1957

Political behavior in a time of crisis, 1865-1905

John Cameron
Colby College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/seniorscholars

Part of the Political Science Commons

Colby College theses are protected by copyright. They may be viewed or downloaded from this site for the purposes of research and scholarship. Reproduction or distribution for commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the author.

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/seniorscholars/39

This Senior Scholars Paper (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Scholar Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.
POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN A TIME OF CRISIS, 1865-1905

by

John Wilson Cameron

Submitted in partial requirement for fulfillment of the Senior Scholar Program.

Colby College

1957
APPROVED BY

[Signatures]

David Bridgesman
Tutor

[Signatures]

Senior Scholars Committee, Chairman

Richard Cary
Major Adviser

Major Department Chairman
This paper began as a study of the unconventional types of American bosses in the United States from 1865-1900, but after about three months of research, I found that I was faced with an impossible task as far as this topic was concerned. No research of any importance has been done in this field, and since Colby does not possess the facilities to do original research work on this particular topic, I found that the emphasis of my paper would have to be changed to some extent. I decided, therefore, to make this paper a study of political behavior and use my original unconventional bosses as representatives of the various types of political behavior that were present from 1865-1905. I must admit that my selection of men to study was not done in a very scientific way, for I used as my major criteria their "colorfulness" in politics; I wanted to make this paper as interesting as possible and I knew that I would be working at an advantage if I could place before the reader men whose personalities were exciting as well as being worthy of attention.

In writing this paper, I have encountered one problem after another, and most of them, though they have not proved to be insurmountable, have not been easy to solve. I would say that my biggest problem has been my difficulty in expressing myself on paper; to a writer, this is bound to be a discouraging problem, but it is one that can help him gain a
maturity and understanding of himself that cannot be found in any other way. Writing a paper of this type also teaches a person "intellectual humility;" by this, I mean the more that one studies any particular subject or area of learning, the more he comes to realize how little he really knows. I am sure that any college professor would agree with me when I say that this is a most valuable lesson for a college senior to learn.

From the start, let me say that I do not claim that this paper is an original and creative one; I believe that there are very few college students who have the capabilities, or the resources at hand, to "create" at such an early age. To write with insight and maturity, one has to have experienced life much more fully than college students yet have. I agree wholeheartedly with Christian Gauss of Yale University who has said: "Historians tell us that only out of a study of the past can we understand our own experience. I have come to suspect that... the reverse of this is much nearer the truth. By thesis therefore is this. Only out of our own experience can we understand the meaning of our own lives and the lives of others. Only out of our own experience, therefore, can we understand the meaning of history." I ask the reader to keep this statement in mind as he reads my paper.

I prefer to think of my Senior Scholar project not as the creation of a tour de force but rather as a rewarding and
unique type of learning experience for myself—a learning experience that, unfortunately, one is not able to find in the lecture hall under the supervision of a professor, but one which requires more independent and thoughtful work on the part of the individual student. After finishing his first novel, Ray Stannard Baker, wrote: "It's all I've got to give, and I've given it. I'd like to be more than I am; but cannot. If people, even a few people, like what I have written I shall be well rewarded; if they don't, I cannot help it." I say amen to Mr. Baker's statement.

I am especially grateful to my tutor, Dr. David Bridgman, who had enough faith in my judgment to allow me to write this paper as I desired, and who came to my rescue only when I was getting too far off the track. I also wish to thank Mrs. Earla Robertson of the Colby College Library for the cooperation I received from her in getting books through inter-library loan.

J.W.G.

April 28, 1957
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Overview of America, 1665-1900 ........................................ p. 1

2. Tom Watson: The Nativist In Politics ................................. p. 52

3. The City Boss In Politics .............................................. p. 93


5. Mark Hanna: The Businessman In Politics .......................... p. 142


7. Conclusion ........................................................................ p. 195
Chapter 1
OVERVIEW OF AMERICA, 1865-1900

Lieutenant General U. S. Grant

Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia
April 9, 1865

General: "I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as prepared by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper offices to carry the stipulations into effect."

R. E. Lee, General

There was stillness in the land once again. The guns were silenced and the soldiers wearily started the journey back to their respective homes. Sometimes singing and joking could be heard, but, more often, the journey was a somber one -- the memory of war was too close to them and the devastation that the war had left behind could be seen all around them.

The two generals of the opposing armies had met at Appomattox in early April of 1865 and had declared peace -- now it had to be made. This was not to be easy. As in every major conflict, the social tensions bred by war intensified the problems of peace; these tensions were all too conspicuous in 1865, for America was divided by sectional hatreds, political conflicts, and economic antagonisms. It was obvious that no single generation could heal the wounds of war, unite a separated people, and secure equality for the freed slaves. Unity was to be sought after, but division was to be the result. Men who lacked the strong and intelligent leadership that was so desperately absent in this period were to become
confused and blinded by their own prejudices.

The eleven states of the rebellious South were not in an enviable position in 1865, for the energy and confidence of the people were gone. There were only about five million whites and three and a half million Negroes to rebuild their homeland and many of these whites had been crippled and debilitated by the war. Impoverishment was the general rule in South with the exception of a few rich speculators and war profiteers. The relations between Negroes and whites became increasingly more precarious, and the bloody and frenzied race riots in New Orleans seemed to be an indication of the things to come during the next decade.

The Southerners had many problems to face. The farms and plantations were insolvent and there was little chance for the coming of prosperity, due to the lack of ready money in the South. Their labor force was depleted and in a state of flux. There was no adequate system for the transporting and marketing of the crops. The only solution to these innumerable dilemmas seemed to rest with the modernization of the South's economic order as well as the adoption of a more liberal attitude toward the primary components of the labor force. The unused natural resources of their homeland convinced Southerners that there was room for industry as well as agriculture here; "we wish to Yankeeize the South; we want to get away from our parochial personality." The energetic men of the South also saw in the unsettled areas of Texas and Arkansas a chance to start all over again in a section
where land was cheap and the soil was productive.

The war that had brought ruin to the South had been more friendly to northern interests. The bankers came into control of the liquid wealth of the nation and the industrialists learned to use machines efficiently for production; the time was ripe for exploitation on a giant scale -- Capitalism now had its first view of the Promised Land. The times were stirring and it was a lazy fellow that was not able to make his fortune. Northern industry was booming when the war ended and the boom had eight more years to run; records in industrial output were being broken. The feelings of the Northerners toward victory, power, and wealth came to be reflected in industry. The Steel Age was just coming into being and it made vast contributions to the improvement of transportation, engineering, building construction, and rails. American life in the North between the War and the Panic of 1873 was characterized by a greater prosperity and comfort than ever before; it was a larger and fuller life that people were living. Godkin remarked that Americans are far less raw and provincial than their fathers; they have seen more, they have read more, they have mixed more with people of other nationalities, they have thought more and had to think more, they have spent more for ideas and given more away."

Fortunately the industrialism of the United States,
which was advancing swiftly, was to recast society, and the problems of the Civil War were to be discarded for new problems. In this period of its history, the United States was teetering between two worlds -- one rural and agricultural, the other urban and industrial. Behind agricultural America lay two and a half centuries of experience -- it was a world which was decentralized, democratic, and individualistic; it was the world of the Adams, Jacksons, and Jeffersons. The newly-born Industrial America offered a centralized world which was capitalistic and ambitious. One world was decaying, the other rising, and between them would be friction until one or the other of them had become the supreme master. Sectionalism was far from dead, for in the South another order was rising unsteadily on the ruins of the plantation system; in the East an expanding factory economy was weaving a new pattern of industrial life; and in the West a rebirth of agriculture was made possible by the application of machines to rich prairie soil. These sections were being bound together in a common whole by a great web of iron rails. America's frontier was fast disappearing.

The natural consequence of the great industrial prosperity of the time with its increasing number of mills, railroads, and its growing stream of European immigration was the rise of the city to new importance in American life -- the city can be said to be the supreme achievement of the new
industrialism, for within the city were found all the new economic forces -- vast accumulations of capital, business and financial institutions, railway yards, smoky mills, the white-collar middle class as well as the motley wage-earning population. The city proved to be an excellent study in contrasts -- squalor matching splendor, municipal scandal contending with civic spirit. Whitman gloried in the "splendor, picturesqueness, and oceanic amplitude of these great cities."

From 1860-1910 the urban population multiplied almost seven times and in 1890 it was estimated that one third of our population resided in the cities. The city, with its immense need for new facilities in transportation, sanitation, policing, lighting, gas, and public buildings, offered a magnificent internal market for American business; all the cities of the country busied themselves with carrying through astonishing public improvements. Horsecar lines, imposing structures of limestone or marble, concrete sidewalks, and gas lamps became an integral part of the city.

The industrial city was a sprawling maze of factories and railroads, palaces and slums swarming with farmers, middle-class Americans, and hordes of Italian, Greek, and Polish laborers. Here was the Biblical Tower of Babel transferred to the 19th century. Chicago seems to offer a good example of the rising city: in 1871 it was an overgrown village which was destroyed by fire -- from the charred ruins
in 1875 there emerged a city. The streets of Chicago were unpaved and jagged wooden sidewalks rose and fell in a crazyquilt confusion; there was a crowded mass of crate-like commercial buildings, endless rows of smokestacks, and vast slum areas. The atmosphere was always heavily permeated with the odorous smell of the horses, as well as the dust and smoke from the factories and stockyards. Chicago at this time was considered the most frankly American city -- here the commercial East met the agrarian West and clashed; here were concentrated the railroads, the reaper works, the processing establishments, the granaries and packing plants; here the native Americans and foreigners lived in almost equal numbers. The paramount devotion to the Almighty Dollar and the quest for material success epitomized the Chicago spirit; George Pullman, Marshall Field, Cyrus McCormack, Armour and Swift found this city suitable for their future plans.

These American cities which sprang to life out of mere villages and grew into great metropolises were often organized around nothing but a mill, factory, or railway and had no settled governing class for administrative purposes. Their pace of growth was all out of proportion to the capability of management; this combination of rapid growth and lack of administrative management was a situation that proved ideal for the development of the city boss and an informal type of local government.
The rural migrant to the city was startled and frightened by urban life and its poverty, crime, corruption, and impersonality. To a man who had been raised in the high moral doctrines of evangelical Protestantism, the city seemed a strange threat to his civilization; he realized that he was living in a time of agitation when there was a general shaking up of virtues and vices. Crime, vice, and graft were all rooted in the slums and the saloon, and religion was confronted with the need of adapting its teaching and methods to an urban rather than a rural constituency. The dense population of the city also posed new problems of transportation, lighting, sewerage, sanitation, and fire protection. Criminologists pointed with alarm to the great increase of lawlessness in the United States, and a census inquiry disclosed a fifty per cent rise in the number of prison inmates from 1880-1890 while other civilized countries were showing a declining homicidal rate; fundamental blame for this increase was placed on the unhealthy urban growth, unrestricted migration, the saloon, and the maladjusted Negro.  

Theological thought was affected by the rise of the city, for churches were faced with serious urban problems. How could they compete for men's attentions in a secular world that enshrined profits as the new goal? How could they match the lure of the theater, sports, and newspapers? Far worse than this was the publication of *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* by Charles Darwin, which impelled all thinking people to recon-
consider their traditional attitude toward the Bible. In the eyes of the faithful, the foundations of faith were imperiled by these grave heresies of Darwinism and the science of Biblical criticism; gradually, however, many Christians came to accept the fact that Darwinism and Christianity were not necessarily irreconcilable, and, despite the many theological obstacles that beset the path of religion, the last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a substantial gain in church membership for all denominations.

The middle-class woman had more time on her hands than ever before as a result of inventions, and the way was open to her for a wider participation in the world that lay beyond the domestic walls. Women began their campaign for suffrage, better educational facilities, legal equality, and political recognition. Feminine "breadwinners" in the United States rose from 2,500,000 in 1880 to 4,000,000 in 1890 and to 5,330,000 in 1900; in the 1880's the industrial states began to give serious attention to acts concerned with regulating factory conditions of female labor. In this same period there was also a great growth in the divorce rate which was said to have been the result of urban conditions; the anonymity of city life, its distractions and temptations, the growing practice of living in boarding houses and flats, the harsh struggle for existence, the opportunities afforded women for self-support -- all these factors were said to have had their effect on the increasing divorce rate.
The rise of the city should not be looked upon as building only evil, for education, literature, science, invention, the fine arts, social reforms, public hygiene, the use of leisure, and the "good life" were given a lift and a direction by those who lived in urban centers. Only a person who had lived in this period could imagine how the invention of the telephone added to the speed of living and the invasion of privacy; it helped make America the most talkative nation, it greatly facilitated social and business intercourse, and it brought urban influences into the areas of rural isolation. Improved incandescent lighting lengthened the working day for both the intellectual and physical toilers, and it gave an enormous boost to the after-dark amusements, particularly the theater. Invention after invention had similar effects.

Taking the nation as a whole, improvement of the educational system occurred at every stage. With the concentration of wealth and population in the urban centers, higher salaries for teachers, better buildings, and better methods of instruction could be provided; the only section of the country that lagged behind was the South which failed to recognize opportunities for education as a civic obligation. Elsewhere this period was marked by the spread of new ideas and the addition of new subjects to the curriculum -- drawing, nature lore, sewing, manual training, general science, and commercial subjects; discipline and drill were discarded for a more effective presentation of subject matter. In 1880 the total amount
of schooling received by the average person in his lifetime
was less than four years; in 1898 it amounted to exactly
five years; one should remember that undoubtedly the varied
literary aspirations and attainments of the time were condi-
tioned by this fact. The work of the women in their fight
for equal educational opportunities seemed to pay off, for
by 1898 four out of every five universities, colleges, and
professional schools in the United States admitted women;
their right to as diversified an education as men was no
longer questioned. Colleges and universities became the
recipients of vast fortunes from the world of big business
and, because of this generosity, impossible dreams became
realities. Once scholars and scientists came to be amply
equipped with the tools of research, such as laboratories;
libraries, and museums, they were prepared to make positive
contributions to the world's learning.

One has only to read a few of the works of writers of
this period to realize that they reflected the varying and
inconsistent moods evoked by this new orientation of society.
Some sought to preserve in their pages a civilization that
was fast passing, while others wrote of their acute disgust
with the city and its culture. The unrepentant romanticists
turned their backs on what they did not care to see and
sounded the clarion call to romance and forgetfulness.
What is most important is that these writers enjoyed a
popular following and support which was without any
earlier parallel in this country's history; by the end of
the century, America had become "the land of the general
reader" through the influence of schools, bookstores, libra-
ries, magazines, and newspapers.

The city was not all bad nor all good; rather it was
humanity compressed -- the best and worst combined in a
strangely composite community. The city crystallized the
failure of man to solve the social problems of a modern
world. Henry Demarest Lloyd said: "The huge, rushing,
aggregate life of a great city...curtails man of his whole-
ness, specializes him, quickens some powers, stunts others
..."6 E. A. Ross, the sociologist, warned his readers of
the great danger of impersonality that was a result of the
growing city -- "The modern high-power dealer of woe wears
immaculate linen, carries a silk hat and a lighted cigar,
sins with a clear countenance and a serene soul, leagues
or months from the evil he causes. Upon his gentlemanly
presence the eventual blood and tears do not obtrude them-
selves...the tropical belt of sin we are sweeping into is
largely impersonal. Our integrity is wireless, and we
know not whose withers are wrung by it. The hurt passes
into that vague mass, the 'public,' and it is there lost
to view."7 Senator William Sprague in a speech to his
colleagues credited the city with bringing about the gen-
eral decay of our society: "...the state of American society
today has less virtue, less morality in it, than that of any
civilised Government in the world...It is the strivings of those who are rich to be richer, and in that process virtue is lost.\textsuperscript{8}

* * * *

Prior to the Civil War, the Indian and the buffalo roamed over most of the trans-Mississippi West; it was during the next quarter of a century that the pioneers surged into this untried land, and it was in great part the absorbing power of the West which enabled one million soldiers to resume civilian life without serious maladjustment. With the discovery of new methods of farming to cope with inadequate rainfall, the invention of barbed wire, and the laying of the railroad, the West no longer looked so formidable to great numbers of people. America turned her face westward as its public lands were thrown open to settlers by the Morrill Land Grant Act, the Homestead Act, and the provision that gave the Union Pacific princely domain; by 1871 the whole area given away by the government had reached the total of 129,000,000 acres -- three times the size of New England.\textsuperscript{9}

The first urgent business for these new inhabitants to attend to was the wresting of this wild region from the Indians and the buffalo. For years all the Indian tribes had maintained a stubborn and successful resistance to white penetration of their hunting grounds -- it was the wanton destruction of the buffalo that most seriously affected the Indian's livelihood. The federal government set aside
reserves where the Indians could be supported while they re-
cast their lives to fit the white man's mould; in many cases
when the Indians had settled upon the lands assigned to them
by compact and had begun to support themselves, they were
jostled off into the wilderness again -- between 1864 and
1890 the West was seldom at peace as troops ranged over the
plains in search of recalcitrant Indian bands, hunting them
down, and slaughtering them if possible. A truce occurred
between the white and red men in 1887 when Congress passed the
Dawes Act which carried the promise of land ownership and Am-
erican citizenship to the Indian.

Mining may be regarded as the first great attraction of
the Far West; tales of mining towns filled with a reckless,
excitement-loving population symbolized the romance of the
"wild West" to the Easterners; the existence of this vast,
romantic treasure house known as the West made Americans feel
that the age of almost endless opportunity in America had not
yet come to an end. The life of the miner in the West was a
rough and exciting one -- claim jumping, banditry, and other
assorted crimes were not uncommon, and dance halls, saloons,
and gambling dens were designed to satisfy the most discri-
minating taste in debauchery. These miners found it necessary
to formulate their own social standards and laws; each miners'
camp had its own executive officers and judges and it enforced
laws that were passed by means of public opinion and public
protection officers.
Scarcely less romantic than the miners were the cowboys who followed the miners to the Far West; these ranchmen were only temporary occupants of the Plains, utilizing its wealth in pasturage while it was waiting for farmers who should put it to more profitable employment. The rise of the cattle range occurred simultaneously with the building of transportation lines, destruction of the buffalo, and the suppression of the Indian. Beef prices which were inflated by the wartime demand insured high profits to any man who was able to protect his land from other men with the same ambition -- land frauds in the cattle kingdom were universal. The cowboy with his own lingo, folklore, and custom flourished for a few years, and then faded into legend as the open ranges were criss-crossed by the railroads and the barbed wire fences of the homesteads.

It was the two decades following 1870 that witnessed the greatest expansion of the West. The public lands were for the most part occupied by small holders -- war veterans, Eastern clerks and artisans, German and Scandinavian immigrants; they were families with little cash and each penny was saved in order to obtain stock and machinery. Immigration and the railroad seemed to have been the most influential factors in the settlement of the West. By 1890 one in every five persons in the Great West was foreign-born; wealth, adventure, health, and the desire for an easier way
of living played their parts in increasing the tide of immigrants. Commenting on the importance of railroads, one Westerner said: "Without the railroad, it would have required a century to accomplish what has been done in five years under its powerful influence;" over the gleaming rails of the Union Pacific and other transcontinental railroads came the farmers who settled the Far West; these same railroads which were considered such a blessing in 1870 were to be, by 1890, cursed as an evil.

By the end of the seventies, the highly romanticized West was gone and Americans no longer felt that sense of spaciousness and adventure that it had experienced before the settlement -- the West was gaining maturity as it developed new industries (salmon packing, lumbering, the wine industry), and as it drew closer to the East due to the railroads. Agriculture was taking its dominant place in the new economy. Like the other sections of the country, life in the West was pitched to a key of conflict: there was conflict between rival cattle barons, between cattlemen and shepherds, between Whites and Reds, between miners and outlaws, and between ranchers and homesteaders. By 1890 an unbroken frontier line no longer existed -- the continent was settled and America had to adjust to existence within the closed borders.
In 1891 Josiah Strong wrote: "During the last ten years, we have suffered a peaceful invasion by an army four times as vast as the estimated numbers of Goths and Vandals that swept over S. Europe and overwhelmed Europe." Strong was speaking here of the great numbers of immigrants that were coming to the United States during this particular period; from 1860-1900 about 14,000,000 immigrants entered the United States.

The reasons for this exodus from the Old World are that times were hard in some of these people's homelands -- there was land trouble and the Fenian Movement in Ireland, the panic of 1866 in England, and the Austro-Prussian conflicts; the need of transcontinental railroads to unload their large landholdings and the demands of heavy industry upon the labor market were probably the immigrants' major incentives for leaving their homes -- here was a promise of prosperity, comfort, and opportunity. While the Northern Europeans became farmers, entered business, or the skilled professions, immigrants from Southern or Eastern Europe (Irish, Russians, Poles, Jews, and Italians) usually became unskilled laborers in mines, factories, or railroads. Crowded into squalid ghetto-like communities near the packing houses and railroad shops, they were isolated from the normal currents of the city and were looked upon by Americans as strike-breakers and scabs, as criminal and immoral, as illiterate and insane; it was in this era that the national speech acquired such phrases as "wop," "dago," "bohunk," "grease-ball," and "mike." The natives, in many
places, were outnumbered and overwhelmed and found themselves being pushed into their own ghetto; the fear that haunted many Americans was that because of the growing numbers of these immigrants they were liable to overwhelm "American blood" and bastardize American civilization.\textsuperscript{12}

An immigrant's awakening to the wonders and evils of American life and, in particular, to the city are well described by C. C. Jensen:

"My childish responses to the new world uttered themselves in my emotions. A bartender giving me a plate of corned beef and cabbage filled my heart with a rare joy. A park cop poking my ribs with his club made me angry enough to kill. A watchman pointing his gun at me gave me a fear that literally tasted salty. The new world with its new words and new feelings grew into a corporation -- like the Trinity almost. First in rank came the new order; second the new words which were only symbols and were a kind of substituting vicar; third, the new feelings -- which were like a spirit that revealed and appraised its two triumveral peers, a sort of guardian ghost that told me the difference between good and evil. For the new world was neither all good nor all evil. I worshiped it with the faith of a child, that is, selfishly.\textsuperscript{13}

The immigrants' conception of their role in the political life of America was a curious one and it was in this area that they came in sharp conflict with the Yankee-Protestants. The Yankee's idea of political action called for widespread participation and eager civic interest in our democracy -- politics was the responsibility and business of all men. The immigrant, on the other hand, who had come from a peasant environment and an autocratic type of government was totally unaccustomed to this type of a role. He did not envision himself as a poli-
tional agent, for he saw government as the instrument of the ruling classes, and in the Old World those who governed always acted from interests hostile to those of the peasant; the immigrant knew the State only in its role of the harsh, unfriendly exploiter. Each individual had a place within which he ought to stay -- to push oneself forward was a grievous sin.

The immigrant did not long for liberty; he was interested only in security, for he was afraid of getting hurt. He looked not to politics for the realization of any high principles but for concrete and personal gains through personal relationships -- it was the city boss that became this sought-after specialist in personal relations. It was the boss who saw the needs of the immigrant and made him the political instrument of the urban machine which was able to provide quick naturalization, jobs, and social services; the boss encouraged the immigrant to think of politics as a field in which one could legitimately pursue one's own interests. The political boss accepted the immigrant for what he was and asked no questions, and the immigrant, in turn, was grateful for the services rendered and submitted himself willingly to the boss's experienced leadership. The immigrant looked to the ward boss as the champion of the little men against the big, the humble against the proud; he was the "kindly overlord, the feudal noble translated from the manor
to the ward." This loyalty of the immigrant was one of the major reasons why local reform was so short-lived.

The Yankees at this time were busying themselves with reforms in local and national governments, but their messages fell on deaf ears when it came to the immigrant population, for such abstractions as citizenship, responsibility, efficiency, good government, and "business-like government" had no meaning within the immigrant's experience. The immigrants had become even more conservative in their course of migration and they came to dread political change for the reason of the disruptions to their life that might come as a result of it. The efficiency that the reformers preached about too often expressed itself in an inhuman disregard for the individual. One reformer saw the situation quite clearly when he said: "The immigrant lacks the faculty of abstraction. He thinks not of the welfare of the community but only of himself."15

During the forty years after Lee's surrender, an industrial expansion without parallel in the world's history occurred; the factory displaced the farm as the typical economic unit and revolutions in methods of production and transportation provided spectacular wealth for America. The Civil War furnished the capital that was needed for commercial undertakings on a large scale. Exploitation, for the first time, was provided with adequate resources and competent
techniques; raw materials were limitless -- coal and oil from Pennsylvania and Ohio, copper and iron from Michigan, and gold, silver, and lumber from the Pacific coast. The Bessemer process turned an age of iron into an age of steel and mills were hurriedly constructed to produce rails for the expanding railways. The reaper and binder, the sulky plow, and threshing machine helped to create large scale agriculture. Invention played a major part in the growth of business: the washing machine, the sewing machine, the use of kerosene and anthracite coal in homes, refrigeration, the passenger elevator, and the telephone, telegraph, and typewriter did much to change important phases of business and urban life. An expanding population created new markets, railroads reached the trading areas of the West, and a stabilized currency assured safety for investment -- America now found its opportunity equal to its desire; it had reached manhood in the battles of a tremendous war and now it wished to cast its suppressed desires aside in its drive for wealth, power, and strength.

The completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869 was easily the greatest engineering feat that America had ever undertaken, for East and West were joined together and, thereafter, the frontier began to disappear from American history -- an old era drew to a close and made ready for the new one. Railway expansion proved to be neither well-planned nor healthy, for railway speculation was nothing but a mania with stock-watering and other crooked devices to lure
prospective customers. Under the Homestead Act, the speculators found ways to control the best lands, leaving to the homesteaders only the poorer lands far removed from the railroad tracks. It has been estimated by reliable sources that for every acre obtained free by an actual settler, ten passed into the hands of jobbers for resale at exorbitant profits. As soon as the West was inhabited and its people depended on the railroads for the transportation of their produce to the East, the railroad owners shoved up the freight rates.

No section of America escaped industrial expansion: in Chicago, Armour and Morris were laying out stockyards and drawing cattle and sheep to their slaughter houses; in Cleveland, Mark Hanna was erecting his smelters and turning out iron ore; John D. Rockefeller was squeezing the small fry out of the petroleum business and creating the Standard Oil monopoly; In Pittsburgh, Andrew Carnegie, aided by the Bessemer process, was laying the foundation for a steel trust; in Minneapolis, Charles Pillsbury was applying new methods to milling and turning northern wheat into flour; and in San Francisco, Leland Stanford and Collis Huntington were amassing huge fortunes out of the Southern Pacific Railway. Exploitation was the business of the times and commercial morality was widely debased as men entered business with the general belief that the nation had entered upon a golden age in which everyone could have wealth for a mere bold
venture. There were also no regulatory laws or a well-established code of business ethics, making manipulation all the easier. There was no bargaining with corporations for the use of what the public gave -- they merely took what they wanted and no questions were asked.

All was not easy sailing for industrial America in these years when one recalls the Panic of 1873 and the depression that lasted until 1880. Ever since the end of the war, businessmen had been overtrading, expanding credits, and speculating recklessly on a market that they thought indestructible but which collapsed in 1873. The currency was too much inflated, and reckless speculation and wholesale stockwatering in many industries brought unfortunate results. Industrial plants shut down, railroad construction decreased, and long bread-lines appeared; millions, both rich and poor, walked the streets. Recovery was to be a long way off.

Year by year, thousands of weak, ill-managed businesses were thrown into bankruptcy -- an average of no fewer than 9500 annually for the three years from 1876 to 1878. Those which had the most capital, the greatest efficiency, and the best marketing facilities survived and expanded. In these years more than 5000 firms were incorporated into giant combinations all of which had a capitalization of over fifty million dollars. These combinations engaged in pools and rate agreements and it was evident that they were pushing toward a monopoly in their field; by the end of 1878 the
Standard Oil Company had perfected an alliance which controlled virtually all transportation of oil in America and 95% of its refining -- its supremacy was unquestioned. The path which Rockefeller had trod was strewn with ruined men and abandoned plants; the Panic of '73 seemed to provide an opportunity for the few titans of American industry to consolidate their gains even further.

No study of this period can leave out a description of the leaders of business, for it was from these men that the era took its color and tone; here were "men of heroic audacity and magnificent exploitative talents -- shrewd, energetic, aggressive, rapacious, domineering, insatiable." Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, scheming Jay Gould, crafty James Fish, Jr., ruthless James J. Hill, E. H. Harriman, and Leland Stanford were the new Americans whose social philosophy was: "Preemption, Exploitation, Progress --" the "public be damned." They were never bothered by petty scruples, and a strain of tough-mindedness marked them; here were "self-made men quick to lay hands on opportunity if it knocked at the door, ready to seek it out if it were slow in knocking, recognizing no limitations to their powers, discouraged by no shortcomings in their training."

Jay Gould, Daniel Drew, and Jim Fisk were among the prophets of 'grab and hold, accumulating such power as no American had hitherto known, and they were men who dreamed
of building empires and who came close to transforming their visions into realities. They believed that what they were doing would work to a final good, so why worry about day-by-day crooked devices; they seemed to be governed by what was expedient -- for them. They stood squarely upon the American mythology of opportunity for the common man, for they had started life in the lower middle classes and had had early careers of privation, hard work, and frugality; Andrew Carnegie was the son of a poor Scottish weaver, and Armour, Swift, Drew, and Gould had all been the sons of humble farmers. They viewed their riches and powers as the reward for their hard work and special talents -- they had earned everything they had gotten. Their praise of Darwinism was to be expected -- in the bitter strife of competitive industry, those who emerged at the top were the fittest to survive and carry on.

In accordance with the above beliefs, these new chieftains created a new mental outlook in the United States called the Gospel of Wealth -- a philosophy which became as universal as our faith in democracy. The major tenets of this new creed were:

1. Wealth comes to those who have the superior energy and ability to produce it. We must accept and welcome conditions such as concentration of business in the hands of the few as being not only beneficial but essential to the future progress of the race.

2. "The man of wealth must become the mere agent and trustee for his poorer brethren, bring to their service his superior wisdom, experience,
and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.

(3) Poverty was a blessing in disguise to one who rose above it, but to him who failed, it was a symbol of shame, a scarlet letter that continually reminded him that he was wanting in talent and character. Life is a race where the prizes shall go to the swiftest of foot.

(4) The State exists to maintain order and protect property; its activities must be limited to these functions. The best interests of society are furthered by putting the government of the economic area of society into the hands of a natural aristocracy of businessmen who have proven their worth.

This gospel of wealth was a philosophy that functioned as a defense of economic government in the hands of what was supposed to be a natural aristocracy of ability against a political government in the hands of mediocrity.

Jay Gould is a good example of this new type of American leader who rose to a position of wealth and power but understood little of the responsibilities imposed by wealth. From nothing he had built up a vast fortune, and he exemplified all the substantial middle-class virtues of a people newly given to the worship of a sterile money economy -- he was scrupulous in all religious duties, a kind husband and a generous friend, one who was simple and democratic in his tastes, and uncreative and unintellectual. An American poet summed up Jay Gould in the following way:
JAY GOULD'S MODEST WANTS

My wants are few; I scorn to be
A querulous refiner
I only want America
And a mortgage deed of China
And if kind fate threw Europe in,
And Africa and Asia
And a few islands of the sea
I'd ask no other treasure.
Give me but these -- they are enough
To suit my notion --
And I'll give up to other men
All land beneath the ocean.21

This poem seems to echo well the sentiment of the American millionaire of the eighties who said of his class: "We are not politicians or political thinkers; we are the rich; we own America; we got it, God knows how; but we intend to keep it if we can."22 Theodore Dreiser has one of his characters say: "I haven't seen many troubles in this world that money wouldn't cure...If one had force, plenty of it, quickness of wit and subtlety, there was no need for anything else...To get what you could and hold it fast...that was the thing to do."

There was a dichotomy in these potentates of wealth as can be seen when they lavished millions on hospitals, libraries, colleges, and art galleries for the good of all, and then turned around and ground the faces of the poor under their iron heels by refusing to increase the wages of their workers or by forbidding them to organize into unions -- these were the same self-appointed spokesmen for the equality of opportunity.
It should not be supposed that these new leaders of business had the complete support of all America, but there were very few men who had either the courage or the power to speak out against these individuals; an exception to the rule was Charles F. Adams, who was their bitter opponent and blasted them publicly:

The five years which have succeeded the war have witnessed some of the most remarkable examples of organized lawlessness, under the forms of law, which mankind has yet had an opportunity to study. If individuals have, as a rule, quietly pursued their peaceful vocations, the same cannot be said of certain single men at the head of vast combinations of private wealth. This has been particularly the case as regards those controlling the rapidly developing railroad interests. These modern potentates have declared war, negotiated peace, reduced courts, legislatures, and sovereign states to an unqualified obedience to their will, disturbed trade, agitated the currency, imposed taxes, and, boldly setting forth both law and public opinion at defiance, have freely exercised many other attributes of sovereignty...single men have controlled hundreds of miles of railroads, thousands of men, tens of millions of revenue, and hundreds of millions of capital. The strength implied in all this they wielded in practical independence of the control both of governments and individuals; such as petty German despots might have governed their little principalities a century or two ago.23

Theodore Dreiser was even more embittered about the situation: "Big business movements are making it impossible for men to express themselves as individuals. Because they cannot hope to succeed in small enterprises they have lost their initiative and power to think. Modern business has made American citizens into nothing but trudging asses."24
The capitalists were oblivious to any of these criticisms, for they were too interested in studying each new set of statistics on output of farm and factory; the great strides that America was taking in the industrial area convinced many Americans that they were a superior people. As in the early 1840's, men raised the claim of "Manifest Destiny" and demanded that the blessings of American civilization be extended to the downtrodden of "backward" nations. Behind this humanitarian facade, the business classes were looking beyond the national borders for new openings for trade and investment as the industrial progress of the country was beginning to produce a surplus of goods and capital which had to be used to produce more goods and more capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that the American government found itself drawn increasingly into the stream of world affairs by the end of the nineteenth century.

The century ended on a high note for business as it turned its eyes to a new adventure -- imperialism. Business had now become more than an occupation -- "it was a philosophy, a morality, and an atmosphere..."25 The Civil War had afforded an opportunity for the development of powerful industrial and financial interests with which democracy had had to grapple and it was apparent that the country was now in danger from a form of slavery that would result from the aggregations of capital in the hands of a few. Walt Whitman understood this fear when he said: "Democracy looks with
suspicious, ill-satisfied eyes upon the very poor and those out of business; she asks for men and women with occupations, well off, owners of horses and acres, and with cash in the bank. It was unfortunate that with the birth and maturing of capitalism in the United States the idealism of the 1840's, the romanticism of the 1850's, and the heritage of Jefferson were thoroughly forgotten. There was no longer any concern about the future of democracy or of civilization -- "getting rich quick" was the only common concern. 

There was an extremely wide abyss that separated the employers from his employees. One has only to look at the condition of the laborers of this period to prove the above statement. At the end of 1866, the average wage had risen 60% since 1860 but the increase in the cost of living was about 90% -- the laborers obtained only half again as much as before the war. Their homes were shabbier and less sanitary than formerly -- the great majority of workmen seemed to be worse off than in 1860.

Most of labor's discontent arose in connection with the primary questions of employment, wages, and hours -- and for good reasons. There can be no doubt that a considerable portion of the wage-earning class were always unemployed for a part of the year; studies taken in Illinois for 1885-1886 showed that the average worker was normally idle for about one quarter of the possible working time during the year.
In a number of New England textile mills, the daily earnings for all types of workers of both sexes, working ten hours a day, ranged from $.50 to a $1.80 a day. To go a step farther, it was figured in 1884 in the state of Illinois that the average yearly earnings of heads of families were $525.27 and the sum was increased, on the average, by the income of other members of the family to $588.00; the yearly average living expenses were computed to be about $507.00. This narrow margin certainly did not provide for much extravagance of any sort.

The attitude of the employers toward their crews is almost unbelievable: "I regard my employees as I do a machine, to be used to my advantage, and when they are old and of no further use I cast them in the street." Not even the law appeared to be on the side of the working class as can be seen in a court's opinion of the validity of strikes: "They mean terror, incendiarism, violence, and bloodshed, and with these characteristics the law shall deal...A mob of strikers is entitled to no more leniency than a mob of lynchers or common ruffians." The Panic of '73 caused from two and a quarter million to three million workers to remain idle; those who worked had to accept drastic wage cuts without the benefit of redress. There were parades and mass meetings of protest but they accomplished very little as the employers were holding all the cards.
America's first major clash between labor and capital came with the bloody railroad strikes of 1877 which were the result of a ten per cent cut in railway wages. An epidemic of the strike spirit spread through Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and even went as far as California. For the first time the nation saw the explosive nature of the new social problems of the industrial era; this strike called the attention of the public to the fact that unemployment was greater than ever before and that the sufferings and despair of thousands of workmen demanded sympathy on their part. The workers, however, gained nothing from this strike and most returned to their jobs at wages that were lower than before. On both sides a reservoir of bitterness had been built up.

The labor movement grew more desperate and, for a short period of time, resorted to such appeals as: "If we achieve our liberation from economic bondage and acquire our natural right to life and liberty, every man must lay by a part of his wages, buy a Colt's navy revolver..., a Winchester rifle ..., and then learn how to make and use dynamite...Then raise the flag of rebellion." The best weapon of this underpaid working force seemed to be a trade union powerful enough to call an effective strike. The most impressive of these bodies formed after the first decade of the war was the Knights of Saint Crispin; after this the Knights of Labor was organized and this union was marked particularly by bitter industrial
warfare. Resenting any labor organization, employers fought back by using black lists and other malicious devices. The union cause also suffered from the support it got from a small group of radical anarchists who preached a fiery gospel of revolution as the only solution to the class war; it is generally assumed that the Haymarket affair adversely affected not only the eight hour movement but the entire American labor movement, for the public, henceforth, associated unions with the cause of the anarchists. In 1886 a more powerful federation of the trades was formed called the American Federation of Labor which caused labor's hopes to be revived. To understand the great agitation and discontent that were part of the labor movement, one has only to remember that between 1881-1900 there were 23,798 strikes involving 6,610,000 workers.33

Of the few descriptions I have read of the average worker's life in this period, none stands out so clearly as that of Jurgis, one of the characters in The Jungle by Upton Sinclair; in the following passage, Sinclair is describing the work of Jurgis in a fertilizer factory in Chicago:

Working in his shirt sleeves and with the thermometer at over a hundred, the phosphates soaked in through every pore of Jurgis's skin, and in five minutes he had a headache and in fifteen was almost dazed. The blood was pounding in his brain like an engine's throbbing; there was a frightful pain in the top of his skull, and he could hardly control his hands...he fought on in a frenzy of determination; and half an hour later he began to vomit -- he vomited until it seemed that his inwards must be torn into shreds. A man could get used to the fertilizer mill, the boss had said, if he would
only make up his mind to it; but Jurgis now began to see that it was a question of making up his stomach...

Of course Jurgis had made his home a miniature fertilizer mill a minute after entering. The stuff was half an inch deep in his skin -- his whole system was full of it, and it would have taken a week not merely of scrubbing, but of vigorous exercise, to get it out of him. As it was, he could be compared with nothing known to man, save that newest discovery of the savants, a substance which emits energy for an unlimited time, without in itself being the least diminished in power. He smelt so that he made all the food at the table taste and set the whole family to vomiting.

And still Jurgis stuck it out! In spite of splitting headaches he would stagger down to the plant and take up his stand once more and begin to shovel in the blinding clouds of dust. And so at the end of the week he was a fertilizer man for life -- he was able to eat again, and though his head never stopped aching, it ceased to be so bad that he could not work.

The farmers after the Civil War were no longer independent and self-sufficient producers but had become merely an adjunct to the industrial, urbanized East. They had to readjust themselves to a social order in which national legislation was geared to the needs of industry rather than those of agriculture. This was a difficult task and was the cause of much of the agrarian discontent of the late nineteenth century.

Certain general tendencies were making for distinct improvement in the farmer's lot, for scientific ideas, such as crop rotation and fruit culture, were spreading rapidly; more important was the advance attributed to improved
machinery -- the self-rake reaper, the self-binding harvester, the steam engine in threshing, and the modern windmill. Year by year more modern houses were built and farmers bought washing and sewing machines. In spite of these advances, the comforts were meager and life was harsh; this was especially true of the mid-West. A pioneer farmer suffered the perils of Indians, prairie fires, droughts, and blizzards in the hope of generous reward, and when this was denied him, he was ready for revolt. Extortions practiced by railroads and middlemen, and abuses resulting from the disturbed currency and the evil tariff, and the "unfair" tax system always caused him to be receptive to any plan for his own betterment.

The occupation of the plains resulted in disastrous overproduction and there followed a glut in the world market and a fall in the value of gold which seemed likely to be permanent; this, in turn, meant a lapse from the comparative prosperity to grinding poverty and it was only natural that the bitterness of the farmer should ripen into open revolt. The first warning came from the attack of the Illinois farmers upon railways and the alleged monopolists of the Chicago market; as these farmers engaged in a duel with the powerful corporation interests, there occurred the sudden rise of a rural organization called the Grange, which was partly economic, partly social, and partly political. Cooperation was the weapon nearest at hand, and farmers found in the Grange a weapon to hurl at the financiers, the politicians, and at the East. -- it was time to "shake hell"
out of these robber corporations. By 1875 it was possible to point to independent agrarian parties in nine of the prairie states and in California and Oregon. The migration of many farmers into the cities did much to relieve the pressure on the means of rural livelihood, and the Grange shifted into a social, rather than a political, instrument of the farmer's life.

Throughout the eighties as the number of the miles of the railroad increased, the number of railroad companies decreased; thus fortified by monopoly, the railroad, in the farmer's eyes, could collect whatever rates they chose. The farmers watched the influence of the railway grow until it was able to dominate the political situation in every western state; railway lobbyists were on hand whenever a legislature met; under the watchful eyes of railroad agents, no one hostile to the railroad should ever hold an important office in the state. These common grievances of the South and West against the railroads promised to supply a binding tie of no small consequence between the sections.

Declining agricultural prices, increasing freight rates, and the grinding burden of debt stimulated the organization of a series of Farmers' Alliances in the South and West. The Alliances grew in numbers as the bottom dropped out of the cotton market, and there was "a concentration of agricultural lands in the hands of merchants; loan agents, and a few of the financially strongest farmers."34 The farmers looked upon
themselves as possessing one quarter of the nation’s wealth and paying three-quarters of its taxes. Conditions had to be changed and, again, farmer cooperation to that end seemed the logical means:

People commenced to think who had never thought before and people talked who had seldom spoken. On mild days they gathered on the street corners, on cold days they congregated in shops and offices. ...They discussed income tax and single tax; they talked of government ownership and the abolition of private property...and a thousand conflicting theories.36

By 1890 the Alliance felt that they had enough members and strength to enter politics as a third party. Their platform in 1890 called for very definite reforms:

1. The railroads should be compelled to lower rates.
2. Land monopolies should be broken down.
3. Trusts of every sort should be destroyed.
4. Interest rates must be lowered and national banks abolished.
5. More paper money or silver should be issued to help carry the increasing volume of business that the growth of the country made inevitable.

The campaign of 1890 and the spirit of the times of Populist agitation are described well by Elizabeth N. Barr:

The upheaval that took place can hardly be diagnosed as a political campaign. It was a religious revival, a crusade, a pentecost of politics in which a tongue of flame set upon every man, and each spoke as the spirit gave him utterance. For Mary E. Lease, Jerry Simpson...and half a hundred others who lectured up and down the land, were not the only people that could talk on the issues of the day. The farmers, the country merchants, the cattle-herders, and they of the broad-brimmed hats and heavy boots, had also heard the word and could preach the gospel of Populism...Women with skins tanned to parchment by the hot winds, with bony hands of toil and clad in faded calico, could talk in meetings, and could talk right straight to the point.37
Mary Lease seemed to sound the keynote of this revival when she said, "what you farmers need to do is raise less corn and more Hell!"

Throughout the South and Northwest the election results of 1890 were highly gratifying to the Alliance; they elected five United States Senators, six governors, and forty-six Congressmen. Once in office the Populists proved to be less successful in administrative matters, and their legislation was too often found to be defective and unconstitutional. The Populists expected that the men they elected would do more than was politically possible, and they soon turned from ardent supporters to disappointed critics. Their adoption of a fusion and moderate policy as well as their rapid decline is described in the chapter dealing with Tom Watson.

Like the laborers, the farmers, under the flag of Populism, had thundered rather effectively, for a time, against exploitation by industrial America; they soon discovered that they were fighting a long and losing struggle to save agricultural America from the devouring jaws of industrial America. The great barbecue had been spread before the nation after the war, and it is evident that industry ate the best portion of the feast while the laborers and farmers scurried under the table in search of crumbs and were presented with the bill at the end of the feast.
Post-war America was wholly lacking in a political philosophy. The great party of Jefferson and Jackson was gone and what developed might be called a profit philosophy which assumed as its greatest good the shaping of public policy to promote private interests: its two major tents of belief were that it is the duty of the state to help its citizens make money, and, secondly, that the public good cannot be served apart from business interests as business interests are the public good -- "Let the government take care of business and business will take care of the country."

A brief look at city and state governments is enough to warn the reader of what he can expect on the national level. In 1870 at Albany, New York votes were being openly bought and sold, and few bills could be passed without purchasing a considerable proportion of the members of both houses. The legislature was run by Boss Tweed; six Republican Senators were reported to have received $20,000 each for their obedience to his wishes. Tweed had risen in fifteen years from a chair-maker to the multimillionaire boss of New York City. A heavy element of Tweed's followers were made up of bewildered and ignorant immigrants -- 77,000 of the electorate were foreign-born; they were much more interested in Tweed's distribution of coal, flour, and money than with the true aims of municipal administration. Tweed was their Robin Hood, and in this way he could control over half of the 130,000 votes in the city. As Tweed's power became more
secure the scale of stealing increased: buildings were rented at twice the proper cost, and one man was paid $25,000 for removing dead animals; by the fall of 1871 the Ring was generally credited with the theft of $20,000,000.

In Pennsylvania, the Camerons and the Quays, along with the Pennsylvania railroad and the coal companies, ran the state; in Cincinnati, it was George B. Cox; Colonel "Ed" Butler in Saint Louis; the Ames regime in Minneapolis; and "Blind Boss" Buckley in San Francisco. Andrew White was not exaggerating when he remarked: "With very few exceptions, the city governments of the United States are the worst in Christendom -- the most expensive, the most inefficient, and the most corrupt." It is hard to understand the slowness with which even the better citizens were aroused by reformers; it appears that much of this blindness lay in the fact that the immense growth of national wealth was unaccompanied by any civic responsibility, and, too, Americans had had little previous training in the management of densely populated urban centers.

The political activities in Washington during the years from 1865 to 1884 were especially notorious ones, for the politicians of both parties were dazzled by the wealth of the industrial titans, and they bowed to the demands of industry until their platforms reflected the wishes of business rather than those of the people: a centralized banking system, a sound currency, labor laws favorable to Capital, and
a steadily rising tariff. The Union Pacific alone is claim-
ed to have spent about $500,000 by the middle of 1868 in
the form of "gifts" to Washington "statesmen." There is
no other period in American history when politics was so
dwarfed by economic changes nor none in which the fate of
the country rested so completely in the hands of the indus-
trial entrepreneurs. The business of politics borrowed its
style from the business of industry as men began to see in
politics "the means of participating in the general riches,
of becoming wealthy in their smaller ways and by their lesser
standards, as did the captains of industry."40

The people saw in General Ulysses S. Grant a symbol of
order; a man who could bring the government back to its
regular practices and restore moral order to the administra-
tion; the next eight years were to be a witness not to order
but to chaos. The most significant contribution that Grant
was able to give the office of the President was an imperish-
able glamour; he regarded the Presidency as a personal peroga-
tive and a reward for services that he had rendered -- he for-
got about the responsibility that went along with his office
and he was only too happy to turn over the tools of running
the government to his scheming and crooked associates, whom
he trusted with a profound faith.

A small change came over the national temper after the
years of the economic depression of 1873-1878, and papers
began to assail corruption in the administration, and the
easy tolerance of the sixties was replaced by a new stern-
ness, but the reformers were both isolated and sterile when it came to knowing the people and their motivations. They could not arouse mass excitement, for the masses were not deeply shocked over the dishonesty of public servants; the average American of this period accepted democracy just as he did the telephone or the electric light; though the party bosses managed to get him to the polls on election day, he voted the straight party ticket and saved himself the trouble or thinking about candidates or issues.

With the election of the reform governor of New York, Grover Cleveland, to the presidency those who had expected any radical change were disappointed. Cleveland's record shows that he failed to recognize the emergence of a new era or the necessity for a new outlook; to prove this, one has only to remember that when Congress in 1887 appropriated $10,000 to aid the drought sufferers in buying new grain seed, Cleveland vetoed the provision by saying that "though the people support the Government the Government should not support the people."

James Bryce in The American Commonwealth said:

"Perhaps no form of government needs great leaders so much as a democracy...Those whose material prosperity tends to lap them in self-complacency and dull the edge of aspiration need to be thrilled by the emotions which great men can excite, stimulated by the ideas they present, stirred to a loftier sense of what national life may attain."

This period from 1865-1900 called for the leadership of great men and all that answered the summons were mere pygmies who
sat in the White House or Congress incompetent to bring order and peace to the nation. With leadership lacking, the parties became tools of pressure groups rather than instruments of popular government and the result was that fortunes multiplied in the hands of the few and the masses of the population sank deeper into a poverty that threatened the very basis of the democratic experiment. Unfortunately, Henry Adams seemed to have been quite correct when he said: "No period so thoroughly ordinary has been known in American politics since Christopher Columbus first disturbed the balance of American society."41

*****

After the war, Americans quickly turned away from the battlefields and the ruined South and closed its ears to the questions of the Negroes; it looked to the ballroom, salon, and parlor for its relief from its exhaustive tasks. For years the American people had had to wrestle with the problems of secession, survival, and death, and with these obstacles now out of the way they turned to diversions of many sorts. The culture of America lacked depth and cultivation and there was something flashy and gaudy in the activities that America turned to; perhaps there was a powerful current flowing beneath the surface of the life of this country, but it failed to appear in this period.

With the acquisition of wealth and power, American men often did not know what to do with these newly gained assets,
and so fortunes were spent on red, yellow, and black mansions, for the purchase of a titled husband for the daughter, for banquets where cigarettes were wrapped in one hundred dollar bills, or for a poodle who was draped with a $15,000 bejewelled collar. A large group of nouveau riche thought they could buy culture and social standing: "The newcomer found that the more recherché his manners, the more piquant his conversation, the purer the breed of horses he drove, the more fashionable his criticism of pictures, books, and music, the better he was liked: but above all it was money that was indispensable." 

This was an age in America when all aspired to be rich, and material possessions became the goal and sum of most American lives -- Money, Success, and Power: this was the stuff that dreams were made of. Though all aspired to this type of life, few were called to actually partake of it; the richest one per cent had as much income as the poorest fifty per cent and more than one half of the aggregate income of the country was enjoyed by one eighth of the families.

Up to this time for one to be worth a million of dollars was to be rated as a man of fortune, but now bygones must be bygones. New York's ideas as to values, when fortune was named, leaped boldly up to ten millions, fifty millions, one hundred millions; and the necessities and luxuries followed suit... Fashion demanded that you be received in the hall of the house in which you were to dine by...five or six servants, who, with the help of the butler, were to serve the repast...everything that skill and art could suggest was added to make the dinners not a vulgar display but a gastronomic effort evidencing the possession by the host of both money and taste.
Builders vied with each other in putting up castles and better equipped buildings; Jay Cook's mansion, Ogontz, was not untypical with its vast gloomy pile of granite, one hundred and seventy-five feet long, and containing seventy-two rooms costing about two million dollars. The agonies of decision and indecision that these persons went through while building their homes can be seen in this description of Kate Chase Sprague's attempts to capture perfection in her home, Canonchet, at Newport:

...She would give orders for a suite of rooms in the north wing to be done in a certain style -- French Provincial or Louis XIV -- workmen would finish the rooms with painstaking care; furniture would be ordered and installed; Kate would step across the threshold, stare absently for a moment at the completed room, and then abruptly turn and walk out. Calling for the foreman, she would announce that the suite was unsatisfactory, that it all would have to be done over in the style of Queen Anne...Slowly the great monument took shape -- a Victorian Gothic mansion of over sixty rooms, said to have cost almost a million dollars...The house looked like a series of swift inspirations that found each other's company disquieting. Dormer windows jutted from the roofs of the towers, topped with spires like spindles on a highboy; a great colonnade swept around the front of the house with classical hauteur; balconies sprang from windows and hung uneasily in mid-air.

Often just around the corner from homes like these, filthy and heatless slums spread out.

***

While millionaires raised up their gaudy palaces, the masses toiled long hours in factories and offices, and returned to their humble homes embittered and benumbed. The
dwellings of the poor were five or six stories high running about ninety feet back from the street. Every space available was made into a room, many of them without direct lighting or air, and most of them occupied by more than one family. In these rooms and hallways roamed dirty, half-clad children who drifted into gangs and whose ambition was to emulate the lawless exploits of their elders; beginning as beggars and pickpockets they soon graduated to the ranks of shoplifters, robbers, and thugs. In a test conducted in Boston’s primary schools it was discovered that over one half of the children had never seen a plow or a spade, a robin, or a squirrel; instead of collecting birds’ eggs or butterflies, these children had collections of small picture cards of prize-fighters or burlesque queens which came in cigarette packages.

Jacob Riis who knew first hand how the other half lived described almost too realistically the conditions that a vast majority of Americans lived through during the rise of industrialism --

The hall is dark and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them; kicks and cuffs are their daily diet. They have little else...All the fresh air that ever enters these stairs comes from the hall-door that is forever slamming, and from the windows of dark bedrooms that in turn receive from the stairs their sole supply of the elements that God meant to be free, but man deals out with such niggardly hand. That was a woman filling her pail by the hydrant you just bumped against. The sinks are in the hall-way, that all the tenants may have access -- and all be poisoned alike by their summer stenches...
Here is a door. Listen! That short hacking cough, that tiny helpless wail -- what do they mean? They mean that the soiled bow of white that you saw on the door downstairs will have another story to tell...before the day is at an end. The child is dying with measles. With half a chance it might have lived; but it had none. That dark bedroom killed it.49

Like Jacob Riis, Henry George watched and grew angry as he saw men like Marshall Field make $500 to $700 an hour while his non-executive employees worked a fifty-nine hour week and took home a paycheck amounting to about $12.00; his anger burst into words when he said in his book, Progress and Poverty:

We plow new fields, we open new mines, we found new cities; we drive back the Indian and exterminate the buffalo; we girdle the land with iron roads and lace the air with telegraph wires; we add knowledge to knowledge, and utilize invention after invention; we build schools and endow colleges; yet it becomes no easier for the masses of our people to make a living. On the contrary, it is becoming harder. The wealthy class is becoming more wealthy; but the poorer class is becoming more dependent. The gulf between the employed and the employer is growing wider; social contrasts are becoming sharper; as liveried carriages appear, so do barefooted children.50

The "vast gap" that George spoke about would have increased if the rich and powerful had had anything to say about it but their era was fast drawing to a close and the new twentieth century was going to see the rise of a new movement -- Progressivism.

What was middle-class America thinking and doing in this period? Up to about 1865 the United States was a nation in which wealth, status, and power were spread out in such a
way that a man of moderate means living in a small community received much respect and exerted influence. Because of the lack of very many nationwide sources of power and wealth, this was an age when local eminence was of great importance, and so the lawyer, small merchant and manufacturer, and the preacher were looked upon as men worthy of all the community's admiration. The post-Civil War period, however, transformed society from a peaceful agrarian and small business republic to one in which the dominant form of enterprise was the giant corporation -- this change revolutionized the distribution of power and prestige. While there had not even been twenty millionaires existent in the United States during the 1840's, by 1891 it was estimated that there were probably more than one hundred and twenty men in the United States who were each worth more than ten million dollars. In this same decade a reliable source indicated that about nine per cent of the families of the nation owned 71% of the wealth. 51

The nouveau riche, the parvenus, the masters of the great corporations were bypassing the old gentry -- the professional men, the merchants of long standing, and the small manufacturers -- in wealth. The college-educated civic leaders of an earlier era whose deep ancestral roots were firmly entrenched in traditions of political leadership found themselves being rather rudely pushed aside by this new rising class and ignored in the making of basic political and
economic decisions. They even found their private lives and careers being obstructed by the agents of the corporations and the allies of the political bosses. They were not growing poorer financially, but they knew they were being dwarfed by the new eminences in business. Their loss of importance and prestige was as great a blow to them as a financial loss would have been. Their ability to fight this horde was held in check by their own scruples and their regard for reputation and social standing in the community. This group of Americans, who were being expropriated morally by a newer and stronger group, were the carriers of the cultural ideals and traditions of early New England, and their attitudes were Protestant and Anglo-Saxon for the most part. Politics and statesmanship were synonymous terms as far as they were concerned, and they looked back longingly to the days when the leadership of the country was under the aegis of an Adams, Webster, or Sumner — "Their ideal leader was a well-to-do, well-educated, high-minded citizen, rich enough to be free from motives of what they often called 'crass materialism,' whose family roots were deep, not only in American history but in his local community."53

The hate and scorn that these expropriated Americans felt toward the robber barons can be discerned quite easily in the following scathing remarks of Henry Demarest Lloyd:

Our great moneymakers have sprung in one generation into seats of power kings do not know. The forces and the wealth are new, and have the opportunity of new men. Without restraints of culture,
experience, the pride, or even the inherited caution of class or rank, these men, intoxicated, think they are the wave instead of the float, and that they have created the business which has created them. To them science is but a never-ending répertoire of investments stored up by nature for the syndicates, government but a fountain of franchises, the nations but customers in squads, and a million the unit of a new arithmetic of wealth for them. They claim a power without control, exercised through forms which make it secret, anonymous, and perpetual. The possibilities of its gratification have been widening before them without interruption since they began, and even at a thousand million they will feel no satiation and will see no place to stop.54

Though Lloyd's thoughts were echoed by many of the old gentry, they remained conservative in their economic and political views. As abuse after abuse in the economic order came to the attention of the public, the typical middle-class citizen ignored them or accepted them passively as an inevitable result of the struggle for existence; laissez-faire still remained his economic philosophy. It was true that he was critical and eager to dispose of the predatory capitalists and their political henchmen, but he was even more opposed and frightened of the word "mob" -- the radical agrarians, the city workers with their anarchist ideas, and the urban immigrants. He and his group could never conceivably contemplate appealing to the masses as an ally in their fight against plutocracy. At times he was more an aristocrat at heart than a democrat. Caught between two evil forces, and fearful of the consequences of their alliance with either, the gentry developed the belief that Am-
merica's economic ills could be remedied by free trade, and that "the essence of government lay in honest dealing by honest and competent men." With this rather ineffectual reform program, it is not hard to understand why the middle-class failed to offer any positive leadership from 1865 to 1900.

Before Progressivism could be made possible, the insulation of the middle-class from the lower class had to be overcome, and before this obstruction could be removed it was first necessary for some of the middle-class ideas and attitudes to undergo a transformation -- their unaltering support of the laissez-faire doctrine had to be modified, an enthusiasm for popular government had to take preference over their aristocratic tendencies, and a greater flexibility in dealing with the discontents had to be developed. Once the middle-class had seen the merits of a program of progressivism and came to understand that they were capable of leading it, they made little advance toward their goals in the 1890's because the events of that decade with its talk of socialism, its strikes, its slump in business, and its lengthening breadlines seemed like the beginning of social revolution. Perhaps Bryan was another Robespierre, and Debs a Murat. There was a tendency among the middle classes to put aside their own grievances and program for action until the time should come when the air was less full of violence and class hatreds. It was only after four years of McKinley's administration which
brought peace and prosperity of various degrees to all classes that the middle-class dared to take seriously ideas that seemed to involve a fundamental challenge to the established ways of doing things. The movement began on the state level in Wisconsin in 1900 and culminated on the national level with the election of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1912.

Populism in the 1890's had appealed only "to the misfits — farmers who had failed, lawyers and doctors who were not orthodox, teachers who could not make the grade, and neurotics full of hates and ebullient evanescent enthusiasms;" the Progressive movement, however, was one of the "petit bourgeois" — the little businessmen, professional men, well-to-do farmers, skilled artisans from the upper brackets of organized labor, and the successful middle-class country-town citizens.\(^{55}\)

The period from 1865-1900 in American history seems to me to be the birth of technological America; it is a period when America first showed its potential ability to be a formidable world power. America was at last able to play the role of the Conqueror. It embraced the ideology of unrestrained competition among individuals and clasped it to its bosom — "the unknown, the untried, the unheard of, was in the air... and people were intoxicated by it..."\(^{56}\) In this race for power and wealth, man, himself, was forgotten and moral and humanitarian values were cast aside for the chance of holding in their hands, though only for a short time, material possessions.
Chapter 2
TOM WATSON: THE NATIVE IN POLITICS

Tom Watson was born four years prior to the Civil War, and he was only nine years old when the Confederacy went down in ignominious defeat. His father, who had been a brave Confederate soldier, came home to find the old order gone, his slaves freed, and the South in the throes of grave economic and financial collapse. John Watson, and thousands of other Southerners like him, had to face the fact that the prosperity that they had enjoyed prior to 1861 was now supplanted by abject poverty, for the liquidation of security debts had swept away their lands. The old Southern homestead that had been a little kingdom, a complete social and industrial organism, almost wholly sufficient unto itself, was now a thing of the past -- never to be revived. It was in this wholly new and hard order of things that Tom Watson found himself at the age of ten -- a world that was to offer him only insecurity and poverty until he reached manhood.

Tom was only seventeen years old when the panic of 1873 came to add further to the troubles of the South, and he felt keenly the evil effects of this financial conspiracy of a few Northern bankers to contract the currency and produce the depression -- "...when the smoke cleared from that financial Waterloo my father was one of those who was stretched upon the field."¹ Tom's father's last acre of land was now gone. Despite the hard times, Tom managed to receive two years of
education at Mercer University, but then it was necessary for him to leave and find work. This was not an easy task in the South in 1874, and Tom was quick to discover it. There was no employment to be had in Atlanta, but in Screven County, Georgia, he succeeded in making up a small school at "Little Horse Creek Church" where he taught school in the daytime and studied law at night for two years. The salary was hardly enough to subsist on but the people were very kind and he, in turn, loved them. In Screven County, Watson saw what remained of the middle-class agrarian culture in the post-bellum South; eating at their tables, sitting at their fireplaces, sleeping in their beds, he gained a knowledge of the working farmer that no books could ever give. He watched these men try to overcome disadvantages of their condition which seemed almost completely hopeless. Tom shared fully the lot of the farmer whose lot at this period was not particularly happy. They had given him a home when he had none; they had given him a job when the city had rejected him. "I think that my earnest sympathy for the poor dates from this period of my life--" this statement by Tom Watson is not difficult to understand when viewed in the light of the above circumstances.  

Tom often grew discouraged about his progress but he continued to make the most out of the relatively little he possessed. He was determined to become one of the first men of the state -- "It is for this that I am studying, it is for
this that I am working, and I never mean to stop the one or the other, until my object is obtained. I have no great wish for money for myself; I only wish for fame; but I intend to make money for you (his father) and fame for myself at the same time." While at Screven County his chief occupation was fame and fortune although he was beginning to wonder if perhaps they were going to elude him --

"Ambition, my cherished ambition,
Still comes at my call -- dreary call!
But a mantle hangs over her features
As dark as a funeral pall."

Tom thought of himself as an Ishmael of modern times; he was also a Byron and a Don Juan -- he was anything but a seedy country school teacher, and the world must find out about him. He wanted to be somebody; he wanted to be appreciated for his talents -- law became the means to achieve this goal.

It is not my purpose to trace the rise of Watson to eminence as a lawyer but it is important to notice that his practice was almost entirely rural, that it was concentrated in his own congressional district, that his juries and audiences were made up of farmers, and that his later practice consisted very largely of criminal cases in which he was always counsel for the defendant. He was a lawyer who helped the underdog -- a tribune of the people. Even though Tom was gaining success as a lawyer, his pride was checked by the humiliation of his family's poverty; the memory of their plantation years and the conditions of their present plight bothered him. The Watson family now lived in a wretched shack
on a piece of sandy soil in Richmond County; John Watson was in a constant stupor and his energy was gone. It disturbed Tom to see his "stately old grandfather's bookcase" being used for the smoke-house, larder, pantry, and buttery. He could not bear to see these things continue, so as soon as he was financially able, Tom bought his father a seven hundred acre farm. Tom was seeking, though perhaps unconsciously, to restore to his parents and himself a little of the ante-bellum Southern paradise.

These few paragraphs on Tom Watson's early life have been perfunctory in many respects, but it has been the intention of the writer to give the reader enough information about the early years so that he can see as he reads more about Tom Watson that there grew in Watson's emotional life an irrational core of nostalgia for a lost paradise of childhood. This old order of agrarian life that was a part of Watson's boyhood loyalties was to retain a stronghold upon him. Even when the New South rested upon a firm foundation, Watson continued to dream of his lost agrarian paradise and its possible resurrection. This writer feels that only if the reader has been able to comprehend and assimilate the main patterns of Watson's early life can he hope to understand the tragic ordeal of Tom Watson in the New South.

Politics had always proved to be fascinating to young Tom Watson. In his early years after the war, he had seen
white-robed horsemen galloping at midnight on some mysterious mission; he had seen political gatherings of his people broken up by the blue-coated military oppressors; he had listened to the talk of his father and other men as they tried to discover the means whereby they might cast off these oppressors. It was not until 1880, however, that Tom engaged in his first important political venture when he joined a group of Southern insurgents who were opposed to the "New Departure" leaders of the South and their methods. Watson campaigned county after county, and this brilliant young orator was received with great enthusiasm; the crowds were willing to sit for hours and listen to Tom and his splendid oratory. Very early in life Tom had recognized that a truly effective politician must possess the gift of oratory; while in college he wrote to his father on this subject; "when the national heart is heaving with excitement, he who would control its pulsations and direct its energies, must speak in the language of enthusiasm. The power of the orator lies in the sympathy between him and the people. This is the cord which binds heart to heart; and when it is struck, thousands burst into tears or rouse into passion, like a single individual." Watson was going to see this very thing happen many a time in his life whenever he spoke. Aided by his oratorical powers, Tom Watson did much to help the insurgents win about thirty-five per cent of the popular vote in 1880; the revolt of this small group caused apprehension in the ranks of the New Departure leaders
for this was the first time that they had been seriously challenged and threatened.

If one analyzes the campaign of 1880 perceptively it can serve as an appropriate prologue for the drama in which Tom Watson was to serve as leader in the next forty years. The campaign boldly announced the conflicts and patterns that were to be magnified and expanded a hundredfold when the capitalists became more confident of their position and the agrarians became better organized -- the Solid South against the insurgent rebels, the new capitalists against the old and new agrarians; the Negro, race chauvinism, religious superstition, military fetishism were all to be milked of every emotion that they might draw out of the people.6

That Watson was not the dedicated crusader in 1880 that he had become by 1890 can be seen by his comment on the part he played in the campaign: "Stump-speaking is glorious. The inspiration of the band, the cheers of the crowd, the ready echo to every blazing sentiment and sparkling anecdote leads the orator to a brilliant feast on the Field of the Cloth of Gold." He described the campaign itself as a "certain show-parade." Watson was still preoccupied with fame and the romantic aspects of politics.

*****

The years from 1880-1890 saw the continuation of the growing power and consolidation of the New South; this era offered no place for the agrarian rebel, and so Tom Watson
remained on the sidelines waiting for his chance to plunge headlong into the game when the right opportunity presented itself. This ten year period cannot be ignored by the student of Tom Watson for the simple reason that it was within this decade that the economic setting was prepared which Watson and his followers were to protest against so vigorously in the nineties.

Just what is meant by the "New South" and the "New Departure?" After the Civil War, there followed a deflation of political fervor and moral enthusiasm throughout the entire South; the old Southern leaders were either disenfranchised, exiled, or put in prison. There was no doubt about it -- the South was a conquered province. However, it was not possible for some of the Southerners to remain in a defeatist attitude for long, because they saw all about them activity as the Industrial Revolution whirled merrily along. "You can see it in people's faces, you can feel it in the air; Everybody and everything's goin' places." 7 The South made up its mind that it, too, should go places. It was not the planter-aristocrats of the old South who offered leadership to their devastated homeland but rather it was men who possessed the acquisitive zeal of the rising capitalists and industrialists whom they served; they became railroad promoters and servants of the corporations. Lawyers, merchants, railroad directors, and bankers were the leaders of the South during the 1870's and 1880's. New masters were definitely in the saddle in the South.
These leaders were convinced that the Southerners were living in a new era and that the South must accept new ideas; they called for a "new departure" from Southern tradition in order for the South to take advantage of its opportunities and turn away from its agrarian instincts and promote those of manufacturing and industry. Though this was a radical pill for most Southerners to swallow, the leaders of the New Departure were able to command a submissive loyalty from all Southerners after home rule had been restored; this loyalty was based on fear -- fear of the Negro menace, scalawags, and Federal intervention. As the price of protection from these fears, the leaders demanded unflinching allegiance that until now they had refused even in war.

One has only to study Henry Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, to find a good representative of the leaders of the New South; Grady was Georgia's unofficial "good caliph-at-large" who devoted his time to spreading a gospel of optimism concerning the future of the South. Since he was loved by his fellow Georgians, he was chosen by the higher echelon of the New Departure to glamourize the new order. He taught his newspaper readers that the acquisitive instinct was respectable and that speculation was something that required enormous quantities of courage and valor; he even went so far as to explain to the once agrarian South that it was through the competitive struggle for business profits that the meaning of life could best be discovered. One of Grady's admirers
commented: "He did not tamely promote enterprise and encourage industry; he vehemently fomented enterprise and provoked industry until they stalked through the land like armed conquerors." He called for preemption and exploitation of the South's untouched natural resources. Grady's spell of radical optimism spread quickly over the South.

Factories were springing up in all directions; industries were multiplying; people were once again finding employment; taxes were being lowered, credit was being raised. A nervous energy permeated Atlanta and its people; the spirit of enterprise was everywhere. "Everybody is brushing away the tears of war and laughing with a new hope in a new era!" Grady continued to write and speak, and as the eighties advanced his following became greater; how the people enjoyed listening to Grady's vision of the New South: "I see a South, the home of fifty millions of people; her cities vast hives of industry; her countrysides the treasures from which their resources are drawn; her streams vocal with whirling spindles..." Others, such as Patrick Calhoun, were quick to add to this hymn of praise and adulation: "The future of the South is commercial and manufactured. She will exchange the modest civilization of the country gentleman for the bustling civilization of the towns."

The readers of Grady's paper were soon making speeches patented after their favorite editor, but often supplanting Grady's cheerful optimism with something a little more
concrete -- "We must get rich! Let the young south arise in their might and compete with them (the Yankees) in everything ...
Get rich! Sell everything marketable and live on the culls. Let every yellow legged chicken, dozens of eggs and pounds of butter look in your eyes as fractions of a dollar, and act accordingly. Get rich! if you have to be mean! The world respects a rich scoundrel more than it does an honest man --" 

these were words that poured forth from the genteel South in the 1880's. It was evident that the old provincialism and the aristocratic arrogance were disappearing and the rise of a new Southern culture, of a society that was interested in newspapers, books, and schools, as well as money, was coming into being. 

There is no doubt about it, the South was playing the sedulous ape to the industrial North.

***

Though Tom Watson remained rather inactive in the political field in the eighties, he still managed to command the respect of the politicians and his share of the public attention. He was elected to the Georgia State Legislature in 1882, and attempted to get bills passed aiding the tenant farmer and the exploited convict but failed. He returned home after the first session frustrated and dissatisfied. Undoubtedly the only joy he experienced in his first legislative role was reading newspapers which called him "The most brilliant young man in Georgia" or "There was no more
brilliant or brainy young man in the legislature last summer." Fame was evidently beginning to knock at Mr. Watson's door, and he enjoyed it tremendously, but he became restless and disillusioned when he looked around him and saw hundreds of young men his age ingratiating themselves with the captains of industry and gaining that wealth and fame to which he had always aspired.

While Grady was winning praise for his vision of the New South, Watson watched as southern agriculture continued to sink lower and lower. Grady was failing to touch the hearts of the farmers and for good reasons -- outside of the cities the same wretched poverty prevailed twenty-two years after the war that had been present in 1860. The Southern farmer had lost his independence and autonomy. The war had operated to restore the South to essentially the frontier stage of development. By the continuance of the crop-lien system the farmer was reduced to a state of peonage to the town merchant, for until the last dollar of the farmer's debt was paid to the merchant, he was dependent upon his every purchase upon the merchant who saw to it that his debtor was charged from twenty to fifty per cent more than the cash price. As each year went by the debt became greater and the farmer found himself so entangled that he almost ceased to struggle. Probably from three-fourths to ninetenths of the farmers of the cotton South were caught up to some degree in the crop-lien system.¹⁴ The farmers watched
as their city brothers grew richer day by day, and they got poorer in the same ratio.

The agrarian masses remained leaderless until they saw that only some type of action initiated by themselves was likely to remedy their many ills. In 1887 a North Carolina farm journal expressed most accurately the feeling of the majority of Southern farmers:

There is something radically wrong in our industrial system. There is a screw loose. The wheels have dropped out of balance. The railroads have never been so prosperous, and yet agriculture languishes. The banks have never done a better or more profitable business, and yet agriculture languishes. Manufacturing enterprises have never made more money or were in a more flourishing condition, and yet agriculture languishes. Towns and cities flourish and "boom" and grow and "boom" and yet agriculture languishes. Salaries and fees were never so temptingly high, and yet agriculture languishes.19

The farmer had long regarded himself as the backbone of the nation and the producer of the largest share of wealth. Why then should he be faced with abject servility? Who was to blame? Certainly not himself. It was the railroads, trusts, middlemen, money-lenders, bankers, and muddled currency that caused their suffering, and they slowly began to realize that if only they could control the state governments might they hope to find legal redress for these economic ills.

There was no part of the farmer's story that Tom Watson did not know -- he had lived it along with the rest of his family. It was natural, therefore, that by the late eighties
Watson was becoming the embodiment of the new rebellion. Casting his suspicious eye at Grady and his men, he had this to say: "There are certain men in Congress and certain influential newspapers in the state which are advocating principles diametrically opposed to the sentiment which prevails almost unanimously throughout the South. And if the seeds of dissension sown by these parties are not uprooted...the result will be that the Solid South... will be disrupted and ruin will follow to the party."16

The more he talked, the louder and more vociferous he became and no one can deny that he was calling his people to arms:

"...our newspapers are absolutely crowded with advertisements of sheriff’s sales...There is no romance in having landed property excluded from the banks...no romance in being fleeced by a fifty per cent tariff; no romance in seeing other classes and other property exempted from taxation and realising fabulous dividends upon their investments, when the lands are taxed to their uttermost dollar and farming has paid no dividend since the war..."

"To you who grounded your muskets twenty-five years ago I make my appeal. The fight is upon you -- not bloody as then -- but as bitter; not with men who come to free your slaves, but who come to make slaves of you. And to your sons also I call; and I would that the common spirit might thrill every breast throughout this sunny land, till from every cotton field, every hamlet, every village, every city, might come the shout of defiance to these Rob Roys of commerce and to the robber tariff, from whose foul womb they sprang."17

These speeches did not fall on unsympathetic ears for men were already mobilizing under the banner of the Farmer's
Alliance; cooperatives of many sorts sprang up all over the South. In 1888 one of the Alliance leaders stated: "We are not to be intimidated or frightened by the cry that 'the farmers are going into politics.' Who in all this broad land has a better right 'to go into politics' than he who clothes and feeds the world."  

The standard of revolt was now up; Tom Watson saw to it that it stayed up and that the movement was accelerated. Very happy over this turn of events, Watson wrote: "A new era has dawned in Georgia politics. The old order of things is passing away. The masses are beginning to arouse themselves. The great currents of thought quicken new impulses. At the bar of public opinion the people are pressing their demands and insisting that they be heard." The farmers were happy to welcome young Tom into their fold as a leader of their cause, for they remembered well that while in the legislature Tom had fought their battles against the convict lease system and the monopolistic practices of the railroads. Watson, for his part, was eager to be one of their spokesmen: "My interest is the same as theirs. Then why shouldn't we fight side by side to achieve the common victory."  

The death of Henry Grady in 1889 can be said to mark the end of an era in Southern history. The Southerners for the first time in their lives had embraced the industrializa-
tion, the glorification of the capitalist and his way of life, and the alliance between the South and the East. Tom Watson was to change this creed somewhat in the next decade when he preached agrarianism for the South, glorification for the farmer and his way of life, an alliance with the West, and the enlistment of the Negro in the battle for the supremacy of the farmer.

An example of the South's total unawareness of the change of events that were to take place in the South during the 1890's can be seen by this item in a Southern paper:

"The Constitution spreads this morning the blessed gospel of sunshine! Its sails are bellying with the rising winds of trade...Its expanded columns carry the news of cheerful and hopeful enterprise. On every side things move well. In politics, in business, the outlook is brightening."21

The Alliance men were so pleased with the results of Watson's labors in their behalf that they promised him their support if he would run for Congress. Watson consented and in his campaign of 1890 he spoke as one of the people talking to one of the people. He attacked legislative evils and promised that he would do all within his power to put a stop to monopolies, trusts, and railroad combines. Thousands turned out to hear Watson and his opponent hold debates in which Tom always had the upper hand. After the election was over that November, the Alliance controlled
the state convention, chose the government, wrote the plat-
form, named three-fourths of the Senators and four-fifths of
the representatives. The Alliance was in its ascendancy. 22

With his election to Congress, Watson sold his law
books, for he was determined to devote his entire time to
politics. Tom still thought of his desire for fame, but it
cannot be denied that he was now entering the field of poli-
tics with something of the spirit of consecration -- the work
that lay before him was holy and must be done. Because he
had pledged himself to the carrying out of the principles of
the Farmers' Alliance, he refused to bind himself in Congress
to any action harmful to his constituents. Of the numerous
bills he introduced to aid his people, only two were ever
reported out of the committee to which they were referred.

Watson was not happy while in Congress: "Being in
Congress does not seem near so big a thing as when I was
campaigning for the place." His disgust with this body can
be seen in his own vivid description --

Pledged to reform, they have not reformed. Pledged
to economy, they have not economized. Pledged to
legislate, they have not legislated. Extravagance
has been the order of the day. Absenteeism was
never so pronounced. Lack of purpose was never
so clear. Lack of common business prudence never
so glaring. Drunken members have reeled about the
aisles -- a disgrace to the Republic. Drunken
speakers have debated great issues on the Floor
and in the midst of maudlin rumblings have been
heard to ask, "Mr. Speaker, where was I at?" Use-
less employees crowd every corridor. Useless ex-
penditures pervade every department. 23
The above quotation is a good example of the growing invective which was to become an accepted form of Watson's speeches.

The farmers, along with Watson, came to realize that their non-partisan and bipartisan efforts were mainly wasted. They had thought themselves powerful enough to take over the old Democratic party and to work their reforms from within the party, but this was soon discovered to be a hopeless idea. Watson and others felt that their only alternative was to organize a new political party because the Democratic Party and its leaders were domineering and intolerant and they were drifting away from the "true principles."

By 1892 a great number of people were willing to listen to talk of separation from the two political parties, for the farmer had reached the end of his rope; cotton was selling at the lowest price that it had ever reached in a third of a century; hundreds of men were turned out of their homes and were forced to become tenants on land which they had once owned; weeds choked acres of good land because of the lack of necessary capital. The farmers felt that if the money power were outlawed the solution to their social ills would be accomplished; they agreed that a new party was needed in order to undertake this difficult task. Watson saw the rise of this new party not as a political fight headed by politicians but as a movement of the masses,
an uprising of the people, who would assume the leadership. Watson saw his place as at the head of the battle obeying the commands of the people.

Hamlin Garland, visiting the House of Representatives in the early nineties, describes the nervous energy that was widespread not only in the House but throughout the whole country, particularly in the South: "Everywhere as I went through the aisles of the House, I saw it and heard it. The young Democrats were in almost open rebellion against this domineering philosophy of the old legislators...the House is a smoldering volcano. The Populists, the men who are advocating right and justice instead of policy, sat eager, ready for the struggle. They have everything to win and nothing to lose in the vital discussion or reorganization which, in my judgment, is sure to come." Garland felt that there was approaching a great periodic upheaval similar to that of 1861.

Who were these Populists and what did they stand for? Aside from the new factory proletariat, they were rural; Watson said that Populism stood for the "yearning upward tendency of the middle and lower classes." They were the sworn foes of power, privilege, and wealth. "Close no entrance to the poorest, the weakest, the humblest;" say to all, "come and win your share if you can." This was the first such movement to attack seriously the problems created by industrialism; its believers were interested
in restoring conditions that prevailed before the development of industrialization and the commercialization of agriculture. Perhaps the outstanding feature of the Populist program is that it called for a united front between the Negro and the white farmer. The Populists felt that it was necessary to foster tolerance, friendly cooperation, and political rights for Negroes. Tom Watson saw to it that a Negro was nominated to a position on the state executive committee of the party; he also spoke repeatedly from the same platform to mixed audiences. Though Watson never advocated social equality for the Negro, he was definitely for political equality for these people: "The accident of color can make no difference in the interests of farmers, croppers, and laborers." Watson was undoubtedly the first native white Southern leader to treat the Negro's aspirations with great seriousness; it is important that the reader remember this fact in the light of Watson's further development of his attitude on this very same topic. The concern of the Populist over the Negro can probably best be explained by saying that the Negro was recognized as a political ally of the farmer whose support could greatly increase the farmer's chance of gaining power. Never before or since have the two races in the South come so close together as they did during the Populist struggles.
When Watson stood for re-election in 1892, he was denounced by all machine Democrats and a bitter warfare was launched against him in every county in Georgia; a campaign fund was contributed from other states to aid in his defeat. The election turned out to be a farce; there was wholesale bribery, ballot-box stuffing, voting of minors, and intimidation. Negroes were hauled in from South Carolina to vote in Augusta. Tom Watson was soundly defeated, and this marked the end of his career in political office for more than twenty-five years. His political life had just begun, however, for Tom found his true place to be out among the people preaching a crusade. That was the role he was to play until the end of his life even though he was to lead many different types of crusades. Watson did not become dismayed or discouraged over his defeat, and he remained anxious to get back out among the people and explain the Populist program so that he might win new converts. Watson looked upon himself as the guinea pig of the Populist Party:

The work I did, somebody had to do. The abuse I took somebody had to incur. The losses I have sustained somebody had to dare.

I did the work, took the abuse, risked the loss, and I am proud of it.

Proud of my record, proud of my principles, proud of my friends. 26

From 1894 until the next major election in 1896, the power of the Populists became more consolidated due to the national depression; a new high was reached in unemployment;
capitalism put up a strong fight for the total repression of labor, and agriculture remained in its distressed state. Discontent and Protest were the two keywords of this period. In the county elections the Populist vote increased in every instance with the winning of several new counties and the losing of none of the old. During this same period Watson's power over the Populist Party became great and even appeared dictatorial at times; he often found it necessary for himself to pick the Populist candidates, for the newer elements in the party such as the factory proletariat would not support a dirt-farmer candidate. Some of the members of his own party accused him of undertaking dictatorial acts that the Czar of Russia would be ashamed to do. The threats to Tom's power were never very serious, however.

Election time came round again in 1894 and the Democrats were more convinced than ever that they must defeat Watson again; this would have seemed like an impossible task to most people as the Democrats were being blamed for the hard economic times of 1894, and Democrats in the South and the West were deserting by the thousands to join the Populist ranks as a protest against Cleveland's unpopular administration, but the Democrats merely carried out their bribery and wholesale corruption on an even more extensive scale than in the election of 1892. With only 11,240 possible votes in Richmond County, there were 15,980 votes cast by that county;
Watson received about 2,200. Thus out of a possible poll of 11,240 votes, the Democrats received a majority of 13,780.27 Had Watson been able to gain control of Richmond County he would have gone back to Congress, but as it was he was defeated. By the end of 1894 Watson must have realized that he was fighting a losing battle and that his sacrifice of a successful career in the old party had been in vain.

By 1896 Watson had seen most of the prolific energy and effort he had poured into the new movement going down the drain, for once the silver question was introduced the Populist Party was on its way out. Watson cautioned his party to keep in the middle of the road and not to make any coalition or fusion with either old party; there must be no compromise on principles or surrender of convictions. As free silver was advanced as being the remedy to all social ills, Watson denied this and said that any political party that ventured to go before the American people with only one plank in its platform would be hissed off the stage and kicked into oblivion. This meaningful prophecy was to come true for Tom Watson's own party.28

The Democrats were determined that they should keep control of the White House for another four years; because they knew the unpopularity of Cleveland's administration, they repudiated Cleveland and all he stood for at their national convention in 1896. They baited their platform with certain measures that would make it appeal to the Populists; there was a demand for free silver, denunciation of the bond-selling
policy, condemnation of the Supreme Court's decision against income tax legislation, and the promise of more strict railroad control. In this way the Democrats were hopeful of preventing any Populists from getting on the national ticket; the Democrats saw that it was the plain duty of all Populists and reformers to rally behind the cause of Bryan their candidate.

At their convention in 1896 the Populists were faced with a puzzling dilemma: "If we fuse we are sunk; if we don't fuse all the silver men we have will leave us for the more powerful Democrats." The West was committed to Bryan beyond recall; with the separation of the West, how could the party hope to live? Compromise was the only way out, so the Populists agreed to Bryan as their nominee for president as long as Tom Watson would be the vice-presidential candidate instead of Sewall whom the Democrats had nominated. Watson was assured that leading Democrats would accept this compromise ticket, so he agreed to accept the nomination as this seemed the best way to get the reform measures he had advocated to be adopted. From this time on the Populists were "hopelessly sold out."

Watson immediately began his campaigning, and in all his speeches he made reaffirmal of Populist principles -- he was not content to debate only the silver issue. He called for government ownership of railroads and other public interests, control of trusts, an entirely new system
of money and credit, and a ballot free from corrupting the political rights of Negroes. It is doubtful that any candidate ever to appear on a presidential ticket found himself in quite the humiliating position that Tom Watson occupied in 1896 -- he was ignored by Bryan, his running mate, and he was denounced by the fusionists within his own party for his refusal to withdraw from the race. As the election approached, state after state announced the withdrawal of the Bryan-Watson ticket; the Democratic machines were doing their job effectively. When the election returns poured in, the Populist Party that had two years previously polled close to 2,000,000 votes gave Watson only about 217,000 votes distributed through seventeen different states.

The poor showing bothered Tom a great deal, but what was more tragic is that he had been forced to watch what had once been a powerful party disintegrate under his feet while he acted as its official leader. Such an experience was sure to leave permanent marks upon him:

Somewhere else must be asked to kill that Party. I will not. I sat by its cradle; I have fought its battles; I have supported its principles since organization...and don't ask me after all my service with the People's Party to kill it now. I am going to stand by until it dies, and then I want no man to say that I was the man who had stabbed it in the heart...

To all unprejudiced and manly men, regardless of party, I submit the statement that never before has any party, so badly needed as ours, been so badly treated. Invited to come to the help of the helpless democracy, we have received no generous recognition from those who appealed
to us, and whose appeal we heard. We did not go
to them for aid -- they came to us...In other
words, Populism is allowed to furnish all the cam-
paign principles, all the self-sacrifice and
patriotism, and the two million votes which the
Democrats need, but they are not to be allowed
to furnish a candidate for either place on the
ticket...it appears that the Democratic managers
would be willing to make a sacrifice of both Bryan
and silver, if they can but destroy Populism...

Our party, as a party, does not exist any more.
Fusion has well night killed it...the national
organization is almost dead...confidence is gone.

Describing his own condition after the election, Watson
had this to say: "Politically I was ruined. Financially I
was flat on my back. How near I came to loss of mind only God
who made me knows -- but I was near distraction, perhaps, as
any mortal could safely be. If ever a poor devil had been out-
lawed and vilified and persecuted and misrepresented and howled
down and mobbed and threatened until he was well nigh mad, I
was he."31

****

After the debacle of 1896 Tom Watson became a recluse for
about eight years. Commenting on this period of his life, he
said: "What I suffered in those awful years is known to none
but my wife who shared my lot and God who gave me strength to
endure it."32 Part of this period was filled with his law prac-
tice as six years of political agitation had plunged Tom into
debt. Once his debts were out of the way Tom turned to writing
histories about France and Napoleon. It will be profitable to
look at these two books very briefly as they illustrate the
contradictions that were present in Watson's character.

Watson says that he wrote *The Story of France* to describe the long-continued struggle of the many to throw off the yoke of the few. In this book he reviews the encroachments of absolutism upon popular rights, of the corrupting influence between the union of Church and State, and he illustrates the damaging effects of superstition, ignorance, and blind obedience of the weaker classes to the stronger. *The Story of France* was a plea for oppressed humanity -- Watson hoped this book would bear fruit.

In his biography of Napoleon one can see a complete reversal of attitude from respect for a free society to adulation of a dictator. Watson reveres the name of Napoleon because he was able to break up the monopoly of power, patronage, and wealth that existed in France. Napoleon was a man of the people; Watson preferred to forget the fact that he also became a dictator. The reader is bound to wonder how Watson, an advocate of the popular election of all officers, can reconcile himself to the rise of an emperor. Even more puzzling to explain is this statement made by Watson: "There is not a railway king of the present day, not a single self-made man who has risen from the ranks to become chief in the vast movement of capital and labor, who will not recognize in Napoleon traits of his own character; the same unflagging purpose, tireless persistence, silent plotting, pitiless rush to victory..." No one needs to know much about Tom
Watson to know that he was not accustomed to celebrating the virtues of a railway king. In praising Napoleon, was not Tom Watson erecting an image of capital acquisitiveness for his people to worship? What was behind this? The answer to this question this writer has not been able to track down.

The reader should be introduced to the home that Watson built during this period, for it is a further indication of his personality. The name of his new home was Hickory Hill; it had four imposing fluted columns with Ionic capitals; at the second story of the house was a balcony and around three sides of the house ran an open veranda. Hickory Hill represented the grandiloquent pretentiousness of the ante-bellum Southern traditions; every detail was the reminder of the culture and refinement of the South. There was also much of the ante-bellum flavor of life at Hickory Hill in its spacious freedom of the plantation big-house, in its bounteous tables, and in its tradition of hospitality. Tom was also a stickler for the social etiquette of the Old South as can be seen in a remark made by one of his cousins -- "Cud'n Tom has studied about French kings so much that he has taken to acting like them."

Politics held too much of a fascination for Watson for him to stay away from the political arena very long, and when in 1904 the Democratic platform was silent on silver and Cleveland's name was repeatedly cheered and it was plain that
Eastern Big Business leadership was in control, the People's Party nominated Tom Watson as their presidential candidate. Watson campaigned from Boston to California but he entertained no illusion of victory for he was without party organization of any kind. He received a popular vote of 117,183.

Watson called for all the reformers of this period to gather together in one compact, aggressive movement and agree upon some essential reforms which would be within their reach. It was in March, 1905 that Tom Watson's Magazine was set up, and it was here that Tom was able to exercise his ideas to a much wider audience than would be covered by a political speech. His editorials dealt with the same material that absorbed the attention of the muckrakers, but where these men were content to expose, Watson was moved to ridicule, denounce, and abuse whomever he wrote about. For example, Woodrow Wilson made the statement that "Trusts can never be abolished. They must be mobilized." Tom Watson replied in the following manner:

Go back to thy gerund-grinding, Woodrow -- thou insufferable, impracticable prig. Among the dead Greeks and the extinct Romans thy labors, haply, be useful; but when thou comest among the practical men of today seeking to master actual conditions and to take part in great battle of thought, motive and purpose which rages around us, thou art but "a babby and a gal babby at that."34

After 1904 Tom Watson announced that he would pledge his support and that of the Populists to any anti-machine Democrat running upon a suitable platform that included a pledge to "a change in our Constitution which will perpetuate white
supremacy in Georgia." This announcement of Watson's is important, for it shows that he will sell his support and that of his old followers to any man who will promise him a share in the running of Georgia's state government. However, the most interesting aspect of this announcement is that concerning white supremacy. This is an indication that Watson had abandoned his old dream of uniting both races against the enemy and it is his first step toward the opposite extreme in racial views. It was not long before he was writing in his magazine: "What does Civilization owe to the Negro? Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!"35

The Democrats saw that they were going to have to reconcile themselves to the fact that Tom Watson would be controlling the machinery of the Democratic party -- and at the same time remaining an open and avowed Populist. In 1905 Watson supported Hoke Smith, a one-time strong Democrat, on a Populist platform and he managed to swing 90,000 Populists to the side of Smith. Watson admitted that this was the hardest fighting he had done since 1892. The reform government of Hoke Smith accomplished wonders as Watson dictated the reform policies of this government from Hickory Hill. "What will Watson say?" was always important to know before any action was taken. At the end of two years Watson gave his unqualified endorsement and blessing to the Smith administration. Everything was moving along smoothly until the Arthur Glover case came along.
In 1907 Arthur Glover, a long-time supporter of Watson's, had been convicted of murder and sentenced to hang. Glover appealed to Watson for mercy and Watson spoke to Smith about changing the sentence to life imprisonment. Smith took up the case with a commission who reviewed the case and came up with the decision that the sentence to hang had been a just one; Smith said that he would go along with the decision reached by the commission. Smith would undoubtedly have pondered his decision much more deeply had he known beforehand Watson's reaction to his decision: "The Governor has chosen and will take the natural consequences. No such cold-blooded and selfish politician can ever be a friend of mine again." Watson considered that Smith was under obligation to him and that he had, therefore, been double-crossed.

In 1908 when Hoke Smith was up for election, Joseph Brown was encouraged to enter the gubernatorial race with the promise of Watson's support. In heritage, training, occupation and interest, Brown was completely identified with the corporation interests and their point of view. It would have been difficult for Watson to pick a man more representative of the forces that he had fought against and reviled since his earliest days in politics. There was very little constructive that Watson could say about his candidate so he kept quiet when it came to naming Brown's attributes, but he made it quite plain that he expected all Populists to support him in his fight against Hoke Smith by voting for
Brown. Some of Smith's measures that two years ago he had approved, Watson now damned. In the June primary of 1908 the Smith landslide was reversed and Brown won by the small majority of 12,000. Everyone in Georgia was now convinced that "ole Tom Watson" controlled enough votes in the state to turn an election in the direction that he preferred.

Tom Watson had won a victory in 1906 when he was able to defeat Smith, but he had also suffered the loss of many Populists who no longer could understand what prompted their leader to act the way he did: "The charm of your career, the romance of your life, the heroic sacrifices you have made for liberty fade from my view in this mean hour of fate." In 1906 when he ran for President of the United States for the last time, he only polled approximately 17,000 votes in his own state; what had happened to the once formidable ranks of 90,000 Georgian Populists? It appears that Watson's behavior had been too erratic in this first decade of the twentieth century for very many of his supporters to give him continued loyalty. What had happened to the young idealist of the 1890's? The Jeffersonian equalitarianism and humanitarianism of the nineties had been exchanged for militant sectionalism, fear of majority rule, and racial domination.

In 1910 Watson decided to return to the Democratic party after twenty years of rebellion; he saw that he could accomplish little by remaining on the outside so he decided
to devote the balance of his life to driving out of the party its deserters and do-nothings. He informed the Party leaders that he planned to take command of the Democratic Party himself. His first target was Hoke Smith -- his desire to bring disgrace upon this man had become a blinding obsession with him. First of all, he dug up a discredited scandal about Smith, and supported it by means of anonymous letters and rumors that had no backing. When this failed to have the effect he had anticipated, he printed in his magazine only a few days before state election (Hoke Smith was a candidate for governor) the following story: "Hoke Smith has ruined more than one pure girl, more than one pure wife." Details of Smith's sexual excursions were furnished in an anonymous letter which was also printed. Smith ignored these charges and a few days later was overwhelmingly elected. Watson's candidate lost to Smith by a large majority. Undaunted, Watson continued to print his charge of immorality against Smith. The editor of the Georgian, at about this time, wrote an editorial entitled "What Is The Matter With Thomas E. Watson?" in which he said that if Watson was in a sane condition of mind, he was "the basest, most depraved, most poisonous man in Georgia today."37 This editor was not alone in his opinion.

Tiring of manipulating state politics, Watson turned his eyes toward certain "menaces" that he felt it was his
duty to lead the people against. He was to be the Messiah of the Southland -- "But of late a new spirit has taken possession of me and I have to obey it." He was convinced; he said, that the people "were beginning to believe that I am one of the men whom God himself raises up and inspires." The majority of the farmers were willing to become part of any crusade that Watson might want to lead, for they had become frustrated in their age-long and losing struggle against the industrial economy; they were eager to participate in crusades that might have antagonists that could be more easily defeated. These victorious crusades offered some degree of compensation and reward to a people who were starved for success.

From 1910-1917 the frustrated men and the frustrated classes were engaged in an anti-Catholic crusade. Watson used his magazine to print anti-Catholic articles that were a strange mixture of erudition and sensationalism bordering on the pathological. Watson saw himself as another Erasmus or Henry VIII. Accuracy, moderation, and fairness were absent completely from these articles. Tom Watson got a special kick out of printing pictures of Catholic dignitaries accompanied by an original comment: "Such a proboscis always marks the sensual man. It is thick and I shouldn't wonder if it is red...It being so manifest that O'Connell eats and drinks deep, how does he control his other and STRONGER passions?" Watson always made sure that the titles
of his articles were sufficiently intriguing — "The Murder of Babes," "What Happens in Convents?", and "How the Confessional Is Used By Priests To Ruin Women" in which Watson vividly described to his readers just how it happened:

Through his questions the priest learns which of his fair penitents are tempted to indulge in sexual inclinations...He is alone with a beautiful, well-shaped young woman who tells him that she is tormented by carnal desire. Her low voice is in his ear; the rustle of her skirts and the scent of her hair kindles flames. She will never tell what he says or does. She believes that he cannot sin. She believes that he can forgive her sin. She has been taught that in obeying him, she is serving God.  

In 1911 Watson and others organized the Guardians of Liberty who spoke out against immigration and the growing interference from foreign ecclesiastical authority; in 1912 it assumed a predominantly anti-Catholic complexion through Watson's influence.

In the person of Woodrow Wilson, Watson saw another chance to organize a crusade for it was common knowledge that Wilson had "kow-towed" to the Roman hierarchy as well as being "ravenously fond of the Negro." Watson accused Wilson of sending "...BOOKER T. WASHINGTON A MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE AND CONFIDENCE WHEN THAT GOON WAS CAUGHT AT A WHITE WOMAN'S BEDROOM DOOR AND WAS DESERVEDLY BEATEN FOR IT." When Wilson was up for re-election, Watson managed to control completely the Georgia Democratic Convention and pledge the delegates to a candidate other than Wilson. The national convention, however, nominated Wilson, and so
Watson immediately bolted and went over to the side of Teddy Roosevelt and the Bull Moose Party.

Now that he had smeared the Catholics, it was only natural that he should turn to a persecution of the Jews; his crusade against the Jews was provoked by the Leo Frank case of 1913. A young girl of fourteen had been found horribly murdered in an Atlanta factory and her foreman, Leo Frank, a northern Jew, was arrested although there was not adequate evidence against him. Watson called Frank the typical young libertine Jew "who is dreaded and detested by city authorities of the North for the very reasons that Jews of this type have an utter contempt for law and a ravenous appetite for the forbidden fruit -- a lustful eagerness enhanced by the racial novelty of the girl of the uncircumcised." Watson immediately bolted and went over to the side of Teddy Roosevelt and the Bull Moose Party.

When news of the commutation of Frank's sentence had been given by the governor, there was a great gathering of mobs in all sections of the state and they eagerly read and discussed what Watson had to say about this latest development:

Our Grand Old Empire State HAS BEEN RAPED!
We have been violated, AND WE ARE ASHAMED!
The great Seat of State has gone...
We have been betrayed! the breath of some leprous monster
has passed over us, and we feel like crying out in horror
and despair, "Unclean! UNCLEAN!"

In his paper of August 12th, 1915, Watson wrote, "THE NEXT JEW WHO DOES WHAT FRANK DID IS GOING TO GET EXACTLY THE SAME THING THAT WE GIVE TO NEGRO RAPISTS." Four nights later
twenty-five men entered the state penitentiary and took
Frank out and drove him one hundred and seventy-five miles
across the state in eight automobiles and hanged him on a
tree near Marietta.

When the news first reached Watson of the lynching,
he remained silent, but he soon came to the lynchers' aid
by writing a long defense of lynching using the text, "The
Voice of the People is the Voice of God." He said that there
were millions of people throughout this land who must be en-
thusiastically greeting the news of the triumph of law in
Georgia. To Tom Watson, these men who had taken the law
into their own hands were not guilty of being called lynchers
but rather he saw in the ruffians an army of Jacobins. Wat-
son had no Party now, no platform, but only a nondescript
army of followers who believed the prejudices of their
master.

The Frank case had been swelled to such giant propor-
tions that the next state election in Georgia in 1916 was
fought largely on the issues of this case and Watson's can-
didates proved to be victorious all along the line -- Watson
once more became the power behind the throne at the state
capital. Though Watson was probably unaware of it, one
night when the people of Georgia were still up in arms about
the Frank case a group of men met ten miles out of Atlanta
to inaugurate a new Klu Klux Klan. The Klan in the years
to come was to visit terror on many peaceful people in the
South; if one is to be credited with releasing the forces of malice, ignorance, and superstition that the Klan used as its chief weapons, the likely candidate for such a dubious honor is Thomas E. Watson. When Tom was only twenty-three he wrote: "I have imagined enemies where there were none: been tortured by indignities which were the creatures of my own fancy, and I have magnified the gloom of every reverse..." What a prophetic statement this is once one has studied Watson's fight against the "menaces."

With the coming of World War I, Watson was still so absorbed in his crusades that he had time for little else, but he did say that he favored a strong position of neutrality. However, two weeks prior to Wilson's declaration of war, Watson backtracked and called for United States intervention; once the country had entered the war Watson, not surprisingly, went back to his former position of neutrality calling the war the result of the most "ravenous commercialism that ever cursed a nation." Of course, he was furious to see so many war powers given to Wilson; he refused to have anything to do with the war.

Watson's health was growing worse month by month and in April of 1917 a Negro servant found him wandering on the beach out of his mind; for nine hours he talked incessantly, for the most part repeating speeches he had made in the nineties; it was not until July that he began to recover and then he sought relief in drugs and in an increased
amount of drinking. Never again was he to be capable of the sustained mental exertion that he had once been accustomed to. Nevertheless in 1918, he decided to run for Congress again in the hopes that it would turn his mind away from "morbidness and melancholy." The crowds still came to hear Tom, but they noticed that the fiery invective that they had relished was now gone. Watson announced himself as the only out-and-out anti-Wilson candidate, the only thoroughgoing opponent of the League of Nations, and the only defender of civil liberties. He was against the American Legion, the Catholic "menace", and he urged the Ku Klux Klan to put the Legion to rout. Despite this extreme radicalism, Watson won by about a 40,000 vote margin. People still had memories of the young idealist while others were quite happy to see a reactionary represent Georgia in the United States Senate. Nation magazine commented:

Watson's election was "essentially the victory of the Fifth Estate, of the sinister forces of intolerance, superstition, prejudice, religious jingoism, and mobbism... Never before had so conspicuous, so violent, so flaming an apostle of every variety of race hatred been invested with the power and dignity of the Senatorial Toga."46

Watson's last years which were spent in the Senate are not exciting ones; he was assigned unimportant committee appointments. During an interval of six months, he was known to have challenged three men to physical combat or
threatened them with assault and battery -- he who was the smallest man in the Senate, but certainly the most belligerent. He found no peace of mind in his new job. On September 26, 1922 Watson died of a cerebral hemorrhage; his body was taken back to Hickory Hill where between seven and ten thousand people attended the funeral service; everywhere there were badges and banners of mourning. There was genuine sorrow in the faces of the Georgians -- the Rebel had come home to Hickory Hill and his lost Southern paradise.

POSTSCRIPT

Anyone who knows the Tom Watson story cannot help but feel love and hatred toward this man -- love for his early idealism and his faith in his fellowmen; and hatred for his illiberalism which became his only creed at the turn of the century. This writer sees Tom Watson as an insatiable romantic and an unreconstructed and unrepentant Populist who was rejected by society because he was born in the wrong period in American history. I do not blame society for its rejection -- it had no other choice; I only lament the fact that Tom Watson was not able to rise to the occasion and adapt his talents to the age of industrialism. A great man's mind and talent were sacrificed because of his inability to live in the new America of industrialism and commercialization. It became wasted on purposeless crusades which served to disunite the people of his own homeland. One can only feel pity and regret.
Watson was born of a certain tradition and his loyalty to that tradition and to his class was the most important thing in his life -- his agrarianism was basic and whatever other ideas and principles he believed in were only superstructure. Americans believed throughout the nineteenth century that farming as a vocation was something sacred and not to be tampered with by anyone. Complacency and self-righteousness were bound to enter into their thinking and, therefore, it was only natural that this complacency should be rudely shocked when industrialism and its conquests took a permanent place in American history. It was a tragic experience to see what you had always believed in uprooted and cast aside. This was the tragedy of Tom Watson's life, for he was born at the time that the agrarian society was beginning its decline and he accepted a heritage of defeat. He was a proud participant in the agrarian resurgence of the nineties and attained leadership of a movement that was doomed. No matter how hard a fight he put up for his cause, he met only one thing -- Frustration. He longed for the status and power which he felt due him but which had been taken away from his class by the manufacturers, the railroaders, and banking houses, so he turned to other devices -- devices which would not have gained his consent at one time. New recruits, frustrated like their leader, took up his cry against the "menaces." They soon deserted him when the newness had worn off.

Tom Watson was a unique type of political boss for he was able to stand outside the party he bossed and still be very
effective. To the Democrats he was a party outlaw who played one faction of the party against the other, and one who was completely oblivious to party discipline, rule, or traditions. There were always plenty of politicians at Tom Watson's door currying his favor because news of Watson's favor or disfavor could make or unmake a candidate. Of course, it cannot be said that Watson's power was absolute -- but does any political boss possess absolute power? His influence waxed and waned as can be seen best in his campaigns against Hoke Smith. Yet there was no governor of Georgia from 1906 to 1922 who did not owe at least one of his terms to some degree to Tom Watson's support. I think that it can be said that Watson, as a boss, did not always use the power that he possessed to his greatest benefit -- it was too arbitrary and rested too much on the fact of whether one happened to be in the favor of Tom Watson or not.

Again I wish to repeat that Tom Watson failed as a great American because his utopia was in the past, not the future. He looked with longing to a lost agrarian Eden. Even if Watson were to live in the mid-twentieth century, he would still cry out: "With a resolution, which nothing can shake, I take my stand for the ideals of the Old South...Here I choose my ground; here I form my line of battle; here, I fly the flag of revolt."
Chapter 3
THE CITY BOSS IN POLITICS

In the first chapter of this paper I described very briefly the type of role that was played by the city bosses during this period in history; in this chapter I shall look at this type of politician much more closely and attempt to show how his actions and behavior enabled him to gain control of municipal government. While reading this section, one should keep in mind the conditions of this period as described in the first chapter, for the boss, or even ward leader, cannot be pictured realistically unless he is presented against his social, economic, and political background. A writer could not hope to draw an accurate portrait of the city boss if he looked at him apart from his constituents and environment; even though the professional politician is one of the factors that helps fashion and maintain his own peculiar environment, he is, above all else, a product of his surroundings.

A period of contentment and lassitude in politics followed the Civil War and Americans were interested only with the expansion of the West and with the building of industry. There was a shameful neglect of the details of politics as had never been seen before, and, as never before, those peculiar conditions were present that allowed for the growth of rings and bosses:
The existence or opportunities for illicit gains arising out of the possession of office.
The presence of a mass of pliable and ignorant voters.
The insufficient participation in politics of the "good citizens."  

George Washington Plunkett, one of Tammany Hall's wisest philosophers, indicates how changing conditions can bring about a new outlook as far as the politician's morals and ethics are concerned: "A half a century ago, our cities were small and poor. There wasn't many temptations lyin' around for politicians. There was hardly anything to steal, and hardly any opportunities for even honest graft...It makes me tired to hear of old codgers back in the thirties or forties boastin' that they retired from politics without a dollar except what they earned in their profession or business...It just means that the old timers had nothing to steal, while the politicians now are surrounded by all kinds of temptations and some of them naturally -- the fool ones -- buck up against the penal code."

Politics during this period became almost wholly personal because the people were living in an environment that was, for the most part, impersonal, remote, and meaningless. The people longed for a life that was fuller, more beautiful, and more human; when leaders appeared before them and offered to help them find this type of life, they were overjoyed and accepted the philosophy of these bosses wholeheartedly. The people saw in the boss a man who knew and understood their wants --
a man who could bring warmth and animation to that which had formerly been cold and aloof. He became the man who was able to bridge the gap between the incomprehensible outer world and the inadequate citizen.

Attempting to give the reader a composite picture of the city boss is an almost impossible task because apart from "courage, persistence and a flair for politics" there is no one quality that all bosses possess. All men have varying characteristics, different traditions, different moral codes, cultural attitudes, and mental habits -- the city boss is no exception. Thomas Nast's classic description of the "derby-hatted, sport-suited, flashy-jeweled, plug-ugly boss, with coarse, brutal features, protruding paunch, and well-chewed stogy, who has no morals and is socially impossible" has been accepted by many as an accurate portrait; however, there is no valid reason for believing that bosses are a distinct species of the human being -- they "possess the physical, mental, and moral variations of men in general."4

There was no one pattern that was followed by men to achieve the status of city boss, but there are certain trends that can be seen in studying a number of bosses of this type. The first step in the preparation for a career in city politics was either to be born into a constituency made up of one's own kind of people, or to move to one as promptly as possible. It is hard to find a boss who did not reside in the city over which he later dominated at least before his twentieth year and usually
it was much earlier. Most of the bosses had foreign-born mothers and fathers, and they were products of urban rather than rural life. A surprising number of bosses lost their fathers at an early age, and consequently were forced as mere children to assume at least part of the burden of keeping the family from starving. The environment they usually grew up in was far from ideal with its crowded downtown sections, factories, and squatters' shanties. Their education was usually limited to the grammar school.

Many bosses began their careers as the leaders of juvenile gangs in their districts. Tim Sullivan of New York attributed the early opening of his political career to a battle with a pugilist whom he found beating a woman; by whipping the bully he drew around him the most promising young men of the Bowery and established a reputation that went far in the rough scramble of young boys. When there was no fighting to be done, a boy would sell newspapers, shine shoes, make bricks, or peddle vegetables and tobacco. George Plunkett tells of how he got a foothold in politics:

If you are goin' to cast your first vote next November and want to go into politics, do as I did. Get a followin', if it's only one man, and then go to the district leader and say: "I want to join the organization. I've got one man who will follow me through thick and thin. If you go to him and say -- 'I took first prize at college in Aristotle; I can recite all Shakespeare (sic.) forwards and backwards..." The boss will probably say: 'I guess you are not to blame for your misfortunes, but we have no use for you here.'
The average length of apprenticeship for these aspiring bosses was from fifteen to twenty years. Plunkett said "show me a boy who hustles for the organization on election day and I'll show you a comin' statesman." On election day, the apprentice would sit in a corner saloon and distribute ballots while he listened to the reports of the precinct captains and organized groups of "repeaters" to be sent to any district if the boss's opponent was receiving too much support. The political ladder was ascended gradually as one moved from precinct worker to precinct leader and finally to leader of the ward. Once one had a seat on the Central Committee, the final step was to become chairman of this committee; promotion came only through a merit system -- he who leads must first serve, he who commands must first learn how to obey. The success of any ring rested on the principle of the survival of the fittest -- a man must be able to hold his position in this organization by means of efficient service or he may find his job lost to one of the crowd of eager aspirants. Once the city boss has solidified his position his power is tremendous:

Seeing the powers of Croker, one almost believes that not a policeman walks his beat in New York City except by his grace; not a brick is laid on a public or private work that he may not impudently tear down if the contractor laying it withholds homage to the Boss; that not a wheel turns in any railroad, not a car moves up and down an elevator shaft in Greater New York but, by expressing an idé caprice, Croker may not stop them.

The city boss and his relation with his henchmen has been pictured very well by Alfred Henry Lewis: he "turns them, and twists them, and takes them in, and moves them about, and in
all things does with them what one...might do with children at
a game of cards.9

The personal morality of the political boss had to be better
than average, for he was constantly under the eyes of his consis-
tuents who were not disposed to have as a leader a man who was
a companion to dissipation. Although he might be a warm support-
er of saloons and other vices because such institutions helped
maintain his control, he ordinarily desisted from the patronage
of such establishments himself. He would often play the role of
the stern father to his constituents as he lectured them on the
value of thrift or the evils of drink and gambling. Most of
these bosses were regular churchgoers, but there were exceptions
to the rule such as Boss Tweed who was known to share Jim
Fisk's mistress.

The boss, as a rule, never occupied very high social posi-
tions because he lacked the time and because his business was
not looked upon with favor in most high social circles. His
club and lodge memberships were generally quite good as he
joined such organizations as the Knights of Columbus, the
Rotary, and the Elks. Both Tweed and Croker of Tammany used
their wealth in a showy way, but most bosses remained rather
conservative when it came to displaying their wealth. Tweed
lived in a gorgeous palace on Fifth Avenue and he owned an
expensive steam yacht and housed his horses in a mahogany stable
trimmed with silver.10 The elite Democratic Club that Croker
established proved to rival those of New York's high society:
It was really as good as a play to watch Croker every evening. He had a table near the center of the dining-room, and only the chosen few were permitted to sit with him. Any one that wanted to stand well with the chief was expected to dine at the Club at least once a week. No one ever thought of going into the dining room until Croker was seated. I have always believed that Croker regarded this as a huge joke and was continually laughing in his sleeve at his subservient followers. Frequently he would not go to the dining room until very late, and the famished members would feel obliged to bear their hunger. Just as soon as Croker entered the dining room there would be a grand rush. The majority of the diners would watch what Croker ordered, and then order the same thing. Croker, of course, pretended not to notice this, but he did. Frequently, to carry out his job, he would order very little, and some of these brawny leaders who had large appetites would suffer because they were afraid to go any further than the chief.

Why did men want to become municipal bosses? This is a difficult question to answer for the reason that each man probably had his own aims in politics and these aims depended on the man’s character. Politics was, and is, one of those fields in which the desire in man’s life for power and recognition along with the wish for wealth could be fulfilled if he were willing to work hard for the position of boss. That power and wealth were not easy things to come by can be seen in this statement made by Croker at the end of his career:

The role of leader isn’t a bed of roses. It is too much for me...It has been all work and no pleasure with me...If a man becomes a leader of Tammany, he might as well give up the idea for all time of having fun...It is the man who has to handle all the troubles of the organization that gets no sleep...A leader in Tammany isn’t made. He is like Topsy -- he just grows. I was not selected leader. I just grew up to it. It is this way: The district leaders come to regard one of their number as most competent to lead, and naturally defer to him. The executive committee doesn’t select anyone...I am not envious the man that gets the
job. He has got to be a firm, independent man, who can say "no" pretty often and shoulder a lot of trouble if it comes his way. He will have lots of trouble. He can count on that as a certain prerequisite of the office.]

####

Too many people have the mistaken idea that fraud in politics is what enabled the city boss to maintain his strong position; this notion has been too much overemphasized, and the theory that a boss succeeds over a period of years because he has something positive to offer to the people has not been given worthy consideration. The party machines and the rings have always been the strongest when the needs of the voters were most compelling; the work of the boss and his organization revolves around the basic wants of man -- food, jobs, low taxes, and justice (tempered with mercy or favoritism). The boss realizes that if he can take care of the people, the people will take care of him. The boss must be a specialist in personal relationships if he wishes to maintain his power for a long period of time:

There’s only one way to hold a district; you must study human nature and act accordingly. You can’t study human nature in books. To learn real human nature you have to go among the people, see them and be seen. I know every man, woman, and child in the Fifteenth District...I know what they like and what they don’t like, what they are strong at and what they are weak in, and I reach them by approachin’ at the right side...the poor look up to George W. Plunkett as a father, come to him in trouble -- and don’t forget him on election day.]

Richard Croker was another active supporter of this philosophy of paternalism: "While most men sit around club windows or at dinner, discussing political plans, I go among my people
to find out what they are saying and doing."14 When Croker was asked what he considered most to his credit during his reign of Tammany, he replied, "Every man, rich or poor, small or great, who wanted to see me, did see me and was listened to."15 Boies Penrose saw the task of the political boss as one that seemed almost too difficult to accomplish: "...There are about five thousand electoral divisions in this state. They hold from twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand Republican workers who carry the division and bring out the vote. I must know all these men. They must know me...I must know what they are, what they want, and how and when. My hand must always be on the job. I can never take it off. All my time goes to the task, and must. If I take my hand off, I am gone."16 The boss must look after his own interests, the organization's interest, and the city's interest all at the same time.

The city boss found that a great deal of strength rested with the great numbers of immigrants that were entering the United States during this period of history. These immigrants received the right to vote after only two or three years of residence but they were not prepared for suffrage; they knew nothing of the institutions of this country, or of its political issues. They had come, for the most part, from countries where methods of free government were not practiced. They soon realized that their vote had value to the party machine, and so they demanded stated and definite returns for their political allegiance, or else their allegiance was soon transferred. Because of the wide variety of immigrants, the boss found himself adapting to many new roles -- he learned to eat corned beef and kosher meat
with the same enthusiasm, and he took his hat off in church and pulled it down over his ears in the synagogue. The boss's great ease in assuming many roles can be seen in Plunkett's amusing comment:

My district, the Fifteenth, is made up of all sorts of people, and a cosmopolitan is needed to run it successful. I'm a cosmopolitan. When I get into the silk-stocking part of the district, I can talk grammer and all that with the best of them. I went to school three winters when I was a boy, and I learned a lot of fancy stuff that I keep for occasions...As for the common people of the district, I am at home with them at all times. When I go among them, I don't try to show off my grammer, or talk about the Constitution, or how many volts there is in electricity or make it appear in any way that I am better educated than they are.17

Plunkett goes on to offer sound advice about campaign speeches:

"If you're makin' speeches in a campaign, talk the language the people talk. Don't try to know how the situation is by quoting Shakespeare (sic.). Shakespeare was all right in his way, but he didn't know anything about Fifteenth District politics."18

The boss would go to almost any lengths to insure himself of a vote. When one of his supporters had difficulty in learning whom he was to vote for, the boss might go so far as to give him a piece of cardboard which had oblong holes cut in it, which, when fitted by the voter over the list of candidates, would leave only the boss's choices in sight; the voter was thus enabled to vote "right." Another story is that of a girl who had been married only a few weeks before her first child was born. The mother of the bride explained her plight to the ward leader and stated that if something were not done, the neighbors would
begin to talk. The leader, by his influence in City Hall, had
the date of the marriage records moved back exactly one year.
The mother then was able to explain to her friends that her daugh­
ter had been secretly married a year before. In this way the
daughter's life was not ruined and she and her husband and the
whole family always voted for their benefactor's candidates.\textsuperscript{19}

As long as the boss played Robin Hood to the poor, they
were quite willing to be his vassals, but if they discovered that
he was robbing his supporters, his power would decline rapidly.
The boss saw the need of continually giving the people something
they could "see," for the ordinary citizen judged government by
tangibles which he could look at with his own eyes. One of the
city bosses of Boston, Martin Lomasney, summed up the situation
quite well by saying, "I never saw a man in my life who made
economy his watchword who was not always defeated before the
people...I would sooner vote any day to increase a salary than
to cut it down...The men who live are those who look out for
people, and when the people receive the benefits, they never
grumble about taxes.\textsuperscript{20}

Finley Dunne's Mr. Dooley realized the vast amount of work
the city boss was confronted with every day: "No, sir, polly­
tics ain't droppin' into tea, an' it ain't wurrakin' a scroll
saw, or makin' a garden in the back yard. 'Tis gettin' up at
six o'clock in the mornin' an' r-rushin' off to wurruk, an'
comin' home at night tired and dusty."\textsuperscript{21} A look at an actual day
in the life of George Washington Plunkett, ward leader, would
seem to indicate that Mr. Dooley's description is pretty accurate:

2 A.M.--Goes to police station to bail out saloon-keeper arrested for violating the excise law. Returns to bed at 3 A.M.

6 A.M.--He is awakened by fire engines passing his house. Goes to scene of fire to give assistance to the fire sufferers. Took several tenants who had been burned out to a hotel, supplied them with clothes, fed them and arranged temporary living quarters for them.

8:30 A.M.--Went to police court and secured discharge of four drunks and paid the fine for two others.

9 A.M.--Appeared in Municipal District Court where one of his district captains was acting as counsel for a widow against whom dispossession proceedings had been brought. He also paid the rent of a poor family about to be dispossessed and gave them a dollar for food.

11 A.M.--At home again. Four men were waiting for him asking for jobs. He succeeds in finding jobs for all of them.

3 P.M.--Attended funeral of Italian and then hurried back to make his appearance at the funeral of a Hebrew constituent. Later he attended a Hebrew confirmation ceremony in the synagogue.

7 P.M.--Went to district headquarters and presided over a meeting of district captains. There was a discussion of the attitude of the people toward Tammany. Suggestions were made as to who might be won over and how.

8 P.M.--Went to church fair. Took chances on everything and kissed the children, flattered the mothers, and took the fathers out for something down at the corner.

9 P.M.--At club-house again. Spent ten dollars on tickets for church excursions and promised a subscription for the new church bell. He listened to the grievances of twelve push cart peddlers who complained of being persecuted by the police; he promised he would look into it.

10:30 P.M.--Attended a Hebrew wedding reception and dance. Had previously sent a gift to the bride.

12 P.M.--In bed.
The period for the ascendancy of the political boss was also a time for the presence of reformers who did their best to obstruct the work of these men. That they failed in their task can be attributed to their general attitude toward reform: "I am in earnest--I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch--and I will be heard." The reformers looked to the passage of laws as the panacea of all America's ills; it was believed that every phase of human conduct could be ordered and regulated by the enactment of statutes. The typical reformer of this period showed himself to be without knowledge of life or of human nature; everything appeared to him to represent either absolute good or absolute evil -- there was no middle road. Plunkett, in one of his more poetic moods, described the plight of the reformers quite accurately and concisely: reformers were like morning glories who "looked lovely in the morning and withered up in a short time, while the regular machines went on flourishing forever, like fine old oaks."

The reformers and their mission of salvation failed because they could not seem to comprehend that they were dealing with a motley population whose motto seemed to be -- "A free and easy life in a free and easy town." These metropolitan masses proved to be primarily interested in pleasure, and pagan in their tastes; because of their utter indifference, they refused to be deeply moved by the sensational details of graft and other illegal practices. These people realized that they could not enjoy liquor, vice, and gambling and possess civic purity as well;
it is needless to say what was sacrificed. Sidney Brooks sees the failure of the reformers to achieve concrete results resting on the fact that "no reform administration has yet mastered the secret (which Tammany so perfectly understands) of 'team-play!' The heads of the various departments work far too independently of each other; they are too much like a company of star actors; they quarrel with one another and criticize each other's conduct with a publicity and freedom quite destructive of any real unity."25

The boss had an interest in the present order of government, and so he did his best to prevent reformers from carrying out any of their proposed innovations. Plunkett's tirades on the reformer's role in civil service serve as an excellent example of the boss's fury toward reform of any kind.

The Civil Service Law is the biggest fraud of the age. It is the curse of the nation. There can't be no real patriotism while it lasts. How are you goin' to interest our young men in their country if you have no offices to give them when they work for their party?... How are we goin' to provide for the thousands of men who worked for the Tammany ticket?... I know more than one young man in past years who worked for the ticket and was just over-havin' with patriotism, but when he was knocked out by the civil service humbug he got to hate his country and became an Anarchist. Now what is goin' to happen when civil service crushes out patriotism? Only one thing can happen: the republic will go to pieces. Then a Czar or a Sultan will turn up... there will be h-- to pay. And that ain't no lie.26...

I see a vision. I see the civil service monster lyin' flat on the ground. I see the Democratic party standin' over it with its foot on its neck and wearin' the crown of victory. I see Thomas Jefferson lookin' out from a cloud and sayin': "Give him another sockdolger: finish him." And I see millions of men wavin' their hats and singin' "Glory Hallelujah!"27
Walter Lippmann caught the essence of a Plunkett's success as a leader when he spoke a note of advice to reformers: "You can beat Tammany Hall permanently in one way -- by making the government of a city as human, as kindly, as jolly as Tammany Hall."28

The purpose of this short chapter on the typical city boss has been to show that he was not a freak but rather a natural phenomena. The boss is a prototype of his people, for if he were not of the people and interested in their personal problems, he never could have survived and achieved the power that he did. What he says and does is merely the expression of the general tenor of his constituents. The strength of the boss, or of any public figure, comes from the support of real and living individuals whose specific wants he is able to satisfy rather than from an anonymous public. Lincoln Steffens has summarized my point of view on this topic in a statement that seems to say what I have been attempting to get across to the reader in this chapter:

The misgovernment of the American people is misgovernment by the American people...Are the people honest? Are the people better than Tammany?...Isn't our corrupt government, after all, representative?...There is no essential difference between the pull that gets your wife into society or for your book a favorable review, and that which gets a feather into office, a thief out of jail, and the rich man's son on the board of directors of a corporation...The boss is not a politician, he is an American institution, the product of a freed people that have not the spirit to be free...We are responsible, not our leaders, since we follow them...The spirit of graft and of lawlessness is the American spirit...The people are not innocent..."29
Bosses, then, are offspring of their environment; their morality becomes that of their surroundings. If there are doors open to easy wealth and power, they will be sure to walk in. The years from 1865-1900 were just such years and some men like George Washington Plunkett "seen their opportunities and took 'em."
Chapter 4

JAMES BLAINE: THE PATRIOT IN POLITICS

James Gillespie Blaine was born in 1830 in the old Gillespie farm on the banks of the Monongahela; even Baline's most enthusiastic admirers have failed to discover anything of great importance about his boyhood. The first ten years of Blaine's life were exciting ones for the nation as a whole, for nullification in South Carolina was threatened, the national bank was slaughtered, and Webster and Clay organized the Whig party in protest over the tyranny of "King Andrew the First." By the time he was ten years old, Blaine declared himself to be a confirmed Whig (through the influence of his father), and it is told of how young Blaine saw a picture of Democrat candidate Martin Van Buren and thumbed his nose at it -- he was never to revise his opinion of the Democrats.

Ephraim Lyon Blaine, James' father, seems to have been a genial and good man, but he had little business acumen and the Blaine family found their money supply growing lower and lower. Blaine's elementary education was given to him by his mother, and at the age of thirteen he entered Washington and Jefferson College -- the youngest member in a class of thirty-three. The college had an undistinguished faculty and the curriculum put its major emphasis on rhetoric, the ancient languages, and philosophy. While at Washington
and Jefferson, Blaine came to be noted for three things: his remarkable memory, his ability to learn easily, and his swift and original mind.\(^1\) Blaine had an almost abnormal interest in politics at the time; he had not a glimmer of interest in athletics, and politics was quickly substituted for sports.

With his graduation in 1847, Blaine found himself as a teacher of Latin, Greek, and geometry in the Western Military Institute at Georgetown which was about twelve miles from Lexington; "Professor" Blaine was then eighteen years old. He performed his academic duties well at Georgetown, but it was politics and not education that absorbed Blaine's attention; letters to his friends at this period in his life are filled with amazingly shrewd comments on the political situation in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and the nation-at-large; Blaine already possessed that peculiar sense or instinct that enabled him to feel out in advance the probable direction of mass opinion which was to be extremely helpful time and time again in his political career.

Blaine's marriage in 1850 increased his sense of the need to be at the business of preparing for his chosen profession which was to be law. He left the military institute and went back to his home state of Pennsylvania where he obtained a position at the Pennsylvania Institute for the Education of the Blind; his salary was considerably larger and the teaching hours fewer than at the military institute,
and also the city of Philadelphia offered adequate facilities for study in its law libraries. He taught at Philadelphia for about a year and a half until he was offered a chance of being director of the editorial page of the Kennebec Journal in Augusta, Maine; the men of the Journal realized that Blaine lacked journalistic experience, but they liked him for his geniality, his knowledge of politics, and his ardent devotion to the Whig Party and its principles. There seems to have been no hesitancy in Blaine's acceptance of the offer, for he must have realized that a newspaper at the capital of a state was an opening wedge to the political activities that best suited his genius. Blaine's acceptance of this job was probably the most important decision of his life because of its effect on his public career. At the age of twenty-four, he was a permanent resident of New England -- henceforth he was to be known as "Blaine of Maine." His close identification with the economic interests of Maine molded or confirmed his opinion on such political questions as taxation, the tariff, currency, the fisheries, and foreign relations. Blaine's ambition for a legal career was now discarded as he saw journalism as the means by which he might enter public life -- the newspaper, acting as a sounding board, offered a wonderful opportunity for political influence.²

Blaine's acceptance of the editorship of the Journal coincided with stirring events in our history which are worth
mentioning for the reason that they enlisted Blaine's zeal and gave full scope to his aggressive talents. By 1852 the Whig Party was on its deathbed as the questions of internal improvement, the bank, the tariff, and resistance to executive "tyranny" lost all their timeliness. It was the passage of the Douglas Kansas-Nebraska Bill (1854) which repealed the Compromise of 1820 and opened the whole Louisiana Purchase to the slaveholder that launched the new Republican Party which was dedicated to the fight against the extension of slavery. This was the crisis in national affairs when Blaine reached Maine, and he found the people of his adopted state in agreement with the Republicans; he quietly dropped the teachings of Clay and Webster and buried his Whig past and became a hardshell Republican.

Blaine infused his editorials with a pungency and vigor that began at once to draw attention. Slavery was the main topic of the times and Blaine knew just how far he could go before he started to tread on dangerous ground; he felt perfectly safe to denounce the slave-owning oligarchy and the extension of slavery into the territories, but he knew it was not well to advocate the abolition of slavery because that would be interference with property, and the people of Maine had always been the champions of property. As the Republicans began to build up their party in Maine, it is only natural that Blaine should become one of the leaders; he supported the first Republican presidential ticket in
1856 with such great enthusiasm both in the Journal and on the stump that he contributed more than any other man to the 25,000 vote majority which the State gave Fremont.

Politics were fast moving up to the forefront and journalism showed a poor second in Blaine's life. Blaine went west in the fall of 1858 to write some newspaper articles about the political outlook; while there he attended two of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates on the slavery issue; Abe Lincoln now became Blaine's hero as Henry Clay had long since stopped serving the purpose. When Lincoln was nominated for President by the Republicans in 1860, Blaine threw himself into the campaign; when he was not writing, he was organizing his precincts -- he knew how virtually every man in the State would vote and he could always predict the outcome with a great degree of accuracy. The Republicans in 1860 swept to victory in Maine thanks to the excellent planning and strategy by "General" Blaine.

In 1858 Blaine had been elected to the lower branch of the Maine legislature, and in the three following annual campaigns he was elected by large majorities. In 1861 the State House of Representatives chose him to be its speaker and he filled his job with an expertness in parliamentary procedure and an impartiality which was to aid him immensely when he held the same role in the national House of Representatives. Blaine's journalistic career was definitely
closed when in 1860 he committed himself still further to politics by accepting the chairmanship of the Republican State Committee.

From the outbreak of the Civil War, Blaine gave unfaltering support and aid to the Union cause -- "I am for the Administration through and through, being an early and unflinching believer in the ability, the honesty, and the patriotism of Abraham Lincoln." Blaine saw slavery as an evil that must be done away with, but he never allowed the real horror of the thing to lay hold of him and torture his soul; he merely kept in step with the general thought of his party on the question. One may wonder why the thirty-three year old Blaine did not enter the service when the war broke out; he chose rather to provide a substitute when drafted; this may sound a bit cowardly, but it should be understood that the commutation of military service was an honorable one as well as being highly profitable for the government; also no one doubted that Blaine would be more useful to the cause in the position which he filled. Blaine served as the right-hand man of the war governor of Maine as he visited the recruiting stations, defended the actions of the administration, and helped keep up morale. It was apparent that the people of Maine approved and were satisfied with the war duties of Blaine, for they sent him to the United States House of Representatives in 1863, when Blaine was thirty-
three. From this time on he was to exert a great influence on national politics.

When Blaine arrived in Washington, he was little known. The novice in Congress is usually cautioned to keep quiet and to watch the veterans to learn how things are done. Fortunately for Blaine, he arrived when doubt and hesitation were common in this body, and he proved himself to be a "Man Unafraid;" his confidence allowed him to push forward in a time when there was too much desire for conservatism and caution. In this role he could hardly miss distinction. Blaine possessed the uncommon faculty of seeing straight to the heart of any matter, "to do it quickly, to do it unerringly, and to be a trifle impatient with those who could not."4 The youth soon began to correct his elders, and for this he drew much admiration. He was a hard-working member whose rule it was never to speak on a bill until he had mastered it. Thaddeus Stevens, leader of the Stalwart Republicans, claimed that the House had acted unwisely on a certain bill because it had been swayed by the "magnetic" manner of Blaine. This phrase of Stevens stuck, and it was conceded by many that no one could withstand the spell of that wonderful magnetism.

Blaine's performance in debate on the floor of the House was unsurpassed, and there was nothing that Blaine enjoyed more. He would choose the strong points in the opposition's arguments and tear their logic to pieces; next he would
submerge his antagonist with such a mass of facts and figures that the only way out seemed to be to follow in the direction Blaine felt to be right. Blaine was always careful to see that the debate did not take a turn in an area with which he was unfamiliar or that was not to his liking -- he always managed to bring it back to his way of thinking.5

He took only a minor part in the debates on the reconstruction bills though he approved of them in general -- it can be said quite accurately that he leaned toward the side of the radicals. His choice of sides was not dictated by vindictiveness but rather by partisanship; he saw his chance for success in his ability to be the organ of his party -- the party is always right.6 He felt that the government had to deal with an enemy that sought to win by tricky legislation what it had lost in the war; a government could not be generous with the leaders of the South whom Blaine considered unrepentant "rebels." One of the very few acts of Blaine's congressional career that he never ceased to regret was the vote that he cast for the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in 1868. In 1885 he stated that the charges against Johnson "were gross exaggerations and distortions of facts which could not be sustained by legal evidence or... by reputable testimony of any kind."7 The said part of this is that Blaine found it fit to make this statement more than fifteen years after the harm had been done -- he did not say it when it would have counted. The majority were for impeachment and
he refused to stand alone against them. This was a weakness of Blaine's that was to follow him throughout his life and cause him to lose the title of a great American.

Undoubtedly Blaine possessed a much clearer understanding of the great economic and industrial changes that were taking place in the country at this time, for his speeches in the House often concerned themselves with the boundless opportunities for wealth and expansion that awaited the citizens of the West. Practical details of railroads, protective tariffs, and banking were of much more concern to him than carpetbagger rule and Negro suffrage -- he was obsessed with the Manifest Destiny of his country. He saw the great opportunities that the Southern lands offered after the war -- "I say there is no hope for the growth of cotton and grain on the part of the loyal men there, unless we furnish them with the magnificent facilities for transportation to market afforded by those very lines of railroad...The interest of the country demands their speedy completion." This statement was made long before Blaine had any personal interest in the welfare of the railroads.

The election of Schuyler Colfax of Indiana as Vice-President on the Republican ticket with Grant in 1868 created a vacancy in the Speakership of the House for which Blaine was one of the aspirants. With the meeting of the Forty-first Congress in March of 1869, Blaine was elected unanimously by the Republican members with even the
Democrats speaking well of his parliamentary skill and his fitness to serve; he was reelected with the same unanimity in the two succeeding Congresses and retired from the Speakership in 1875 to become the minority floor leader. By the common consent of all concerned, Blaine ranks with the very greatest of the Speakers of the House. His courtesy, his even temper, and his remarkable knowledge of parliamentary law and procedure earned him this distinction; his committee appointments proved to be wise and fair, and his rulings were always sustained by the House.

The House of Representatives had for a long time been called the "Bear Garden" because of the great disorderliness and noise that had become an integral part of its machinery. It would be an exaggeration to say that Blaine was able to reduce the Bear Garden to order, for it is doubtful that any one could have done that, but he did make it function and he commanded obedience. There is much dispute among Blaine's biographers as to the power that Blaine exerted to see that certain bills went the way he desired. David Muzzy, who is in the minority, contends that Blaine seldom left his chair to debate issues and join controversies on the floor; Matthew Josephson and Charles Russell, on the other hand, claim that Blaine's methods in presiding over the House were "most unconventional," and Blaine is said to have left the Speaker's chair or to have told certain men what to do whenever a
measure came up which was of especial interest to him. This was always done with tact and discretion, and when he had arranged the program to his satisfaction, he returned to the dias.

The power of the Speaker in Blaine's day was second only to that of the chief executive, for his gavel was a powerful weapon as he recognized or refused recognition to members, bills, motions, dealt with questions of procedure, or appointed members to standing committees who had the power to "bury" legislation of they saw fit. Josephson has the following to say about Blaine's reign in the House:

During the years of Blaine's chairmanship, the nation's capital experienced a land-office boom in grants-in-aid, franchises, and subsidies to allies of the ruling party; and the Speaker's role in endeavoring to preserve harmony, in befriending and strengthening...the new interest groups which so often bid against each other for government privilege, was...arduous. Henceforth his days and nights, as Mrs. Blaine relates in a letter to her son, are curiously filled "with wool and cotton manufacturers to meet in Boston, dinners, breakfasts, and lunches."

Even though Blaine might have engaged in this type of activity he was seldom assailed or questioned about it by his political opponents; probably because he had already established among them a reputation for honesty and fairness.

No report on Blaine's years in the House would be complete if his rivalry with Roscoe Conkling were not included. Before Blaine's appearance in Congress, Conkling had been the darling of the House and had been referred to as its most brilliant young man. Conkling now found this niche occupied...
by the black-bearded youth from Maine; competition and jealousy were inevitable among these two ambitious men. Both men engaged in flinging castigations at each other, and the climax to these tirades came in an impromptu remark made by Blaine. Speaking of Conkling, Blaine said:

As to the gentlemen's cruel sarcasm, I hope he will not be too severe. The contempt of that large-minded gentleman is so wilting, his haughty disdain, his grandiloquent swell, his majestic, supereminent, turkey-gobbler strut has been so crushing to myself and all the members of the House, that I know it was an act of the greatest temerity for me to venture upon a controversy with him.

The phrase "turkey-gobbler strut" stuck with Conkling much to his displeasure, and Blaine made a very powerful enemy for the rest of his life; it was said that in 1884 Conkling cost Blaine the Presidency.

Probably the years of the Speakership were the happiest ones in Blaine's life, for never again would he be held in such high esteem by the people of the country no matter what their party or creed. No other speaker since Henry Clay had been as important as Blaine; an eyewitness reports that at the closing session of the Forty-third Congress no such ovation was ever given before to a retiring Speaker. The Boston Advertiser commented that Blaine "has proven himself equal to all the requirements of his high office, and, in laying down the gavel at the close of his six years service, he does so with the universal respect of the whole country and with the admiration and respect of all who have served in Congress.
Though Blaine was held in great respect by most Americans, some of them wondered how he was prospering on the rather slim salary of a representative. He had bought a home in one of the best sections of Washington; he entertained well and often. James Blaine, the youth who had been poor, seemed to idolize and sympathize with the society of the rich; he exemplified the American belief that the object of life was material success. Blaine's intimacies with men from Wall Street increasingly caused remarks that indicated it was not hard to see how Blaine was becoming more wealthy. Blaine's defenders, on the other hand, claimed that in his youth he had made wise investments which were now returning large profits to him; one cannot help from thinking how it was possible for the young Blaine to have had any funds to make these investments.

While Blaine was still in the Speaker's chair, the Credit Mobilier scandal reached the halls of Congress. The Credit Mobilier was merely a blind which disguised the machinations of the Union Pacific Railroad; it was discovered that stock in the Credit Mobilier had been used as a means to bribe members of both houses to vote in ways favorable to the Union Pacific; because of these favorable votes the railroad had won enormous advantages and great areas of public lands. The stock in the Credit Mobilier was offered to congressmen in such a way that they were not obliged to pay for it; the divi-
dividends paid the purchase price, so that in effect it was a gift. The men who took this stock must have been aware of the fact that stock that pays four and five hundred per cent dividends is not given away without a purpose. The list of the stockholders was presented to the congressional investigating committee and the name heading the list was that of Blaine, who owned three thousand shares.

Blaine immediately demanded that a bi-partisan committee be formed to investigate all of his alleged connections with Credit Mobilier and the Union Pacific. Blaine was the first witness before the committee, and he said that he had been offered stock in the Credit Mobilier and that he had declined it; he also stated that he had no financial interest in the Union Pacific. Oake Ames, the man behind the Credit Mobilier idea, backed Blaine, and the scandals of the Grant Administration passed Blaine by although they were not so kind to Vice-President Colfax and Representative James Garfield, who were found to be lying. When the resolution for expulsion of those members of Congress who had been found guilty was presented, Blaine left his chair and organized sufficient forces to defeat the censure. Blaine emerged from the Credit Mobilier affair unsoathed and as virtuous and as honest as ever in the eyes of his constituents.

With the Democrats in control of Congress, Blaine had to step down from the Speakership and assume the position of minority floor leader. Though he commanded a minority,
he directed it with such consummate skill that victory often belonged to his group. The Civil War was now being fought all over again in Congress, and Blaine became the leader in the legislation which frustrated the designs of men who wished to restore the control of the country to the former slave owners. When Democratic Representative Samuel Randall of Pennsylvania introduced an Amnesty Bill removing legal disabilities from Confederate officials, Blaine immediately introduced an amendment which stated that the officials must take an oath of allegiance to the Union and that this amnesty would exclude Jefferson Davis from its privileges. Blaine called Davis "the author, knowingly, deliberately, guiltily, and wilfully of the gigantic murders and crimes at Andersonville;" he went on to say: "And I here before God, measuring my words, knowing their full extent and import, declare that neither the massacre of Saint Bartholomew...nor the thumbscrews and engines of torture of the Spanish Inquisition begin to compare in atrocity with the hideous crimes of Andersonville." Never before had Blaine spoken with so much heat and abandon, and his speech caused the defeat of Randall's Amnesty Bill and diverted the public's attention away from the scandals of the civil government. By this one speech, Blaine aroused sectional hatred and raised the old banner of the Bloody Shirt. The Republicans began to see Blaine as their leader -- as their saviour -- one who might be about to make the Americans forget about the corruption
of the Grant Administrations and to see instead the chance of a revival of the Civil War spirit. The Republicans were once again confident, and they owed this change of mood to Blaine who had changed the certainty of defeat to a hope of victory. The rank and file rallied to him with great enthusiasm and Blaine's nomination for President in 1876 on the first ballot was being predicted.

The Democrats were earnestly looking about for some evidence of Republican misconduct in the winter of 1875-1876 to use in the approaching campaign. Although Blaine had come out of the Credit Mobilier scandal unscathed, there were still rumors that his soul was not as pure as his constituents thought it to be. On April 11, 1876, an Indianapolis newspaper published the story that a government director of the Union Pacific Railroad, J. C. S. Harrison, alleged that $64,000 had been advanced to Blaine by the railroad against worthless collateral consisting of bonds in the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad; the bonds had been presented to Blaine for recognition of service he had rendered while Speaker of the House. Blaine immediately rose to a question of privilege in the House and made a sweeping denial of the rumors in the press; he gave as evidence testimonial letters from the heads of the Union Pacific Railroad which completely vindicated him. Most of the members of Congress were satisfied with Blaine's performance and were willing to think of Harrison's accusation
as an "invented scandal." After this episode, Blaine's presidential prospects seemed to grow brighter, and the people seemed more than ever to believe him.

The Democrats saw that the only means by which the Republicans could be beaten was, first of all, to defeat Blaine, and so a committee with a Democratic majority was formed less than a month before the national convention; the task of this committee was to determine the guilt or innocence of Blaine's Little Rock and Fort Smith affair. The Democrats were willing to ransack Blaine's public and private life if there was a possibility that they might come up with some evidence that could discredit Blaine's reputation with his party. Blaine went before the committee and almost at once began to dominate it. Everything seemed under control for Blaine, for, after all, his denials had been sustained by sworn witnesses of the highest respectability.

Then there appeared a new story that caused the Republicans to feel encouraged; it was said that Blaine had been implicated in the congressional bribery that put over the Northern Pacific land grab, and that despite all the denials and the sworn statements, the $64,000 bonds were his and that letters of Blaine's were in existence to prove this. It was at this moment that Mr. James Mulligan came on the scene and caused Blaine to lose most of his composure. Mulligan had been a clerk for Warren Fisher, a broker, who was the middle-man in the transactions between the Little Rock and
Fort Smith bonds and Blaine. Mulligan was said to have in his possession the incriminating letters. Mulligan, under oath, stated that he had some letters in his possession between Blaine and Fisher. This remark by Mulligan seemed to have a tremendous effect on Blaine and he immediately asked for an adjournment.

That very afternoon Blaine went to where Mulligan was staying and asked Mulligan to give him the letters. Mulligan refused and so Blaine asked if he might examine the letters; Blaine looked them over and found that only one was of any interest to him (it had to do with the Union Pacific Railroad); he asked Mulligan to let him keep this one letter, but he was again refused and so he returned the entire packet. Blaine then asked if he might reexamine the letters and when he had them in his possession, he put them into his pocket and went away. Mulligan's version of this story is very similar except for the fact that he said that he consented to give the letters to the Senator because Blaine threatened to commit suicide if the letters were not delivered to him.

When the committee demanded that Blaine turn the papers over to them, he refused on the grounds that the letters were private and that the committee had no right to see them. Blaine found himself in an embarrassing position -- if he refused to divulge the letters' contents, he would be suspected by those very people who could elect him to the
presidency, and if he should publish these letters voluntarily, he would undoubtedly be injured. Two weeks before the national convention, Blaine finally saw a way out of his predicament. The House was packed the morning of June 5, 1867, for the rumor had spread that Blaine was to break his long silence and reply to his enemies about the Mulligan letters. Blaine began the most important speech of his career by insisting that he had been made a victim of persecution by the Democrats -- this secured the sympathy of a large part of his audience; he next stated that it implied no guilt or wrongdoing for a man to insist upon the inviolability of his intimate personal business correspondence. Then speaking of the Mulligan letters, he said:

I am not afraid to show them...There they are holding up a package). There is the very original package. And with some sense of humiliation, with a mortification that I do not pretend to conceal, with a sense of outrage which I think a man in my position would feel, I invite the confidence of 44,000,000 of my countrymen while I read those letters from this desk.14

He then proceeded to read from the letters as he pleased, in an order of his own, so that the whole made no decided effect except to arouse sympathy for this man who had the courage to bring his affairs out into the open for all to hear and judge. He climaxed his speech by accusing the committee of suppressing a telegram from a Josiah Caldwell which would have exonerated him completely from any shady dealings. The committee was given no time to state their
reply, for the House was filled with applause in apprecia-
tion of the magnificent performance that Blaine had given
that morning; to all his followers and admirers, vindication
-- complete and absolute -- had come to Blaine.

No questions were asked or suspicions raised when Blaine
still refused to give the Mulligan letters to the committee
and they were published only in the form in which he had read
them in the Congressional Record. The protests of James
Mulligan that Blaine had not read all the letters, and that
he had read a series of letters out of their due order was
almost unheard. It seems that men with but a little sophis-
tication and intelligence would have detected the cheap
theatrics that Blaine employed to vindicate himself but
apparently this was not the case, for Blaine's nomination
was now looked on as assured.

A few days after his vindication, Blaine was mounting
the stone steps to the Congregational Church in Washington
when he suddenly raised his hands crying, "My head, my head!"
and he sank unconscious into his wife's arms. 16 A couple
of days later he was well again; could this attack have
been an indication of the mental strain that had been with
Blaine ever since Mulligan had made his statements to the
committee or was it only a further play for the sympathy
of the delegates to the convention?

* * * * *
In June of 1876, Cincinnati was seething with excitement and intrigue for this was the sixth convention of the Republican Party. Whiskey and oratory were the two most common items on display. Some of the delegates realized that they were facing quite a responsibility, for this would be the first time in the sixteen years of the party's life that they were actually faced with the job of choosing a standard bearer and not merely ratifying a choice that had already been designated by public opinion. Candidates who were to be considered for the nomination were:

1. Roscoe Conkling, a favorite of the Grant Administration.
2. Rutherford B. Hayes, who was acceptable to the reform elements in the party without alienating the conservative branch.
3. Senator Oliver Morton, another Grant Stalwart.
4. Benjamin F. Bristow, the candidate upon whom the hopes of the reformers were pinned.
5. James G. Blaine was the most popular candidate and he commanded support in every part of the country. Though Blaine's forces had the sentiment and feeling, they lacked leadership. Things might have gone differently had Blaine himself undertaken to organize his victory.

The nomination speeches were all outshadowed by the one given by Robert Ingersoll of Illinois in favor of the candidacy of James Blaine:

Like an armed warrior, like a plumed knight, James G. Blaine marched down the halls of the American Congress and threw his shining lance full and fair against the brazen foreheads of
the defamers of his country and the maligners of his honor. For the Republican party to desert this gallant leader now is as if an army should desert their general on the field of battle.

Had the balloting begun while the convention was still under the spell of Ingersoll's eloquence, Blaine would undoubtedly have won the nomination, but another day was to elapse before the balloting got under way.

On the first ballot Blaine received 285 votes and was within less than 100 votes of the necessary 378; his nearest opponent, Morton, had only 124. From the three largest delegations at the convention (New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio) Blaine did not receive a single vote on the first ballot; the support of any of these states during the convention would have given Blaine the nomination, and it was clearly apparent that Blaine had little chance of winning as long as these three states held out. On the sixth ballot Blaine jumped from 286 to 308 votes while his nearest competitor had but 113; it was significant, however, that Governor Hayes had gained on every ballot while all the others, with the exception of Blaine, had lost strength. On the seventh ballot Indiana withdrew from their support of Morton and gave 25 of her 30 votes to Hayes; then the fireworks really began as states "in the interests of amity and Victory" switched their votes to Hayes; the final results were Hayes, 381 and Blaine, 351. A convention, two-thirds of whose members knew nothing about the rather color-
less Hayes, accepted him as the man of their desire. Conkling must have been an extremely happy man when Hayes was elected, for although Hayes's ways and views were irreconcilable with his own, he was content to know that his old enemy, Blaine, had been beaten.

Blaine took his defeat graciously and immediately sent a letter of congratulations to the nominee in which he offered his services in the coming campaign. Though Blaine was to figure in four more Republican conventions, there is no doubt that it was only in 1876 that he earnestly desired the nomination, for it was the logic of his career. It would have meant not only the reward for his brilliant championship of the Republican Party and its principles but also the "capstone of his vindication from the slanders of his political enemies."18

***

James Blaine was sent by his state to the Senate to fill a vacancy in 1876. Blaine never became the leader in the Senate that he had been in the House, and there are two important reasons for this -- first of all, he did not complete even his first elective term in the Senate where length of service is often the primary mark of distinction; furthermore, he was hostile to the policy of Hayes in his treatment of the Republican claimants to the Governorship in Louisiana and South Carolina; had he been in sympathy with the Administration, he might have played a brilliant role as the
champion of Hayes' policy in the Senate. Hayes needed someone to help put across the civil service question, and Blaine, who was chairman of the Senate Committee on Civil Service, would have been ideal in this role, but because he allowed personal differences to stand in his way, he lost the chance of aiding Hayes in getting a most important bill made law. Neither did Blaine give any support to the Administration in its courageous handling of the great railroad strike of 1877, nor did he offer moral support to Hayes with the problem he faced on the Mexican border in that same year. It is said that for the greater part of Hayes' term Blaine did not set foot in the White House; Hayes believed that he who serves his country best serves his party best, while Blaine believed that he who serves his party best serves his country best -- this in a nutshell was the major difference between the two men.¹⁹

Blaine continued through these years the most respected and admired member of the Senate, and the Blaine cult continued to grow in its membership. While in the Senate, Blaine did not introduce any bills which have had a great influence on our history, but he managed to hold the allegiance of his followers by his support of such things as the Chinese Exclusion Act. He delivered thunderous speeches in the Senate upon "the menace of the incalculable hordes of China," and by advocating Chinese exclusion he gained many new adherents in the West while doing little to en-
danger his position in the East. Once more he had raised the Bloody Shirt and had been successful. Blaine also knew how to win the support of the Irish; his fierce verbal onslaughts upon Great Britain were enough to make the Irishmen rally to the side of Blaine. Blaine also preached of the "American Dream" to the discontented urban classes; he told them of the promise of the frontier in the following way: "The poverty of the frontier is indeed no poverty. It is but the beginning of wealth, and has the boundless possibilities of the future always opening before it."  

The year 1880 meant another contest for the Presidency. General Grant had been brought out of retirement by the Conkling forces, and it was soon apparent that he and Blaine were the top contenders for the nomination at the Republican convention. Blaine no longer desired the nomination with such an earnestness as had been present in 1876, and on the thirty-fifth ballot when it was decided that neither the Blaine nor the Grant forces were going to yield, the Blaine men, under instructions, switched to the support of a dark horse, James Garfield, who had received one vote on the first ballot. Blaine now had his revenge -- he had beaten Conkling. Conkling realized what this victory meant; he knew that Garfield was weak and that if he should ever become President, Blaine would be the real power behind the throne.
Even before the election it had been well understood that if Garfield should win, Blaine was to be the Secretary of State, for it was the support of the nearly two hundred and fifty Blaine delegates which made Garfield’s nomination possible. It should not be forgotten either that Conkling’s campaigning for Garfield once he had been nominated was probably the determining factor in the narrow victory for the Republicans. Garfield realized his debt to both these men, and when he suggested to Blaine that Conkling be included in the cabinet, Blaine is said to have replied:

"His appointment would act like strychnine upon your Administration—first bring contortions, and then be followed by death." Blaine saw that he was now in a strong enough position to destroy Conkling and his Stalwarts.

Garfield was a weak man who realized the great superiority of Blaine and so, from the beginning, he consulted him about every move and every appointment. Blaine was only too happy to offer his advice, when it was asked of him as well as when it was not. Perhaps the major worry in Garfield’s mind was what he could do to placate the Conkling crew, his solid pillar of support immediately offered him counsel: "The Grant forces were never more busy than at this hour... Of course it would not be wise to make war upon them. Instead that would be folly. They must not be knocked down with bludgeons; they must have
The Conkling crowd was angry enough when Garfield announced his cabinet, and found that Blaine had not allowed the President to appoint at least one representative of the Stalwarts, but the final blow came when Garfield replaced a Conkling man as the collector of the port of New York with an anti-Conkling Republican. This was a declaration of war and Conkling and his colleague, Thomas C. Platt, sent to the governor of New York their resignations as senators, and prepared to fight for reelection; the New York legislature, however, was in no hurry to reelect them, and the Blaine Republicans in this body soon made it apparent to Conkling that he would never triumph. He was being slowly driven out of public affairs -- the throats of the "bad men" were being cut very gently with a feather.

Though Blaine had his finger in the pie of domestic affairs all the time, he was also the Secretary of State, and he brought to his job a real understanding of foreign affairs and of America's proper place in international relations. He saw that his primary task was to unite the nations of the Americas into a powerful and stable system with the United States as the elder sister; this was to be merely an extension of Clay's American System, and the traditional division of the world into two hemispheres set forth in the Monroe Doctrine would still be maintained. Blaine served as Secretary of State under Presidents Garfield and
Harrison, and he seems to be the only outstanding figure between Seward and Hay who was really interested in foreign affairs. His two great contributions of Pan-Americanism and reciprocity are not as important as the fact that Blaine attracted the public attention to international relations and to certain lines of policy relating to America which were followed by Teddy Roosevelt and others in the twentieth century. My primary concern in this paper is with Blaine as a leader in national politics and it is for this reason that I have devoted little attention to his influence in international relations.

Garfield was tremendously pleased with Blaine's job in the State Department, for it was bringing glories to his administration; Blaine and Garfield were both looking ahead to a second term together in which they could consolidate the gains of the first administration. This was not to be, however, for Garfield had not been in office a year when he was assassinated by a man named Guiteau who cried out, as he discharged the pistol, "I am a Stalwart and Arthur is President now."23

With the death of Garfield, Blaine's plans for the future were shattered and he had to wait until 1889 before he could continue his work in foreign affairs. He submitted his resignation, and spent his time writing until 1884 when the choice of a Republican candidate for President had to be made.
It was almost too incredible to believe that the Republican Convention of 1884 should present such an unsurpassed demonstration of harmony. Those who in previous years had spurned the nomination of Blaine now flocked to his banner; at the mention of the magic name of Blaine in the nominating speech, the convention became "a mass meeting of maniacs," E. L. Godkin reported. The fourth ballot gave the nomination to Blaine, and at last the Blaine legions were able to breathe a sigh of relief; they had fought long and hard for this prize.

If the Republican Convention could be called harmonious, the opposite could be said of the presidential campaign that followed -- "When it was done, men prayed that its like might never come again." The Blaine idolators had nominated their man but it was not going to be such an easy job to get him elected, for the reform element of the Republicans, the Mugwumps, were against Blaine and they were numerous enough to determine the vote in a state such as New York. Also the Independent voters could not share the same respect and adoration for Blaine that many Republicans did, for they were dubious about his morality. The Democrats had nominated the reform governor of New York, Grover Cleveland, as their candidate; little was known about him and too much was known about Blaine; it was said that if the election had been held at any time between June 15th and July 22nd, Cleveland would have carried the country overwhelmingly.
Until July 22nd, the average voter was all for Cleveland, for the reason that there was no corporation tag upon him nor had he ever served as a errand boy for Jay Gould. The Republican managers knew their plight and so they were ecstatically happy when the story of Mary Halpin came to them. Mary Halpin, a dipsomaniac widow, had had an illegitimate child, and its father was none other than Grover Cleveland. The Republicans immediately used this story as campaign material, and Cleveland was called a lecher, a betrayer of innocent womanhood, and a rake. Cleveland made no denial of this story. Blaine's chances soared upward, for when the American people were faced with the choice of a man stained with financial irregularities and a man stained with personal immorality, the condemnation of the sexual sinner would be much worse. The most popular campaign slogan of the Republicans was --

Ma, Ma, where's my pa?
Gone to the White House, ha, ha, ha!

Blaine was not to escape the slander either, for about this time Mulligan and Fisher made public a batch of Blaine's letters to Fisher among which was one in which Blaine asked for an endorsement of his character by Fisher in connection with the Little Rock and Fort Smith affair; he told Fisher just what he wanted him to say about his honesty and integrity. Blaine also cautioned Fisher to burn Blaine's letter after reading it. It is only natural that the Democrats
should make up a slogan:

Burn, burn, burn this letter
Dear, dear, dear Mr. Fisher

A steady stream of tracts and pamphlets were pouring out from the Democratic and Mugwump headquarters which represented Blaine as a friend of the railroads, a persecutor of Roman Catholics, and a "Jingo." As the campaign wore on, it developed into a contest in vilification on both sides. However, with the election but a week away, victory seemed sure and decisive for the Republicans; they had control of the West, the votes of Maine and Ohio, and with the great Irish ascension in New York, Blaine could win that state easily.

Perhaps the Republicans' prophecy would have come true had it not been for an incident that occurred about a week before the election. A group of Presbyterian ministers were meeting with Blaine in New York City merely to show that they were behind the candidate. Only one reporter was present to cover the meeting, but he happened to hear a remark made by one of the clergymen:

We are Republicans and don't propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion. We are loyal to our party, we are loyal to you.  

It is doubtful that Blaine was even listening to this man, but the reporter was and the next morning all the country was reading the words. The Irish voters that had turned in such numbers to Blaine were mostly Catholics, and they took
the clergyman's sentence as an intolerable insult to their religion, and returned to the Democratic fold. Once the election was over, it was discovered that the presidency would go to the man who could carry New York State, the stronghold of the Irish and the Mugwump votes. When the votes were counted, it was found the Cleveland had received 1,040 more votes than Blaine.

In my opinion the campaign of 1884 marks the end of Blaine's career as a political leader even though he was to be a prominent candidate at two more conventions as well as Secretary of State for three years under Harrison. Somehow his personal magnetism never seemed to be present after 1884. He himself must have recognized that his political career was about to end, for he wrote in 1884:

The whole campaign was a disaster to me, personally, politically, pecuniarily. I ought to have obeyed what was really a strong instinct against running. My regrets do not in the least take the form of mourning over defeat in the election, but over my blunder in ever consenting to run. It was in the wrong year, and gave my enemies their coveted opportunity.

---

James G. Blaine was an interesting man to study and write about, for he possessed great glamour and color. His power in his state and in Washington was of great magnitude, and I think because of this he deserves the title of political boss, but I could never think of Blaine as a man who set out consciously to become a political boss. He became a boss because he possessed those qualities that are needed to make
a successful boss -- he was able to control a great number
of votes, not because he engaged in political manipulations
of any sort, but because of his personal magnetism which
appealed to thousands of people. Blaine was a man consumed
with ambition and he was willing to go to great lengths to
fulfill his ambitions for wealth and fame; because of this,
he sacrificed his chance of becoming a great statesman.

Here was a man who for more than a score of years was
the acknowledged leader of the Republican Party as well as
the most conspicuous figure in American politics; yet today
Blaine is remembered as a man who "said something about rum
and Romanism" or who "wrote some Mulligan letters" -- this
is his real tragedy. Blaine left behind him nothing of any
value; he had only a record of almost incredible popularity
and that soon disappeared after his death. It seems odd
that man could rise to such heights in American politics
and yet not leave behind him a constructive achievement.
It is hard to believe that a man could build his career
merely on loyal devotion to a party and his own personal
magnetism.
Chapter 5

MARK HANNA: THE BUSINESSMAN IN POLITICS

My selection of Marcus Alonzo Hanna as an example of a unique type of political behavior was influenced by my belief that Hanna represents a characteristic American type -- the businessman turned politician. The reasons for a captain of industry becoming a power in public affairs are worth examining. Another good excuse for studying Hanna is to remove some of the misconceptions that the average American has when he thinks of Hanna; the usual cartoonist's impression of him as a battle-browed Irish bully wearing a suit checkered with dollar marks, smoking an expensive cigar, drinking out of a whiskey bottle, and driving his heel into the skeletons of proletarian women and children has caused most people to have the wrong ideas about Hanna and his political contributions. Even an amateur historian soon discovers that there is nothing that can be pictured as all black or all white -- usually it is necessary to use "gray" in writing about men and events. This is especially true in dealing with Mark Hanna.

Hanna's career divides itself naturally into two periods. The first period covers the sixty years in which he was a businessman and little else. The second period of his life is much shorter and concerns itself with his role as the most influential single political leader in the United States; this period marked the first time in
history that a businessman had assumed so high a position in politics. This chapter will confine itself primarily with analyzing the latter period of Hanna's life. The details of his early life and his career in business are cited only when they prove relevant as factors in understanding Hanna, the political leader.

Hanna was born in 1837 in New Lisbon, Ohio, the son of Scotch-Irish parents. In 1852 the Hanna family moved to Cleveland where the elder Hanna started a grocery store trading on the lakes in the Lake Superior county. Young Mark went through the public schools in Cleveland and spent a year at Western Reserve University. In 1857 he returned to his father's grocery business which was growing rapidly; with the death of his father, the management of the store became Hanna's burden. This responsibility schooled him in the uses of courage and self-reliance as no university training could ever have done. When Hanna closed the store successfully five years later, he was well acquainted with all aspects of the grocery business. This all-around adaptability of Hanna's was to remain with him until his death.

At the age of thirty he married the daughter of Daniel P. Rhodes who was a prosperous businessman in coal, iron ore, and pig iron. Young Hanna, by instinct, threw himself into his father-in-law's industry with great enthusiasm and he learned the iron trade from the bottom up.
Hanna could not have chosen a better time to enter this particular area of industry, for the Civil War had just ended and a new industrial America was beginning to appear. He labored unceasingly to build up Rhodes and Company until it became a highly individual business organization and one of the largest firms in the coal and iron trade of the Ohio Lake district. He established foundries, smelters, and forges. The two outstanding characteristics of Hanna's business acumen were probably his insatiable curiosity and his ability to develop a "system" in business. After reducing mining to a system, he added shipping and later shipbuilding; next he turned to street railways, for he used his coal and iron for making cars and his steel for making rails. Feeling that he was neglecting culture, Hanna bought the Cleveland town opera house and was soon making friends with the stars of the theatrical world. He was also president of the Cleveland Union National Bank. Hanna's personal attitude towards his own business ventures was that of the man who starts enterprises, takes whatever chance they involve, and builds them up with his own brains and energy.

Because of his vast business interests, men worked for Hanna from western Pennsylvania to the base of the Rockies, and he knew his employees and the work that they did. The relationship that existed between Hanna and labor must be examined rather carefully for it distinguishes him sharply from the common run of the very successful businessmen of his own generation. He was always willing to talk with the dollar-a-day laborers, and he was able to establish a common
ground of good feeling which permitted the full discussion of differences and which usually resulted in their adjustment. Hanna, with a cigar strongly clenched between his teeth, would often be seen sitting on a barrel talking to his employees which was a radical departure from the typical businessman of the post-Civil War days who had become remote and unfriendly to the labor class.

Though Hanna had no fancy name for his attitude toward labor, he believed in essentially what is known today as collective bargaining. A strike was a nuisance to him and nothing good could ever come of poor wages and discontent. He listened patiently to the grievances of his workers and promised to aid them if they would promise to use the device of strikes as their last resort. In his career of business, he found it necessary to call in strike-breakers and the militia only once, and he never forgot this bitter lesson. It impressed upon him even more strongly the need for arbitration, for labor unions, and for the existence of a personal relationship between employer and employee. The reader should not get the idea that Hanna went out of his way to champion the cause of labor, but he was much more liberal than the ordinary employer in recognizing the laborer's right to organize, and he was quicker to perceive the mutual advantages that could be derived from collective bargaining.

Hanna's political career and "system" were an outgrowth of the characteristics he had developed while a businessman. The reader has already seen his initiative and his desire to
break new ground; Hanna was to experience that same desire once he entered politics. I feel that the greatest contribution his business career made to his growth as a political leader was his great success as an organizer which rested on his talent of getting good work and loyal cooperation out of his associates; he possessed the wonderful gift of persuading other people to do what he wanted them to do. His organizations never became mere machines, for he was always there to impart his own vitality to them. Because he had confidence in himself, he inspired it in others.  

Now than Hanna had learned about business in all its forms, it was only natural that the next area which he would turn his attention to would be politics. He saw that with the rise of new industries, business and politics were becoming more closely inter-related than ever before. Before Hanna's entrance on the political stage, the theory that business and politics could be allied had never been tested to any great extent. It was Hanna, however, who brought this theory down to earth and made it a realistic fact. Perhaps the most startling discovery that he made in politics was that money makes the machine go round. In politics he used the same techniques which had made him a successful businessman. He realized that he had the talent to create a politician who could prove to be as profitable to him as his mines, ships, and banks. Hanna was a primitive Republican; he had cast his first presidential ballot for Lincoln and he had always remained a Republican to the hilt.
In 1880 he bought the Cleveland Herald which provided him with a mirror for the expression of his ardent Republicanism. When John Sherman, the candidate he backed in 1880 for the presidency, lost, Hanna went on the Advisory Council of the National Committee — here he learned how the machinery of national politics runs, and where its power is generated. Four years later he helped to collect, handle, and disburse the campaign fund, and in 1888 he was assigned the special task of soliciting campaign funds. The greatest contribution toward this fund came from the industrial leaders of America; Hanna understood what these donors wanted in return. It was Hanna who originated the idea of a Business Men's Republican Club; Cleveland's capitalists were organized as an auxiliary political association which lent its prestige to the Republican Party. Besides raising generous sums of money, torchlight parades were arranged with Hanna acting as the Grand Marshal. The idea of similar clubs spread to other cities.

As his experience increased in the field of politics, Hanna discovered that he was fast becoming an expert in this area. As he had done in business, Hanna reduced politics to a system comparable to that of the mines and railroads; the philosophy he evolved shaped up in the following way: "High tariffs keep foreign goods made by cheap labor out of American markets. Politics controls Congress and Congress makes high tariffs. Money influences politics." Believing in this, his plan of operation became very simple -- provide for more work,
more sweat, more business, more dividends. His "system" was first tried out in his home state, and that it was successful can be seen by a statement made by a former member of the Ohio Legislature:

No bill was permitted to come out of committee (in the State Legislature) until Mr. Hanna's lawyers had first examined and approved it... Money was rarely used. It was not necessary... But... there was something behind the (Hanna) lobby that worked with clocklike precision and extended over the entire State. It included the local press and the press agencies, the Chambers of Commerce and the county rings... Ohio, in short... was ruled by business...4

Hanna wanted to be associated with larger political events than those on the state level; the task of electing a man to the highest office in the land would be much more interesting and challenging than electing governors and mayors, and, if successful he would obtain a great amount of prestige and power which he could not acquire in any other way. One might quietly rule in politics without being a politician; his would be a reflected glory.

****

The current of events from 1890 to 1896 such as the Silver Purchase Act, the business slack, and the growing Populist Party with its demands for government ownership of railroads and free silver convinced Hanna that a crisis faced the country, and that he must do everything within his power to halt those forces which were trying to eliminate organized plutocracy in the United States. If he could elect a man of his choice to the presidency, he would be
ble to save the country from the calamity which was fast approaching under the Populist banner.

For the first time in United States history, a national campaign was about to be waged on an issue involving the business prosperity of the country. Never again would Hanna be presented with such an opportunity to seize power and organize it into a system. Hanna was not even faced with the problem of finding a man who could represent his interests, for he had been a friend of William McKinley for several years and their friendship had been strengthened by their common political interests; McKinley's congressional reputation had always been associated with an advocacy of high tariffs and he represented, on the whole, a group of ideas and attitudes as national as those of Bryan and his followers. Hanna sincerely believed that the nomination and election of McKinley was the best means of restoring to American business its normal condition of prosperous expansion and to the American people their customary amount of personal economic satisfaction. So that nothing would stand in his way of getting the Republican nomination for McKinley, Hanna, after 1895, ceased to exercise any direct supervision over the business whose expansion had been the dominating influence in his life for twenty-eight years. Politics had become more absorbing than business.

Hanna conducted the McKinley candidacy as he had "conducted fleets and managed mines...developing resources
and applying them with courage and capacity and with honorable distinction and affluent success." Whenever Hanna heard the news that delegates from certain states could be obtained on certain terms, he was always willing to listen to the demands and usually some arrangements were worked out whereby the delegates found it to their advantage to jump on the Hanna-McKinley bandwagon. There is no written evidence or testimony that specific pledges were made promising particular offices to certain men, but it is probable that supporters of Hanna's cause were promised that they would be consulted after the election in respect to appointments in their various districts. Almost the whole cost of the campaign for McKinley's nomination was paid by Hanna, but the money had not been spent in vain as the results of the convention showed.

With the coming of the Republican Convention of 1896, the average American politician was astounded to see Hanna use the exact, businesslike methods of the general manager of a railroad. This convention resembled the meeting of a large business concern, and there was little room for emotionalism, for Hanna's syndicate had the meeting well under control. Boss Platt of New York watched Hanna's boys operate, and he said in awe: "Hanna...had the South won practically before some of us awakened. Then he picked off enough Western and Pacific Slope States, before the convention met, to render him and McKinley invincible."
When William Jennings Bryan and his "Cross of Gold" speech made the currency question the general issue of the campaign, Hanna knew that this attack by Bryan must be met with equal force. If Bryan were allowed to turn the campaign into a contest between rich and poor, the poor would win.

The Republicans decided to oppose Bryan's personal appeal to the people with an exhaustive and systematic educational canvas of the country. It was hoped that the campaign would turn into a conflict between national interests and the local interests of the old Confederacy plus the new homestead states. The National Committee collected about 1400 campaigners, paid their expenses, and sent them wherever their services were most needed. These agents penetrated into every election district and held small local meetings. Without this contingent of speakers it is very doubtful that McKinley could have won; these agents for the Republican Party were told by the national committee to talk sense and assume that the public was capable of thinking. By keeping calm, by arguing as if the people possessed brains, and by insisting that the Republican Party stood for no particular class or region, but for all America, the people came to be more attentive to the Republican's platform than to Bryan and his silver monomania.

More than any other presidential candidate, Bryan was getting out and seeing the voters personally; some countermove was necessary to keep McKinley's insatiable personality
before the public. McKinley, cherishing "the proprieties of political life" refused to consider a competing tour of his own. Since McKinley would not go to the people, Hanna arranged for the people to come to Canton, Ohio to see McKinley -- this came to be known as the "front porch" campaign. Large organized delegations of editors, temperance societies, farmers, Catholics, Germans, and Negroes made "pilgrimages" to Canton -- their expenses were paid in advance. These delegations would always ask McKinley his opinions on certain leading questions of the day, and soon the front porch in Canton became a national sounding board. McKinley would greet the delegates with a few brief remarks: "... this year is going to be a year of patriotism and devotion to country. I am glad to know that the people in every part of the country mean to be devoted to one flag, and that the glorious Stars and Stripes (great applause); that the people of the country mean to maintain the financial honor of the country as sacredly as they maintain the honor of the flag."

Hanna could compete without shame with C.T. Barnum when it came to advertising and publicity for what he intended to sell to the American people. To combat Bryan's voice and good intentions, Hanna threw thousands of tons of advertising into the nation. Two hundred and seventy-five different pamphlets (120,000,000 copies in all) were printed in English, German, Italian, Polish, Yiddish, Greek, Swedish, and others. The general virtues of the Republican Party, and in particular,
McKinley, were extolled to the ultimate by means of this propaganda. Cartoons, posters, and buttons were manufactured by the carload -- the most popular poster was one with McKinley's picture and the inscription, "The Advance of Prosperity." Brass bands were always a part of a McKinley demonstration. Theodore Roosevelt said of Hanna and his methods: "He has advertised McKinley as if he were a patent medicine."9

Both the task of planning this tremendous campaign and paying for it belonged to Mark Hanna. Full use of all the powers of property were made and the campaign was managed as if the birth of a corporation were being accomplished. The use of money in the campaign had to be kept in the background; it was a business to be done quietly, by a solid man.

The Republicans were indeed lucky to have Hanna:

Hanna set up a complete machinery for modern political warfare. The Republican National Committee, which he headed...became the general staff of the whole army. Its orders were carried out by the state committees automatically, as if they were the branch offices of one of the modern, centralized, industrial Trusts in oil, steel, or sugar. A loose confederation of Republican regional leaders and ward heelers was whipped into shape of a machine-like army, under a single leader, who oversaw everything, who infused all its men, from top to bottom, with his confidence and resolution.10

The Standard Oil Company gave $250,000, but this corporation was controlled by men who were very good friends of Hanna and this accounts for their liberal contribution.11 Other corporations and many industrial capitalists made
significant donations; Hanna developed a systematic assessment according to the means of individuals and institutions. In the case of banks and trust companies, a regular assessment was levied which was calculated at the rate of one-quarter of one per cent of the firm's capital, and this assessment was for the most part paid. Dollars were rapidly converted into "civic integrity" and patriotism.

With only a couple of weeks left before the election, the Republicans could not be sure of victory, and so the practice of intimidation spread rapidly in all sections. Large orders were sent to iron manufacturers and shipbuilders with the proviso that they would be cancelled if Bryan were elected. Employers came before their workers and threatened them with loss of jobs if McKinley were defeated. Hanna's forces even managed to break Bryan's hypnotism over the farmer, and some farmers were convinced that a panic would result if the silver faction won. There was really no need for this campaign of threats, for no President since U.S. Grant entered office supported by so large a proportion of the American people as did William McKinley. On receiving the news of McKinley's election, Hanna telegraphed the following to a friend, "God's in his Heaven, all's right with the world."13

Until 1896, Hanna was not known in politics outside of his own state, but after the McKinley-Bryan campaign, he
swelled into national legend as a figure of gross wealth; he became an image of mud stained with dollars in the cartoons. John Hay, after evaluating Hanna's work in the campaign, had this to say: "He is a born general in politics, perfectly square, honest, and courageous, with a coup d'oeil for the battlefield and a knowledge of the enemy's weak points which is very remarkable."

Hanna refused the cabinet position which McKinley offered him, for he felt that if he was going to become anything more than a political manager, he must seek and obtain an elective office of some dignity. He wanted to obtain public approval for his actions. The position of United States Senator seemed to carry enough political and social prestige for his enjoyment. He served as Senator by appointment for awhile, but ran for senator when the opportunity presented itself. Hanna threw himself ardently into the campaign for his election. He was under a great handicap -- he was a "boss" in both politics and business; to add insult to injury, he was also a millionaire. He knew that this record would not be likely to gain popular support. However, once he got out on the stump and started talking to the people, he discovered that his audiences liked him because he spoke their language and had their ways. When he appeared on the platform, instead of seeing a monster, the crowd found him to be just the kind of man that Americans best understand. He was not separated from them by differences in tastes or intellectual sophistication. The roughness of his public speaking was an essential
part of his success. The crowds passed judgment on the man as they saw him rather than how a cartoonist or Democrat might see him; needless to say, they liked what they saw. With his election by the people of Ohio, Hanna broke away from the limitations of the political manager and created a genuine popular following. He was now more than "the lion behind the throne." Perhaps his ability to attract both business and the common man can be found in this statement that he once made: "My theory is that if you bring men together in a way to make them know each other, and if you appeal to the head and heart, you establish a bond between the two factions that can't be broken."\(^{15}\)

While in the Senate, Hanna looked at public affairs through the eyes of business, and in dealing with them was largely governed by party considerations and his party affiliation. Hanna was respected by his fellow congressmen because they knew he was well acquainted with the powers in their home states who had made it possible for them to come to Washington. Hanna worked at the job of Senator as he had worked at business, and he always remained highly partisan.

How much power did Hanna exert on the White House? This is a difficult question to answer, for in respect to certain problems confronting the administration, Hanna's opinions were extremely powerful. On the other hand, concerning equally significant problems; his influence was practically nil; Hanna knew enough not to interfere in affairs that his
past training had not taught him to deal with. Next to the
President, Hanna was responsible for the operation of that
most vital party function, the distribution of patronage;
under his direction the appointments to office became a
source of strength to the McKinley administration. Though
there were many disappointed office seekers, Hanna was able
to persuade leading Republicans that the offices were being
distributed for the best interests of the country.16

It is clear that the McKinley administration and Congress
alike intended to let the country alone, and to allow business
to create prosperity, and prosperity, in turn, would create
the proper gratitude toward the Republican Party. McKinley
and Hanna believed that the Grand Old Party and the United
States were one and the same, and that whatever helped either
of those institutions must equally help the other. If Hanna
were asked how a farmer could profit from the grant of favors
to giant industries, he would probably reply that high tariffs
added more to the riches of the country by stimulating pro-
duction than they took from consumers in terms of prices.17
This was typical reasoning on the part of Mark Hanna and most
Republicans of this period.

***

In 1900 the Republicans endorsed William McKinley as
their presidential candidate and, of course, this meant an
endorsement for his political prime minister and manager
also. At the convention, Hanna's will prevailed in all
matters with the exception of Theodore Roosevelt as the choice for vice-president; Hanna was pacified, however, when he was shown that the Republican ticket was decidedly strengthened by the presence on it of the hero of the Cuban War. Hanna once again became the head of the National Committee, and when he was asked to state the issue of the 1900 campaign, he replied, "We'll stand pat." That was the only position that the Republicans had to take, for they had gained the confidence of the people during the past four years -- the high tariffs and the gold standard had not brought any revolution. Everywhere the worker's dinner pail was full and the factories were thriving; all the people were crying to the president, "God Bless You!" The prosperity had reached the farmer, merchant, mechanic, and capitalist -- this new wealth proved to be only an incentive to greater wealth and the people became prosperity-mad. Even the war of 1898, which the higher echelon in the party had not wanted, proved to be a dazzling success as far as the people were concerned.

The task of electing McKinley, therefore, was a much easier one than it had been in 1896. Hanna did not have to engage in a country-wide campaign of popular instruction, and he needed much less money; what money he needed, he had less difficulty in raising. He solicited and obtained support from Wall Street with much more ease than in 1896. During McKinley's first administration, businessmen had seen how well political powers had protected business interests, and
they earnestly desired the same treatment for four more years. It is for this reason that the corporation interest rallied more enthusiastically than ever to the Republicans and opened its purpose in a most generous gesture. With the re-election of McKinley in 1900, victory was interpreted by the businessmen to mean that the Republicans had received a clear mandate to govern the country in the interest of business expansion.

Only a few months after McKinley's inauguration, the President was assassinated, and with his death, the political dynasty that Hanna had carefully constructed tumbled down, never to have any hopes of rising again. Theodore Roosevelt, who had once been called a "madman" by Hanna, was now the president, and he lost little time in proclaiming his own doctrines and preaching his own particular creed. Hanna and Roosevelt maintained a pleasant relationship, but it had none of the true respect and love that existed in the Hanna-McKinley friendship. Hanna lived three years longer than McKinley, but these last years proved to be rather ineffectual ones in judging them in comparison with the rest of his life.

I hope that I have not exaggerated too much the role of Mark Hanna as a daring pioneer of industrialism, for the reader must always keep in mind that he was also a "mental cousin" to any prosperous mid-Westerner; he resented the patronage of the East just as thousands of his colleagues did.
He was part of the crowd with his expensive and strong-smelling cigars, and, like the others, he was insistent that his wife have the best suite in the hotel. There was a wide gap between Hanna the business and political wizard, and Hanna, the man.

Though Hanna ruled unchecked in politics for five years, he was never in the class of politicians that Blaine and Conkling belonged to. He was really an outsider in politics who was a power in politics because of the great benefits it was able to bring his only love -- Business. Hanna could never be called a statesman, for he failed to be interested in those things which lie outside the realm of business. He was anxious to secure a practical working relation between labor and capital because business could advance much more rapidly if such things as strikes were no longer in existence.

The common man taken out of his role as laborer had little interest to Hanna; in this situation, he believed in every man for himself and to him the failures in life were failures and there was no need to go into heredity or environment to attempt to locate an explanation for their condition. The public be damned.

The smoke from a factory chimney had more meaning to Hanna than the dreams of any man working in the factory, for he wanted results and not dreams. In politics he was willing to work with the machine and overlook corruption whenever this was the only way that results could be achieved. A
men's scruples often had to be sacrificed for the preservation of the party. If he were being dishonest for a worthy purpose, there was little need to feel guilty.

Power, not politics, was uppermost in Hanna's mind at all times and he sincerely believed that his use of it would be wise and just. This was not an unusual attitude for the leaders of the post-Civil War days to have, but with the death of McKinley a new generation came to power. The men of the Civil War were gone forever -- the Vindicatives, the Stalwarts, the Halfbreeds, and the Robber Barons. Hanna's system was to be supplanted by a view of public life and a practice of public duties on a much higher level. The next chapter concerns itself with the evolution of this system under the leadership of Bob LaFollette.
Chapter 6

BOB LaPOLLETTE: THE CRUSAIDER IN POLITICS

The first chapter of this paper pointed out that in the years after the Civil War, privilege was invited into the government by tariff favors, by land grants to the railroads, and by the treasury department's close identification with the financial interests of the country. These very same interests extended their control into the state and seized hold of the machinery of government. Cities soon found themselves with unworkable charters and with responsibility so widely diffused that effective protest was almost impossible; the organized opposition to the Australian ballot and the perfecting of the caucus and convention system caused direct voting by the people to be impossible. The state governments appeared to be largely at the beck and call of the corporations and the political bosses who worked hand in hand. Legal departments of the railroads and corporations found themselves with the power to name United States Senators and members to the state legislatures. Bribery was used to pass legislation, defeat legislation, and to manipulate taxes in favor of the interests. Generally the people, who were surrounded by this corruption, accepted the situation and refused to become excited over it as they reasoned that what was being done was both necessary and inevitable. The average man's logic seemed to be extremely inconsistent
during this period, for he would consider it wrong for a man to steal a dollar from his neighbor but corporations were able to steal millions of dollars from the people of a state. In the following pages of this section I would like to show the reader the redemption of one of these states mainly through the efforts of one man, Robert M. LaFollette.

Wisconsin in the 1880's was not unlike other states in the union. What counted in Wisconsin was economic power, and a talent for serving and obeying those who possessed it. A political combination based on lumbering, railways, and other forms of capital ruled the state. The Wisconsin political machine could be described as a smoothly running one, for factions and rivalries had been submerged, Democratic opposition was weak, the press was behind the Republicans, and there was a trained and loyal band of workers for the party. This corps of party loyalists had been developed by party leaders who did their best to distribute patronage in a way that brought forth the greatest amount of effort for the party; it was seen that jobs went only to the active workers of the Republican Party. The leaders of the machine found themselves continually faced with the problem of pleasing two factions whose likes and dislikes failed to complement each other. The first group was the voters of Wisconsin who were a very heterogeneous group -- a mixture of natives and foreigners and Catholics and Protestants; one of the better methods that these Wisconsin leaders used to hold the loyalty of this
group was the keeping alive of the memory of the Civil War, in which the Republican Party was considered to be the party of freedom and union. The second important group to be considered was the big businessmen who offered their support and wealth to politicians in return for tariffs and subsidies.

That this Wisconsin machine could be termed successful was probably due to the remarkable triumvirate that led this organization -- John C. Spooner, Henry C. Payne, and Philetus Sawyer; each man brought his own special talents and essential strengths to his position. Payne was said to be a born manager of men and he was the master of political organization. Spooner's special abilities were in his legal background and in his brilliant oratory. The man who deserves special credit for this centralization of Wisconsin politics is Senator Philetus Sawyer for he was the chief political boss during the period from 1865-1900. His wealth and financial success in business attracted the business class to him and his freedom from booklearning, his image as the self-made man, his good humor and his unpretentious democratic ways won the support of much of the working class. It was only natural that the desires of business would coincide with those of Sawyer, for he was himself one of the leading businessmen in Wisconsin -- he bought and sold timber in Chippewa valley; he was a partner in Chicago lumber companies which had large investments in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and elsewhere; he was a part owner and helped to direct and combine the Wisconsin railroad lines and manage their land affairs; his influence
also extended to banks where he held stocks and served as director.¹

Lord Bryce says in The American Commonwealth that "The real hostility of the Boss is not to the opposite party, but to other factions within his own party...those members of the party who do not desire and are not to be appeased by a share of the spoils, but who agitate for what they call reform. They are natural and permanent enemies; nothing but the extinction of the boss himself and of bossdom altogether will satisfy him."² These words of Bryce applied perfectly to Sawyer and his lieutenants, for a Democratic victory was not feared by them as much as the chance of the victory of a faction with a bold, determined leader who was hostile both to their leadership and the existing system. It was to be only a matter of a few years before this bold leader would appear on the scene and bring with him ideas that were likely to start a bloodless revolution in Wisconsin.

In June, 1873, a young boy sat in the audience at the University of Wisconsin's graduation exercises and listened as the commencement speaker, Judge Edward G. Ryan, told the graduates: "There is looming up a new and dark power. I cannot dwell upon the signs and shocking omens of its advent. The accumulation of individual wealth seems to be greater than it ever has been since the downfall of the Roman Empire... For the first time...in our politics money is taking the
field as an organized power... The question will arise, and arise in your day... 'Which shall rule -- wealth or man; which shall lead -- money or intellect; who shall fill public stations -- educated and patriotic free men or the feudal serfs of corporate capital?'

The young man, Bob LaFollette, was born in a log cabin near Madison in 1855, the son of a French father and an American mother. Bob's father, a farmer, had died when Bob was young, and as the eldest boy the care of the farm and family fell on his shoulders. He divided his early years between attending a district school and working on a farm. In the Granger movement, Bob had seen the first powerful revolt in Wisconsin against the rise of monopolies, the arrogance of railroads, and the waste and robbery of public lands. Bob graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1879 at the age of twenty-four; he had been too busy earning his way through college to have much to do with books but he did gain a reputation in college as an outstanding orator; he won an intercollegiate contest in Iowa City in his original oration on the study of Iago.

LaFollette's political experience commenced just about a year after his graduation from college, and his first real struggle with the political machine of Wisconsin began. Since graduation, he had received his law degree and so the next sensible thing to do was to run for the office
of district attorney for Dane County, for its salary was a rather enticing one for a man of only twenty-five -- $800 per year. He knew practically nothing of politics or political organization never even having attended a caucus or a convention. When Colonel Keyes, boss of Dane County, saw LaFollette, he told him very frankly who the next district attorney was going to be -- and it was not LaFollette. This, however, only caused Bob to fight all the harder for the nomination. He left the larger cities where the machine was invincible and drove up and down muddy country roads speaking in schoolhouses and along the wayside: "It was harvest time and I remember how I often tied my horse, climbed the fences, and found the farmer and his men in the fields." It was in this first campaign that LaFollette began keeping a card index (arranged by localities) of all the men he met. His campaigning paid off, for he was elected by a narrow majority of ninety-three votes and in 1881 was sworn in; he served two terms as district attorney, and during this time he felt the indirect influence of the bosses working against him -- witnesses would fade out of sight or juries would refuse to reach a verdict.

At the age of twenty-nine LaFollette was elected to Congress without the aid of Phil Spooner, the boss of the district; he served in this position for six years (1885-1891). LaFollette soon discovered that Congress made no attempt to challenge the tariff interests, the railroads,
or the land grabbers. The West was still considered to be a paradise where land and resources were limitless, and railroads continued to ask for enormous land grants and received them with little trouble. In an attempt to free himself from these interests, Bob refused to accept a railroad pass from the railroad companies; these passes were offered to all public officials and they were used without scruples. After a few months in Congress LaFollette had no difficulty in understanding how legislation in the public interest could be quietly and subtly killed in a committee by the pressure of special interests; members of Congress were being silenced by the fear of vengeance from powerful corporations.

The leading member of Congress from Wisconsin was Senator Philetus Sawyer who was chairman of the Railroad Commission and second ranking member of the Commerce Commission; these appointments enabled him to do a good deal for his own enterprises and for those of his business-minded constituents. The thousands of bills he introduced were for special privileges or local legislation; taken together, they had a tremendous impact in promoting the fortunes of men like Sawyer himself and also in strengthening the political position of the Republicans both in state and nation. His committee room also served as a mecca for needy people in Wisconsin. His devout loyalty to the Republican Party can be seen in the following ingenious scheme which he hoped to promote --- it was Sawyer's idea to take a party contribution from a lobbyist, use this money to
buy up swampland in Delaware, and divide this real estate among indigent Republicans which would qualify them as property holders under Delaware law and allow them to vote at the polls. 5

Politicians who accepted the political and economic institutions of the country were able to get along well with the Senator from Wisconsin, and they were likely to think of him as the "exemplification of true Republican simplicity." With men, however, who were disposed to question things as they existed, Sawyer was apt to become impatient -- such a man as this was Robert LaFollette. Sawyer saw to it that LaFollette was appointed to the rather innocuous committee on Indian Affairs, but even then LaFollette managed to discover and thwart an attempt to steal the timber of the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin much to Sawyer's displeasure. LaFollette's feelings toward Sawyer as a United States Senator are quite explicit:

Wherever it was necessary, I believe that he bought men as he bought sawlogs. He assumed that every man in politics was serving, first of all, his own personal interests -- else why should he be in politics? He believed quite simply that railroad corporations and lumber companies, as the benefactors of the country, should be given unlimited grants of public lands, allowed to charge all the traffic would bear, and that anything that interfered with profits of business was akin to treason. 16

While in Congress, LaFollette decided that the only way to beat the bosses was to keep the people well informed -- "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make
you free." He believed that machine control maintained its power by misrepresentation and ignorance, so he devised a plan which would keep his constituents informed on public issues and his own record in Congress. First he secured a complete list of all the voters who had voted in the last election; these names were then written on large sheets and were sent to a friend in each of the five counties in his district. This friend filled in all the information he could and indicated the strong man or leader in each community; to this information was added that of La Follette's acquaintances in the district -- the final product was a complete descriptive poll list of his district. Whenever a Congressman made a speech that La Follette knew would appeal to certain of his constituents he would send copies of it to one of them: "Get out and keep a dozen or more of the leading men in a community interested in, and well informed upon any public question and you have laid firmly the foundations of democratic government." It seems that La Follette was going to fight fire with fire -- this was his first step toward the building of his own political machine.

After the Democratic tidal wave of 1890 retired La Follette from office, he returned to law practice for a short time. The years that he had spent in Congress had been profitable ones, for through his own experience, he had received invaluable information about politics and its organization. Congressman La Follette had also proven to the
Wisconsin machine leaders that in the coming years they were undoubtedly going to have to put up a rugged fight to keep him in his proper niche. Sawyer and his machine had nothing against LaFollette personally but they were determined that he accept their authority and leadership, for they feared and hated freedom and independence. These men did not know "Fighting Bob" well enough yet to know that he would never submit: "I could have made terms with Keyes and the state bosses of Wisconsin at any time during my years of struggle with them and secured personal advancement with ease and profit to myself, but I would have had to surrender the principles and abandon the issues for which I was contending, and this I would not do."5

By 1890 the Populist Revolt was in the making and the people were turning their attention to the Democratic Party and its candidates. Times were hard on the farms with low prices and high costs. The farmers had always been suspicious of tariffs and trusts, and with the passing of the McKinley Tariff Bill they were convinced that the government had lost complete interest in the farmers' plight. Wisconsin faced its own state problem along with the national ones, for feeling was running high over the Bennett Law which the Republicans had passed; this law required all Wisconsin school children to attend schools in which classes were taught in English. German Lutherans and Catholics in
whose church schools classes were taught in German, attacked
this law as an example of shameless bigotry. They naturally
blamed the Republicans for its passage, and the election of
1890 resulted in complete control of the Wisconsin government
by the Democrats.

The first official act of the new Democratic administra-
tion in Wisconsin was to have, indirectly, a tremendous in-
fluence on LaFollette's life so I feel that the circumstances
leading up to this should be told. One of the many political
grafts of Wisconsin for years was the farming out of public
funds in certain private banks with party men having banking
connections getting an extra share of profit. When the Demo-
crats took over in 1891, they instituted a suit against all
treasurers and their bondsmen who had occupied that office
for the past twenty years. Sawyer was one of the principal
bondsmen, and he stood to lose about $300,000 in the event
of the state's recovery; this case was pending before Judge
Robert Siebecker, brother-in-law and law partner of
LaFollette. Sawyer sent a note to LaFollette asking him
to meet him in Milwaukee; LaFollette thought this was to
be a political meeting. Sawyer and LaFollette both told
different stories as to what happened at this interview;
Sawyer said he endeavored to employ LaFollette as his lawyer
in the case not realizing that Judge Siebecker was his
brother-in-law. LaFollette, on the other hand, said Sawyer
put a bunch of bills into his hands and said that there was
much more coming if the judge decided the case "right." Which story is true I will not attempt to say, but what is important to know is the effect that it had on LaFollette's life.

Once LaFollette made the interview public and Sawyer had denied the story, the newspapers and the prominent politicians of the state denounced LaFollette because of their loyalty to Sawyer's organization. The party was now split wide open and the machine resolved to destroy this man for daring to speak out. LaFollette even received anonymous letters promising death if he should ever enter politics again. But out of the castigations and fears came understanding and firm conviction to his life; he was shocked into "a complete realization of the extremes to which this power that Sawyer represented would go to secure the results that it was after...I determined that the power of this corrupting influence, which was undermining and destroying every semblance of representative government in Wisconsin should be broken... I grew strong in the conviction that in the end Wisconsin would be free." Out of this statement was to come the ten year fight for control which was to result in the complete reorganization of the Republican party of the state. After the incident at Milwaukee, Sawyer resolved that while he lived LaFollette should never again hold public office. His wish was to be granted.

By 1892 the Republicans were not able to achieve that
harmony and unity that was needed to defeat the Democrats because of the quarreling factions within the party (there was a growing rift between Payne on one hand and Sawyer and Spooner on the other plus an estrangement between Sawyer and Spooner). In November the Republicans did not carry Wisconsin, and the state was lost in an election year for the first time since the founding of the party. On the surface, however, there was not much evidence of an awakened public conscience and few signs of an uprising among the citizens against the machine.

LaFollette saw that the only means by which the people could be aroused was to put his ideas before them; realizing that he would have little chance to win the nomination for governor, he asked his old friend Nils P. Haugen to run as the anti-machine candidate for governor. No sooner was Haugen’s candidacy announced than the fight was on. Democratic machine newspapers and politicians joined with their Republican counterparts to suppress this first organized revolt. Despite this type of opposition, LaFollette was elected as a delegate to the state convention; a Milwaukee reporter described LaFollette’s arrival at the state convention: "Bob LaFollette struck the Pfister (Hotel) like a young cyclone today and if he has only done half what rumor credits him with, must be about as pleasant company for the bosses as a wildcat would be at a picnic." The contest for the nomination of governor lasted two days and finally
the machine united and was able to nominate its candidate. Promises, money, and whiskey were all in the scale against LaFollette. Because of the factions in the machine element of the party, LaFollette's followers were able to hold the balance of power and name practically every other man on the ticket. The greatest victory for LaFollette at this 1894 convention was that his delegation had maintained a solidarity throughout the struggle. The fighters had taken their posts and the cry of defiance and challenge rent the ears of Sawyer, Payne, and Spooner.

By 1895 the Republican machine politicians were once again in power, and their first act was to develop a plan which would relieve the ex-treasurers from the hardship of paying their full indebtedness to the state; obligations amounting to more than $250,000 were cancelled by the legislature and signed by the Republican governor. This action was enough to arouse the resentment of the voters to a high pitch; LaFollette did his best to flame this anger by setting aside a brief period in the autumn of each year from 1894 to 1896 in which he delivered speeches throughout the state attacking the policies of the administration. He announced his candidacy for the governorship in 1896 and came to the convention with enough delegates pledged to nominate him on the first ballot -- he was determined that the convention should choose a "people's man" as their candidate. Once the convention was in full swing, reports came back to LaFollette that wholesale bribery was being practiced on
his delegates and so once again he met defeat. He boosted the morale of his party by reminding them that the men who achieve the final and ultimate victory were those men who were stimulated to better fighting by defeat. His fight for the purification of state government was not to be abandoned until the corrupt leaders had been booted out of the party and government in Wisconsin had been made truly representative of the people.\textsuperscript{12}

Each succeeding campaign of LaFollette's became a more vigorous crusade, and it is only natural that after Bob had seen first hand the evils that were allowed to take place at the 1896 convention that he was intent on overthrowing the caucus and convention system as it existed in Wisconsin:

Abolish the caucus and the convention. Go back to the first principles of democracy; go back to the people. Substitute for both the caucus and the convention a primary election...where the citizen may cast his vote directly to nominate the candidate of the party with which he affiliates and have it canvassed and returned just as he cast it...The voter will not be required to be persuaded that he has an interest in the election. He will know that he has. The nominee of the party will not be the result of "compromise" or impulse, or evil design -- the "barrel" and the machine -- but the candidate of the majority, honestly and fairly nominated.\textsuperscript{13}

This statement by LaFollette shows that he was thinking of a political party as a unit which comprised hundreds of thousands of citizens drawn together by a common belief in certain principles and not just of a few leaders or of a controlling machine. In this great body of voters,
LaFollette saw the power that was needed to smash the machine and to defeat the corrupt leaders who were betraying the interests of the public.

LaFollette came to the convention of 1898 armed with a platform that outlined the steps he would adopt if elected governor. He had let the people know, prior to the convention, what great benefits they could derive from such a program and, generally speaking, the people enthusiastically supported LaFollette's plan. The provisions of this platform were a radical departure from anything that had ever come before and they were to influence profoundly all that was to come after them. Stated briefly, this was LaFollette's program:

1. Protection for the products of factory and farm.
2. Sound money.
3. Reciprocity in trade.
4. Equal and just taxation of all property of each individual and corporation transacting business within the state.
5. The enactment and enforcement of laws to punish bribery in every form by the lobby in the legislature and wherever it assails the integrity of the public service.
6. Prohibit the acceptance by public officials of railroad passes.
7. The enactment and enforcement of a law making character and competency the requisite for service in our penal and charitable institutions.
8. The enactment and enforcement of laws that will prohibit corrupt practices in campaigns and elections.

Though the people were now supporting LaFollette wholeheartedly, the bosses still maintained their old position, and Bob, for the third time in six years, was defeated. It
is estimated that about $8,300 was required to handle the
delegates the night before the balloting began. After
LaFollette's defeat, one of the machine politicians remarked:
"I can't help feelin' a good deal of sympathy with Bob
LaFollette. We've got the newspapers, the organization,
the railroads, and free passes, and all the money, and he is
fightin' us all alone. If he'd had money enough to buy a
few more postage stamps, he'd a beat us sure." These
bosses realized that the only way they could remain on the
people's side was to adopt LaFollette's platform which they
did much to their displeasure. However, once they controlled
the governor and the legislature of 1899, they refused to act
on any of the pledges with the exception of the anti-pass law.

The campaign of 1900 with Bob again as the candidate
for governor on the anti-machine ticket was to produce very
different results than the preceding campaigns; this was due
chiefly to the cumulative effect of the Progressives' pre-
vious work. Also aiding LaFollette greatly was the split
among the Republican leaders and the defection of two of
these men to laFollette's camp. LaFollette was happy to
receive them because of the financial contributions that
they could make and which he needed desperately. In this
campaign for governor, Bob traveled 6433 miles making 208
speeches in sixty-one counties, and he talked to nearly two
hundred thousand people. In August, 1900 he was unanimously
nominated as the Republican candidate for governor, and in
November he received the largest majority ever given up to that time to a gubernatorial candidate.

LaFollette's arch foe, Philetus Sawyer, had died in March of the same year that LaFollette was elected to office; with the death of Sawyer not just a man, but an entire era in Wisconsin politics, passed away. One has only to read the following statement by LaFollette to know that Sawyer, or men like him, could never hope to dominate the "little" people again: "The essence of the Progressive movement as I see it, lies in its purpose to uphold the fundamental principles of representative government. It expresses the hopes and desires of millions of common men and women who are willing to fight for their ideals, to take defeat if necessary, and still go on fighting." 17

While LaFollette held the office of governor his political work was grounded in the belief that "all great movements in society and government...are the result of growth," and "that is our duty to do, day by day, with all our might, as best we can for the good of our country the task which lies nearest at hand." 16 The two tasks that were nearest at hand and which required immediate attention were the railroads and the caucus and convention system. In 1874 Wisconsin had passed a law regulating railroads and a strong railroad commission had been set up; it was at this point that the railroad officials had begun their domination of
Wisconsin politics and by devious means forced the legislature to repeal this law which the Supreme Court had previously sustained. LaPollette wanted to bring this old measure back to the legislature and breathe new life into it. He thought of the railroad as a form of highway which, in order to be built, required that the public could take farmers' land away from them; if then, the right of passage came from the people, they should afterward have the right to control the use of this highway.

Concerning the system of nominating candidates by the caucus delegate method, LaPollette maintained that there was no discussion of issues or candidates; it was a question of getting a majority of the voters at the precinct caucuses to elect delegates to county conventions where, in turn, a majority determined who should go to the state convention. The caucus was merely a perfunctory affair under the direction of an oligarchy of local leaders. The state primary would abolish every intermediary between the voter and the official; it would control the sources of popular government -- whoever controlled the primaries controlled everything else. Only by adopting state primaries could the power of the boss, of the machine, and of wealth be reduced to a minimum.

LaPollette's belief that railroad taxation should be revised upward was strengthened by the report of the Tax Commission which showed that real property paid 1.19% of its market value in taxes and that the railroads paid only .53%
of their market value -- this is less than half the rate paid by farmers, manufacturers, and home owners...LaFollette indicated the policy that he would follow when he made this statement: "Railroad corporations shall pay neither more nor less than a justly proportionate share of taxes with the other taxable property of the state...In other words, I would favor equal and exact justice to each individual and to every interest, yielding neither to clamor on the one hand, nor being swerved by the straight course of any interest on the other."¹⁹

The machine had been unable to destroy LaFollette as an agitator, but they were determined to wreck him as a builder and to discredit him by failure. The "Stalwarts" were in control of the Senate and they loathed those administrative measures that had been proposed in the platform. The railroads were directly interested in preventing the increased taxation, and the bosses desired to retain the caucus-convention system of nominating candidates; working along with these two groups were the manufacturing, business, and commercial interests who feared LaFollette was driving out capital and bringing industrial ruin to the state. Editorials, newsletters, and cartoons were distributed to about three hundred newspapers in the state, and each of these newspapers was paid from $50 to $1,500 to use its columns against the governor.²⁰

To meet these attacks, LaFollette organized a political machine of his own through state patronage; every time his
enemies assaulted his works, he brought forth a new issue
designed to rally popular support to his cause. As was de­
scribed earlier, he card-catalogued the state and wrote to
thousands of his constituents and established personal rela­
tions with them. In 1901 the Milwaukee Free Press, a daily,
was established for the purpose of explaining the merits of
the LaFollette regime.

No sooner had the railroad taxation and the direct pri­
mary bills been introduced than the lobby gathered in Madison
in full force and immediately began their campaign of abuse
and misrepresentation; their loudest cry was that the executive
was controlling the legislative branch of government. All
through this session, members were receiving free transporta­
tion for themselves and their friends. Even prostitutes were
made available by the lobby organization to any member of the
legislature who might desire them. Some members were advised
that they could receive excellent positions with a railroad
corporation after the legislative session was over. The atmo­
sphere, as described by LaFollette, was similar to that of a
carnival rather than a serious deliberative body: "Every
moment from the time the Senate convened down to the final
vote on the railroad taxation bills they were weakening us,
wearing us down, getting some men one way, some another, until
finally before the close of the session they had not only the
senate but a majority of the representatives in the assembly.
It was a pathetic and tragic thing to see honest men falling
before these insidious forces."21
When the Direct Primary Bill was going to be voted upon, an all-night session was held. The lobbyists called the members of the lower house outside the chamber, and liquor was brought into the Capitol and into the committee rooms. Members got drunk and some returned to their seats only with the aid of their colleagues. "At six in the morning the assembly floor was a sight to behold. Just in front of the first tier of desks was an empty bottle marked Hunter's Rye..." In spite of all this, the LaFollette men managed to pass the bill and in order not to arouse the resentment of the state, the Senate passed a substitute measure which defeated the real purpose of the reform -- the direct primary principle was to be tried out with respect to county offices only. The governor vetoed the bill, for no loaf at all was better than half a loaf to LaFollette. After a brief fight, the railroad taxation bills met a similar fate and the session of 1901 closed without any accomplishments. The people of Wisconsin had shown by their votes in 1900 that they desired such legislation, but again the interests had defied the will of the electorate. To LaFollette this was a sign of the end of representative government in Wisconsin and the beginning of rule by the minority; nevertheless, he refused to have his faith in the ultimate judgment of the people shaken, and he called for strong action to be taken on the part of every man who cared to see democratic institutions preserved.

It was not until 1903 that the LaFollette Progressives
were strong enough to organize the legislature, and then they had only a slight majority in the Senate. LaFollette saw his chance to advance vigorously with the railroad regulation issue. To emphasize the necessity for the regulation of railroads, he accumulated a quantity of information about the cost of shipping a number of typical products to Chicago from each of a long list of Wisconsin cities; then he ascertained the charges on similar products from a list of towns in Iowa equally far away. Then he showed his constituents, by an array of facts and figures, just how much they were being cheated by the railroads in comparison with their neighbors in Iowa. Logic such as this was irresistible -- towns in Wisconsin were paying on an average of 39.9% more for their transportation charges than towns located at similar distances in Illinois and Iowa. LaFollette showed that the farmer was paying 59.77% more freight upon certain products than the farmer of Iowa paid for shipping the same product exactly the same distance to market; from 20-60% higher freight rates were being paid in Wisconsin than in Illinois or Iowa for the same service. "They argued, protested, threatened, but they could not controvert my facts." The railroad regulation bill failed to pass at that session due to the influence of the railroad lobbyists, but the foundation was laid for the successful campaign of 1904.

The Primary Bill easily passed the assembly, and after a long fight in the Senate, it was pushed through with the
provision that it would be submitted to the voters of the state in the form of a referendum. This measure failed to be too effective once it was made a law for the reason that it provided no provision for the voter's second choice of a candidate; only in this way could the nomination be assured for the party which was actually in the majority. During this session the banking laws were revised and a start was made toward developing a Corrupt-Practices Law.

LaFollette saw the campaign of 1904 as the very crux of his whole movement and the difference between his success and failure. He knew that the railroad tax law could become workable only when a commission had been created to control the rates; the primary bill still had to face the people in a referendum. The machine leaders were just as desperate for victory as LaFollette was; they knew this campaign was their last chance to win the slate under the old system, for the approaching convention would be the last ever held in the state for the nomination of candidates as the direct primary would be coming into effect. When the convention opened, enough Progressives were seated to give them a comfortable majority; the machine leaders, however, planned to ignore these delegates and seat their "delegates" which the committee on credentials had rejected unanimously. LaFollette's forces were organized in sufficient numbers so as to prevent any coup d'état that might be attempted. None took place, but after the convention adjourned, the old leaders organized
a bolt and called a convention of their own; they nominated a full state ticket of their own. This proved to be their last stand, for in the election the bolters' candidate received only 12,000 votes. 23

LaFollette was determined to make this a campaign which would result in the election of a legislature willing to execute the will of the people; as early as December, 1903 -- almost a year before the election -- he had begun delivering speeches both inside and outside the state. Never before had the governor of the state interfered in the nomination of members to the legislature. LaFollette went out into the senate and assembly districts and took along with him the journal of the two houses; on the public platform, he explained the various measures that had been presented to the legislature and their relative importance. After this was completed, he read from the journal the record vote of the candidates seeking reelection upon these measures. It was only natural that he should frequent the districts in which those men who had voted against the wishes of their constituents were seeking renomination. LaFollette even went so far as to support the Democratic candidates whenever they proved to be more liberal than the Republican nominee. He spoke forty-eight days in succession and averaged eight and a quarter hours per day on the platform with the exception of Sundays. He was forceful in his physical appearance, forceful in his far-
reaching voice, and forceful in his dramatic gestures. He was able to talk to and with his audience; he became the teacher and the audience, his pupils: "Now I think you are entitled to know how your representatives voted on this question...His vote counts not only against your interests, but against the interests of the district in which I live as well, and I am here today to lay before you this record, and let you then decide whether that is the sort of service you want."^24

Though he ignored his own campaign for re-election, he received a 50,000 vote majority; both houses of the legislature were dominated by the Progressive element.

At the outset of 1905, LaFollette informed his colleagues that the imposition of a proportionate tax on the railroads was not enough, for the officials of the railroads were replying to this bill by saying, "It doesn't make any difference to us whether our taxes are increased for we will simply increase our rates and make the people pay for the increase in our taxes." Because of this attitude on the part of the railroads, the legislature drew up a very strong regulatory bill and provided for a committee possessing power to fix rates, to control service, and to make a complete physical valuation of all the railroad property in the state. Railways were left free to make their own rates but these were always subject to review by the commission; rates were considered to be lawful until they were declared unreasonable. The same law authorized the commission to standardize accounts, to
examine the books of the companies, and to require verified lists of all passes issued with the reasons therefor. Though the railway representatives opposed this bill at every step, it was passed by the legislature in 1905, and railroad taxes were increased more than $600,000 annually. It should also be noted that even though the Wisconsin railroads lost more than $2,000,000 annually because of the reduction in rates, its net earnings increased just a little more relatively than the net earnings for all the railways in the United States; this is explained by the fact that the decrease in rates brought a greater demand on the part of buyers. 25

In 1905 an anti-lobby law was finally enacted. The Wisconsin statute required all salaried lobbyists to register themselves with the secretary of state, specifying the character of their employment, and by whom they were employed. No private communication with any members of the legislature upon any subject of legislation was allowed; here was another step by LaFollette to bring state government out into the open. When the legislature adjourned in June, 1905, the statute books contained substantially all the important reforms which LaFollette and his party had so long sought: the taxation of railroads and other public utilities on the basis of actual physical valuation; the railway commission law which also included the regulation of telephone and telegraph companies; a civil service law; labor laws (the first women's compensation act in the nation); a state-bank
law; and conservation and water power franchise laws. This program embodied many of the things that the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt was to include in its platform thirty years later. 26

No study of the "Wisconsin Idea" would be complete without mentioning LaFollette's desire to bring the life of the community into the closest relations with education. The governor had a penchant for employing experts to fill those positions which required expert knowledge. He wished to make the resources of knowledge that were located at the University of Wisconsin available to all the people of the state. Railroad regulation, sanitation, and social legislation were all placed in the hands of the experts. LaFollette also set up an expert fact-finding organization for the use of the State Legislature which reported truthfully on economic conditions in Wisconsin as well as what was being done in the field of social legislation in other states and countries.

LaFollette was appointed to the United States Senate in 1905 but he deferred his resignation as governor and his qualifications as senator until January, 1906 in order to complete the work at hand. By the end of 1905 the "Wisconsin Idea" was fully launched and it was to be elaborated upon during the next few years by LaFollette's lieutenants while LaFollette was making his reputation nationally.

LaFollette, in evaluating his five years as governor of Wisconsin, had this to say: "If it can be shown that Wisconsin is a happier and better state to live in, that its
institutions are more democratic, that the opportunities of all its people are more equal, that social justice more nearly prevails, that human life is safer and sweeter—then I shall rest content in the feeling that the Progressive movement has been successful.”

LaFollette raised Wisconsin from the low state into which it had fallen and converted it into a vital and living political agency.

I do not think there would be any argument if I were to say that Robert M. LaFollette was one of the cleverest political leaders in American history. It takes great skill to capture a state from an entrenched and wilful enemy, and LaFollette was able to do this very thing because he perceived the character of the times, he understood the public temper, and he capitalized on the mistakes and weaknesses of the opposition. The democratic influence of the frontier, the reaction against the effects of the material exploitations of Western resources, and the new social consciousness that grew out of it have all formed a part of his intellectual make-up. LaFollette himself said that "in no one thing does a public man more surely indicate his quality than in his ability to master actual conditions and set them forth with clearness." I believe that LaFollette was accepted by the people of Wisconsin as their political leader primarily because his policies coincided with the self-interest of the group to which he appealed and because he was admired by
these very same people. LaFollette was closer to the people and the soil of America than almost any political leader since Lincoln. The people were willing to accept him because he was honest, fearless, and because he had a clear-cut mission in life of which they were a part.

The question of whether LaFollette was a political boss is difficult to answer, as there is evidence both to support and refute the statement. No one can deny that LaFollette was able to defeat the Wisconsin bosses only by building an even better machine than the one he was fighting. LaFollette and his followers failed to see that the machine organization they were attempting to destroy did have a number of real functions, and that any attempt to replace the existing machines had to provide for alternative machines. LaFollette, in destroying the existing organization, created an organization of his own that was more disciplined and efficient than the one he had fought. The successful campaign of 1900 for the governorship had many of the traditional characteristics of a political machine; LaFollette's group had been joined by elements of big city machines from Milwaukee and various local cliques -- none of these were progressive or reform organizations. To them LaFollette was the candidate who was most popular and likely to promote their own interests. With the defeat of his reform program in 1901, LaFollette was convinced that he could not rely on coalitions, and that his only hope of achieving success was in developing a loyal Progressive
organization capable of defeating the Stalwarts at the polls and in the legislature. By 1904, LaFollette's closely knit Republican organization was a "mosaic" of many groups and individuals drawn from all economic and social levels, and from all sections of the state. The Progressive machine in Wisconsin received its support from many diverse elements:

(1) Progressivism in Wisconsin had an intellectual base and the use of "experts" in government was an integral part of LaFollette's political philosophy. Because of this belief, Bob was able to count on the support of the intellectuals of the state.

(2) LaFollette appealed to the ranks of labor in all the urban centers because of his known sympathy for the cause of labor and his untiring efforts to improve working conditions.

(3) He gained the support of the Norwegians and Swedes in Wisconsin by his inclusion of these people in political offices.

(4) LaFollette's own farm background, his interest in scientific farming, and his vigorous support of the University's College of Agriculture won him many loyal friends among the farmers in every section of the state.

(5) LaFollette was extremely lucky to have Isaac Stephenson on his side, for Stephenson was able to provide the funds necessary to combat the resources of the Stalwarts. It was Stephenson who furnished the Progressives with a much-needed metropolitan daily, and not only did he defray the expenses of a statewide campaign, but he also gave liberally for district and local races. It is estimated that he spent more than a half million dollars to forward LaFollette's cause: "Without me, the history of this achievement would have been a blank page." 29

LaFollette's organization ran on patronage; party workers found their way into professional jobs at the state capital. The largest single group of part-time political workers for the Progressives were the state game wardens; at election
time, they distributed pamphlets, posters, and sample ballots. The Progressives used everybody and every device they could find in the scramble for votes just as the Stalwarts were doing. Bob surrounded himself with young lieutenants who obeyed without questioning. His own personal magnetism and oratory attracted a large following. Neither was he without personal ambition -- he wanted to lead the procession rather than remaining a mere marcher. He possessed those assets that are needed by every political boss: (1) a hold on the people; (2) excellent political organization; and (3) political adroitness. On the other hand, one should remember that LaFollette held office and was a popular hero -- the boss almost never is. The machine of the corrupt politician usually works behind the scenes whereas the Wisconsin organization was pointed to with pride and flourished in broad daylight. The boss is also one who courts popularity by appealing to the baser passions of the mob; LaFollette often cast his popularity aside by espousing some cause that was known to be unpopular. Finally, I feel that the ends served by the usual political machine are decidedly dissimilar from those sought by the Wisconsin group.

Anyone who is at all familiar with LaFollette should always come to the defense of this man when it is asserted by some that he and his ideas were socialistic and radical. LaFollette appears to me to be rather an exponent of the old-fashioned American individualism, for his most note-
worthy achievements were not in the field of progress but of restoration. His objectives were directed toward the abolition of those corrupt relations between big business and government; his innovations all had a definite purpose -- the preservation of old American liberties. Changing conditions had made the former safeguards ineffectual.

After reading LaFollette's autobiography and other books and articles about him I am of the opinion that LaFollette looked upon himself not as a boss but as a Christ in the temple chasing out the money-changers. He was a young David defying the giant of Capitalism. He was the crusader and the reformer -- the purifier of public life. There was sacrifice and suffering in this role he assumed, but through his suffering came material salvation for his fellowmen. Life to LaFollette was a battle; a battle between the forces of good and evil, and he envisioned himself as the leader of this righteous cause. Here was a case of divine inspiration in the twentieth century.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to bring together, in a few pages, the major ideas that I have been stressing throughout this paper.

This study has attempted to explain the nature of the institutions from 1865-1905 that made it inevitable that manipulators of persons on the grand scale should emerge to take control where there was, temporarily, a political-social vacuum to be filled. A nation of individuals, accustomed to the idea that each person must fend for himself as an independent unit, moved into an age of interdependence. The people, however, were slow to recognize this fact and slow to organize the institutions which such an era required. Ray Stannard Baker in his American Chronicle has caught the feelings of the average man in this traumatic period:

What a different world I knew from that of my ancestors! They had the wilderness, I had crowds. I found teeming, jostling, restless cities; I found immense, smoking, roaring industries...I found hugeness and disorder. I found, after the clean forests and the open plains, confusion and dirt and poverty and crime. I found dishonest politics and greedy business men. While we were not without evil enough there on the frontier, it was not concentrated and complex and overpowering.

In short, it was a crowded world I found; how was I to live in it? How was a man to look at it; what was he to do? Was it possible for any man...to live happily in it?

This terrible new struggle for existence among the people was brought about, in large part, by the phenomenal growth of
American business and, especially, of the corporation. The uprooted villagers and farmers who had come to live and work in the city were accustomed to a life based on primary human contact—the family, church, and neighborhood—and now the actuality of the community was on the decline. The major characteristic of this new economic unit was its impersonality and unprecedented distance from its customers; if any malpractices occurred, the effects would be felt far away from the source of malefeasance: "The man who picks pockets with a railway rebate, murders with an adulterant instead of a bludgeon, burglarizes with a "rake-off" instead of a jimmy, cheats with a company prospectus instead of a deck of cards...does not feel on his brow the brand of a malefactor." This new unrighteousness did not advertise its vileness, and so it was possible for iniquity to flourish greatly. There was little likelihood that a new set of ethics could suddenly spring into being to accommodate the new, abstract relations between manufacturer and consumer.

It was inevitable that all these problems connected with the economic and social aspects of American life should be carried over into politics, for these population centers had to be run, and politics was the method by which communities worked out their common problems. Politics demand organization, and organization calls for leadership. There must be men with the genius to organize and lead the people. The greatest weakness of this period seems to me to be the failure of responsible
people to assume this leadership in politics. "Good" citizens were too busy to care how local, state, or national government was administered. To them, politics was a dirty game, and their respect for the men they elected to office was practically nil: "There is a Congressman--I mean a son of a bitch--But why do I repeat myself." Because of this prevalent attitude, a political vacuum was created in which a man like Tom Watson, who appealed to the people through his crusades against the "menaces," or James Blaine, who had glamour and "magnetism" to offer his constituents, could gain much more power than they were capable of handling. Neither is it hard to understand that a country enamoured of organization would accept a highly organized political machine to cope with the problems of politics.

My case studies of Watson, Blaine, Hanna, and the city boss have been of men who saw their opportunities and took them in this period of maximal transition from a rural to an industrial nation. I do not believe that any one has the right to place these men into categories of "good" or "bad;" the conditions and temper of the time influenced these men; they received their power through an appeal to the prevailing frustrations of their constituents. Only when these "frustrations" were removed could one expect to see a different type of political leader achieve success.

I have included Robert M. LaFollette in this paper because I believe that he was the first of these new leaders; his rise to
power came about only because the attitude of Americans towards politics had changed gradually since 1665. By 1900, the average citizen could see that there were definite benefits to the emerging organization of life in the United States, but that this same organization was also destroying the value of individualism. America was losing its soul; the individualism that had made the country independent and prosperous was now being suppressed by the corporate organization whose well being rested solely on its technique and efficiency. What was to be the future of the unorganized man—the artist, the writer, the professional man, and the farmer? As business continued to grow, men were haunted by the fear that private power would become far greater than that power possessed by state and federal governments—this would bring about an end to traditional American democracy. Once the American man began to follow this line of thought, a genuine and sincere awakening to the social, economic, and political ills that had so long afflicted the country came about under the label of Progressivism. I feel that the Progressives should be praised for their awareness that the organization of industry and finance was part of a social evolution that was here to stay, and one which had proven itself beneficial in many instances. The Progressives were interested only in ridding the economic system of its most dangerous elements.5

In writing this paper, I have come to realize that our politicians are what they are—for better or for worse—because of ourselves; the myth of the "blameless public" has been indulged
in too long. Samuel Lubell accounts for a politician mirroring the views of his constituents in the following way:

   By subjecting our politicians to the...test of periodic elections we force them...to probe for all our weaknesses and strengths, our prides and prejudices, for the issues which will rouse us out of our apathy...This process of political selection continues until everything about us manages to find its image in some one or other of our politicians. Lubell goes on to say that courage and timidity, indignation or complacency register in the makeup of our politicians and through them are impressed upon our national character.

   In order that Americans will never have to live through another period of history such as the one from 1865-1900, I believe that our best self-defense is to "see ourselves as others politick us." By changing our own character, we can force our politicians to change. Each citizen must never abdicate his own individual power, and he must always choose men of the highest moral qualities for his political leaders. If this simple procedure is followed, moral vigor will always remain a dominant element in our government.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

5. Ibid., p. 142
6. Ibid., p. 422
7. Billington, p. 180
8. Thomas and Maria Selden, So Fell the Angels (Boston, 1956), p. 225
10. Schlesinger, p. 128
11. Schlesinger, p. 26
13. John Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis, 1931), p. 91
15. Ibid., p. 219
16. Billington, p. 45
17. Nevins, p. 304
21. David, p. 9
22. Ibid., p. 10
23. Hicks, p. 153
25. David, p. 9
26. Nevins, pp. 69-70
27. David, p. 20
28. Ibid., p. 17
29. Ibid., p. 18

20.
21.
22.
23.
24.
25.
26.
27.
28.
29.
Chapter 1 (Continued)

30. Ibid., p. 7
31. Ibid., p. 42
32. Ibid., p. 119
33. Billington, p. 215
35. Hicks, p. 28
36. Ibid., p. 132
37. Ibid., p. 159
38. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 175
39. Nevins, pp. 178-190
40. Hofstadter, Political Tradition, p. 169
41. Schlesinger, p. 387
42. Goldman, p. 35
43. Nevins, p. 818
44. David, p. 13
45. Henry S. Commanger and Allan Nevins, The Heritage of America (Boston, 1939), p. 890
46. Belden, pp. 219-220
47. Schlesinger, p. 111
48. Ibid., p. 127
49. Billington, p. 186
50. Goldman, p. 33
51. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 136
52. Ibid., p. 140
53. Ibid., p. 141
54. Ibid., p. 142
55. Ibid., p. 132 A quote by William Allen White
56. Ole Ralvaag in Giants In The Earth

Chapter 2

1. Memorial Addresses Delivered In Congress: Thomas E. Watson (Washington, D.C., 1924), p. 48
3. Ibid., p. 39
4. Ibid., p. 33
5. Ibid., p. 28
6. Ibid., p. 141
7. Goldman, p. 3
8. Woodward, p. 90
9. Ibid., p. 115
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 2 (Continued)

10. Ibid., p. 115
11. Ibid., p. 117
12. Ibid., p. 118
13. Nevins, p. 362
14. Hicks, p. 45
15. Ibid., p. 54
16. Woodward, p. 122
17. Ibid., pp. 133-135
18. Ibid., p. 137
19. Ibid., p. 139
20. Ibid., p. 147
21. Ibid., p. 145
22. Ibid., p. 161
23. Ibid., p. 211
24. Ibid., p. 195
25. Memorial Addresses, p. 13
26. Woodward, p. 252
27. Ibid., p. 270
28. Ibid., p. 281
29. Ibid., p. 294
30. Ibid., pp. 321-330
31. Ibid., p. 331
32. Ibid., p. 332
33. Ibid., p. 342
34. Ibid., p. 359
35. Ibid., p. 380
36. Ibid., p. 394
37. Ibid., p. 414
38. Ibid., p. 416
39. Ibid., p. 421
40. Ibid., p. 427
41. Ibid., p. 440
42. Ibid., p. 441
43. Ibid., p. 443
44. Ibid., p. 17
45. Ibid., p. 453
46. Ibid., p. 473
47. Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 12

Chapter 3

1. James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (London, 1900), p. 120
2. William Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (New York, 1940), p. 42
Chapter 3 (Continued)

4. Ibid., p. 65
5. Riordan, pp. 13-14
6. Zink, p. 11
7. Riordan, p. 26
9. Ibid., p. 75
10. Zink, p. 28
11. R.L. Stoddard, pp. 192-193
12. Zink, pp. 145-146
13. Riordan, pp. 34 and 37
14. R.L. Stoddard, p. 76
15. Zink, p. 135
17. Riordan, pp. 52-53
18. Ibid., p. 70
19. Salisbury, p. 19
20. Zink, p. 27
22. Riordan, pp. 123-126
24. Riordan, p. 23
25. Quote by Sidney Brooks in *Master of Manhattan*
26. Riordan, pp. 15-16 and p. 21
27. Ibid., p. 120
28. Quote by Walter Lippman in Salisbury, p. 69

Chapter 4

3. Muzzey, p. 36
4. Russell, p. 100
5. Ibid., p. 117
7. Muzzey, p. 57
8. Josephson, p. 110
9. Ibid., p. 111
10. Muzzey, p. 61
11. Ibid., p. 72
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 4 (Continued)

12. Josephson, pp. 207-208
13. Ibid., p. 209
14. Ibid., p. 211
15. Muzzey, p. 98
16. Ibid., p. 100
17. Russell, p. 315
18. Muzzey, p. 108
19. Ibid., p. 133
20. Josephson, pp. 251-258
21. Muzzey, p. 182
22. Russell, p. 375
23. Josephson, p. 315
24. Ibid., p. 357
25. Russell, p. 393
26. Russell, p. 401
27. Muzzey, p. 326

Chapter 5

1. Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna (New York, 1912), pp. 79-80
2. Ibid., pp. 103-104
4. Josephson, p. 644
5. Croly, p. 173
7. Josephson, p. 650
8. Ibid., p. 696
10. Josephson, p. 695
11. Croly, p. 220
12. Josephson, p. 699
13. Ibid., p. 707
14. Beer, p. 165
15. Review of Reviews, March, 1904
16. Croly, p. 297
19. Agar, p. 627
FOOTNOTES

Chapter 6


2. Ibid., p. 236


4. *Personal Narrative*, p. 5

5. Ibid., p. 249


7. Ibid., pp. 67-68

8. Ibid., p. 25


10. *Personal Narrative*, p. 164


13. Ibid., pp. 198-199

14. Ibid., pp. 270-271

15. Current, p. 302

16. Bela LaFollette, p. 135

17. *Personal Narrative*, p. x in the Introduction

18. Bela LaFollette, p. 135


20. Howe, p. 15


22. Bela LaFollette, p. 142

23. *Personal Narrative*, p. 327

24. Ibid., p. 339

25. Ibid., p. 351

26. Bela LaFollette, p. 192

27. *Personal Narrative*, p. 369

28. Ibid., p. 48


30. Ibid., p. 64

Chapter 7


FOOTNOTES

Chapter 7 (Continued)

4. Beer, Hanna, p. 70. This is a quote from Mark Twain
7. Ibid., p. 17
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (2)


Hicks, John D. The Populist Revolt. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1931.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (3)


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (4)


Sullivan, Mark. Our Times: Turn of the Century. vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907;


Abstract: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN A TIME OF CRISIS, 1865-1905
by
John Wilson Cameron

This study has attempted to explain the nature of the institutions from 1865-1905 that made it inevitable that manipulators of persons on the grand scale should emerge to take control where there was, temporarily, a political-social vacuum to be filled. A nation of individuals, accustomed to the idea that each person must fend for himself as an independent unit, moved into an age of interdependence. The people, however, were slow to recognize this fact and slow to organize the institutions which such an era required. Ray Stannard Baker in his American Chronicle has caught the feelings of the average man in this traumatic period:

What a different world I knew from that of my ancestors! They had the wilderness, I had crowds. I found teeming, jostling, restless cities; I found immense smoking, roaring industries... I found hugeness and disorder... I found dishonest politics and greedy businessmen. While we were not without evil enough there on the frontier, it was not concentrated and complex and overpowering.

In short, it was a crowded world I found; how was I to live in it? How was a man to look at it; what was he to do? Was it possible for any man...to live happily in it?

This terrible new struggle for existence among the people was brought about, in large part, by the phenomenal growth of American business and, especially, of the corporation. The uprooted villagers and farmers who had come to live and work in the city were used to a life based on primary human contacts—the family, church, and neighborhood—and now the actuality of the community was on the
decline. The major characteristic of this new economic unit was its impersonality and unprecedented distance from its customers if any malpractices occurred. This new unrighteousness did not advertise its vileness, and so it was possible for iniquity to flourish greatly. There was little likelihood that a new set of ethics could suddenly spring into being to accommodate the new, abstract relations between manufacturer and consumer.

It was inevitable that all these problems connected with the economic and social aspects of American life should be carried over into politics, for these population centers had to be run, and politics was the method by which communities worked out their common problems. Politics demand organization, and organization calls for leadership. There must be men with the genius to organize and lead the people. The greatest weakness of this period seems to me to be the failure of responsible people to assume this leadership in politics. "Good" people were too busy to care about now local, state, or national government was administered; to them, politics was a dirty game. Because of this prevalent attitude, a political vacuum was created in which a man like Tom Watson, who appealed to the people through his crusades against the "menaces," or James Blaine, who had glamour or "magnetism" to offer his constituents, could gain much more power than they were capable of handling.

Neither is it hard to understand that a country enamoured of organization would accept a highly organized political machine to cope with the problems of politics.

My case studies of Watson, Blaine, Hanna, and the city boss have been of men who saw their opportunities and took them in this
period of maximal transition from a rural to an industrial nation. The conditions and temper of the times influenced these men; they received their power through an appeal to the prevailing frustrations of their constituents. Only when these "frustrations" were removed could one expect to see a different type of political leader achieve success.

I have included Bob LaFollette in this paper because I believe that he was the first of these new leaders; his rise to power came about only because the attitude of Americans toward politics had changed gradually since 1865. By 1900, the average citizen could see that there were definite benefits to the emerging organization of life in the United States, but that this same organization was also destroying the value of individualism. America was losing its soul; what was to be the future of the unorganized man—the artist, the writer, the professional man, and the farmer? As business continued to grow, men were haunted by the fear that private power would become far greater than that power possessed by state and federal government. Once the American man began to follow this line of thinking, a genuine and sincere awakening to the social, economic, and political ills that had so long afflicted the country came about under the label of Progressivism.

In writing this paper, I have come to realize that our politicians are what they are—for better or for worse—because of ourselves; the myth of the "blameless public" has been indulged in too long. Courage and timidity, indignation or complacency register in the makeup of our politicians and through them are impressed upon our national character. Americans must learn to see themselves as others politick them.