

1911 were not a time of inertia but a formative period that awakened public opinion to the need for an expanded economic and political democracy. In that respect John Franklin Fort's greatest contribution as governor may have been to lay the foundation on which Woodrow Wilson would build.

Fort left the governor's office in January 1911. He spent the last nine years of his life engaged in a variety of business, political and public service activities. During the 1912 presidential campaign he served as chairman of the state Progressive Committee. Though Fort was pledged to Theodore Roosevelt, he had close ties with President Woodrow Wilson that kept him in public life. In 1914 and 1915 he served as a special envoy to Santo Domingo, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, investigating the financial and political difficulties that troubled those nations. In March 1917 Wilson named him chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, a post he held until ill health forced his resignation in November 1919. After a prolonged illness John Franklin Fort died in his South Orange home at the age of sixty-eight, on November 17, 1920.

He left a legacy of moral rectitude, honesty and hard work. During a period in New Jersey history when corruption and an arrogant disregard of the commonweal characterized government, John F. Fort gave expression to those citizens demanding meaningful social change. His dilemma was simply that he could not be all things to all people. Late in life he was fond of characterizing his term as governor by telling the story of the little girl who returned from school to ask her mother the difference between hope and expectation. "Well," said the mother, "I hope to meet your father in Heaven, but I do not expect to."

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THOMAS WOODROW WILSON (December 28, 1856-February 3, 1924), thirty-fourth governor, was born in Staunton, Virginia, the son of the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson, D.D., and Janet Woodrow Wilson. His paternal grandparents were James and Anne (Adams) Wilson, who emigrated from northern Ireland in 1807; his maternal grandparents were the Reverend Thomas and Marion (Williamson) Woodrow, who emigrated from Carlisle, England, in 1836.

Presbyterianism, with its Calvinistic emphasis on the sovereignty of God and its covenantal tradition, was a dominant influence on Woodrow Wilson from his boyhood. His father was a leading southern Presbyterian minister, and the son almost literally grew up in the bosom of the church. His home was also a place where education and matters of the mind were highly valued. From his "incomparable father," as Woodrow called him, the boy received intellectual stimulation, the desire to excel, and his best instruction.

Educated in private schools in Augusta, Georgia, and Columbia, South Carolina, Woodrow Wilson spent his freshman year, 1873-74, at Davidson College. His father's fortunes greatly enhanced by a call to a prosperous church in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1875, Woodrow enrolled in the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). The next four years were a time of rapid intellectual growth for the precocious youth. Active in sports and campus affairs, he was elected speaker of the American Whig Society and editor of the student newspaper.

Wilson studied law at the University of Virginia, 1879-80, and practiced in Atlanta, 1882-83. Disillusioned by an excess of damage suits, he entered The Johns Hopkins University in 1883 for graduate work in history and political science. His published dissertation, *Congressional Government* (1885), regarded as one of the seminal works in American political science, brought him professorships at Bryn Mawr College (1885-88), Wesleyan University (1888-90), and Princeton (1890-1902). His reputation as a scholar grew with the publication of *The State* (1889), a textbook in comparative government, and *Division and Reunion* (1893), a study of the period 1829-89 in American history.

Meanwhile, Wilson married Ellen Louise Axson of Rome, Georgia, in 1885. They had three daughters: Margaret Woodrow (b. 1886), Jessie Woodrow (b. 1887), and Eleanor Randolph (b. 1889). Mrs. Wilson died in 1914.

Elected president of Princeton University in 1902, Wilson transformed that ancient college into a modern university by reforming the curriculum, revolutionizing teaching methods, and expanding the graduate program. However, frustration plagued him from 1907 to the end of his administration. He tried to abolish the exclusive eating clubs and democratize undergraduate social life but received a sharp rebuff from wealthy alumni and trustees. He also led a fight against Andrew F. West, dean of the Graduate

School, over the location and character of a residential graduate college. With the aid of alumni money, West won the battle in the spring of 1910.

In the long run, the greatest significance of Wilson's struggles at Princeton was their impact on his political thought.

Until 1907, Wilson was a moderate conservative interested mainly in administrative and municipal reform and identified only peripherally with the burgeoning progressive, or reform, movements in New Jersey and the nation at large. The struggles over the clubs and graduate college convinced him that privileged wealth threatened economic opportunity and social democracy; the crucible of turmoil and defeat transformed him into a radical social democrat.

The situation at Princeton also caused Wilson to seize the opportunity to make a new career in politics. George B. M. Harvey, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, and Harvey's friend, James Smith, Jr., of Newark, boss of the Essex County Democratic machine, tried throughout the spring of 1910 to persuade Wilson to say that he would accept the Democratic gubernatorial nomination at the next state convention. Harvey, who fancied himself a kingmaker, had been touting Wilson for the presidency since 1906. Smith needed the Princetonian as a respectable front to head off a revolt against his dominance in the state party by such young progressives as Mayor H. Otto Wittpenn of Jersey City, state Senator George S. Silzer of New Brunswick, and James Kerney, publisher and editor of the *Trenton Evening Times*. After negotiations during which he was assured that he would be left free "in the matter of measures and of men," Wilson announced on July 15, 1910, that he would accept the nomination.

Antimachine Democrats charged bargain and sale, but Smith won the support of his erstwhile rival, Robert Davis, boss of the Hudson County Democracy, and achieved Wilson's nomination on the first ballot at the Democratic state convention in Trenton on Sep-

tember 15, 1910. Wilson electrified the convention and won the warm support of his critics by declaring that the nomination had come to him unsought and without any strings attached, and by promising to serve the people of the state "with singleness of purpose" if elected.

New Jersey was in the throes of a popular rebellion against an alliance of old-fashioned machine politicians, the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Public Service Corporation, and other corporations. Wilson moved boldly to seize the leadership of the insurgent elements in both parties. He came out for direct primaries to give the people an opportunity to select their own nominees, a public utilities commission with power to establish rates, and legislation to provide compensation for workers and their families when they were injured or killed. He promised to be the leader and tribune of all the people. In a public letter to George L. Record, progressive Republican of Jersey City, Wilson declared that the Democratic bosses were as reprehensible as their Republican counterparts and that they would not control the state if he was elected. Under this onslaught, the dazed Republican candidate, Vivian M. Lewis, could only reply that he agreed with his opponent. The result was a Democratic tidal wave on election day, November 8, 1910. It carried a Democratic majority into the general assembly and Wilson into the governorship by 49,056 votes. Republican President William Howard Taft had carried New Jersey two years earlier by more than 80,000 votes.

During the next three months, a battle over the election of a United States senator determined Wilson's success as governor, indeed his future in politics. Both parties had held nonbinding senatorial primaries in September, and James E. Martine of Plainfield had won easily in the light vote in the Democratic primary. But legislatures still elected United States senators in 1911; and once it was certain that the Democrats would have a majority in the joint session, Smith decided that he would like to return to the

body in which he had served somewhat ignominiously in the 1890s.

Wilson was in a quandary. He felt deeply obligated to Smith and wanted his support for his legislative program. On the other hand, he could not countenance the election of this agent of big business, and he knew that the voters would never trust him again if he did not fight the Newark boss. His efforts at persuasion failing, Wilson went to the voters in a speaking campaign and rallied the Democratic legislators-elect behind Martine. Smith's support outside Essex County melted. Martine was elected on January 25, 1911, and Wilson emerged the undisputed leader of his party.

Meanwhile, Wilson had been inaugurated as governor of New Jersey on January 17, 1911, and had begun to plan his legislative program. The first item, the Geran elections bill providing for the direct nomination of all elected officials and a preferential presidential primary, aroused the fierce opposition of the professional politicians. Twice Wilson went into the Democratic assembly caucus to plead for the measure. It was the first time in the history of New Jersey that a governor had asserted personal leadership over his party members in the legislature. The Geran bill passed the assembly on March 21, the senate on April 13.

Then followed the much easier adoption of a stringent corrupt practices law, a statewide workmen's compensation system, a measure giving the Board of Public Utilities Commissioners sweeping powers over rates and services, a bill permitting cities to adopt the commission form of government, and legislation benefiting schools and labor. It was, altogether, the most productive session since the Civil War; overnight, as it were, an aggressive governor with an aroused public opinion behind him had brought New Jersey abreast of the most progressive states in the Union.

Wilson was also hard at work to change the leadership of the Democratic party in New Jersey and to secure his own control over it. With the assistance of his secre-

tary, Joseph P. Tumulty of Jersey City, as well as that of Kerney, he used his immense patronage to reward his friends and strengthen antimachine Democrats in every county. In July 1911, when the Democratic state chairman, James R. Nugent, committed the indiscretion of publicly calling the governor "an ingrate and a liar," the state committee deposed him and elected a Wilson partisan in his stead. An intense struggle over legislative candidates in the Democratic primary followed. Wilson campaigned hard for his friends, particularly in Essex County, where a Wilson Democratic League was challenging the Smith-Nugent machine with a full slate of candidates. Wilson Democrats swept the primary on September 26, 1911, in every other county, but they could not dislodge the entrenched Newark organization. Smith and Nugent had their revenge in the general election of November 7 by not supporting their own ticket, thus assuring the election of a legislature that the GOP would control in both houses.

In his annual message of January 9, 1912, Wilson called for the reorganization and rationalization of the state's commissions and agencies, tax reform, health and welfare legislation, and the gradual elimination of grade crossings over railroad tracks. In response the Republicans in the legislature, not eager to add to a Democrat's laurels, chipped away at the major legislation of 1911, passed a grade crossing bill that Wilson thought put undue hardship on the railroads, and offered nothing by the way of constructive reform. There was much public mutual recrimination when at the end of the session Wilson sent forty-two veto messages to the legislature on one day, April 2, 1912.

Wilson had meanwhile emerged as seemingly the leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1912. He spoke frequently, and everywhere that he went idealistic, progressive Democrats responded eagerly. A group of friends conducted a publicity bureau in New York, but Wilson would not permit

them to make any alliances, much less any deals, with the state organizations. For Wilson, the crisis of the preconvention campaign came with the New Jersey presidential primary on May 28, 1912; repudiation by the Democrats of his own state would have killed all his presidential hopes. Except in Essex County, however, New Jersey Democrats gave their governor a thumping endorsement, and his nomination for the presidency remained at least possible.

Though Wilson supporters constituted only about one-fourth of the delegates in the national Democratic convention that opened in Baltimore on June 25, they were fanatically loyal. They hung on even when Champ Clark of Missouri, Speaker of the House of Representatives, won a majority on the tenth ballot, but not the two-thirds then necessary; gradually wearing away the Speaker's strength, they achieved Wilson's nomination on the forty-sixth ballot. The New Jersey governor conducted a strenuous campaign on a platform demanding, principally, tariff reform and legislation to destroy industrial and financial monopoly—as Wilson put it, a "new freedom" for the American people. Even though he received only 42 percent of the popular vote on November 5, 1912, Wilson won an overwhelming victory in the electoral college because the Republicans were divided between the regulars led by Taft and the progressives led by former President Theodore Roosevelt. The split in the GOP was also crucial in the election of a large Democratic majority in the House of Representatives and a small Democratic majority in the Senate.

The Democrats also won majorities in both houses of the New Jersey legislature, and Wilson decided to remain in harness as long as possible. From mid-January to mid-February 1913, he pushed through the legislature a series of measures called the Seven Sisters, designed to prevent cutthroat competition and monopoly, as well as a new grade crossing bill, ratification of the Sixteenth Amendment establishing a federal income tax, and other

legislation. The remainder of his time as governor he devoted to an unsuccessful fight to remove the power of constituting grand juries from the hands of sheriffs, often allied with corrupt machines, and to vest it in the governor. He also failed to get a bill for a constitutional convention through the rurally dominated senate. He handed over the reins of the state government to the president of the senate, James F. Fielder, on March 1, 1913, saying that serving the people of New Jersey had been the greatest privilege of his life.

Inaugurated as twenty-eighth president of the United States on March 4, 1913, Wilson proceeded with accustomed vigor to rally public opinion and Democrats in Congress behind legislation to overhaul and strengthen the national political economy. He was what historians and political scientists call a strong president. He kept careful watch over the conduct of foreign relations; indeed, during crises he conducted diplomacy personally and wrote the diplomatic correspondence of the United States on his own typewriter. Reviving the custom, abandoned by Jefferson, of addressing Congress in person, he made it clear that he intended to break down the wall that had so long separated the executive and legislative departments. He worked closely with committee chairmen and others in Congress in drafting legislation and used party discipline, patronage, and public opinion to force recalcitrant Democrats into line. Later, when the nation was fighting in World War I, Congress gave him virtual dictatorial authority. Wilson brought presidential power to its apogee, yet, withal, he ruled with restraint and deep respect for constitutional traditions.

The first item on the Wilson legislative program was tariff reduction and reform. The Underwood-Simmons Tariff Act of 1913 not only greatly reduced duties and enlarged the free list but also levied the first income tax under the Sixteenth Amendment. Wilson's victory paved the way for even more important legislation—the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. One of

the most important acts in American history, it created a new currency and a system of central banking through the Federal Reserve System. In 1914 came the Federal Trade Commission Act and the Clayton Antitrust Act. They established a new agency to serve as a watchdog over competition and tightened the laws against potential monopolists. A special provision of the Clayton Act declared, for the first time in federal legislation, that labor unions were not to be construed as conspiracies in restraint of trade.

A lull followed this first surge of reform, but Wilson put through an even more significant program in 1916. (It included the first federal child labor law; an employers' liability measure; a heavy increase in the income tax and the first federal estate tax; the eight-hour day for workers on interstate railroads; and a federal farm credit system. By orchestrating public opinion and leading his party members in Congress like a prime minister, Wilson in less than four years put through the most comprehensive legislative program in American history to that time. It laid the foundations of the present-day political economy of the United States.)

In his foreign policy, Wilson pursued a course of idealism tempered by an understanding of practical realities. He repudiated Taft's "dollar diplomacy" (the use of private financial resources to advance national interests) in the Caribbean, yet he felt compelled to occupy Haiti and the Dominican Republic to save them from self-destruction. He was more successful in Mexico. There he contributed significantly to the triumph of a democratic revolutionary movement.

The greatest challenge to Wilson's wisdom came with the outbreak of the First World War in Europe in August 1914. His supreme ambition and the objective of all his policies toward the rival alliances was to end the carnage through American mediation. Thus he endured assaults against American maritime rights by British cruisers and German submarines while winning significant concessions

from both sides. And when the Germans began to sink American and other neutral ships in early 1917, he accepted a decision for war mainly because he believed the United States could bring peace more effectively as a belligerent than as a neutral.

From the declaration of war against Germany on April 6, 1917, to the armistice of November 11, 1918, Wilson mobilized a great army and the entire domestic economy in the first total war in American history. He also raised the hopes of liberal and democratic forces everywhere in a series of speeches that called for an end of imperialism, rival balances of power, and heavy armaments, and demanded a postwar international organization to promote cooperation and prevent war. The most notable of these speeches was the Fourteen Points Address of January 8, 1918.

Going to Paris in December 1918 as head of the American Peace Commission, Wilson was hailed throughout western Europe as the savior and hope of mankind. During the following months at the Paris Peace Conference, he fought with incredible tenacity for a liberal settlement. The Versailles Treaty with Germany, signed on June 28, 1919, was a bundle of compromises that in important particulars violated Wilson's ideals. However, the treaty included provision for a strong international organization, the League of Nations.

Wilson presented the treaty to the Senate on July 10, 1919. The Republicans in that body objected strongly to Article X of the constitution of the League because it guaranteed the independence and territorial integrity of member nations. Led by Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, they refused to consent to ratification without a clear avowal that the United States did not consider itself bound to support Article X. Wilson rejected ratification with that reservation, saying that it was tantamount to nullification of the treaty. He tried to break the stalemate by embarking on a long speaking tour to rally public opinion to his side. However,

he suffered a severe stroke after his return to Washington in early October. Though unable to give any effective leadership to Democrats in the Senate, he still had influence enough to prevent that body's approval of the amended treaty. Thus the United States remained technically in a state of war with Germany until a separate peace was negotiated in 1921.

Somewhat recovered by the spring of 1920, Wilson remained secluded in the White House while the ship of state drifted without a rudder. The anti-League Republican senator, Warren G. Harding, won the presidency in November 1920. Wilson retired with his wife, Edith Bolling Wilson, whom he had married in 1915, to a home on S Street in Washington. He lived there quietly in declining health. He died on February 3, 1924, and was buried in the Washington Cathedral.

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