressive following nominated a full slate of candidates. Iowa's Progressive ticket was headed by John L. Stevens of Boone for governor.

Stevens led the Iowa delegation to the Bull Moose convention in August. Other leading Progressives, careless of their political future, joined the new party. Hiram Johnson of California stayed with Roosevelt, and led his state's delegation to Chicago. After some hesitation, Indiana's popular and famous orator, Senator Albert E. Beveridge, accepted Roosevelt's request that he give the keynote address at the convention. Among newspapermen, Medill McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune* was strong in his support of the Rough Rider. These and many others, besides the great mass of the rank and file of Progressive Republicans, made up the convention at Chicago.

The Bull Moosers met in the same Coliseum which had so recently housed them as Republicans. They used many of the same state standards, probably some of the same bunting and flags. Huge pictures of Washington, Jefferson,

Lincoln, Alexander Hamilton, and Andrew Jackson hung around the walls. Overshadowing these was a huge oil painting of Colonel Roosevelt at one end of the hall, and a "stuffed head of a splendid specimen of a bull moose" at the other.

The first day was marked by the usual formalities of organization and by the keynote address of Beveridge, a great speech in the liberal, progressive tradition.

> We stand for a nobler America. We stand for an undivided Nation. We stand for a broader liberty, a fuller justice. We stand for social brotherhood as against savage individualism. We stand for an intelligent cooperation instead of a reckless competition. We stand for mutual helpfulness instead of mutual hatred. We stand for equal rights as a fact of life instead of a catchword of politics. We stand for the rule of the people as a practical truth instead of a meaningless pretense. We stand for a representative government that represents the people. We battle for the actual rights of man.

"Thus he began, and the convention cheered." Beveridge had truly sounded the "keynote" of the Progressive movement. When he closed with the first stirring words of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic,* his audience rose as a man and thundered out the majestic words and refrain of that mighty song. They were truly a "dedicated people." It was such a sight which led one observer to "experience religion."

The high point of the convention was reached the next day when Roosevelt gave his "Confes-

sion of Faith." His appearance on the platform was greeted with an hour-long ovation. His speech, reported someone with a flair for statistics, was interrupted 145 times by applause. His nomination, and that of Hiram Johnson as his running mate, was a formality, and the convention adjourned with a sense of having accomplished great things.

Americans had experienced three tumultuous political conventions within a few weeks. They now girded themselves for the campaign — a campaign which proved as full of excitement as had the conventions.

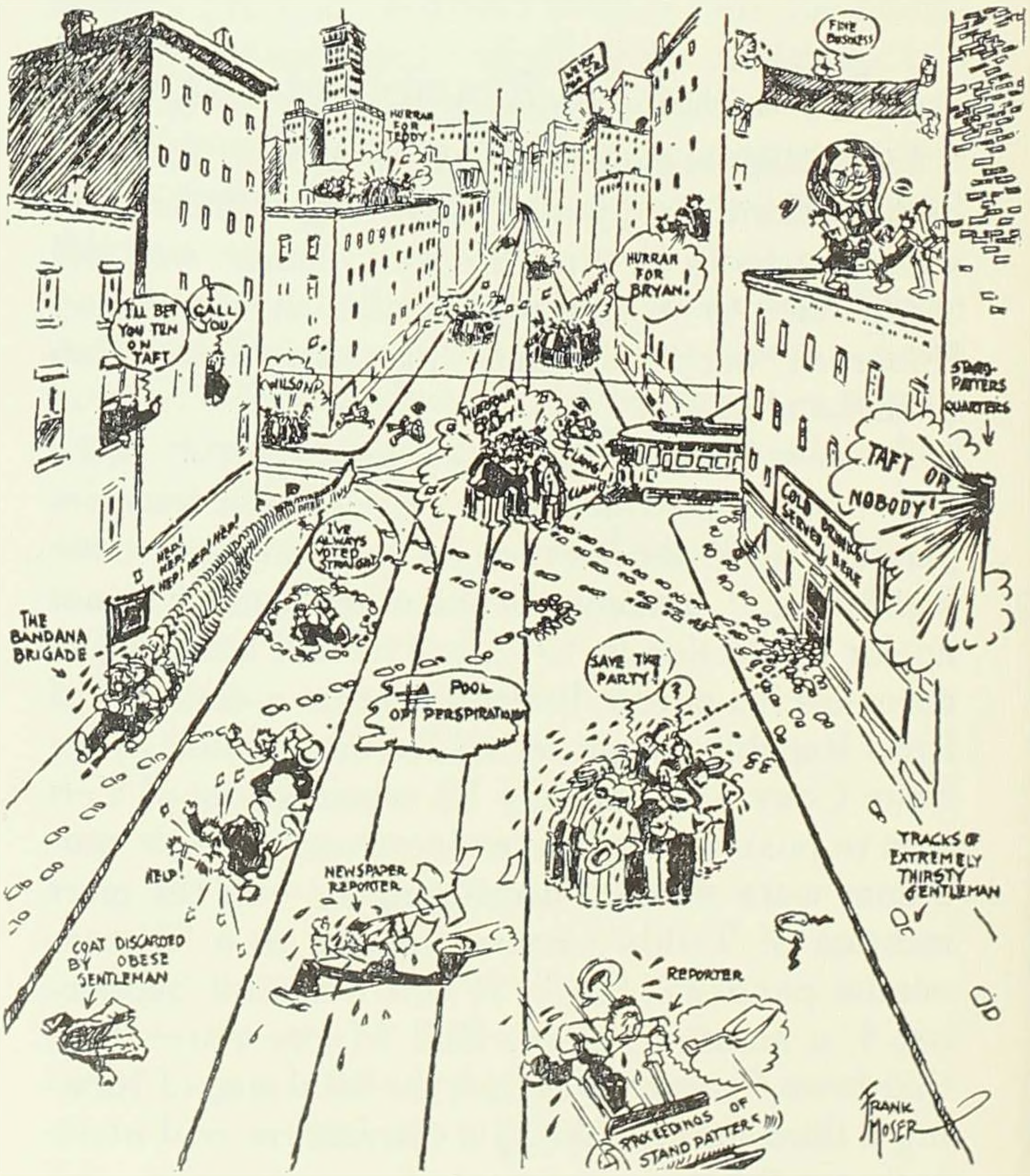
MILDRED THRONE

Iowa and the Election of 1912

Iowa Republicans were sadly divided in 1912. Some defiantly supported Taft, others went over wholeheartedly to the Roosevelt banner, and still others tried to be all things to all men, supporting Roosevelt nationally and the state Republican ticket locally.

Senator Kenyon faced the most difficult problem, since his re-election to the Senate was dependent upon the election of a Republican state legislature. Cummins, on the other hand, was not up for re-election in 1912, but he still hesitated to renounce his party. Indications that a majority of Iowa Republicans preferred Roosevelt came at the State Convention on July 10, when efforts of Taft men to push through an endorsement of their candidate were shouted down angrily, and the mere mention of Teddy's name brought on a "fifteen-minute pandemonium." It was not until September 4, a month after the Bull Moose convention, that Iowa Progressives took the fatal step of forming a third party, holding a convention, and nominating a ticket.

Iowa Democrats, on the other hand, were united and happy. It was evident that the Republican split would put Iowa in the Democratic column in



"As Des Moines Looked Yesterday"

(From the Des Moines *Register and Leader*, July 11, 1912)

November, nationally at least, and many had hopes that the state offices would follow suit.

Iowa's strongest Republican newspaper, the Des Moines *Register,* waited until August 27 before announcing its choice. On the one hand, Editor Harvey Ingham could not condone the methods of the Taft forces at Chicago; on the other, he could not approve Roosevelt's third party, even though he was strongly Progressive himself. Never had so many Iowans faced such a difficult political choice. The solution of the *Register* was based on an amazing if not revolutionary bit of political reasoning. Since the contest was between Roosevelt and Wilson, wrote the editor, and since there was no doubt that the next Congress would have a Democratic majority, then it would be best to elect Roosevelt to the presidency so that he could block the too-radical actions of the Congress. Thus the *Register* had solved its problem by advocating a stalemate — an indication of the vast political confusion in 1912.

A few days after its decision, the *Register* carried a banner headline: SENATOR CUMMINS IS FOR ROOSEVELT. Iowa's senior Senator had at last made his choice: he repudiated the Taft nomination; he promised to vote for Roosevelt; but he still opposed the formation of a third party and urged Iowans to vote the regular state Republican ticket. Senator Kenyon remained, unhappily and uneasily, in the Taft ranks.

Meanwhile, campaign trains shuttled back and forth across Iowa, carrying candidates of every persuasion. Roosevelt was in the state on September 4, making several speeches and many platform talks. In all, about 25,000 enthusiastic people saw and heard him, as he traveled from Keokuk, through Ottumwa, Eddyville, and Oskaloosa to Des Moines. At the latter city he spoke to 12,000 Progressives gathered at their party convention, where they had just nominated Judge John L. Stevens as their gubernatorial candidate.

Teddy, energetic as ever, wasted no time during his "whistle stops." At Ottumwa he began speaking before the train had come to a full stop, emphasizing his remarks with waves of his black fedora, and he was still speaking when the train pulled out five minutes later. His tour of Iowa was considered a great success.

The Taft Republican campaign was neither satisfactory nor a success. Traditionally, Iowa opened Republican campaigns with a banquet for the party faithful at the Tippecanoe Club in Des Moines, but in 1912 the club secretary found all the available orators "too busy" to attend, and the project was dropped. Taft campaign literature, sent to party headquarters, was left forgotten in a corner. When, on October 8, the Taft campaign was finally opened by "a public speaker," later identified as Warren G. Harding, a scant 1,000 bothered to attend.

Woodrow Wilson, who had visited Iowa during his spring campaign for the nomination, made a run through Iowa, but few people saw him since his train crossed the state at night. He spoke twice at Sioux City on September 17. His running mate, Thomas Marshall, spoke at Clinton on October 8. This was scant attention to pay to a state where many were predicting a Democratic victory; perhaps even the Democrats could not realize that at last they were going to crack Iowa's long Republican record.

More important for Democratic victory than speeches by the candidates themselves was the appearance of one of Iowa's favorite orators, William Jennings Bryan, at Des Moines on October 12. When he entered the hall, late and tired, 5,000 people rose and cheered. His voice husky from long campaigning, Bryan spoke for two hours.

Two days later the papers carried great headlines: COLONEL ROOSEVELT SHOT BY ANARCHIST. Just before departing from his Milwaukee hotel for a scheduled speech, Roosevelt had been shot at point-blank range by a fanatic who said he did not approve of third-term candidates. Fortunately, the bullet was deflected by a thick bundle of the manuscript of his speech, which Roosevelt carried in his breast pocket. In spite of a bullet in his lung, the stubborn Colonel insisted on going ahead with his speech, talking for over an hour,

although growing noticeably weaker as he neared the end. This accident curtailed his speaking engagements, but the campaign rolled on toward election day without loss of momentum.

On the eve of election, each party claimed victory, although both wings of Republicanism in Iowa knew they were whistling in the dark. As the votes were counted, on November 4, it quickly became evident that Wilson had won, although the combined popular vote of Taft and Roosevelt totaled more than that for Wilson. But in the electoral college Wilson had triumphed overwhelmingly, with 435 votes against 88 for Roosevelt, who carried three states, and 8 for Taft, who won the votes of only Utah and Vermont.

Iowa citizens gave 185,325 votes to Wilson, 161,819 to Roosevelt, and 119,805 to Taft. Of the state offices, all remained safely in the Republican column, however, indicating a good many "scratched" ballots. George W. Clarke, Republican candidate for governor, ran well ahead of Roosevelt, defeating both the Democratic and Progressive candidates. Of Iowa's eleven Representatives in Congress, three Democrats were elected, in contrast to only one in 1910. The state legislature had a Republican majority, so that Kenyon's seat in the Senate was safe. Thus, although Iowa had voted for a Democrat for president, her representation in Congress was still largely Republican.

Iowa and the nation had elected Wilson in 1912 because, in the words of an historian of the progressive era, "his seemed the one serene voice." The people believed in the sincerity of his progressivism. "Unembarrassed by the vituperations of his two opponents, he was free to confine himself exclusively to the discussion of principles and policies." In the last analysis, however, and on the basis of the figures, Wilson won because of the split in the Republican party. The combined vote for Roosevelt and Taft was 1,323,728 more than the Democratic vote, while Wilson's Democratic vote was actually 122,892 less than that polled by Bryan in 1908. Thus, if the Republican ranks had not been split, 1912 might very well have been a victory for the GOP.

By 1916 Europe was blazing with war, and the United States was clinging to a weakening neutrality. Foreign affairs had entered the American political scene. The platforms of 1912 were perhaps the last which would emphasize purely domestic issues and ignore the larger world in presenting a program to the American voter.

MILDRED THRONE

Iowa Politics, 1916-1948

Woodrow Wilson entered office on the eve of a great world conflict. Just fifteen months after his inauguration in March, 1913, an assassin's bullet in faraway Sarajevo plunged Europe into war. Wilson was re-elected in 1916, running on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." Iowa, repenting her lapse from Republicanism, returned to her traditional party and voted for Charles Evans Hughes.

The following four years saw America enter the war and help win it; they saw peace treaties signed and plans for a League of Nations drawn up. Woodrow Wilson, ill and distraught, traveled over the country pleading for his cause, a cause that failed under the blows of Henry Cabot Lodge and the Republicans in Congress.

America was tired of war, of Europe, and of the Democrats. In 1920 Warren Harding — the Ohio politician who had nominated Taft at the 1912 convention — was swept into office by an overwhelming majority. In 1924 his successor, Calvin Coolidge, won over a combination of Democrats and a new Progressive party led by Wisconsin's Robert La Follette. The majority of Iowans preferred Coolidge, but more of them

voted for La Follette than for the Democratic nominee, John W. Davis.

The year 1928 was a banner year for Iowans: a native son, Herbert Hoover, was elected to the presidency. America was at the peak of her prosperity, a popular Republican was in the White House, and all seemed well with the world. Then came the fateful market crash in 1929 and a depression which became the worst in the nation's history and which spread throughout the world. America and the Republican party staggered under the blow; it was inevitable that in 1932 the voters would turn to a Democrat for a solution. Iowa gave Franklin D. Roosevelt a majority of over 90,000 votes, in a total of over 900,000, against the once-popular Hoover. Again, in 1936, Iowa voted Democratic, although by a smaller majority.

A measure of prosperity returned by 1940, aided by the outbreak of a second great war in Europe. In 1940 and 1944, in spite of this war, which engulfed the world, Iowa decided it was "time for a change" and cast her votes for Wendell Willkie and Thomas E. Dewey. With 1945 came the death of Roosevelt, the end of the war, and Harry S. Truman as President.

The Republicans now looked to 1948 as a year of victory, their first since 1928. They offered the nation their 1944 loser, Thomas E. Dewey; the Democrats, with many misgivings, presented the

incumbent, Harry S. Truman. On election night the nation sat up late to listen to the returns — the Republicans confident, the Democrats resigned. But the returns did not go according to plans or polls; the Democrats were winning. It was not until mid-morning of the day after election that the Republicans conceded that they had again failed in their bid for the White House. And, surprisingly, in the Truman column was found that "safe" Republican state — Iowa. One hundred years after her first presidential vote, Iowa again had "gone Democratic."

MILDRED THRONE

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, 1848–1948
(Winner's name in italics)

Year	*Candidate*	*Party*	*Iowa*	*U. S.*	*Electoral Vote*
1848	*Taylor*	Whig	10,626	1,360,099	163
	Cass	Dem	12,052	1,220,544	127
1852	*Pierce*	Dem	17,823	1,601,274	254
	Scott	Whig	15,895	1,386,580	42
1856	*Buchanan*	Dem	37,568	1,838,169	174
	Fremont	Rep	45,073	1,341,264	114
	Fillmore	American	9,669	874,534	8
1860	*Lincoln*	Rep	70,118	1,866,452	180
	Douglas	Dem	55,639	1,375,157	12
	Breckinridge	Dem. (South)	1,034	847,953	72
	Bell	Const. Union	1,763	590,631	39
1864	*Lincoln*	Rep	88,500	2,213,665	212
	McClellan	Dem	49,525	1,802,237	21
1868	*Grant*	Rep	120,399	3,012,833	214
	Seymour	Dem	74,040	2,703,249	80
1872	*Grant*	Rep	131,566	3,597,132	286
	Greeley	Dem	71,179	2,834,125	66
1876	*Hayes*	Rep	171,326	4,033,768	185
	Tilden	Dem	112,121	4,300,590	184
1880	*Garfield*	Rep	183,904	4,449,053	214
	Hancock	Dem	105,845	4,442,035	155
	Weaver	Greenback	32,327	307,306	—
1884	*Cleveland*	Dem	177,316	4,911,017	219
	Blaine	Rep	197,088	4,848,334	182
1888	*Harrison*	Rep	211,603	5,444,337	233
	Cleveland	Dem	179,877	5,540,050	168
1892	*Cleveland*	Dem	196,366	5,554,414	277
	Harrison	Rep	219,795	5,190,802	145
	Weaver	Populist	20,595	1,027,329	22
1896	*McKinley*	Rep	289,293	7,035,638	271
	Bryan	Dem	223,741	6,467,946	176
1900	*McKinley*	Rep	307,808	7,219,530	292
	Bryan	Dem	209,265	6,358,071	155
1904	*Roosevelt*	Rep	307,907	7,628,834	336
	Parker	Dem	149,141	5,084,401	140
1908	*Taft*	Rep	275,210	7,679,006	321
	Bryan	Dem	200,771	6,409,106	162
1912	*Wilson*	Dem	185,325	6,286,214	435
	Roosevelt	Prog	161,819	4,126,020	88
	Taft	Rep	119,805	3,483,922	8
1916	*Wilson*	Dem	221,699	9,129,606	277
	Hughes	Rep	280,439	8,538,221	254
1920	*Harding*	Rep	634,674	16,152,200	404
	Cox	Dem	227,921	9,147,353	127
1924	*Coolidge*	Rep	537,635	15,725,016	382
	Davis	Dem	162,600	8,385,586	136
	La Follette	Prog	272,243	4,822,856	13
1928	*Hoover*	Rep	623,570	21,392,190	444
	Smith	Dem	379,311	15,016,443	87
1932	*Roosevelt*	Dem	508,019	22,821,857	472
	Hoover	Rep	414,433	15,761,841	59
1936	*Roosevelt*	Dem	621,756	27,751,612	532
	Landon	Rep	487,977	16,681,913	8
1940	*Roosevelt*	Dem	578,800	27,243,466	449
	Willkie	Rep	632,370	22,304,755	82
1944	*Roosevelt*	Dem	499,876	25,602,505	432
	Dewey	Rep	547,267	22,006,278	99
1948	*Truman*	Dem	522,380	24,045,052	303
	Dewey	Rep	494,018	21,896,927	189