

Topic: Chapter 23—Political Paralysis in the Gilded Age, 1868-1896 and Chapter 26: The Great West and the Agricultural Revolution, 1865-1896

Aim: To what extent did the Populists effectively address economic and political problems in the 1890s?

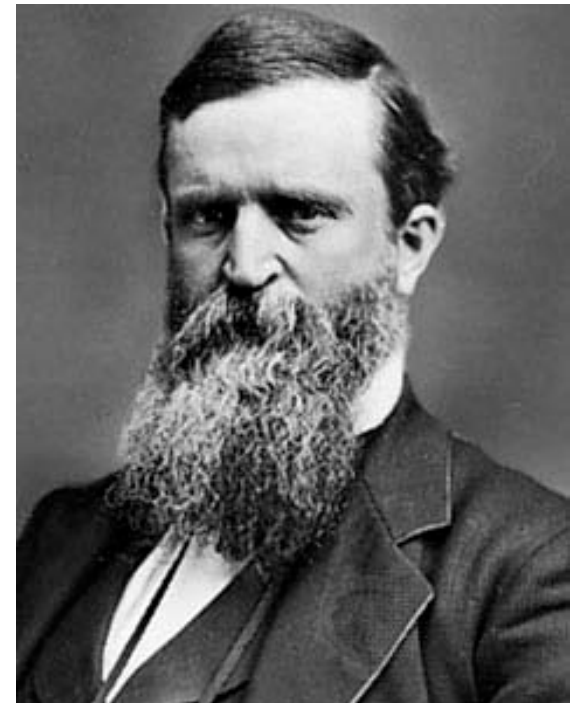
February 14—Chapter 23 - pgs 504-512 and Chapter 26

- Homestead Act of 1862
- the Grange Movement
- the Farmer's Alliance
- Sherman Silver Act of 1890
- Depression of 1893
- Populism—The People's Party
- Haymarket Riot of 1886
- Coxey's Army/Pullman Strike
- McKinley Tariff of 1890
- Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1893

The Populist Movement 1880s – 1890s



Mary Elizabeth Lease was a prominent Populist, noted for her rallying cry to “raise less corn and more hell.”



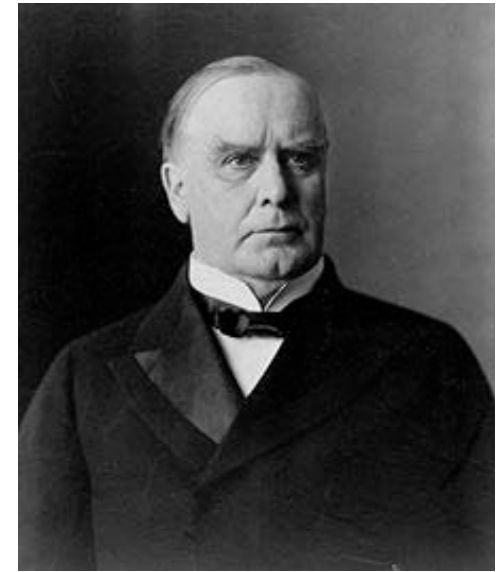
The Presidents in the 1890s

Benjamin Harrison (1833 – 1901)
23rd 1889 - 1893

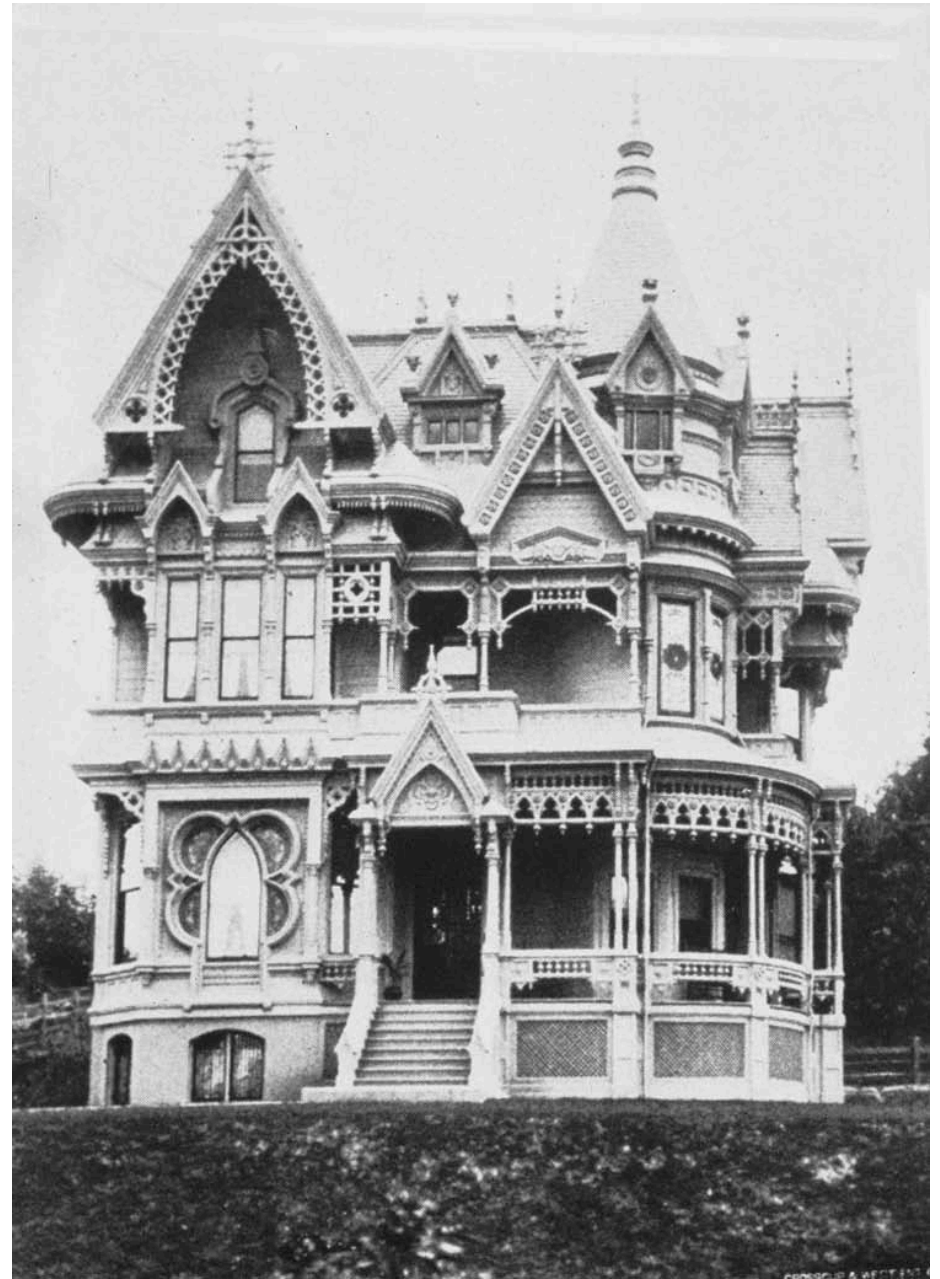


Grover Cleveland (1837 – 1908)
24th 1893 - 1897

William McKinley (1843 – 1901)
25th 1897 - 1901



- The 1890s were a time of ongoing economic growth, but also increasing concentrations of wealth in the hands of the very few
- Tensions of the 1890s were predicated on economic outcomes—political gridlock led to increasing economic problems—Depression of 1893 the worst and longest economic depression to that time
- Almost all groups were affected by economic problems
- There were labor problems: lasting tension from the Haymarket Riot in 1888, Homestead Strike in 1892, the Pullman Strike in 1894, also “Coxey’s Army” marched on Washington



The monetary deflation and fall in commodity prices following the Civil War hurt farmers almost immediately, causing widespread debt and the loss of land.

Noting the success of the unions for the country's laborers, organizations for farmers were founded.

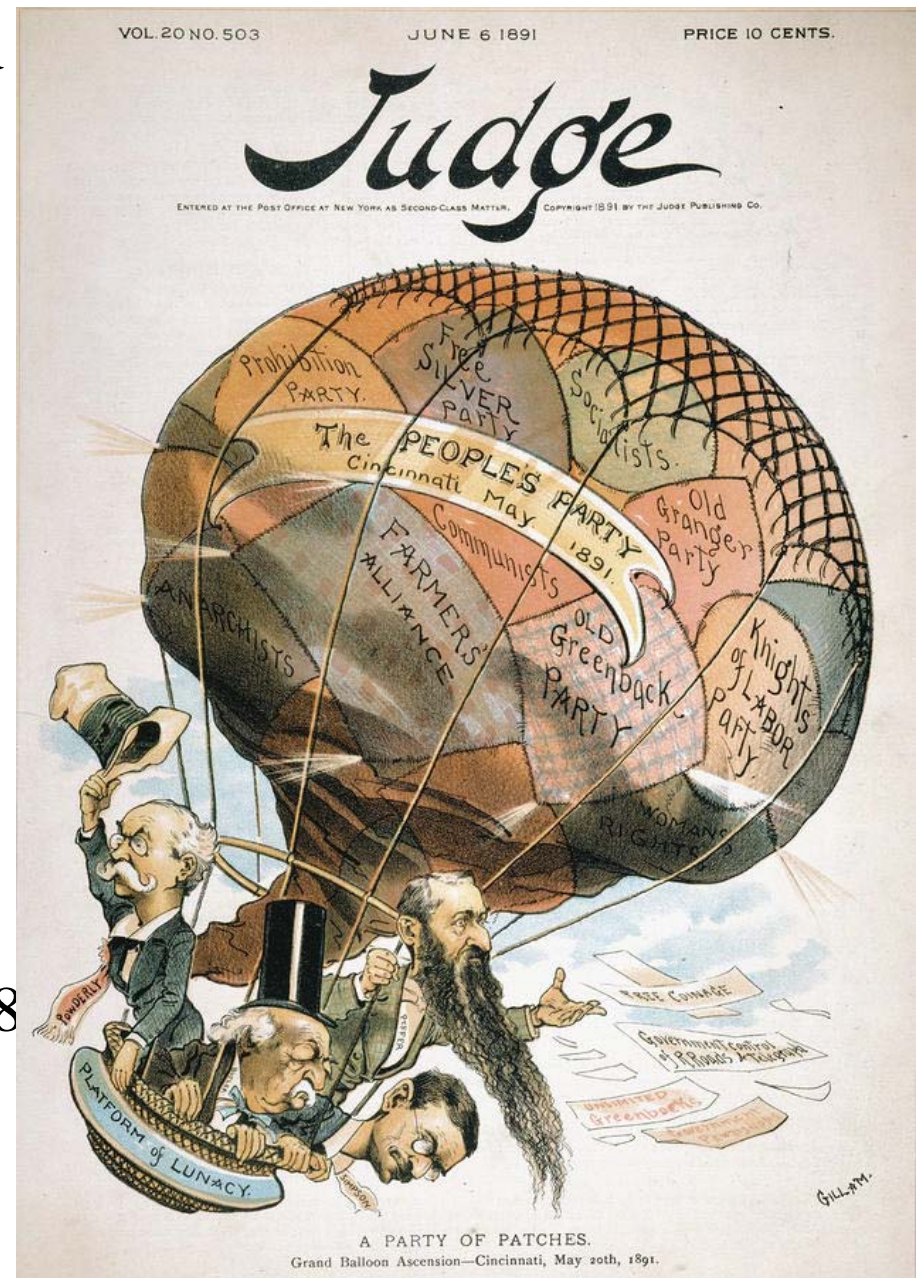
The National Grange was an organization designed to pool the abilities of local farmers to political and economic ends.

The Farmers' Alliance was formed in 1876 in Texas and spread throughout the country, with its strongest hold in the South and the Great Plains.

The Farmers' Alliance was a precursor to the Populist Party, which rose to power soon after the demise of the original organization.



1. There was a money crisis as gold in the treasury dwindled causing fear for the future—arguments returned for silver money or greenbacks
2. There was political protest: The Populist Party was led by angry farmers; the party threatened to upset the two-party system; neither major party was addressing key issues
3. The Spanish American War (1898) divided the nation on the debate for empire



James B. Weaver (1833 – 1912)



**Populist Party candidate, Election of
1892**

The Omaha Platform of 1892

- Free silver
- Graduated income tax
- Public ownership of railroads, telegraphs and telephones
- Restricted immigration
- 8 hour workday
- Womens suffrage
- Secret ballot
- Direct election of senators

Mary Elizabeth Lease (1850 – 1933)

“Queen Mary” or “Mary Yellin”

Populist political activist

- “Money rules. . . The parties lie to us and the political speakers mislead us!”
- “We have advanced scientifically, ethically and otherwise, but in finance we have followed the barbaric methods of our ancestors and the teachings of college-bred idiots who tell us that gold is the only desirable coin.”



Mary Elizabeth Lease was a prominent Populist, noted for her rallying cry to “raise less corn and more hell.”

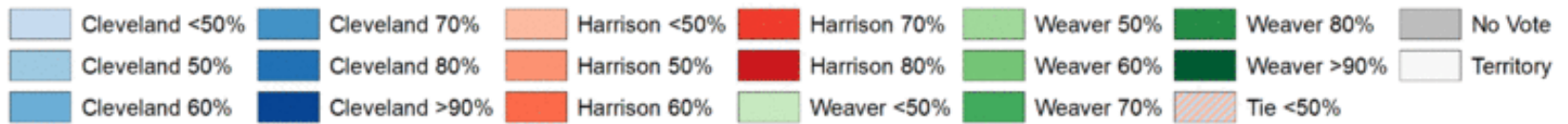
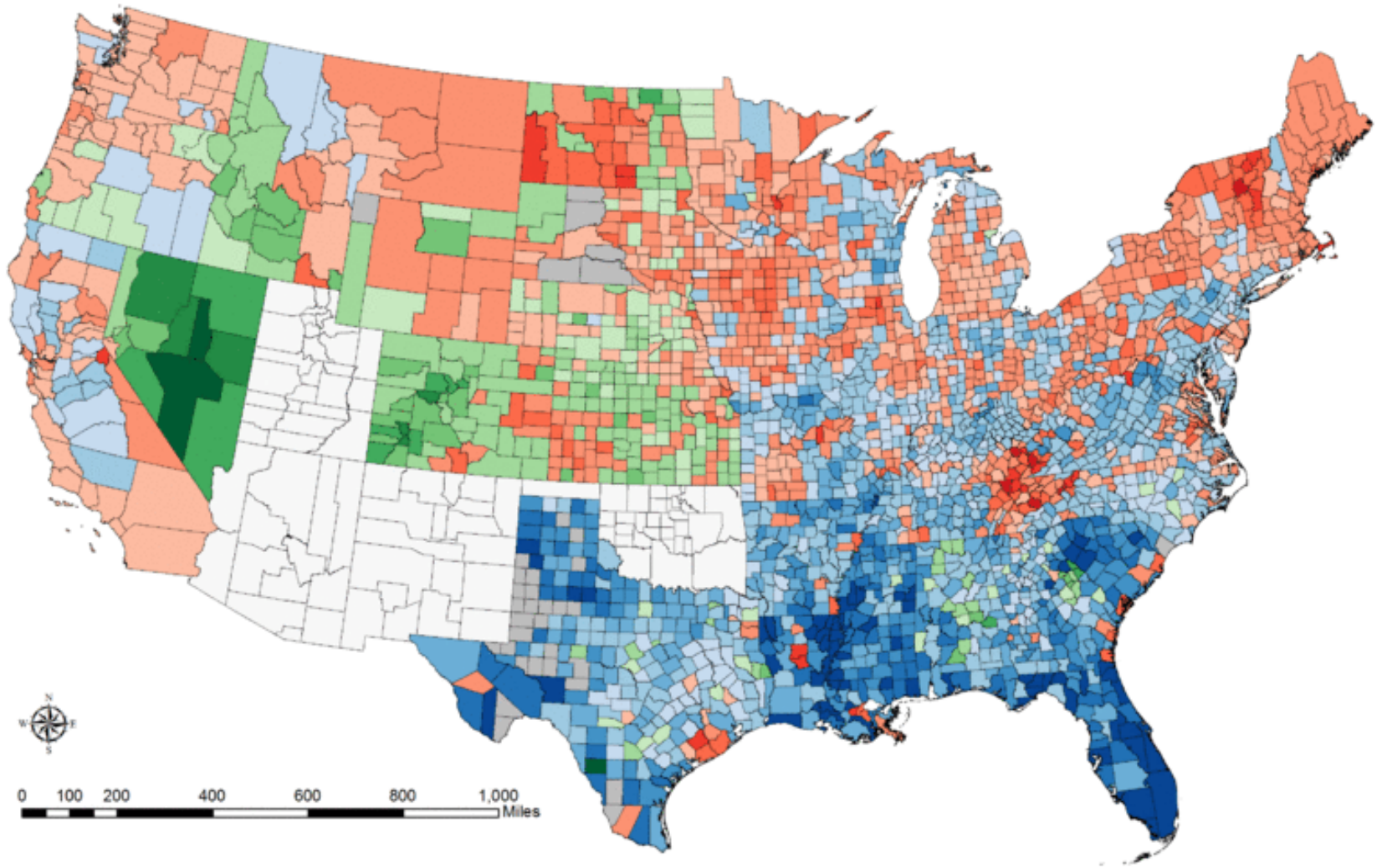
In Reality...the Populists...

- They were coming up with new ideas to return America to its agrarian past— ‘regressive’ reform
- Populism represented a class movement that was based on racism, anti-Semitism and sectionalism, but not nationalism
- They turned to the city only for backing from unions and supported women voting only for Populist issues



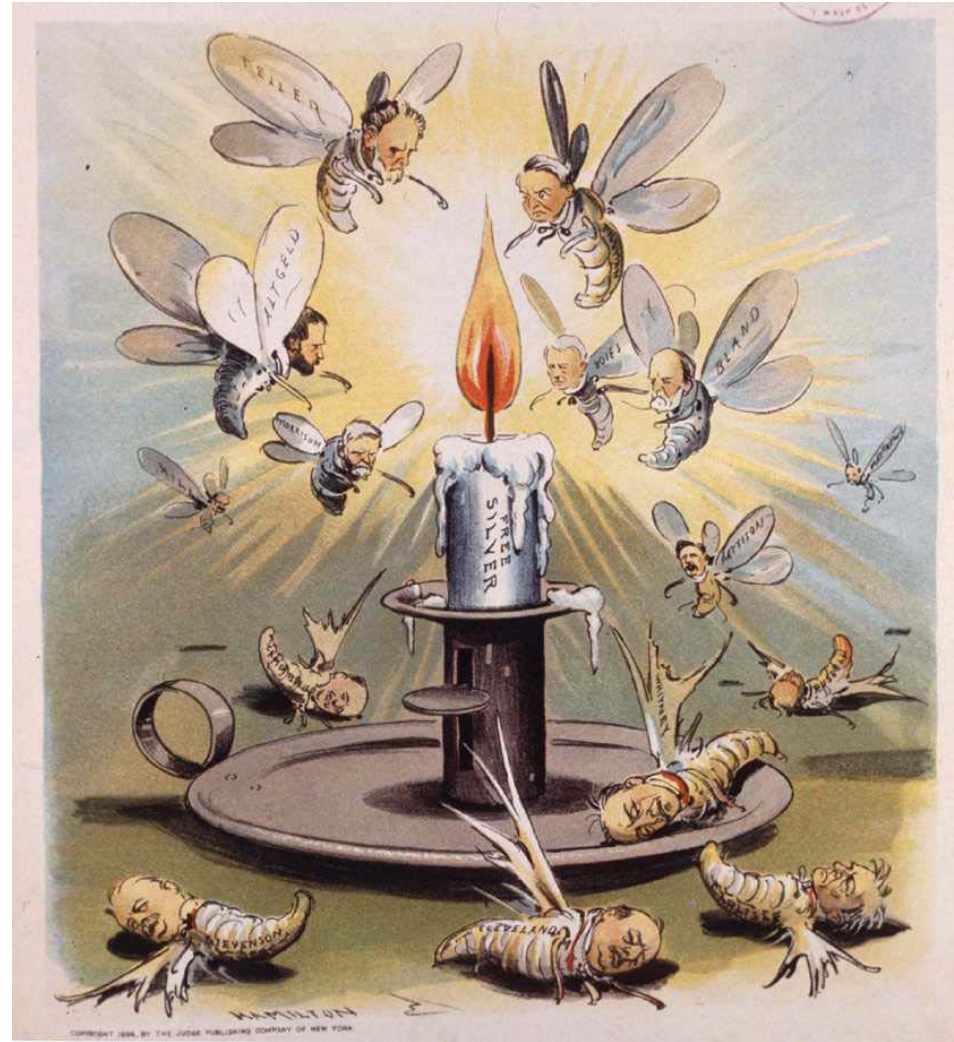
The Situation; The Result of Interest Bearing Bonds and Sherman

Presidential Election Results by County (1892)



Free Silver

- The **Sherman Silver Purchase Act** became federal law in 1890, increasing the amount of silver the government must purchase every month.
- It increased the amount required by the **Bland-Allison Act of 1878** by 4.5 million ounces.
- American citizens began to redeem their silver notes for gold, depleting the Federal Reserve.
- Following the onset of the 1893 depression, Grover Cleveland repealed the acts to protect the American Economy.



President Grover Cleveland—Economic Damage



- Sought to limit or end tariffs—in particular the **McKinley Tariff of 1890** that raised the tariff almost fifty percent, an act designed to protect domestic industries from foreign competition
- tariffs had been raised to pay for military and protectionism
- By 1881 the Treasury had an annual surplus of \$145 million
- Most government income, pre-income tax, came from the tariff.
- Later introduced the **Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act** of 1893 his second term—when it passed the Senate, it had more than 600 amendments attached that nullified most of the reforms
- The Sugar trust gained key benefits that outweighed any reforms
- Cleveland was outraged and denounced the bill, but it became law without his signature—the Panic of 1893 worsened

Economic depression of 1893—causes:

- Splurge of overbuilding and speculation
- Labor disorders and ongoing agricultural depression
- Free-silver agitation had damaged American credit abroad
- European banking houses began to call in loans from the United States.

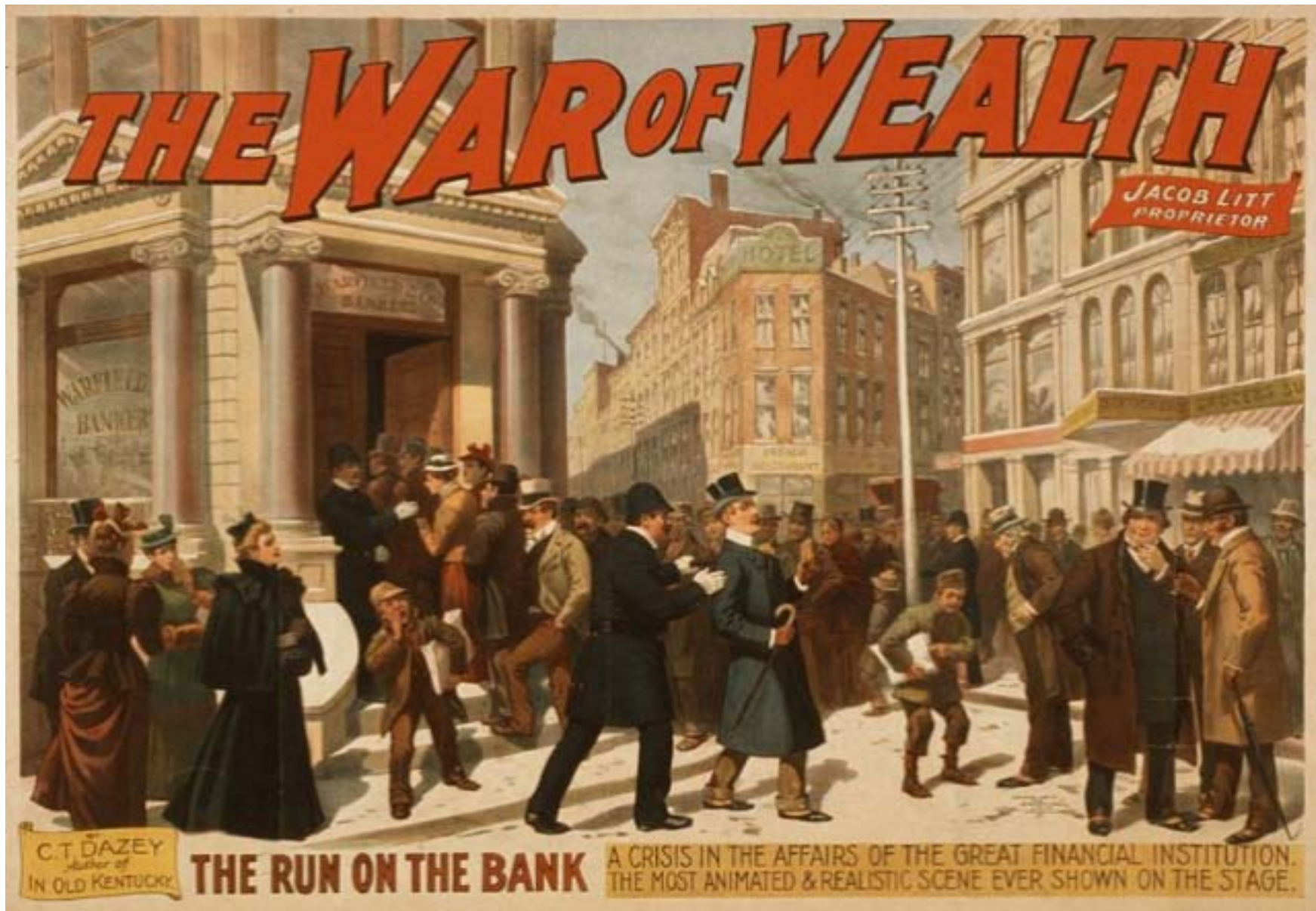
Depression ran deep and far:

- 8,000 American businesses collapsed in six months
- Dozens of railroads lines went into receivers' hands.



ANOTHER HIDE TO BE TAKEN.

Uncle Sam (in the Right at the Bottom).—One of you jolly old men around here about every twenty years, but this is the year that you got!

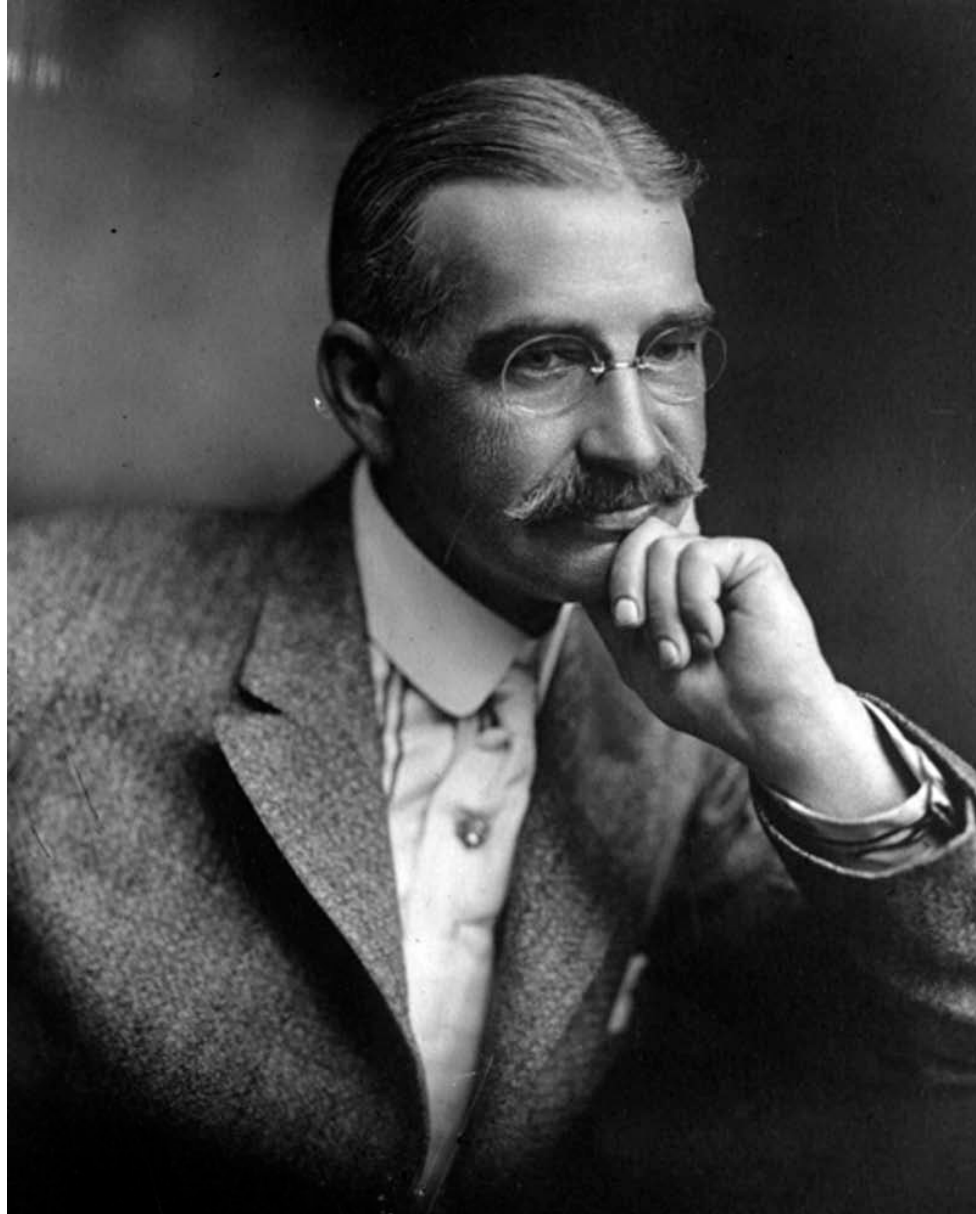


Poster for a melodrama, presented at the Chestnut St. Opera House, Philadelphia, 1895



Jacob S. Coxey (1854 – 1951), Ohio businessman led a march on Washington in 1894 to urge the government to provide assistance. The government was unresponsive, Coxey was arrested and the marchers disbanded.

L. Frank Baum (1856 – 1919) author of *The Wizard of OZ* (1900)



The Wizard of Oz as Political Allegory



The characters and who they represent





Dorothy represents the American people



The Scarecrow represents the western farmers from the Grange Movement and the Farmer's Alliance—Populists, who had “lost their brains”

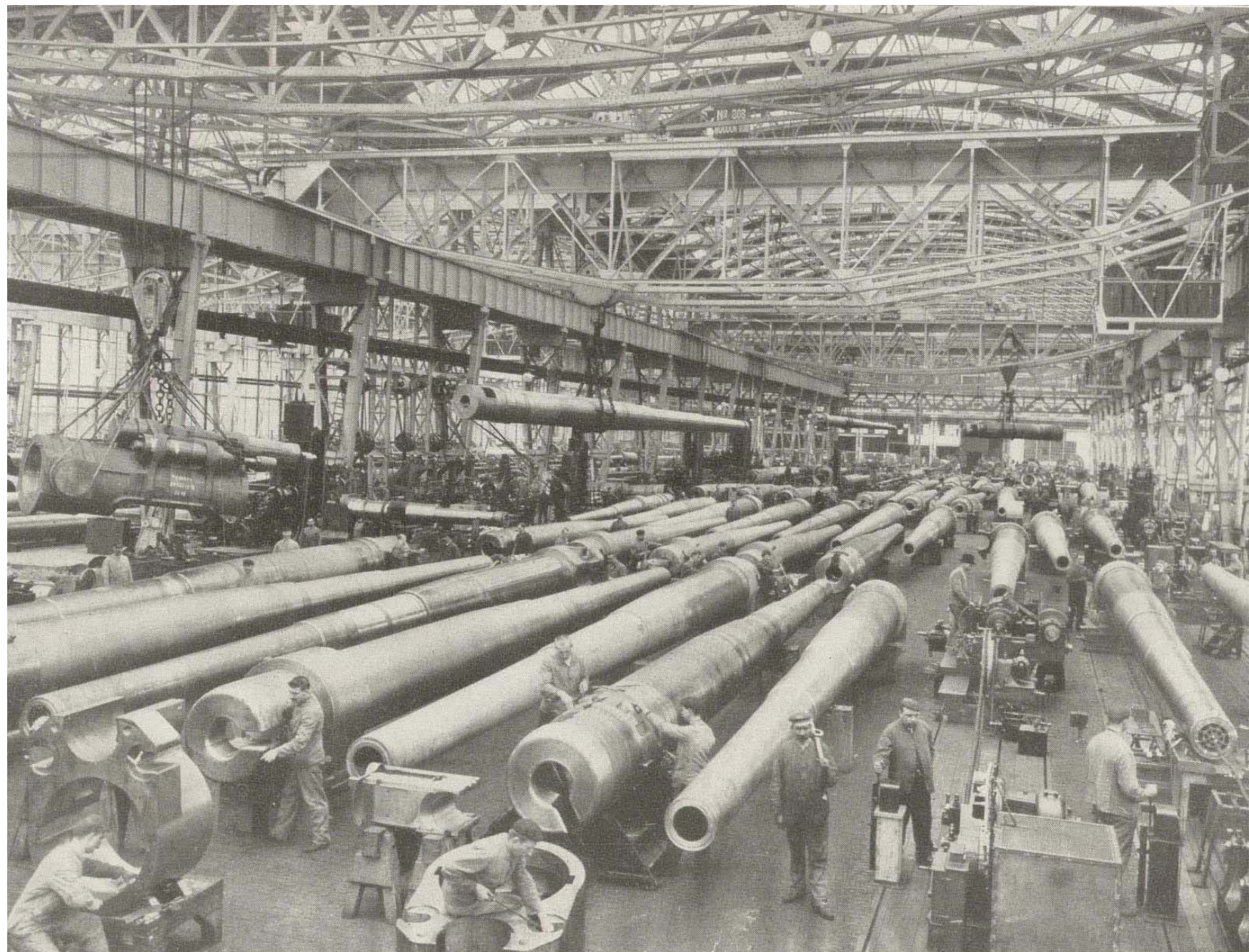


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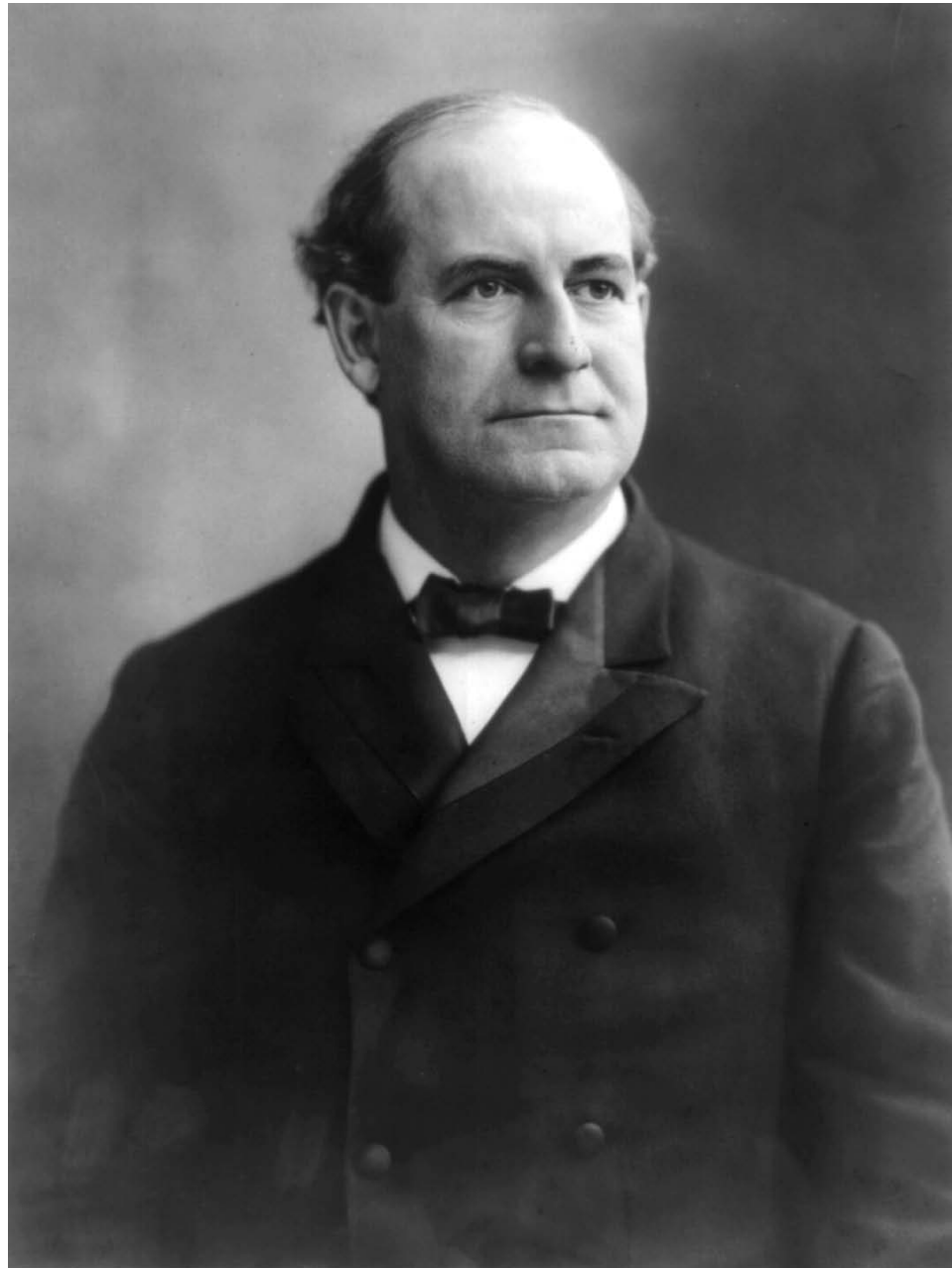


The Tin Woodsman represents the eastern workers and members of the Union Labor Party, “victims” of mechanization—just as he had lost his heart





The Cowardly Lion represents **William Jennings Bryan** (1860 – 1925): Bryan, a Democrat, ran for the presidency in 1896 and lost to William McKinley; thus Bryan had a load roar, but no power.



The Munchkins—people controlled by the “Wicked Witch of the East”:
the Banks of New England and the Upper Midwest



Bryan favored bimetallism

“Cross of Gold” Speech

“If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.”



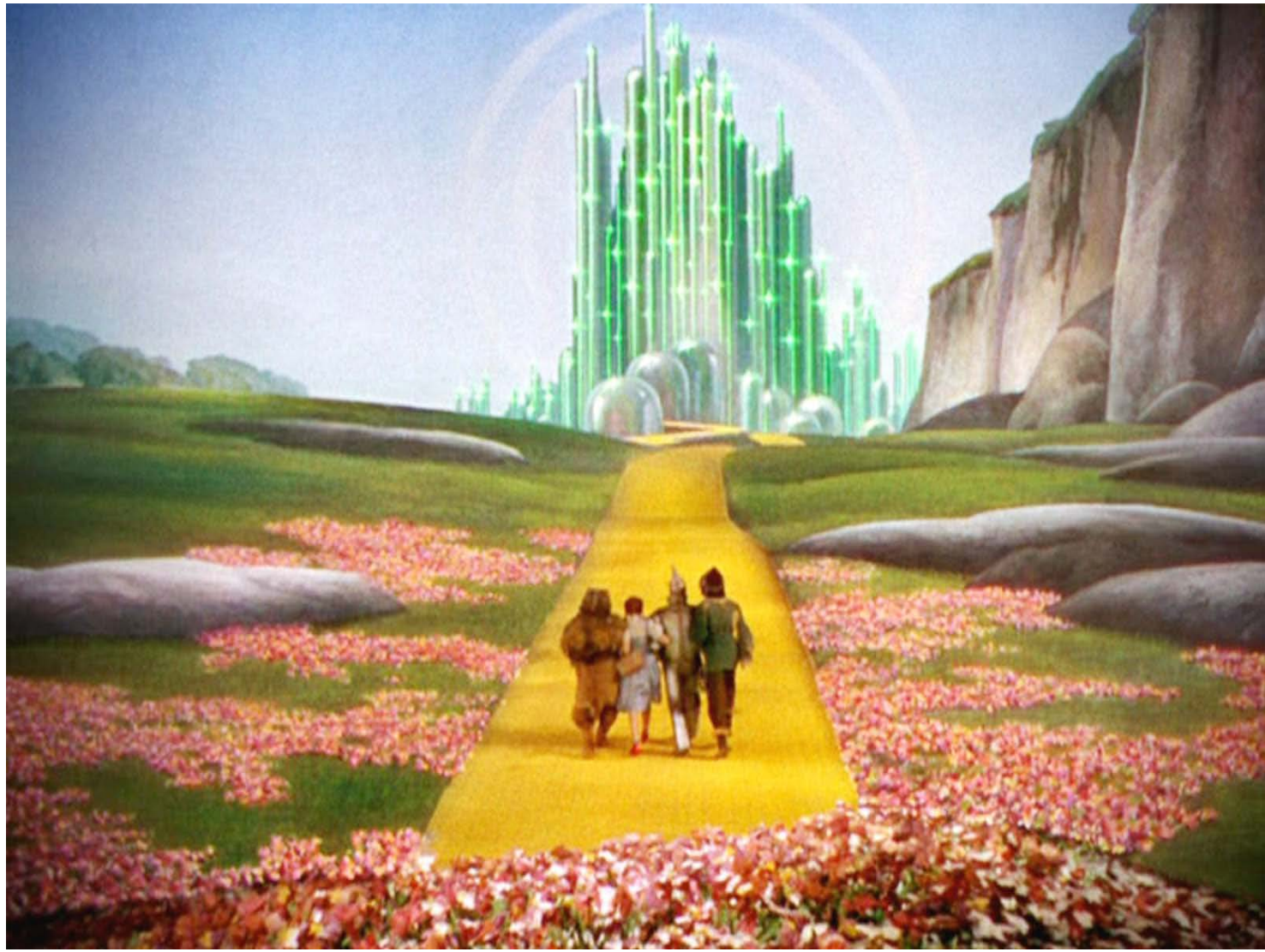
The Wicked Witch of the West



Represents the banking interests (Dorothy kills her sister)

Glinda, the Good Witch of the North: Populist supporters in New England

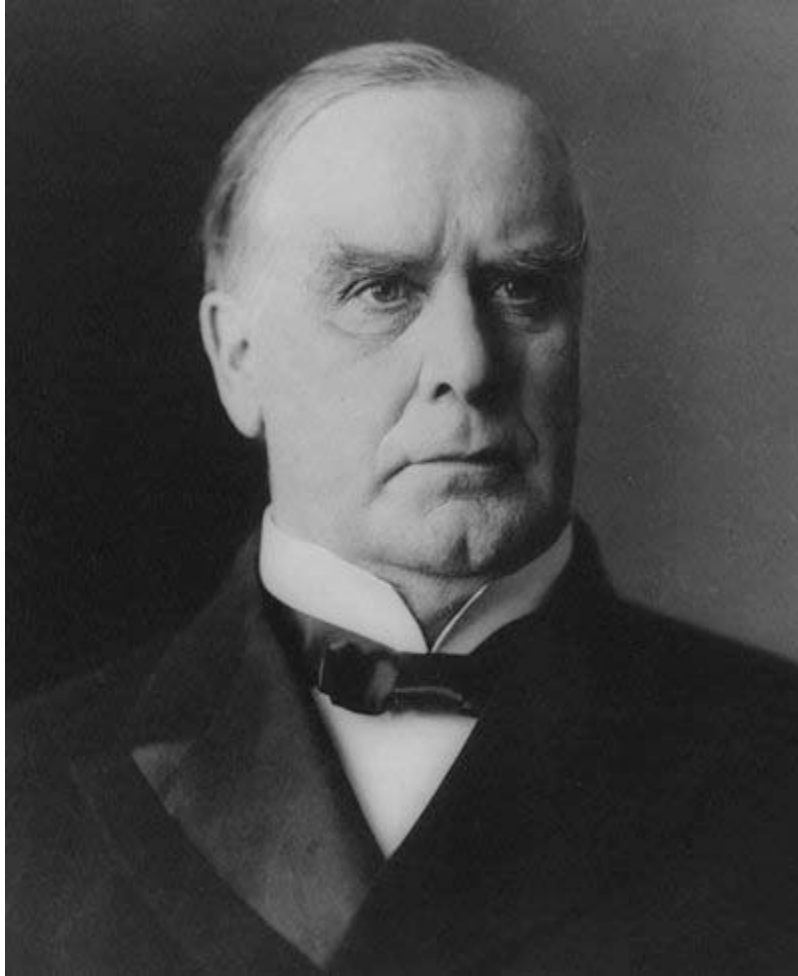




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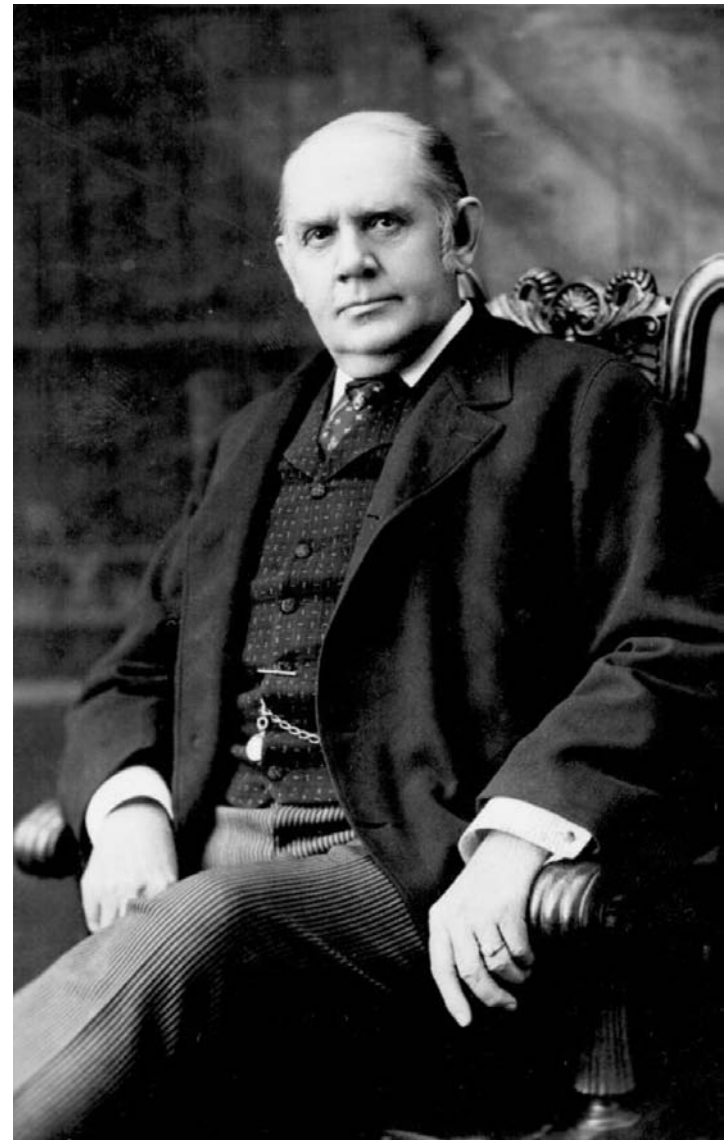


The Wizard of Oz



William McKinley (1843 – 1901)
25th President of the United States
(1897 – 1901)

or



Marcus Alonzo "Mark" Hanna (1837-1904) Senator
from Ohio

- made millions as a businessman
- managed McKinley's presidential campaigns



Oz

abbreviation for “ounce”
16 oz. of silver is equal to 1 oz
of gold

This has fluctuated over the years, but the standard remains between 14:1 and 16:1 for an ounce of gold or silver

The **Yellow Brick Road**, the **Emerald City**, or **Silver** (not Ruby!) Slippers? Only the **Silver Slippers** could bring Dorothy home....



Balance achieved?



**Only with a proper coalition of industrial and agrarian interests,
but it never happened**

The Panic Ends

- Congress passed a high protective tariff and the Gold Standard Act in 1897
- Recovery began before passage of either act
- External factors:
 - Increase in European demand on wheat: European wheat crop was reduced by 1/3 for 1897. . . U.S. exported more wheat; farmers were assuaged
 - European money flowing into U.S. stopped the drain on gold, and new discoveries of gold in '96 helped ease the gold problem

- Europe recovered from the depression before the U.S.
- European industries could not keep up with product demand
- U.S. began to export goods – this meant more work for U.S. industries and workers
- By 1900 prosperity was back