WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE, COUNTRY EDITOR, 1895-1905

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Grace M. Pizzonia

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WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE, COUNTRY EDITOR, 1895-1905

By

GRACE M. PIZZONIA

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

William Allen White was the editor of a country newspaper, a prominent figure in Republican politics, and the author of several books and numerous magazine articles. He has been widely regarded as the spokesman and interpreter for the middle class in America. The author has examined White's writings in the Emporia Gazette from 1895 to 1905 in an attempt to establish the validity of this reputation.

This decade at the turn of the twentieth century was marked by many changes on the domestic scene; there was returning prosperity after the panic of 1893; industrial changes brought forth the movement toward combination and there ensued a tremendous increase in business consolidations; the Spanish-American War launched America's venture into imperialism with its many problems and responsibilities; Populism rose and flourished briefly to champion the cause of reform; Theodore Roosevelt succeeded the murdered McKinley and ushered in a new, more liberal brand of Republicanism. White, ever keenly interested in the domestic issues of his day commented on these matters in his editorials. These comments present an interesting picture of him which differs from that which has been generally accepted.

The years from 1895 to 1905 marked a change in White also, from an extreme conservative stand to a much more liberal

position under the influence of Theodore Roosevelt. He was a bitter foe of the Populist Party at its inception, but later came to support many of its policies. By inclination he was an isolationist; however, he supported America's stand once we were committed to a war with Spain. When it ended he abandoned his wartime patriotism and deplored the whole affair. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny which had been repugnant to the editor in 1898 became appealing to him, and he espoused for a while a policy of expansion. He disparaged the hue and cry aimed at the "trust bogey," but later urged that their predatory instincts be curbed. In 1895 he supported the conservative Republican stand on protection, but in 1905 he had modified his position somewhat to support lowered duties and the abolition of those tariffs which were no longer needed for revenue or to protect domestic industry.

He was famed for reflecting and interpreting the opinions of the middle class; however, his writings indicate that he reflected better conservative Republicanism in his early years, and a more liberal Roosevelt Republicanism in his later years. He did not influence the formation of opinion nor even anticipate it accurately in many instances, but he wrote of accomplished deeds with a colorful flair, summing up the issues so that they could be understood by all.

His editorials indicate that he was not the prolific and unbiased writer that many considered him to be after reading the careful and polished articles that he wrote for the

national magazines. Many of his finest editorials were repeated frequently. He had many petty biases as evidenced in his strong Anglo-Saxon prejudices and his deep distrust for the foreign elements in our society. He was a shrewd and practical politician whose sentiments usually placed him on the side of the upper classes and the monied groups. His extreme nationalism frequently caused him to make narrow minded appraisals of domestic issues, and he was unable to gauge our position in the world picture accurately.

He wrote with much emotion and consequently much of his appeal was to the sentiment rather than to the intellect, an attribute which assured him of a wider following. William Allen White usually reflected through his editorials the sentiment of the Republican party and that segment of the population which subscribed to those beliefs. He can not be considered the spokesman of the grass-roots population of this country because he lent neither his sympathies nor his talents to consistently support anything other than the Republican party and its policies.

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INTRODUCTION

William Allen White was born in 1868 and died in 1944. His years paralleled and reflected the expansion and development of America. He was an interpreter and observer of the unprecedented changes which characterized our country from the post-Civil War period until World War II. He had a genuine affection for the life in a small town and remained as the editor of a small town paper through his own choice although the fame which he achieved brought him many offers to forsake Emporia, Kansas, for more metropolitan communities in the nation. Combined with this genuine affection was a sagacity which told him that his writings carried more weight with the dateline, Emporia. Throughout his lifetime he deliberately maintained the general impression that he was a small town editor with no inclination for city ways, but actually White was a sophisticated gentleman who was as much at home in the drawing rooms of the nation as he was on the front porches of Emporia.

White had an active political career both in Kansas and in the nation although his sole attempt to run for political office was unsuccessful. Politics were as much an occupation with him as was editing his newspaper. He was acquainted with most of the prominent political figures of the day, but his chief concern was for the government of his

own state, and chiefly of his own county. He achieved his first fame through a political essay and after that work he was thoroughly embroiled in politics until his death.

He represents an interesting phenomenon in that this small town editor was known and respected throughout the nation; his opinions were regarded as the opinions of the average, grass-roots American. He became known as the spokesman of the middle class despite the fact that most of his friends were from the upper stratum of our society.

Throughout his lifetime he was primarily a loyal Republican. He occasionally deserted the Republican party in theory after he had been exposed to the liberalizing atmosphere of Theodore Roosevelt, and in 1912 he supported Roosevelt for President, but except for this sole deviation he remained with his party at election time.

This paper examines White's writings as editor of his newspaper, the Emporia Gazette, from 1895 to 1905 in order to get a clear picture of this paradoxical person who was generally considered to be a prolific, shrewd, unbiased writer, motivated solely by his own personal convictions. The first half of this decade presents White in his most conservative phase; the last half shows him as his views became more liberal under the influence of the Roosevelt philosophy. Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt was the most important influence in his life at this time and for many years thereafter.

This essay also examines White's weekly editorials in the Gazette in an attempt to establish how well White reflected what the average middle-class American was thinking about such issues as the trusts, the Spanish-American War, the tariff, imperialism, and the like. In order to understand the editorials and their author better, the writer has also examined White's background, the formation of his paper and its policies, and the influences which resulted in his colorful exposition of America at the turn of the century.

CHAPTER I

"WILL WHITE OF EMPORIA"

William Allen White was born in Emporia, Kansas, on February 10, 1868. Although in 1870 his father moved the family to El Dorado, some sixty miles to the southwest of Emporia, young Will returned to his birthplace at the age of twenty-seven and remained there until his death on January 29, 1944. At the time of his death, he had long been firmly entrenched in the public affection as the symbol of the essential goodness and greatness of small-town America. As interpreter for the "grass-roots" populace, White always spoke in the vigorous, colorful idiom of the middle-class. He was careful to keep pace with their prevailing opinions and their main currents of thought.[1]

White's father was an adamant Copperhead Democrat. Accounts of the elder White's temperament, personality, physical and mental attributes are strongly reminiscent of his son's close friend, Theodore Roosevelt. Mary Ann White, née Hatton, was a volatile, quick-tempered, sharp-witted woman. Mrs. White was a staunch Republican, but while she differed sharply from her husband in matters of political affiliation

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[1] Walter Johnson, William Allen White's America (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1947), pp.5-6. Hereafter cited as Johnson, White's America.

both were ardent prohibitionists and advocates of female suffrage. Although both had dominating personalities, Mr. White's gay, easy-going manner contrasted with the more sober temperament of his wife.[2]

Both parents were well educated and widely read. The mother had been a school teacher before her marriage; the father was a doctor, druggist, merchant, and dabbled in real estate and hotel-management in his spare moments. The intellectual atmosphere of his home left Will with a life long appreciation of music, literature, and education.

The political atmosphere of the White household was anything but harmonious, and at an early age Will was well versed in both the Democratic and Republican points of view on current issues. Though he felt that the uncertainty of conviction and the many complexes which characterized his "salad" days were largely generated by the political hostility of his parents, this same hostility taught him to be tolerant of divergent views, and to examine carefully both sides of an issue before taking a definite stand.[3]

White completed his high school education in El Dorado, and in the autumn of 1884 he entered the College of Emporia.

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[2]William Allen White, "Memoirs of a Three-Fingered Pianist," Woman's Home Companion, v. 54 (September, 1927), p.12

[3]William Allen White, The Autobiography of William Allen White (New York: MacMillan Co., 1946), p. 61. Hereafter cited as White, Autobiography.

In the spring of the following year he obtained his first full time job as a printer's devil on the El Dorado Democrat. His activities on this paper expanded until they covered all the mechanics of publishing a newspaper except writing the editorials. His first and "dearest boss," T. P. Fulton, helped in shaping White's interest in a career of journalism. Will's manifold activities on the Democrat stood him in good stead when he acquired his own newspaper a decade later.[4] Additional newspaper experience was obtained as a compositor on the Emporia Daily News and as a reporter with both the Lawrence Journal and the El Dorado Republican.

In 1886 White transferred to Kansas State University where his varied and brilliant extra-curricular activities interfered with his scholastic endeavors, which were only average. Because of difficulties with mathematics, he left the University in 1891 and accepted an editorial position on the El Dorado Republican.

Kansas State supplied White with more benefits than the rather sketchy education which he obtained there. While at the university he formed lasting friendships with people who were to become prominent in many professions on the local and national scenes. He also made his first contact with Professor James Canfield, an instrumental figure in White's acceptance of the Republican party as his political affiliation.

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[4] Ibid., pp. 109-111.

By 1888 White had begun to realize that he would soon have to choose a political party. He had no particular feeling for either party and was beset with further difficulty in the form of confusion between "allegiance to his dead father and fear of his mother."[5] He had discussed the knotty problem with his mother and many of his friends. Professor Canfield, his political science professor at Kansas State, offered the most constructive and reasonable advice and White accepted it. Canfield told his student,

> I have tried to be independent and I got nowhere politically. I know you dislike and distrust the protective tariff, which ought to make you a Democrat. But in Kansas, as a Democrat, it is hopeless for you. You probably can do more harm to the protective tariff by going into the Republican party and fighting it there.[6]

White's boss on the Republican was T. B. Murdock, who became his model in many ways. Murdock gradually delegated to White almost complete responsibility in putting out the newspaper and was the final influence in White's decision to pursue a journalistic career.[7]

In 1891, while he was still with the Republican, White wrote his first piece of fiction, his first bit of political propaganda, "The Regeneration of Colonel Hucks."[8] This was

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[5] Ibid., pp. 162-3.

[6] Ibid., p. 162.

[7] Ibid., p. 131.

[8] This article first appeared in the Eldorado Republican on September 4, 1891. It was reprinted in White's, The Real Issue; A Book of Kansas Stories, (Chicago: Way and Williams, 1896).

a sentimental parable of a bewildered soul who had sought Utopian reforms in the Populist ranks only to be sadly disillusioned. The Colonel was eager to return to the grand old party of Lincoln and prosperity, the Republican party. The story was published in the Republican, but within a week it had been reprinted in the Kansas City Star, the Kansas City Journal, and in all of the daily newspapers of Kansas, also. It came to the attention of the Republican state central committee, who distributed it to all of the western states where Populism was rampant.[9] This literary effort brought White state-wide fame and considerably furthered his progress into the fold and graces of the Republican party.

As a result of the Colonel Hucks composition, White was offered editorial positions on both the Star and the Journal, newspapers which were widely read in Kansas. He accepted the position with Charles S. Gleed and the Journal. "Taking my Republicanism seriously I chose the Kansas City Journal thinking I should be happier writing for the Republican organ than for a mugwump independent . . . ."[10]

White soon became disgusted with the unswerving Republican policy of this paper. This feeling, coupled with a

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[9] Ibid., p. 198.

[10] Ibid., p. 199.

distaste he acquired for a member of the staff, resulted in his resignation. His next position was with the Kansas City Star. He had a deep respect for his new boss, Colonel William R. Nelson, and for the editorial policies of the paper. The two men became close friends and White's relations with the paper were so harmonious that the Star supported him in the Gazette venture which he was soon to undertake. There was always space in the Star for an article which White might want publicized or for a discussion of a candidate whom he might want to push. This amicable relationship continued until his death. The experience which he acquired on the Star was a deep influence on the editorial policies which he formulated and pursued as editor of the Gazette.[11]

White resigned from the Star for many reasons. He had the highest regard for the paper and was given the freedom to write about Kansas as he pleased, but in the campaign of 1894 he began to feel that he was serving his friend Cy Leland, the Republican boss in Kansas, at the direction of someone else, and this irked him. He did not like the Sunday editor and resented having to submit his Sunday stories, which he prized highly, to that person for examination. The free passes to Saturday matinees which he and his new bride, Sally,

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[11] W. A. White, "The Man Who Made the Star," Colliers, v. 55 (June 25, 1915), p. 12.

had enjoyed so much were becoming difficult to obtain. The really important factors in his decision to leave, however, were implicit in his character and temperament. White was a country man at heart and detested city ways; he yearned to return to Kansas. In addition to this, he desired independence; he wanted to be his own master. The boss-employee relationship between himself and Colonel Nelson rankled deeply. He wanted to give and receive the affection of an equal with this man whom he admired so deeply.[12]

After White had made the decision to purchase his own newspaper he began to search for a suitable location. Both he and Sally wanted a paper in a college town where there would be a considerable minority of intelligent people, an intellectual upper-class with which they could associate themselves. "Any talent or freedom((he))had could only thrive in such an atmosphere."[13]

The search for a newspaper in a college town finally narrowed down to Emporia, where there were two papers available. The Whites decided to purchase the Gazette which had been founded in 1890 as a Populist organ by J. R. Graham. It had been sold to W. Y. Morgan in 1892 for two thousand dollars because of the low circulation and poor advertising

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[12]White, Autobiography, pp. 255-256.

[13]Ibid., pp. 256-257.

support. After three years in Emporia, Morgan decided to cast his lot with a larger and faster growing community; on June 1, 1895, he sold the Gazette to White for three thousand dollars.[14]

It had taken White three months to finance the purchase of the paper. He used his mother's property and borrowed one thousand dollars from Governor Morrill, another thousand from the estate of his father's friend, Senator Preston B. Plumb, and two hundred fifty dollars from George Plumb, the senator's brother. The remaining seven hundred fifty dollars was supplied by Major Calvin Hood of the Emporia State Bank. Cy Leland aided White in securing the loan from Morrill; his boyhood friend, Ewing Herbert, helped him with Major Hood; and White persuaded the Plumbs unaided.[15] All of the loans were secured with sound real estate mortgages and were repaid at eight per cent interest.[16]

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[14]Frank C. Clough, William Allen White of Emporia, (New York: Whittlesey House, 1941), p. 69. The author of this book was the managing editor of the Gazette for twenty years and supplies many interesting details about the paper.

[15]White, Autobiography, pp. 256-257.

[16]W. A. White to J. S. Phillips, May 8, 1901, in Walter Johnson, (ed.), Selected Letters of William Allen White: 1899-1943, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), p. 36. Hereafter cited as Selected Letters.

White promptly repaid the money that he had borrowed. By 1899 the final note was paid off.[17] Most of the money to repay the debts came from sources other than the profits of the Gazette. His books, The Real Issue, and The Court of Boyville,[18] enabled him to pay the debts and to move the Gazette from rented quarters to the building which still houses the paper.

When White took over the paper it was published in one room with a cubbyhole walled off as an office for the editor and two reporters. There was little furniture and although the building was neat and clean, it was also old and shabby. The one large room composed the whole building, which was located on a side street, a half block off Commercial Street, the main thoroughfare in Emporia.[19] The equipment was old but serviceable and fortunately there was an abundance of type in the old type cases.[20]

The Gazette staff consisted of ten people and the first week's payroll totalled forty-five dollars. White had a difficult time in meeting this but the second week posed no problem. That week the candidates for county offices announced their candidacy with paid advertisements. During July and

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[17] Ibid.

[18] W. A. White, The Court of Boyville, (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1899).

[19] Clough, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

[20] White, Autobiography, p. 259.

and August of 1895 he was forced to borrow money to keep the paper going but by September it was solvent once more.[21]

White's first editorial, "Entirely Personal," stated his plans and the policy he would pursue as the editor of the Gazette. He said that the paper was a plain business proposition; it would support Republican policies and nominees with no bolting or sulking. Although the politics would be strictly Republican, "politics is so little. Not one man in ten cares for politics more than two weeks in a year. . . . While the politics will be straight, they will not be obtrusive. They will be confined to the editorial page where the gentle reader may venture at his peril." To White, the main thing was to have the paper represent the average thought of the best people in Emporia and Lyon County. Furthermore, he declared that he was not running the paper for political pull, but to make an honest living and to supply the community with a fair, honest paper.[22]

By 1896, White's Republican loyalties were being rewarded in the form of lucrative state and county printing contracts. The editor of the rival Republican paper in Emporia sought an injunction against the city council for this favoritism, but White successfully silenced him on the editorial pages of the Gazette.[23]

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[21] Johnson, White's America, p. 80.

[22] White, Autobiography, pp. 260-261.

[23] Emporia Gazette, December 7, 1895.

Under White's leadership the circulation of the paper grew steadily. In 1895 it was 485; the following year it was almost 800;[24] in 1901 there were 2,500 subscribers and in 1904 it was regarded as the principal paper of Lyon County with a circulation of 4,000.[25] Despite the success of the paper White depended largely on his outside literary efforts to supplement his income. When the Emporia Republican failed in 1904 there were no more serious challenges to White's supremacy although fourteen other men tried to establish rival papers.[26]

The Gazette was an evening paper with both weekly and daily editions. White was telling the unvarnished truth when he wrote that it was "simply a little country weekly and daily, devoted entirely to chronicling the important fact that Bill Jones brought in a load of hay today...."[27] A large portion of the early Gazettes were devoted to exactly such items which appeared in a column entitled "The County in Brief."

The six column weekly paper covered the local news and state news extremely well. The national news was supplied by the Associated Press wire service, an innovation which

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[24] Johnson, White's America, pp. 80-83.

[25] Ibid., p. 227.

[26] Ibid., pp. 227-228.

[27] White to W. R. Anderson, October 3, 1899, in Selected Letters, p. 25.

White was proud to introduce into the community. In election periods the entire Republican ticket was printed directly beneath the masthead and remained there until after the election. A column entitled "Told in a Few Words" gave concise day by day accounts of national and international events.

White was insistent in the matter of black, clear print and always supervised the presses to make certain that enough ink was being used.[28] He felt that the constantly improving appearance of his paper and the distinct impression of its type were primary factors in the advertising which the paper enjoyed.[29]

In 1895 newspaper advertising was regarded suspiciously and considered rather vulgar. It was felt that anyone who had to resort to advertising was doing so in desperation and was in danger of failure. Therefore, the early Gazette ads were chiefly from national concerns selling such wares as patent medicines, tobacco, and baking powder. By 1900 advertising had become reputable and the ad space sold by the Gazette increased ten-fold.[30] By this time White had formulated a code of advertising ethics which was largely governed by his personal tastes and prejudices. He refused to

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[28] Clough, op. cit., pp. 134-135.

[29] White, "The Ethics of Advertising," Atlantic Monthly, v. 164, (Nov. 1939), pp. 665-666.

[30] Ibid., pp. 665-667.

advertise any alcoholic beverages, patent medicines, Democrats, or Populists.[31]

White framed a strong editorial policy as soon as he became editor of his own newspaper. This policy was to change very little over the years and he was to reiterate his principles on newspaper and editorial ethics many times through the years. Not only did most of his principles remain unchanged, but so did his essays on these principles. Practically identical statements may be found on the pages of the Gazette, in magazine articles, and in letters to friends and seekers of advice.

Although White's fame was partly due to his many outstanding editorials, he did not like to write an editorial when he had nothing to say. On June 4, 1895, the day after his first issue of the paper, he omitted the editorial with the comment, "You will observe that there is no editorial in today's paper. It will be that way lots of times. When there is nothing to say, there will be nothing said."[32] The editorials also suffered if the local news happened to be particularly heavy. "If the local news crowds the editorial out it simply has to wait until the local news gets scarce."[33]

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[31]White to E. H. Cherrington, Nov. 29, 1911, in Selected Letters, p. 26.

[32]Johnson, White's America, p. 82.

[33]White to W. R. Anderson, October 13, 1899, in Selected Letters, p. 26.

The editorials which appeared in the daily papers were reprinted in the weekly edition, as were his many articles in national magazines.

White's newspaper ethics were rigid. His frequently repeated view was that the only excuse an editor or a newspaper had for being was to print the news.[34] A newspaper could not succeed on its political beliefs, but on its ability to get news to the people quickly. Although he adhered to his belief that an editorial page should have a definite point of view, he felt that the news columns should remain open to both sides of a controversy.[35]

White was extremely sensitive to any attempts to influence his editorial policies, and felt that the best way to avoid this was for a paper to remain free of economic dependence on any groups.[36] Although in his early years he heartily favored and praised railroads, he refused a generous railroad printing contract in fear that it might influence him unduly. He felt that good newspapers made people violently angry and the strong language of his editorials indicates that he was not afraid of such a result if he felt that his stand was right. He felt that it was his right and duty to

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[34] Emporia Gazette, October 12, 1903.

[35] Johnson, White's America, p. 228.

[36] Ibid., p. 229.

try to make his private sentiment public opinion.[37]

Another tenet of his journalistic code was a strong belief that a newspaper should be a powerful instrument of good will in a community, ever striving for its material and spiritual improvement.[38] His activities in behalf of Emporia testify to his active adherence to this belief.

He had many other specific rules concerning the paper which he required his staff to adhere to, such as a colloquial and entertaining coverage of events, and the protection of minors and first offenders. He purported to ignore gossip until it became a matter of court record; however, the early Gazettes are filled with gossipy items which surely must have proved embarrassing to those involved. He particularly abhorred yellow journalism and did not hesitate to name and condemn papers associated with it.[39]

White reflected in his later years that the editor of McKinley's day belonged to a ruling class and ran a free press restricted only by his courage, honesty, and intelligence.[40] His editorials in the decade following the purchase of the Gazette indicate that he did not lack the necessary

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[37] White, Autobiography, p. 163.

[38] White to Rolla Clymer, Mar. 29, 1918, in Selected Letters, p. 189.

[39] Emporia Gazette, October 12, 1903.

[40] White, "How Free Is Our Press?", The Nation, v. 46, (June 18, 1938), pp. 693-695.

courage and honesty to express his opinions on any matter. While time shows that his intelligence frequently failed or misled him, he always remained true to himself.

William Allen White's version of a successful country paper was that it should derive its distinction and life from the town in which it existed. The newspaper should always be the town's spokesman and interpreter. White impressed his ideals on the Emporia Gazette, which became the prototype of the country-town newspaper in America. It reflected well his oft repeated axiom, "The country newspaper is the incarnation of the town spirit."[41]

There are several misconceptions about the Gazette, provoked in all probability by White's unique career. His fame has spread the name of Emporia and the Gazette, but the paper was never anything more than a strictly local organ. While its editorials were sometimes published in metropolitan newspapers, the Gazette circulation outside of Emporia was negligible. In 1903 White wrote, "It is a small local daily paper of only two thousand circulation, and has practically no subscribers off the townsite of Emporia, though the weekly goes all over Lyon County."[42] White always reprinted his numerous magazine articles, some of his short stories, and

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[41] White, "The Country Newspaper," Harpers, v. 132, (May, 1916), p. 888.

[42] White to the Success Company, October 9, 1903, in Selected Letters, p. 57.

the texts of his more important speeches, in the Gazette.

The paper always gave primary consideration to local and state events. The politics of Kansas and Lyon County were an important preoccupation with White and national events of great importance were very frequently completely ignored in favor of local concerns. Despite the fact that White was a powerful figure in the national Republican organization, his interest in national affairs, if judged from the editorial pages of his paper, was at best spasmodic.

The Gazette would at times be filled for a period of several weeks with some major issue. White would write prolifically and forcefully on this one issue for weeks and then the matter would be forgotten. He would become busy with his outside writings, be forced to leave Emporia, or just become disinterested and drop the matter. He wrote only when he felt moved to, and if an apathetic mood descended on him in the midst of heated advocacy of or opposition to a matter, he merely ignored the event or controversy until he felt once more moved to lift his pen in battle.

When he did not feel moved to editorialize on national events, he usually fell to musing. The editorial pages of the Gazette are filled with his commentary on morals, cooking, Emporia customs, his social philosophy, and with other interesting but largely insignificant literary meanderings.

There were still other factors which contributed to the frequent omission of important material in his editorials.

The Whites traveled a great deal and when they did, page on page of the paper was devoted to the lengthy accounts he sent home of his journeys. Scenery, people, local history, foreign foods, and climate are verbosely discussed. He obviously never gave the editorial staff of his paper any measure of freedom to pen editorials in his absence, or perhaps they did not care to assume this responsibility. At any rate, there were no political editorials in the Gazette when the Whites were away. It should also be considered that White's chief editorial assistant, Miss Laura French, was a devoted follower of William Jennings Bryan, the target of some of White's most bitter attacks. Being aware of the opposing sentiment of her employer, it is not likely that Miss French would venture to comment on any political matters in his absence. Nor did White usually send editorial material of this nature to be published while he was vacationing.

White's editorials are largely general in nature; perhaps this explains their enduring appeal. Although he used a strong, colorful idiom in penning editorials which still remain journalistic masterpieces, in the majority of cases he did not name names. His attacks against trusts, like his earlier editorials praising them, never named specific companies. He wrote about ignorant or corrupt or inefficient politicians who remained largely anonymous, with but a few notable exceptions. His discussions of the tariff usually

deal with the tariff in general, not specific bills. The same holds true for his discussion of railroads. Whether this was a conscious device or not, he does not explain. While there were exceptions to this policy, it can be said that on the editorial pages of his newspaper he preferred to discuss our institutions in general, not in particular.

White and his newspaper cannot be separated in a consideration of either phenomenon. In spite of his editorial idiosyncracies he was more than just an ordinary country editor. When he did comment editorially he was clear, definite, and forceful. He was not afraid to change a stand he had taken. To him editorial consistency was no virtue. "The Gazette has no policy today that it will not abandon tomorrow if the facts change upon which yesterday's stand was taken."[43] His was a vigorous voice in an era of vigor. His editorials chronicled, however spasmodically, the spirit of the decade and the sentiments of the middle class.

Looking back to those years White wrote, "Reading the files of the Gazette of those days between 1896 and 1905, I am always shocked but never amazed, at the intrepid complacency with which I viewed the universe. I was an incurable optimist, with a sort of spiritual hydrocephalus."[44]

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[43] Emporia Gazette, December 19, 1913.

[44] White, Autobiography, p. 364.

CHAPTER II

"WHEN POPULISM WAS IN FLOWER"

It is difficult to divorce William Allen White from Kansas, for despite his cosmopolitan connections and national fame he remained primarily a Kansan until his death in 1944. Because of this, the economic, political, and sectional upheavals of that state in his era are important in any consideration of White.

Its frontier history has made Kansas typical of the middle west in many respects, but despite this it retains a color of its own. It has been accepted that Kansas's provincial characteristics are merely exaggerations of traditional American eccentricities. Carl Becker has written:

> The Kansas spirit is the American spirit double distilled. It is a new grafted product of American individualism, American idealism, American tolerance. Kansas is America in microcosm....[1]

It appears evident that William Allen White was strongly possessed of the Kansas-American characteristics and tradition.

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[1] Carl Becker, "Kansas," Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner, (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1910), p. 110.

The formation of the state of Kansas was due to political expediency. Kansas was territorially organized in 1854 and soon began to receive settlers from the East. The Kansas-Nebraska bill opened to popular sovereignty the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. An attempt to encourage immigration was made by the railroads, which circulated favorable publicity concerning the area. Despite the assistance of the railroads, however, the sparseness of population and settlements in the Kansas territory testified eloquently to the popular belief that the soil was worthless and the climate unfavorable.[2] After 1870 this false notion was dispelled by a wave of prosperity which cast the state into the national consciousness for a short period. After the opening of the trans-plain trail the long believed myths about the great American desert gave way to the favorable reports of settlement societies, railways, land speculators, town-site promoters, and other organizations organized to promote settlement.[3] In the post Civil War period superlative descriptions of the resources and possibilities of the "Middle Border" were in part responsible for the rise and decline of the boom of the eighties.

Before 1880, Kansas had annexed itself to the cattle economy which established its own culture, its own laws, its

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[2]John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), p. 5.

[3]Ibid., pp. 14-20.

own individual characteristics and implanted them so deeply that they remained a part of that state's character. The first half of the eighties were Kansas's boom years. The first phase of life in the state was subsistence farming but this was supplanted by large scale farming for market.[4]

From 1880 to 1885 the population of the state increased by one-third; the value of property more than doubled. It was not uncommon for a new settler to discharge the debts incurred for his land and home with the profits of one year's crop. Many of the settlers were not dirt farmers, but speculators who profited from the unjustified bonanza scale of growth and the exorbitant prices paid for land at the height of the boom.[5]

One reason for the boom was the high prices which prevailed for the bumper crops of wheat and corn; the peak years for these commodities were 1881 and 1882. Another cause was the unprecedented growth of railroads in Kansas from 1880 to 1890. During this period the increase in railroad mileage in Kansas was second only to the increase in Texas. By 1888 there was one mile of rail for every one-third square mile of land in the state.[6] These were not

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[4] Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Ginn and Co., 1931), pp. 206-208.

[5] Raymond Curtis Miller, "The Background of Populism in Kansas," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XI (1925), p. 482.

[6] Ibid., pp. 470-472.

built according to need, but to further inflate the land values. Like many boom projects, these roads were built at small cost to the speculators themselves, who realized that returns in the area would be limited for many years. Townships, cities, and counties bonded themselves heavily for railroad construction. There were gifts of land, bonuses, and mortgages from the state and local treasuries and even from individuals in this unhealthy, boom-happy area. Money was easy to get for speculative purposes and expansion; mortgages on property rose rapidly to unprecedented heights.[7]

When the first adverse condition, a severe drought, struck the state, the economic foundation of Kansas based on eastern credit proved unstable. The weak structure was not able to survive the blow and in 1887 Kansas entered a decline which was to last for a decade. Glancing backward over the years, White described the conditions which he could not see clearly when they prevailed.

> I knew in a general way that Kansas and the West in general were living on borrowed money; but I did not understand that I was living in a debtor land, nor what that signified. Every town was bonded for its public improvements, its macadam paving, its waterworks, and, in some cases, its light plant. Every business was more or less mortgaged. All the

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[7] Raymond Curtis Miller, "The Economic Basis of Populism in Kansas," Thesis (M. A.), University of Chicago, December, 1923, pp. 4 - 5.

> railroads were heavily bonded. The utility companies erected their plants on borrowed money. The banks did a thriving business in renting out cash, and they had a lively hope that some way, in some far off day, interest would come back and mortgages would be paid. But we were all insensible, all of us over the western Mississippi Valley, of the fact that what goes up must come down.[8]

From 1887 on there was a collapse in prices for farm products; heavy debt burdens resulted and scanty rainfall contributed to the decline. Several bad crop seasons followed and grain prices continued low. When the bubble of prosperity burst, the boom methods of settlement proved to be disastrous. The supply of credit to the state was cut short and the assets of the Kansas banks were frozen in land. The most severe hardships fell on the farmers who had bought land at the inflated prices.[9] The East refused to invest any more capital in the state and Kansas was burdened with a large debt it could not meet.[10] The psychological shock which ensued with the new and unaccustomed low in prices, coupled with the fear of even greater impending losses, sounded the death knell for prosperity.[11]

The exodus from the boom area began. In Kansas many of the speculators and malcontents were swept out in the first wave of emigration. Many people who had hopefully

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[8] White, Autobiography, p. 70.

[9] Miller, "The Background of Populism in Kansas," loc. cit., pp. 478-483.

[10] Ibid., pp. 488-489.

[11] Miller, "The Economic Basis of Populism in Kansas," p. 52.

moved into Kansas before 1887 were convinced by their new experience that they had pushed too far into the arid west and now began to retrace their steps.

> Within a few years whole districts in this region were almost totally depopulated except for the older cattlemen who had been there before the boom began and who did not depend for success on a heavy rainfall. Covered wagons, sometimes bearing such legends as... "In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted," streamed toward the east. Fully half the people of western Kansas left the country between 1888 and 1892. Twenty well built towns in that part of the state were reputed to have been left without a single inhabitant and in one of them an opera house worth thirty thousand dollars and a number of fine business houses were abandoned.[12]

The boom had so conditioned the populace that even a decline in prices would have been serious; the complete depression was catastrophic. By the turn of the century, Kansas had a much smaller population than she had enjoyed in 1890 despite a noteworthy influx of new inhabitants in 1897. Exact figures are difficult to compute, for in areas hard hit by the collapse the census statistics of 1890 were deliberately falsified to conceal as completely as possible what had happened.[13] Railroads were going into bankruptcy, the big lines swallowing the smaller ones; financial institutions were reorganizing after failure only to fail again. Paradoxically, the newspapers in the state grew and prospered in this period.[14]

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[12] Hicks, op. cit., p. 32.

[13] Miller, "The Background of Populism in Kansas," loc. cit., pp. 477-480.

[14] White, Autobiography, p. 248.

The collapse which began in 1887 gave rise to the radicalism of the late eighties and the nineties, namely Populism. The economic conditions of the blighted areas found expression in the politics of the times and the depression was a major impetus to the rise of the Populist party. It, like similar movements, was an effort at adjustment to new conditions. In times of plenty the farm population had favored the existing order; now they sought something new. In this Populist movement was to be seen "the history of adjustments and modifications, of giving up an old way of life for a new way in order that there may be a way out."[15] Since the Civil War days the discontent which had been endemic in the Middle Border usually sought relief in political upheavals such as the Greenback Movement of the seventies, the Farmer's Alliance, and then the Populist party.[16]

The people had begun to speak and think in terms of "income and the single tax. They talked of government ownership and abolition of private property; fiat money, and the unity of labor ... and a thousand conflicting theories."[17] Books, magazines, stories, pamphlets, and newspapers told of the conditions that existed and proposed various remedies.

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[15] Webb, op. cit., pp. 507-508.

[16] Vernon Louis Parrington, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America: 1860-1920, Vol. III, Main Currents in American Thought, 3 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1930), p. 286.

[17] Elizabeth Higgins, Cut of the West, pp. 133-136, quoted in John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 132.

Reform papers gained a wide circulation; increased circulation was particularly marked in such papers as the Progressive Farmer and the Farmer's Alliance in the state of Kansas.

> Out of this intellectual ferment came the demands for reform that found their way into Alliance and Populist national platforms and in a surprising number of instances ultimately into state or national law.
>
> The upheaval that took place...can hardly be described as a political campaign. It was a religious revival, a crusade, a pentecost of politics in which a tongue of flame sat upon every man, and each spoke as the spirit gave him utterance.[18]

From the seventies on the farmers tended to organize in seeking the redress of their grievances. The Granger movement, the National Greenback Party, and many local political parties were organized with the purpose of giving expression to the debt-ridden farmer. The main attack of such groups, particularly the earlier ones, was directed against railroad malpractices such as excessive rates, kickbacks, and the like. Even the Greenback Party, which primarily emphasized currency reform, opposed railroad practices of the day as detrimental to the farmers.

One of the important forerunners of the Populist Party was the Farmers' Alliance. This group was originally organized with reform of railroad practices as its main objective but soon grew to adopt resolutions with "a more pronounced tinge of radicalism."[19] The first successful Alliance was formed by Milton George, a Chicago editor. The drought in

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[18]Hicks, op. cit., p. 132.

[19]Ibid., p. 102.

1881 increased the popularity of the group immensely and membership in the organization grew rapidly, particularly in states such as Kansas where the drought hit hardest. In 1890, Kansas claimed a hundred and thirty thousand Alliance members.[20]

There were attempts to consolidate the American Federation of Labor, the Knights of Labor and the Farmers' Alliance into one powerful group, but such efforts were unsuccessful. When the two labor groups were invited to attend an important Alliance convention to be held at St. Louis in 1888, the Federation refused to have anything to do with the meeting. The Knights responded by sending three important representatives but did not consider union or complete consolidation "feasible."[21]

When the Farmer's Alliance was ended in 1891, the Populist Party arose out of the struggle between Alliance members who wished to retain the loose-knit state organizations and those who desired the formation of a national third political party.

White opposed not only the Populists, Democrats, and fusionists, but also the already extinct Farmer's Alliance. He accorded this defunct organization the same treatment which he gave to the active parties. Because of the fact

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[20] Ibid., p. 103.

[21] Ibid., p. 123.

that the Alliance was not a present threat as were the other three groups, it received less attention than those parties. However, the editor spoke vigorously in his infrequent references to the Alliance paralleling that experience with the course that the Populist movement was pursuing. White declared that the Alliance, like the Populists, has been "a most excellent order with great and noble objects,"[22] as originally organized, but had degenerated because of fanatic, unrealistic adherents. Groups such as the Farmers' Alliance and the Populists were, it seemed to the editor, doomed to failure at the outset by the very nature of their platforms. This factor was usually accompanied by "scrubby reformers" who accelerated the decline of such groups. Their leaders were not respectable business men or experienced politicians, but usually failures, fanatics, or farmers playing at the complicated game of government in the hope of selfish gains.

The failure of the Alliance was demonstrated to White's satisfaction by its failure to live up to their preamble or any of its pledges; he averred that it had failed on every point of its Declaration.[23] He seemed to hold the opinion in these early years that failure to accomplish one's aims

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[22] Emporia Gazette, October 31, 1895.

[23] Ibid.

was an indication that those aims were unrealistic or undesirable. In 1898 with a long editorial indictment of the Alliance[24] he repeated his earlier contention that the party's promises and performances had been a "burlesque."[25] After this he devoted no more large efforts to castigating them, but continued to mention the Alliance occasionally as an example of failure to be cited in reference to subsequent more pressing issues.

In 1900 White wrote a belated obituary for the Farmers' Alliance.

> The Farmers' Alliance craze was pure emotion--there was no reason in it. The people went stark mad and the things they believed then make them blush now....Fancy the people of a state flowing with milk and honey saying they were starving....Imagine a state that is worth its weight in pure gold declared on the stump and in the press to be mortgaged for more than it is worth and thousands of people advocating the issue of paper money to pay these honest debts. The fact that a population so thoroughly American...produced the Alliance is a sad commentary on popular governments.[26]

The election of 1888 brought the expected smashing Republican victory in Kansas; in the nation Republicans were also victorious in the election of Benjamin Harrison. In 1890 the Democrats and Populists in Kansas attempted a fusion with gratifying results. In this fusion the Democrats had

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[24] Ibid., November 3, 1898.

[25] Ibid., January 17, 1896.

[26] Ibid., February 22, 1900.

been the aggressors and the Populists reluctant. By 1891, however, the Populists were thoroughly disillusioned at the refusal of the Democrats to recognize their help. The Democrats nominated candidates of their own party for local offices and in some instances even cooperated with the Republicans.[27] Despite the appeasement policies of the Democrats, both that party and the Populists faced a bleak situation. "Republicanism seemed supreme and unchallengeable."[28]

By 1892 the Populist party in Kansas had risen to a high point. The Republicans suffered nationwide defeat in this year; the dissatisfied elements had backed Cleveland and elected him. They hoped for better times; many believed in free silver and tariff reduction. They got instead, a panic, restriction of the currency, and hard times. The next three years saw bad farm yields and lower prices. When the panic came in 1893 the Populist monetary views became more popular and many people were converted to Populist ideals.

In the elections of 1892 the Democrats and Populists in Kansas ran on separate tickets once more. Although the Populists failed to get the complete control of a single state government there were several states in which they

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[27] Raymond Curtis Miller, "The Populist Party in Kansas," Dissertation (Ph. D.), University of Chicago, June, 1928, p. 64.

[28] Ibid., p. 208.

elected a large number of administrative officers or legislators or both to "affect materially the character of the regimes that followed."[29] Appropriately, it was the state of Kansas where Populism won its most notable victories and first challenged the attention and sympathy of the nation. There, the mere process of swearing in "the first Peoples Party administration on earth presented a thrilling spectacle."[30]

Most of the states which had given the Populists some support in 1892 returned to their former allegiances in 1894. Perhaps some of the voters were swayed by William Allen White's first important work, "The Regeneration of Colonel Hucks."[31] This political short story brought White the fame throughout Kansas that his later editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?" brought him in the nation.

In Kansas, the absence of any real Democratic strength and the dissension among the Populists gave an easy victory to the Republicans. They elected a majority in the state's lower house, every congressman but one, and the rest of their ticket.[32]

> The Populists had gained very little ground, if any, by the election of 1894....After the election there was not a state, southern or western, that could be cited as predominately Populist territory ....The Kansas state senate was Populist but this

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[29]Hicks, op. cit., p. 274.

[30]Elizabeth N. Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, ed. by William E. Connelly (Chicago: American Book Co., 1933), II, pp. 1168-1169.

[31]White, The Real Issue. See above, p. 3.

[32]Barr, op. cit., II, pp. 1191-1192.

> was due entirely to the presence of hold-over senators elected in 1892. The Republicans had everything their own way in the House and in the state offices.[33]

The election in 1894 had none of the signs of concession or fusion which had marked several of the preceding elections. It was an election with individual parties standing squarely on their own merits and platforms; as such, it was of great importance. It was to indicate whether the Populists as constituted could be a real power in Kansas or merely a minority group which could only achieve power on terms and conditions dictated by Democratic allies. It was to signify whether or not the Populists could win majority control on their old issues or whether a modification of these issues would be expedient. The results of the election seemed to indicate that "Populism in Kansas was indeed dead."[34]

> On its own resources it had mustered hardly more than a third of the votes of the state. If it was to become a power in the future, it would be only as an adjunct to the Democratic party, and on some issue which might cut the strength of the Republican. Populism, as Kansas had known it in the days of the highest spirit and greatest idealism, was a terror no longer. The "Crusade" was over, Kansas was redeemed.[35]

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[33] Hicks, op. cit., pp. 237-238.

[34] Miller, "The Populist Party in Kansas," p. 280.

[35] Ibid., p. 280.

The national campaign of 1896 was to belie some of the dire prophecies of Populism's demise for a while. In the Republican convention the "debtors and creditors stood massed for the battle which resulted in a victory for the eastern bankers and creditors."[36] In Kansas, Populism was the rural reply to urban combination and was largely the progency of the economic decline which characterized the western area of the United States from 1885 to 1895.[37] Professor James H. Canfield, who was in 1888 an important factor in White's decision to affiliate himself with the Republican party, wrote six years later:

> I think the Populist movement signifies the general dissatisfaction of the rural community with the administration of public affairs. In an age of combination (not yet intelligent cooperation) the rural people feel weak when pitted against the people of the towns because the latter can and do combine; and the rural people seek some form of political and economic combination that will secure equality of privilege and of opportunity. Populism appears in connection with "hard times" simply because when times are "easy" the people are easy going ...Populism is one form of revolt....[38]

The "new-sectionalism" which arrayed the West against the East and expressed itself politically in the Populist movement harbored "that system of radical thought that emerged in the West from three decades of recurring unrest, agitation, and intercourse with radical and reform movements in

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[36]White, Autobiography, p. 360.

[37]Hallie Farmer, "The Economic Background of Frontier Populism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, X (March 1924), pp. 406,427. This article and the previously cited works of R. C. Miller are excellent treatments of the economic motives behind the Populist movement.

[38]James H. Canfield, "A Bundle of Western Letters," Review of Reviews, 10 (July, 1894), pp. 42-43.

the urban world."[39] Though Populism exhibited a clear continuity with preceding radical movements in the West such as the Greenback and Anti-Monopoly forces, it also presented a faith and a creed in addition to demands for economic reform.

The Populist platform demonstrated that they had both a political and an economic program and a creed of brotherhood and justice. Economically they demanded a bimetallic national currency, a graduated income tax, and government ownership and control of railroads and public utilities. In the interests of brotherhood and justice they sought a union of the people and the labor force of the country so that its spirit would "enter into all hearts for the salvation of the republic and the uplifting of mankind." The political program of the Populists was perhaps their greatest legacy to the nation. Many of the measures which they unsuccessfully advocated were later incorporated into our legislation by the Progressives and other liberals. The Populists advocated the Australian secret ballot, the legislative devices known as the initiative and the referendum, the direct election of senators, the passage of corrupt practices legislation to aid in the abolition of malfeasance in government, and other reforms. The Populists resented the attempts of

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[39] Chester McArthur Destler, "Western Radicalism, 1865-1901: Concepts and Origins," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXI (December, 1944), pp. 351-352.

the other two major parties to ignore all of their reform measures except the one demanding the "free and unlimited coinage of silver." On this issue the Democrats and Republicans alike marshalled their forces in an attempt to becloud the other reform measures.[40]

The short, rather unhappy life of the Populist party was approaching its end while the editor was unconsciously approaching the beginning of the fame which was awaiting him with the publication of his scathing indictment of that party in "What's the Matter With Kansas?" The young manhood of William Allen White unfolded against the background of a politically and economically troubled Kansas; he cut his political teeth at a time when the Populists were in the national spotlight; he helped defeat this cause, many of whose tenets he lived to approve and embrace in future years. Populism was a primary factor in his initial renown and in his early political and social philosophy. They were two very different phenomena which concurrently existed and thrived in the same milieu.

In 1895 Populism was yet a real force in Kansas, and that state was beginning to make its first concrete strides toward a recovery. "People who had money were living well in Emporia; others hanging on by their eyebrows. And

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[40] Ignatius Donnelly, "People's Party Platform of 1892," The Shaping of the American Tradition, ed. by Louis M. Hacker, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), pp. 834-837.

Populism was raging across the state, across the Missouri Valley and through the South."[41] At this point White embarked on the career which he pursued until the end of his life. He became the owner and Editor-in-Chief of the Emporia Gazette.

When William Allen White first became known outside the small sphere of Emporia he was the most orthodox of conservatives. In his early years his philosophy was simple and optimistic. He believed that this was the best of all possible worlds, deplored criticism of it, and vigorously sought to maintain what he considered to be the status quo. He did not believe that injustice prevailed in the distribution of the world's goods and he frequently declared that the poor were solely to blame for their own proverty. He stated again and again that the rich were worthy and deserving, having achieved their enviable positions by dint of their own hard work and ingenuity. He believed that the work of the world was done, everything which could make human relationships more satisfactory had been accomplished; God was good and had done His work perfectly; the world should be left as it was. These tenets were more than just White's philosophy, they were almost a religion to him. His early writings and Gazette editorials constantly reiterated these beliefs.

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[41] White, Autobiography, p. 264.

White began his work as an editor in 1895. Populism was a real and present threat to White and from the beginning he opposed it in his paper. The editor was thoroughly convinced that the Populists or any proponents of reform were entirely wrong and he directed most of his early efforts to proving this thesis. In the half decade after 1895 he predicted the death of the Populist movement at regular intervals. He declared that they were "on their last legs. There can be no doubt of that in the light of the cravening manner in which they are fawning over the Democrats."[42] Again he stated, "The once great party has descended . . . . . as a fighting party they are completely incapacitated, even now . . . . The old fire has burned out."[43] These sentiments were voiced so frequently, many times when the political situation in Kansas refuted them, that they seem a conscious device used by the editor in his attack on Populism.

White reported that the farmers who had once embraced the Populist party as the panacea for all of their ills now knew that party for what it really was. The farmer "relates that it is a doctrine of hate that is preached and practiced by the disciples of despair,"[44] and he is now "ashamed of Populism and its doctrines of hate."[45] White considered it

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[42] Emporia Gazette, August 22, 1895.

[43] Ibid., October 10, 1895.

[44] Ibid., October 3, 1895.

[45] Ibid., September 3, 1897.

a sad commentary that the Kansas population which was so thoroughly American "went daft for so slight a cause."[46] To the editor the life had gone out of the party, their enthusiasm was gone, and all of the old principles which were to have reformed the world had been abandoned and forgotten.[47]

If there was one thing which White opposed more vigorously than Populism, that was fusion. For several years there had been spasmodic attempts at combination by Populists, Democrats, and the Greenbacks. He felt that such tickets were dishonest.[48] The editor regarded fusion as not only unethical, but also impractical. He said that no party had ever succeeded with fusion; the Populists were being duped since fusionists were not concerned over the old, honorable aims of that party, but were merely seeking to defeat the Republican party.[49] In a discussion of such "unholy" alliances White declared:

> The Democratic party has lost the respect of the people. The Populist party by its disgraceful fawning over Democracy has lost their respect. Something new must be invented. An old threadbare conspiracy has been trotted out to catch Republican fish. It is fusion.[50]

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[46] Ibid., February 22, 1900.

[47] Ibid., October 10, 1895.

[48] Ibid., October 3, 1895.

[49] Ibid., October 10, 1895.

[50] Ibid., August 29, 1895.

The election of 1896 was to play a large part in the rise of William Allen White to fame and to mark the beginning of a decline for the Populist Party as a real power on the political scene. The Republican National Convention met first at St. Louis and nominated William McKinley as the presidential candidate and Garret A. Hobart of New Jersey as his running mate. Almost the entire cost of the McKinley campaign for the nomination had been paid by his friend, Mark Hanna.[51] Hanna had devoted not only his money, but also all of his time and efforts to aiding McKinley, and in January 1895 he retired from active participation in his business with this political activity in mind.[52]

Though the nomination of McKinley constituted no real problem in the convention, there was a struggle on the currency issue. Both McKinley and Hanna were bimetallists and had been favorable to silver for many years. Because of this and the fact that both men were high protection advocates, they would have preferred to wage the campaign on the major issue of protection.[53] The sentiment in the Republican Party for a single gold standard led by Senator Lodge of Massachussetts and the eastern Republicans prevailed, however,

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[51]Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna, His Life and Work (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1923), p. 183.

[52]Ibid., pp. 173-174.

[53]White, Autobiography, op. cit., p. 273.

and McKinley and Hanna yielded to the gold plank. Senator Teller of Colorado, an advocate of free silver, and thirty-three others, seceded from the convention. William Allen White was present at the convention as a reporter for several large newspapers.

The Democrats met the following month. The chief controversy in their convention was between the Cleveland supporters--the gold faction--and the free silverites, represented by Bland of Missouri. The free silver group was victorious when the gold standard and the resolution for an endorsement of the Cleveland administration were defeated by large majorities. During the discussion of the gold standard resolution William Jennings Bryan came to prominence with his famous 'cross of gold' speech and he eventually captured the nomination. Arthur M. Sewall of Maine, a wealthy 'gold Democrat' was nominated for Vice-President.[54] Although there was no formal 'bolt' from the Democratic convention there was a large minority of discontented Democrats who went home and worked for the Republican candidates.[55] Bryan immediately began an active, whirlwind campaign and the issue of silver versus gold completely obliterated the tariff issue for the time.

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[54] Rhodes, James Ford, The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, 1897-1909 (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1922), p.18.

[55] Charles S. Olcott, The Life of William McKinley (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916) I, pp. 322-323.

The Populists met last in St. Louis and at this convention the split which was to eventually kill that party developed. The two major factions at the Populist convention were the fusionists who favored an alliance with the Democrats by nominating or endorsing the Democratic nominees Bryan and Sewall, and the middle-of-the-road group who felt that such a move would mean the end of their party. They particularly objected to Sewall, a national banker, since opposition to the national banks was a Populist principle. An unsatisfactory compromise was reached when Bryan was nominated as the presidential candidate and Thomas Watson of Georgia was selected as his running mate.[56] Almost all of the Populists were dissatisfied with the results of their convention.

White and the Gazette supported the Republican candidates. He wrote that the election of the Democrats or Populists would lead to the destruction of our American institutions as they had stood since the beginning of our country.[57] He particularly disliked a statement made by Bryan that a Republican victory would mean hard times, lower wages, and decreased exports, and stated flatly that Bryan's abilities as a prophet were as inadequate as were his qualifications for the presidency.[58] In another editorial he declared that

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[56]Hicks, The Populist Revolt, pp. 354-378 passim.

[57]Emporia Gazette, July 31, 1896.

[58]Ibid., September 19, 1896.

Bryan had a "fourth-rate mind" and did not think. "The crown of thorns and cross of gold phrase is the high-water mark of epigram. He does not read the best books nor keep abreast of the world's best thought. He is, in the language of the street, a 'cheap screw'....He accepts a doctrine without question and tries to put it in the most catchy phrases...."[59]

During the summer of 1896 White wrote the editorial "What's the Matter With Kansas?"[60] On a hot day a group of Populists confronted the editor on the streets of Emporia and nagged him about some of his editorials. White became angry and when he was able to detach himself from the group he stalked to his office and wrote the editorial which "came out pure vitriol".[61] The editorial was hastily written and that same afternoon the editor left for Colorado to join his wife.

His departure constituted a problem, for though the editorial was left on his desk with instructions for publication, his staff did not approve the intemperate tone. They were worried as to the probable reaction to the editorial in Populist Kansas and withheld the editorial for a few days. A further complication presented itself. The managing editor of the paper was Laura M. French, a thorough-going Bryanite

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[59] Ibid., September 5, 1896.

[60] Ibid., August 15, 1896.

[61] White, Autobiography, p. 280.

who considered the article particularly distasteful, but finally had to approve the article for publication. The editorial brought fame to the Kansas editor. It received the favorable notice of a Santa Fe vice-president, several large urban newspapers, Speaker of the House Tom Reed, and finally Mark Hanna, who had it released in pamphlet form as campaign propaganda.[62]

This editorial blamed the Populists for all of Kansas's woes. In strong, sarcastic language White spoke of the decline in wealth and population in Kansas--"the whole west is ahead of Kansas." He declared that Nebraska had gained in wealth and population while Kansas went downhill but ignored the fact that in 1894 the Populist and fusion tickets in Nebraska polled over 49 percent of the votes, a percentage only exceeded by the Populist-fusion stronghold of North Carolina.[63] In Nebraska the Republicans had made some inroads into the state offices but the fusionists elected their candidate for governor and one congressman. In 1896, the fusionists in Nebraska completely defeated the Republicans, as they did in Kansas.[64] The editor termed Colorado seven times greater than Kansas, but in 1894 the Populist and fusion votes in that state also exceeded the Kansas percentage.[65]

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[62]Johnson, White's America, p. 92.

[63]Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 337.

[64]Ibid., p. 337.

[65]Ibid., pp. 333,337.

Despite such unfortunate statements the editorial was effective. How he said it was as important as what he said.

. . . . . .

What's the matter with Kansas?

We all know; yet here we are at it again. We have an old mossback Jacksonian who snorts and howls because there is a bathtub in the statehouse; we are running that old jay for governor. We have another shabby, wild-eyed, rattle-brained fanatic who has said openly in a dozen speeches that "the rights of the user are paramount to the rights of the owner;" we are running him for chief justice so that capital will come tumbling over itself to get into the state. We have raked the old ash heap of human failure in the state and found an old human hoop skirt who has failed as a businessman, who has failed as an editor, who has failed as a preacher, and we are going to run him for Congressman-at-Large. He will help the looks of the Kansas delegation at Washington. Then we have discovered a kid without a law practice and have decided to run him for Attorney General. Then, for fear some hint that the state had become respectable might percolate through the civilized portions of the nation, we have decided to send three or four harpies out lecturing, telling the people that Kansas is raising hell and letting the corn go to weed.

Oh, this is a state to be proud of! We are a people who can hold up our heads! What we need is not more money, but less capital, fewer white shirts and brains, fewer men with business judgment, and more of those fellows who boast that they are "just ordinary clodhoppers, but they know more in a minute about finance than John Sherman"; we need more men who are "posted," who can bellow about the crime of '73, who hate prosperity, and who think, because a man believes in national honor, he is a tool of Wall Street. We have had a few of them--some hundred fifty thousand--but we need more.

We need several thousand gibbering idiots to scream about the "Great Red Dragon" of Lombard Street. We don't need population, we don't need wealth, we don't need well-dressed men on the streets, we don't need cities on the fertile prairies; you bet we don't! What we are after is the money power. Because we have become poorer and ornerier and meaner than a spavined, distempered mule, we, the people of Kansas, propose to kick; we don't care to build up, we wish to tear down.

"There are two ideas of government," said our noble Bryan at Chicago. "There are those who believe that if you legislate to make the well-to-do prosperous, this

prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous their prosperity will find its way up and through every class and rest upon them."

That's the stuff! Give the prosperous man the dickens! Legislate the thriftless man into ease, whack the stuffing out of the creditors and tell the debtors who borrowed the money five years ago when money "per capita" was greater than it is now, that the contraction of currency gives him a right to repudiate.

Whoop it up for the ragged trousers; put the lazy, greasy fizzle, who can't pay his debts, on the altar, and bow down and worship him. Let the state ideal be high. What we need is not the respect of our fellow men, but the chance to get something for nothing.

Oh, yes, Kansas is a great state. Here are people fleeing from it by the score every day, capital going out of the state by the hundreds of dollars; and every industry but farming paralyzed, and that crippled, because its products have to go across the ocean before they can find a laboring man at work who can afford to buy them. Let's don't stop this year. Let's drive all the decent, self-respecting men out of the state. Let's keep the old clod-hoppers who know it all. Let's encourage the man who is "posted." He can talk, and what we need is not mill hands to eat our meat, nor factory hands to eat our wheat, nor cities to oppress the farmer by consuming his butter and eggs and produce. What Kansas needs is men who can talk, and have large leisure to argue the currency question while their wives wait at home for that nickel's worth of blueing.

What's the matter with Kansas?

Nothing under the shining sun. She is losing her wealth, population and standing. She has got her statesmen, and the money power is afraid of her. Kansas is all right. She has started in to raise hell, as Mrs. Lease advised, and she seems to have an over-production. But that doesn't matter. Kansas never did believe in diversified crops. Kansas is all right. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Kansas."Every prospect pleases and only man is vile."[66]

This was White's protest. It was typical of his style and point of view in his early years. He blamed Populism for unsatisfactory conditions in his state or wherever they spread their doctrines effectively. The adherents of that

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[66]Emporia Gazette, August 15, 1896.

group were fanatic, unrespected failures. To the editor, such men were incapable of beneficial government; he seemed to be firmly of the opinion that 'nothing succeeds like success.'

The Democrats and Populists were the champions of free silver in the campaign of 1896. To White, this was the single, dominant issue. He was opposed to the principle of free silver; such a currency scheme to him seemed to threaten existing institutions and the conservative editor distrusted and opposed change. The old order was being threatened by cheap money schemes which were "in the last analysis dishonest," and involved "positive dishonesty on the part of the government."[67] He editorialized:

> The spirit of free coinage is essentially socialistic in its tendencies . . . . . humen progress is only possible when the producers of wealth are protected. . . . There are in this country a large number of people who have saved a little money which they loaned out to others. The advocates of free silver boldly claim that the result of the adoption of their money scheme would be to take from all creditors one-half of their property. . . . When the farmer and working-man understand that this is the real object of the free-coinage agitation will they continue to favor the attack on private property?[68]

In November, McKinley was elected, but Bryan and the fusionists were victorious in Kansas. The editor printed the "sickening truth" in headlines. He declared that the state was cursed and honest men all over the nation were laughing

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[67] Ibid., October 24, 1896.

[68] Ibid., August 22, 1895.

and jeering at Kansas.[69] He was happy, however, that McKinley had won in the nation, and several decades later attributed his victory to the fact that the Republicans had persuaded the middle class that a threat to the gold standard was a threat to their property.[70]

The editor conceded a complete Kansas victory to the Populists in that election and then, in characteristic fashion, began looking to the next election instead of mourning the one just past. He wrote an editorial expounding the wonders of our American, democratic government--one in which the differences between the rich and the poor were settled peaceably, unlike those in Europe. He announced that he would continue to support the Republican cause, the belief in individual responsibility for failure or success, the laissez-faire theory. He declared himself satisfied with existing conditions, in favor of "vested rights" and repeated his warning that change in our institutions would mean a revolution which would bring in socialism, a most dangerous doctrine.[71]

White feared and opposed socialistic thinking. One of his most strenuous objections to Populism was that it fostered such a philosophy. When the co-operative colony in Colorado planned by Populist John Otis failed shortly after its inception,

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[69] Ibid., November 6, 1896.

[70] White, Autobiography, p. 235.

[71] Emporia Gazette, November 3, 1896.

the editor was pleased. He wrote that the brawny members of the populace instinctively serve their brainier cohorts; co-operative communities such as Otis planned were doomed to failure because of this:

> The socialistic colony which depends for its successes upon the unselfishness of men has failed as it always has failed and always will fail until nature changes human hearts. The cunningest man wins the battle. It is a fact of nature; laws can't change it. The man who depends upon his muscle will be the servant of the man who depends on his brain.[72]

After the election of 1896 "the Populist party as a great and independent organization was a thing of the past."[73] White's criticisms of that party became less frequent. He regarded Populists as more of a nuisance than a real threat to McKinley and prosperity. In 1898 the Spanish-American War diverted the national attention from the political scene even more; the war was also a factor in the accelerated decline of Populism after 1896. White's jibes at Populism and Bryan became spasmodic and somewhat humorous in a bitter way, as best befitted a defeated foe.

In looking back on Populist and fusion "reforms," the editor concluded that the returns of Populist government had been "bad name, scandals, bribery, blackmail, bankruptcy and constantly increasing taxes."[74] He wondered how long it would

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[72] Ibid., July 10, 1897.

[73] Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 379.

[74] Emporia Gazette, October 26, 1897.

be before Kansas could pull herself "out of the slough of Populism," and questioned whether any Populists or "little men" anywhere were intelligent enough to understand or appreciate the American idea of government.[75]

White rejected the idea that people were poor for any reason other than their own laziness, ignorance or poor management. He opposed the Populist charge that circumstances, not individual differences, were largely responsible for depressed conditions. Like many self-made men White had little tolerance for those who required aid in the struggle to survive and prosper. He favored untrammeled capital as the solution for depressions and continued to oppose "dishonest schemes" and changes such as the free coinage of silver.[76] "Success doesn't lie in the government and the law, but in the individual ....The law cannot change it. Failure or success is an individual affair."[77] The Populist-originated idea of correcting the maldistribution of wealth by legislation was to White dangerous and wrong.[78]

The editor regarded reform and reformers as the "twin enemies" of prosperity, the product of "such unsafe experiments as Populism."[79] In his zealous opposition to reformers

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[75] Ibid., November 8, 1897.

[76] Ibid., October 12, 1897.

[77] Ibid., August 15, 1896.

[78] Ibid., July 10, 1897.

[79] Ibid., August 15, 1897.

he extended his suspicions beyond the Populist ranks and classed all reformers as "frauds."[80]

In the elections of 1898 Kansas returned to the Republican fold by a large majority. In the local elections of 1899 they repeated this performance with an even larger majority. The editor was jubilant and stated confidently that Kansas was now completely cured of Populism. Though the state had "lost heavily" in respect, reputation, and prosperity by yielding to Populism, matters would soon be righted.[81]

The contempt which White accorded Bryan caused him to lose his characteristic sense of fair play on occasion. While the satire and ridicule which he heaped on the man were understandable and even typical of his dealing with opponents, White did not usually indulge in character assassination without solid facts to back him up. He said of Bryan, "....And how does Bryan make a living? Has anyone heard of his doing a day's professional work for three years? Other people have to work for a living. How does he get the money to gad?"[82] He wondered at the "connection" between Bryan and such conservative Democrats as the Tammany boss, Croker, and Gorman.[83]

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[80] Ibid., August 22, 1897.

[81] Ibid., December 14, 1899.

[82] Ibid., October 19, 1899.

[83] Ibid., December 21, 1899.

From July, 1900, until after the elections in November the Gazette featured in large bold-faced type in each issue the Bryan prediction of 1896 that the election of McKinley and the Republicans would mean hard times, lower exports and decreased wages. When Congressman Sibley of Pennsylvania, a Democratic leader in the free silver movement, decided to abandon his support of this issue in 1900, White noted that Bryan had also promised to "soft-peddle" the issue and wondered "if they were bought."[84]

In 1900 the Populists again nominated Bryan as their candidate for the Presidency and Charles A. Towne of Minnesota, a silver Republican, for the second place on the ticket. Although their numbers were very greatly reduced, the convention was a stormy one. The Populists held conventions in 1904 and 1908 also but there were only a handful of delegates at each of the last two conventions and the meetings were mere token gestures to the party which had been. They retained their original platform again in 1900 and once more championed the free coinage of silver. Unfortunately for this platform, silver was no longer a serious issue. The prosperity which the nation enjoyed during the McKinley regime coupled with a large increase in the world's annual gold output because of the opening of several new gold fields had completely destroyed the old Populist arguments. White noted the weakness of the Populist stand in an editorial devoted to the

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[84] Ibid., December 28, 1899.

gold standard. He criticized the Populist and Democratic advocacy of silver as a policy which would wreck the finances of the country. He attributed the depressed conditions of the Cleveland administration to the prospect of silver legislation which scared money out of circulation.[85] "The Populist crowd stands for silver, which will as surely as there is a sun in the sky frighten capital, close the mills, beat down prices, increase interest, coax back a panic, and play hob generally."[86]

One of the Populist charges frequently levelled at the two major parties, especially the Republican party, was that they were boss controlled, and that they encouraged the continuance of boss and machine controlled politics. White replied to these Populist charges with frequent statements on the boss system. He termed boss rule "government by the strong,"[87] and went even further to state that boss rule was inseparable from popular government. He called it "the best system of government there is," and advised the Populists that their political party would have probably been more successful in the hands of a strong boss.[88] Some of his explanations for favoring the boss system were characteristic of the editor in this conservative phase of his career.

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[85] Ibid., August 31, 1899.

[86] Ibid., September 7, 1899.

[87] Ibid., December 10, 1901.

[88] Ibid., December 10, 1901.

He considered the boss system efficient and practical, two qualities which he always respected. The fact that the boss system existed and was successful proved that it had merit. "The boss system is a good system or it would not exist."[89] He felt that the boss system had a long tradition behind it in the history of nations although it had perhaps been called by other names or used different methods; the purpose, which was to obtain power and keep it, had always been the same. The editor always respected traditional institutions.[90] Final factors in his support of boss rule were the Populist opposition to it and the Republican practice of it.

When Populism ceased to be a political power the editor ceased his attack. Although by 1905 White had assumed many new liberal views and had completely reversed many of his old conservative ideas, he never thoroughly appreciated the Populist contributions to our political thought. In 1904 he wrote what he termed his first reform editorial. He championed the election of Joseph W. Folk, a Democrat with a history of Populist sympathies, as governor of Missouri. He considered Folk the "best man" and therefore advised the voters to elect him.[91]

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[89] Ibid., December 26, 1901.

[90] Ibid., December 10, 1901.

[91] Ibid., July 21, 1904.

In 1905 White was beginning to regard Populism in a more tolerant light but he could not overlook the radical, fanatic element which he associated with Populism and Populists. The most he would concede to that once great movement was: "Although it was foolish and misguided, it was almost justified by the conditions of things that confronted the people."[92]

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[92] Ibid., July 2, 1905.

CHAPTER III

"MY LIFE LONG LIEGE"

William Allen White was a Republican at the beginning of his political career and at the end of his natural life. Although in the years from 1912 until 1916 he was a member of the Progressive party, it was undoubtedly his admiration for and loyalty to Theodore Roosevelt which influenced him. From 1905 until his death White became increasingly more liberal in his views, but whatever those views, in the last analysis he would support the Republican party. He admired Wilson, but supported Hughes; he had no use whatsoever for Harding and felt that the Democratic candidate Cox "was more of a person" but he voted for Harding;[1] Franklin Delano Roosevelt said that he appreciated "Bill White's support for three and a half years out of every four."[2] White achieved his first fame by supporting the Republican party, and it is as an interpreter of political events on the American scene that he was most active. Throughout his adult life he was always thoroughly embroiled in politics, particularly party politics, but only once was he a candidate for a political office.

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[1] White, Autobiography, p. 591.

[2] Ibid., p. 640.

The first major campaign in which White participated was in 1896. He contributed to the Republican campaign with his editorial "What's the Matter With Kansas?" He supported McKinley before and after the election, but could never become too impressed with him as a person. He felt a greater affection and a deeper admiration for Mark Hanna. Although the Gazette was filled with editorials supporting Republican policies after 1896 and in the war, White rarely referred to McKinley or to his role in shaping Republican policy.

When President McKinley addressed Congress in December, 1899, the Gazette did not print the text of this address. White explained:

> It((McKinley's address))is interesting and commendable in that it attacks trusts and defends the gold standard...and as a forerunner of what the national policy of the nation may be for the next five years the message has a prophetic value. But as reading the Gazette would recommend in preference either Mr. Dooley or Fox's Book of Martyrs. If this is unrepublican and unpatriotic, all right, trot out the court martial.[3]

Despite his thorough-going Republicanism and his unbounded joy at that party's victory in 1896, he could not wax enthusiastic about the President. Typical of the Gazette's support of McKinley for renomination in 1900 was an editorial asking, "Why not be content with McKinley...?Why change for the sake of change...?Will a nation that is doing well do any better for a change?"[4]

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[3]Emporia Gazette, December 7, 1899.

[4]Ibid., May 10, 1900.

There was no animosity between McKinley and White. Pleasant relations existed between the men. White sought nothing of the President; McKinley bestowed nothing on White. Mark Hanna had arranged a meeting between the two in gratitude to White for his efforts on behalf of the Republican party's victory in 1896. Hanna penned a note of introduction to the President, adding and underscoring, "He wants no office." At the meeting McKinley was gracious, but humorless, cold and impersonal. The editor left the White House with no ill-will, but his original apathy toward the man was unimpaired.[5] The situation remained the same at their few subsequent meetings.

During a visit to Washington White was to meet the man for whom he formed a lifelong affection, and who was to be a heavy influence in shaping the philosophy of the conservative young editor. A Kansas Congressman, Charles Curtis, introduced White to Theodore Roosevelt, who had recently been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The two men immediately established a firm rapport and White later wrote in describing that meeting, "After that, I was his man."[6] Roosevelt had requested the meeting after reading White's Kansas editorial. In their long walk and talk on that first

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[5]White, Autobiography, p. 291.

[6]Ibid., p. 298.

day, White was shocked at the ideals and attitudes which Roosevelt expressed, attitudes which he believed were held only by Populists, but he was so overcome by Roosevelt's personality that he made no objections. After that meeting, the Gazette carried frequent items about Roosevelt.

When American went to war with Spain, Roosevelt was a lieutenant-colonel of a cavalry regiment commanded by Colonel Leonard Wood. When he first applied for duty, Secretary of War Alger had offered him command of that group, but Roosevelt did not feel qualified for such a position. His regiment, which was known as the Rough Riders, received acclaim for its actions at Santiago and San Juan Hill. Roosevelt as their leader received much publicity and praise for his part in the undertaking and in 1898 was promoted to the rank of Colonel.[7]

White deeply admired the part which Roosevelt played in the war and wrote frequently of his exploits in Cuba. He devoted long editorials to Roosevelt's heroism, his strong and sensible attitudes, his leadership.[8] He praised the Colonel for never trying to advance himself at the expense of his men.[9]

On his return to the United States Roosevelt was elected governor of New York. He had been reluctantly supported for the nomination by Senator Platt of that state when it became

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[7]Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 213-219.

[8]Emporia Gazette, September 22, 1898.

[9]Ibid., September 15, 1898.

obvious that Roosevelt was the only hope for the success of the Republican machine which had suffered set-backs in the previous year. He threw himself into the work of governor with all the energy he had displayed in Cuba, and the small Kansas paper, the Gazette, devoted much space to his activities. The editor wrote frequent glowing tributes to the New York governor who was cleaning up the corruption in his state[10] - the "war-horse" who had been "groomed in a clean stall."[11] The editor classed Governor Roosevelt with Senator Lodge, two of the rare men in American public life with first-class minds.[12]

The Roosevelt rise to prominence made him the popular choice for the vice-presidential nomination. When the Republican Convention met at Philadelphia in June, 1900, it was generally accepted and approved that McKinley would be renominated. There was little difference of opinion concerning the platform either; the Republicans retained and endorsed the platform which they had framed in 1896. The highlight of the convention was the vice-presidential nomination. In addition to the popular sentiment in the West and elsewhere for Roosevelt, Senator Platt, the Republican boss of New York, was anxious that Roosevelt should receive the

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[10] Ibid., December 1, 1898.

[11] Ibid., December 8, 1898.

[12] Ibid., January 29, 1900.

nomination so that he could be rid of the man whom he could not control.[13] Roosevelt had repeatedly stated that he did not want the nomination, that he would rather be reelected Governor of New York. Mark Hanna was emphatically opposed to Roosevelt, but since McKinley refused to express any opinions on the matter, preferring to leave the issue to the delegates, popular opinion prevailed and Roosevelt was selected almost unanimously.[14] The only dissenting ballot had been his own.

The editor of the Gazette was jubilant. He had worked hard to create favorable sentiment for Roosevelt in the West, but had not supported him for the vice-presidency as he was aware of Roosevelt's sentiment in the matter. Roosevelt had written to White in February, 1900, that he had "definitely declined to take the Vice-Presidency." He said further that his real desire was to be renominated for governor of New York.[15] In May of that same year he was even more emphatic in another letter to the editor. He wrote, "I think I have got things fixed so that I shall be free of the vice-presidency. It is the last office I want. I should like to be governor of New York again."[16]

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[13] Joseph B. Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt and His Time (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920) I, pp. 134-139.

[14] Rhodes, The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, pp. 269-283.

[15] Elting E. Morison, (Ed.), The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt: 1898-1900, Vol. II, The Years of Preparation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 1172.

[16] Ibid., pp. 1296-1297.

In reporting the results of the convention, the Gazette was filled with items and editorial comments lauding Roosevelt, six editorials and articles in all, while there was only one brief article concerning McKinley, the nominee for President.[17] After Roosevelt's nomination was an accomplished fact, the editor felt free to rejoice and to praise him. Before the nomination he had had to restrain himself with difficulty from actively supporting the selection of Roosevelt, since he was aware of Roosevelt's avowed opinion on the matter.

Throughout the campaign White maintained the same policy. He campaigned vigorously for Roosevelt, and wrote prolifically of his background, career, and lofty ideals; McKinley was largely ignored.

The Democratic convention met in Kansas City the following month. There was complete harmony on the renomination of Bryan, but friction developed over the platform. The Bryan forces finally prevailed and the remonetization of silver at a ratio of 16 to 1 was retained as the primary issue. Shortly after the convention, however, Bryan conceded that the issues were three-fold; they were silver, the trust question, and imperialism.

In November the Republicans socred their greatest victory since 1872 and much to White's delight the state of Kansas

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[17] Gazette, June 28, 1900.

went Republican. He was even more pleased to note that the Populists polled only a little over fifty thousand votes. White attributed the "smashing Republican victory" largely to Roosevelt who had campaigned vigorously in the West.[18]

Before and after the election Roosevelt remarked many times that his political career was ended. Although he had been "put on the shelf," he would try to make his position "cheerful." In November, 1900, he wrote to a friend,

> I do not expect to go any further in politics. Heaven knows there is no reason to expect that a man of so many and so loudly and not always wisely expressed convictions on so many different subjects should go so far! But I have had a first class run for my money, and I honestly think I have accomplished a certain amount.[19]

Shortly after the election of 1900 White had begun to work openly creating sentiment for Roosevelt's nomination for President in 1904. Even before the convention of 1900 the two men had discussed the possibilities. In the summer of 1899 Roosevelt replied to a letter from White, saying, "I am not out for presidential honors at present."[20] A few weeks later he wrote to General Frederick Funston, a close friend of both Roosevelt and White,

> Nothing is to be done with me as President in the coming election....Without the slightest heed to political considerations, we can carry the next election with him ((McKinley)) and prevent the menace of a Bryan administration, which would mean the abandonment of our destiny

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[18] Ibid., November 8, 1900.

[19] Bishop, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 139-140.

[20] Morison, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, II, p.1028.

> abroad and treachery to all traditions of honor at home....I think that for me to be a candidate would not only be futile, but would deprive me of all influence in trying to get the administration to carry out the policies in which we--that is, men like you and myself, and White and Senator Lodge--believe.[21]

In the summer of 1901 White and Roosevelt were communicating about White's progress in securing the support of Kansas, Missouri, and Colorado in the next convention.[22] In August, 1901, the Gazette came out openly and endorsed a "Roosevelt for President" move. The editor urged the Kansas State Convention to convene early so that Kansas could be the first state to instruct her delegates for Roosevelt. He cautioned, however, against too much premature enthusiasm which might dwindle away in the three years remaining before the next election.[23]

The Gazette continued to support the Republican administration in the months before McKinley's death. Roosevelt was praised for his high ideals, good influence, and the things he was "accomplishing in American political life."[24] McKinley was termed by White the best President since Lincoln. He "can't make much of a speech and he is not a profound

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[21] Ibid., pp. 1039-1040.

[22] Johnson, Selected Letters, pp. 39-41, 41-44.

[23] Gazette, August 29, 1901.

[24] Ibid., September 6, 1901.

scholar, but he is a man."[25] When White echoed this sentiment in a national magazine article[26] he incurred the disfavor of many Republicans.

On September 6, 1901, President McKinley was shot while attending an exposition in Buffalo, New York. After seeming to rally from his wound the President suffered a relapse and died on September 14, 1901.[27] White blamed the tragedy on American's greed for cheap labor, which resulted in the importation of "human vermin, beasts, millions of Polacks, Huns, and Italians, the very scum of European civilization . . . .Liberty to them means license."[28] He eulogized the dead President, but could scarcely restrain his pleasure at Roosevelt's accession to the Presidency.[29]

The new President announced that he would continue McKinley's policies unchanged and would make no cabinet changes. The editor recorded all of his statements and approved them enthusiastically. He quoted from Roosevelt's book, American Ideals and Other Essays, Social and Political, to demonstrate his honesty and intelligence.[30] He felt that Roosevelt's

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[25] Ibid., August 29, 1901.

[26] William A. White, "Hanna," McClure's Magazine, 16 (November, 1900), pp. 56-64.

[27] Olcott, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 313-325.

[28] Emporia Gazette, September 12, 1901.

[29] Ibid., September 19, 1901.

[30] Ibid., October 10, 1901.

elevation to the Presidency brought to that office "an erudition ripened by a practical grapple with life; a political sagacity . . . high ideals, good birth, liberal advantages."[31] His joy was unbounded.

When Roosevelt announced his policy of adhering to the principles of the Civil Service in making civil appointments in our insular possessions, White wrote:

> Roosevelt is taking the country rapidly back to the days of the high integrity of the founding fathers. He has divorced politics from the presidency. He is rising in his daily walk to the standard of Washington and Adams. He is administering his office with absolutely no thought of a second term. He is ignoring machine politics[32]. . . .He is appealing to the high intelligence of the masses . . . .The influence of Roosevelt for clean politics, for high civic ideals, for political virtue, will be and is now inestimable . . . .He has exalted the nation.[33]

White continued to support all of the Roosevelt policies without exception. The hitherto ultra-conservative editor was slowly beginning to become more liberal, a course which could hardly be avoided since he chose to champion Roosevelt so actively. When Roosevelt proposed a reciprocity

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[31] W. A. White, "Theodore Roosevelt", McClure's, 18 (November, 1901), p. 47.

[32] White's correspondence with the President definitely indicated active planning for 1904, despite the editor's statements here. They had also discussed the possibility of garnering the support of such political bosses as Quay of Pennsylvania, Platt of New York, Hanna of Ohio, and Leland of Kansas. Johnson, Selected Letters, pp. 41-44. See also, Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), pp. 228-229.

[33] Emporia Gazette, November 28, 1901.

agreement with Cuba wherein the duties on Cuban sugar and tobacco would be reduced to give the Cubans advantages in the American market, White supported the President's contention that such a treaty was a moral issue.[34]

The coal industry gave the President difficulty when in the spring of 1902 a large strike began in the anthracite regions. There had been previous difficulty in 1900 but Mark Hanna had used his influence with the coal operators to ward off a strike which might prevent a Republican victory in 1900.[35] When the strike of 1902 began to show signs of extending into the winter and therefore of causing national hardships, Roosevelt intervened. The President succeeded in appointing an arbitration committee which was favorable to both the miners and the operators and work was resumed in the mines. The commission made their report to the President five months later and their findings proved favorable to the miners. The recommendations of the commission included a ten per cent wage increase for the miners, a sliding wage scale which would increase wages when coal prices advanced, and a clause stipulating that there would be no discrimination against union or non-union labor.[36]

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[34] White, "Cuban Reciprocity--A Moral Issue", McClure's, 19 (September, 1902), p. 388.

[35] Croly, op. cit., pp. 328,390.

[36] Rhodes, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

White worried throughout the strike lest the President incur some ill-will which would be harmful. He also echoed the frequent Roosevelt contention that Wall Street was out to discredit and destroy the President.

> The eastern monied men who hate Roosevelt have undoubtedly set a trap for him in the coal strike settlement. It is now time for Roosevelt to stand up and be counted, either for unions or for capital. He must offend someone--either Morgan or organized labor . . . . The President will find the people behind him if he stands for the unions and insists that the coal operators submit the matter to arbitration . . . .The people, the President, and the unions can whip unreasonable capital at every turn, whether in a coal strike or an election.[37]

The editor rejoiced that in a battle between right and wrong the President had once more taken a strong stand on the side of right. He had been able to win three times in one year, on the issue of clean men in federal offices, Cuban reciprocity, and the coal strike, because he was morally right and had the people on his side. He had "made the people's business, his business and spanked the insurgents into line." In a struggle, Roosevelt's victory was foreordained, according to White, because he had "taken a stand always backed by moral principle and has won with the people behind him."[38]

As the elections of 1902 approached, White assumed a position he had never taken before: he pleaded with people of all parties to forsake party considerations so that they

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[37] Emporia Gazette, October 9, 1902.

[38] Ibid., October 16, 1902.

would not send to Washington men who would fight Roosevelt. He begged the voters to use common sense and not to upset the "happy situation" which existed politically because Roosevelt had "risen above party considerations and has conducted his office as the average, sensible businessman would do it . . . . It is a common sense proposition with every voter, not a political one."[39]

During the Roosevelt administration there was another incident which won widespread public approval for the President's stand. In the summer of 1903 it came to the President's attention that a man had been dismissed from the Government Printing Office because he did not belong to a union. Roosevelt reinstated the man and declared that the printing office was an "open shop." Samuel Gompers, the president of the American Federation of Labor, and several other prominent labor leaders came to Washington to call on the President to protest his action. The President received them kindly, but firmly refused to revoke his act since he had "followed the law of the land." He stated further, "I can no more recognize the fact that a man does or does not belong to a union as being for or against him than I can recognize the fact that he is a Protestant or a Catholic, a Jew or a Gentile, as being for or against him."[40] White approved and lauded this stand as "another blow struck in the cause of righteousness."[41]

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[39] Ibid., October 30, 1902.

[40] Roosevelt, Autobiography, pp. 481-482.

[41] Emporia Gazette, July 23, 1903.

The Roosevelt opinions on the trusts in the United States were echoed by the editor of the Gazette. The conservative stand which he took on the matter prior to his friendly relations with Roosevelt was completely altered and he repeatedly praised the President's policies. He considered Roosevelt's demands for regulation and his actions toward the trusts as the wisest, most sane course possible.

The Republican state conventions of 1902 had indicated a favorable attitude toward Roosevelt's candidacy in 1904 and by the time the National Convention convened, his nomination was a foregone conclusion. Although there had been indications that the Wall Street faction would favor the nomination of Mark Hanna, he did not declare himself a candidate, but did cause Roosevelt some grave concern by refusing to endorse his nomination until the last minute.[42]

The Democrats nominated Alton B. Parker, a New York judge, to oppose Roosevelt. Parker ignored the currency and tariff and made Roosevelt the issue of the campaign. There had been a brief movement afoot to make Grover Cleveland the Presidential nominee. Roosevelt accepted the rumors as sound for he wrote to Senator Lodge in 1903, "It is evident that he ((Cleveland)) has the Presidential bee in his bonnet and it is equally evident that a large number of people are desirous

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[42] Croly, op. cit., pp. 443-446.

of running him again." Roosevelt declared later that Pierpont Morgan and other Wall Street men were definitely supporting Cleveland.[43] The editor of the Gazette was aware of the situation and wrote,

> There seems to be no doubt that Grover Cleveland is a receptive candidate for the presidency. There is good reason to believe that he has J. Pierpont Morgan and the Morgan railroads behind him. The railroads hate Roosevelt for the fight on the Northern Securities merger. They have quit trying to beat him for the nomination but they think they can solidify the East and South against him in the election, and by taking Indiana which is, they think, subject to money influences often, elect Grover Cleveland. Cleveland is a brave man and in the time the country needed him did great service, but from his election next year or the mere danger of it, good Lord, deliver us![44]

The movement to nominate Cleveland, if it ever existed in any strength, was unsuccessful and Parker offered Roosevelt no serious opposition.

White frequently warned against apathy among the Republicans regarding Roosevelt, an unlikely situation. He repeatedly cautioned his readers not to let up in the fighting and take Roosevelt's victory for granted, as he was dangerously opposed by "Wall Street, the East, a cabal in the Senate of the United States whose venal schemes Roosevelt has stopped, and the like."[45] He cautioned his readers against a crash

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[43] Bishop, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 241.

[44] Emporia Gazette, July 2, 1903.

[45] Ibid., December 17, 1903.

which was coming "slowly but surely." He warned them to pay their debts and get their credits in because "Wall Street will make a panic at any time to defeat Roosevelt whom it hates because it cannot use."[46]

The Roosevelt campaign was in an unusual position as regards campaign contributions. It was feared that large corporations might interpret contributions to the Republican campaign as a guarantee of immunity for the next four years. When Roosevelt was informed, falsely, that the Standard Oil Company had contributed one hundred thousand dollars to the Republican campaign fund, he instructed the national committeeman to return the contribution which might be "improperly construed as putting us under improper obligation, and in view of my past relations with the Standard Oil Company I fear that such a construction will be put upon receiving any aid from them."[47] Indeed, in the campaign Judge Parker did imply that Roosevelt had used his official position to induce corporations to contribute funds.[48]

White regarded this situation unhappily. While he loyally maintained that Roosevelt would be elected unhampered by any "pledge, promise, or understanding," he deplored a campaign system which would cast such unkind reflections on the

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[46] Ibid., January 7, 1904.

[47] Bishop, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 320-330.

[48] Rhodes, op. cit., p. 293.

character of such an uncompromisingly upright man. He felt that the legislator's right to act in certain matters had been "sold from him like a chattel . . . . When laws have been passed the corporations through their attorneys have contributed to the campaign funds of men elected to enforce the laws and have thereby bought immunity from legislation."[49] White proposed as a remedy for this situation that the people themselves should donate money to the central committees so that there would be no need to seek the aid of the corporations. He lauded Roosevelt's dignified reply to Parker's charge and stated that the results of the election showed the people's faith in Roosevelt's honesty and innocence.[50]

The strong influence which Roosevelt had on White is demonstrated in the following incident. White had always been a strong party man who favored and urged that Republicans should vote a straight ticket to enable candidates who were elected to work unhindered by the opposition. He quoted an interesting Roosevelt anecdote in the Gazette wherein Roosevelt supposedly rebuked a man who boasted of never having "scratched" his ticket, stating that he had split his own "a dozen times." White wrote:

> Party loyalty is not what it used to be and rightly so. The old idea that one should vote a straight ticket, even if it includes dishonest men, has gone.

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[49] Emporia Gazette, August 18, 1904.

[50] Ibid., November 10, 1904.

> Although Theodore Roosevelt, the leader of the Republican party today, is a party machine man--in the sense that he is a believer in the close organization and entire recognition of the party machine--yet no one is more liberal than he with the man who believes it is his duty to refuse to vote for a dishonest or incapable man because that man is nominated by the party.[51]

Exactly two weeks later the editor wrote his "first reform editorial" and strongly endorsed Joseph W. Folk, a Democrat, for the governorship of Missouri.[52]

The friendship of White and Theodore Roosevelt, the editor's deep and undying admiration for the politician, was perhaps the single most important influence in White's change from a conservative to a Roosevelt progressive. He acknowledged Roosevelt as "the man who more than any other in my twenties, thirties, and forties, dominated my life."[53] His admiration was so deep-seated that he never opposed Roosevelt on any issues whatsoever, and time and time again revised his own opinions in accordance with Roosevelt's. He explains the attachment which he formed for Roosevelt, an attachment which never wavered, in his Autobiography.

> It was not the ten years between us. It was more than the background of his achievements in politics. It was something besides his social status which itself might have influenced me in those days, something greater even than his erudition and his cultural equipment, that overcame me. It was out of the spirit of the man, the undefinable equation of his identity, body, mind, emotion, the soul of him that grappled with me,

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[51] Ibid., July 7, 1904.

[52] Ibid., July 21, 1904.

[53] White, Autobiography, p. 297.

and quite apart from reason, brought me into his train. It was youth and the new order calling youth away from the old order. It was the inexorable coming of change into life, the passing of the old into the new . . . . As a defender of the faith, I had met my first heretic.[54]

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[54] Ibid., pp. 298-299.

CHAPTER IV

"WHEN THE NATION WENT MAD"

The Cuban insurrection against Spain broke out in February, 1895, after months of threatening unrest. The depression of 1893 seriously harmed the already depressed Cuban sugar industry on which the whole economic structure of that island depended. In 1894 the Wilson tariff bill became law restoring a duty on Cuban sugar and completing the wreck of that island's economic life. This revolt which was to be characterized by "a larger amount of lying than any before or since,"[1] introduced the American public to a host of new problems and preoccupations.

William Allen White's literary and political prominence was rapidly increasing through his writings. He was completely preoccupied with domestic affairs during the first years of the revolt and his editorials in that period reflect a thorough-going nationalism. The difficulties of the Cubans seemed to provoke the beginning of the editor's interest in foreign affairs.

At the beginning of the insurrection the editor opposed any suggestion of American intervention in the Cuban situation.

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[1] Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1931), p. 31.

He considered the Cubans an inferior lot with no capacity for self government. If the American people were to help the Cubans throw off the tyranny of Spain, they would soon have a tyrant of their own.[2] His characteristic disapproval and distrust of a disorderly and rebellious minority was obvious in the view he took of the actions of the insurrectionists.

The Cuban insurrection began to occupy more and more space in the nation's newspapers and White began to realize that the situation was more closely related to the nation's business, politics, and health than he had realized, ".. . for yellow fever was one of the Cuban exports that affected American life."[3] He also became aware that interest in the plight of the oppressed Cubans had spread widely across the United States. He was hostile to any ideas of aid for the Cubans, however, and throughout 1897 was too busy opposing the Populists in a county election to be much concerned about foreign affairs.

During the early months of 1898 the relations between the United States and Spain were approaching a climax. In the troubled months of February and March when the battleship Maine exploded and the DeLome letter was published, national

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[2]Emporia Gazette, December 28, 1896.

[3]White, Autobiography, p. 305.

feeling was at fever pitch. The editor's opinion of President McKinley reached its highest point then, too. Although an ardent Republican he had always been lukewarm to McKinley, until the President's actions in the last weeks before the outbreak of the war impressed him deeply. He felt that McKinley had conducted himself like a statesman and had led the nation ably and well through troubled times. "The President has furnished the most conspicuous instance of sanity and wisdom. His perfect calmness has not been for a moment disturbed. His judgment has been faultless. He has made no mistake . . . he inspires the country with a feeling of confidence."[4]

White was skeptical as to the responsibility for the destruction of the battleship Maine. It seemed to him that the only persons who could hope to benefit from such a catastrophe were the Cuban insurgents, "a band which all hands agree is a mangy, measly lot."[5] He believed that the insurgents had plotted the explosion with the intention of laying the blame on Spain, thus gaining the United States as a powerful ally in their rebellion. He reasoned further that Spain had every cause to avoid such a plot. She could gain nothing by such an action but a war which would end in disgrace,

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[4] Emporia Gazette, March 10, 1898.

[5] Ibid.

and though he held the Spaniards in equal contempt with the Cubans he felt that they did have enough sense to realize the outcome of such folly. "There isn't one iota of evidence that Spain had anything to do with the explosion, and there is considerable reason why the insurgents could have done it and with sense in their doing it. Why should America play into the hands of a lot of adventurers who are using the name of Cuba to juggle with."[6] His implication that the Spaniards were innocent dupes in the affair is an unusual piece of writing in the light of his later declarations that the Americans were led into the war by just and holy provocations.[7]

The European powers with the exception of Great Britain were opposed to American intervention. White disliked the rumor of an Anglo-American alliance. He was not an expansionist and did not believe we had the right to expand at the expense of Spain. He cautioned America to stay out of any alliance, keep out of foreign quarrels, and to keep her hands off the property of others.[8]

White reacted differently to the rumor that Germany might ally herself with Spain in the event of a war with the United States. He seemed hopeful that such an alliance might occur. One of his reasons for opposing a war with Spain had

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[6] Ibid., March 10, 1898.

[7] Ibid., April 27, 1898.

[8] Ibid., June 12, 1898.

been that a declaration of war by the United States would dignify the Spaniards whom he considered despicable and beneath our contempt. Since war seemed to be the national sentiment and was becoming increasingly inevitable it would be made more palatable to the editor if there was an opponent worth fighting. "It would be beneath American dignity to fight with a beggar like Spain; but it would afford the average liberty-loving American great comfort to swat the face off the arrogant bourbon Dutchman."[9]

When the war finally did break out in April, 1898, White adjusted himself to the situation quickly. Although he had opposed American entry into the war he felt it was his patriotic duty to support his country's action when the war became an accomplished fact. The tone of his editorials in the early days of the war seems to indicate that his change of attitude was more strongly influenced by political principle and allegiance to the Republican party than to any real change in his convictions.

The country was excited about the war. Sympathy for the Cubans, the growing mood of imperialism, and American investments in Cuba made it a popular war. Populists, Republicans, and Democrats forgot their differences temporarily. The newspapers were filled with the exploits of our boys in Cuba and the Gazette followed suit.

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[9] Ibid., March 10, 1898.

> The Emporia Gazette was just as crazy as any of the newspapers, no better. I hope not much worse. For I, in my heart's heart, had my doubts that sometimes squeaked through in a questioning editorial. But Kipling sang of the white man's burden in those days and the English-speaking people were keen to hear just that soothing message to justify their conquests. At least this is the way it stands in my memory and in the editorial files of the Gazette.[10]

During the war the Gazette recorded the activities of the troops, particularly those of such men as Fred Funston, a boyhood friend of White, and Theodore Roosevelt. White himself did not participate in the fighting, although he was very active on the home front through his newspaper. He wrote Theodore Roosevelt that he wanted to go to Cuba very much, but he felt that his first duty was to his wife, who was ill. He formed a desire to help Roosevelt politically all that he could, and thus hoped to compensate for his lack of direct participation. "I would perform as great a service for my country as I could perform upon the battlefield," wrote White, "and if this service is effective, I will feel that I have made up for what I lost in '98."[11]

The Spanish-American War ended on August 12, 1898, with the signing of a protocol providing for the disposition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and one of the Ladrones Islands. The protocol also provided for a commission comprised of both Spanish and American representatives to negotiate the peace.

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[10] White, Autobiography, p. 320.

[11] White to Roosevelt, August 29, 1901, in Johnson, Selected Letters, pp. 41-44.

The end of the war ushered in a host of new problems, and Democrats and Republicans began to ready themselves for the struggle which was coming over such issues as the disposition of the Philippines. To William Allen White, the one constructive result of the Spanish-American War was that it elevated Rough Rider Theodore Roosevelt to national fame and the governorship of New York. "He should be made governor of New York and President of the United States."[12]

For many months after the war in a page one, boxed-in editorial entitled in bold-faced type, "Are You a Spaniard?" White advanced a popular Republican thesis of that period. He wrote that to vote other than Republican in local, state, or national elections would give Spain the idea that Americans were rebuking McKinley for the war.[13] Furthermore, he was worried that Spain might be stalling off negotiations until after the November elections in the hope that a Democratic victory would mean better terms for her at the peace table in regard to the Cuban debt question.[14] White continued to use the term Spaniard as one of disapprobation for Democrats and Populists alike for many months after hostilities had ceased.

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[12] Johnson, White's America, p. 112.

[13] Emporia Gazette, September 24, 1898.

[14] Ibid., November 3, 1898.

In the post-war months he maintained his position that the Spaniards were innocent of implication in the Maine disaster. Using almost identically the same phrases which he had used two years before, he restated his belief that the deed had been in all probability perpetrated by Cuban insurgents. At the end of the war he also resumed, although to a lesser extent, his opposition to American participation in a controversy which involved two foreign countries. He abandoned his patriotic wartime support of the American cause and deplored the frenzy of emotion which plunged our nation into conflict as a tragic part of our national makeup. He blamed our involvement on the "hysterically clamoring masses."[15]

From the vantage point of 1902 the editor felt even more certain that from an intellectual point of view our war with Spain was unjust. However, although the conflict was distasteful, he was beginning to be attracted to the doctrine of manifest destiny. He wrote that while our war with Spain was wrong, "There is a force in this world stronger than brains; there is a destiny of nations as well as of men and when we put our own little wills in its way---call it destiny or race tendency or God---it intervenes and plays its own game."[16]

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[15] Ibid., February 22, 1900.

[16] Ibid., December 11, 1902.

Imperialism was in the air and on this issue White ran the full gamut of emotions, from a violent opposition to the course the nation was taking, to a reluctant acceptance of our stand, and finally a full-fledged support of our right and duty to acquire and govern any new possessions which we might acquire. He wrote ably and prolifically on both sides of the imperialist fence, but two score years later he confessed that on at least one issue he did not remember which side he took and inferred that he 'took a side' because it was politically expedient to do so.

> 'Free Cuba' was a vote getter. I wrote editorials about 'free Cuba' just as casually as Charley Curtis ((for whom White had great contempt as ignorant and uninformed)) wrote speeches. I do not remember which side I took, but which ever side I took was taken in great ignorance of the deep movements of the heart of men all over this planet that were moving toward freedom and the protection of the invested dollar of free men, the thing called imperialism . . . mortgaging the souls and bodies of millions upon millions of men.[17]

Although he has been termed as "at best . . . a reluctant expansionist,"[18] reluctance was only one of the phases through which White was to pass on the issue of imperialism.

We emerged from the war to free Cuba with an overseas empire of our own. When the issue of the acquisition of the Philippines arose White strongly opposed America's acquiring

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[17] White, Autobiography, p. 305.

[18] Johnson, White's America, pp. 111-112.

these or any other possessions. He felt that most of the rhetoric which had been loosed on the issue was "rot". He wrote that when the "duty" of annexing these islands had been accomplished, the "responsibility" which we would have assumed would go to sleep in the hands of carpet-bagging politicians.[19]

Not only did White distrust the motives of the expansionists, but he suspected their ability as well. Nor could he understand what right we would have to confer liberties on the inhabitants of our new possessions. In an eloquent burst of prose which equals his famous editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?" White sums up his early views on imperialism.

> The rhetoricians talk about giving these people certain liberties . . . . The liberties we Anglo-Saxons enjoy cannot be bestowed by legal enactment any more than our pale skins can be decreed to the brown man by an American congress. The black man, the brown man and the yellow man should learn from the horrible fate of the red man what the white man does to him on whom the Anglo-Saxon would bestow those fine liberties. There should be no disguising the plain, harsh fact. If America takes these colonies she will hold these people virtually as slaves or she will murder them outright. That is the brutal fact about America's 'duties' and 'responsibilities.' The white man has never given his liberty away because it is 'non-transferable'.[20]

White opposed imperialism in 1898 and 1899 on still another ground. After the war with Spain had ended he lapsed

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[19] Emporia Gazette, December 1, 1898.

[20] Ibid., December 1, 1898.

once more into his exclusive preoccupation with domestic affairs and assumed once more his characteristic isolationist viewpoint. As an ardent nationalist he looked about him and saw much need and opportunity. We were a young, vital, growing country. Our resources and possibilities for internal growth were virtually untapped. Additionally, the country still had many unsettled domestic problems which we had dropped when we entered the war with Spain. All of the energy which was being directed toward expansion should be put to better use within our own boundaries. We had greater opportunities to make a contribution to humanity within our country than we would be able to fulfill if we extended the national embrace to include an overseas empire. He was particularly concerned with the plight of southern Negroes who were still struggling for the liberties which did not come to them with the Emancipation Proclamation.

> Is it not enough for duty and responsibility to do to take care of these inevitable troubles at home? Why should duty and responsibility rush off across the world after savages when there are 8,000,000 people south of the Ohio River who are further along than the Filipinos who need American help in their struggle for liberty? . . . . If this government is to be successful it must deal with this business and begin now.
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> And on the other hand, perhaps in dealing with this matter may come a greater gain to humanity and to America than is found in chasing over the sea, pot-hunting junglemen in the name of duty and responsibility . . . . Perhaps he may do more for humanity than he can do by stamping his feet when the orator talks about planting the American flag forever where it has waved in any battle. There are two sides to this duty and responsibility business. It is possible that by making exemplary American citizens, by perfecting a high state of American civilization, by producing a state wherein something like

> approximate justice is done between man and man in the industrial and social world, this nation may help duty and responsibility about as much as it can help them by annexing tropical islands. And perhaps more good may be accomplished by raising America as a shining light among the nations of the earth than will be accomplished by battleships and the carpetbagger.
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> Perhaps this theory is wrong. Perhaps the time has come to follow Greece and Rome. Perhaps the Lord of Hosts may be deceived by this fine talk of taking our liberties in gattling guns to the junglemen. Perhaps God will not smite us for our hypocrisy. Perhaps duties and responsibilities are calling us to the slaughter of our weaker brothers and the practical enslavement of those who live. But on the other hand, isn't it likely that the call to this deed is not through the angel's trumpet, but rather through the somewhat unreliable instrumentality of a pig's whistle?[21]

The spokesman of grass roots America and the great middle-class in this instance and for several months thereafter deviated from the trend of popular opinion by opposing all of the grandiose schemes for expansion which were proving so popular with the people. Throughout 1898 and for the first few months of 1899 White continued to denounce imperialism and the American ability to govern' savage subjects'. The story in every case was, according to him, "one long record of cruelty, rapine lust and outrage."[22]

The editor particularly objected to the seeming neglect of domestic matters by lawmakers who were occupying themselves with expansionist schemes. To White the press of domestic

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[21] Ibid., December 1, 1898.

[22] Ibid., November 24, 1898.

needs was the primary consideration and at the close of the Spanish-American War he once again began admonishing the country to care for America first before assuming foreign problems. He wrote, "There is no doubt that the banking laws need fixing. There is just now a need of a statesman who can put a few of the institutions now operating on their feet . . . . The need of a new banking law is more urgent than the need of a new set of islands."[23]

Another aspect of imperialism was distressing to him. In addition to the neglect of domestic problems, he felt that imperialism and the acquisition of an overseas empire would engender a raft of new domestic problems, more pressing than those which already beset us. The new problems which would result from a continued pursuit of an imperialistic policy might even necessitate constitutional revisions, a consideration which was most distasteful to him. White held the constitution sacred and with his characteristic affection for the status quo strongly objected to any "tampering" with the document which had served us well since its inception.

White felt that in granting the Filipinos full equality, the Negroes in that area too would perhaps receive the right to vote, a right which was denied to many Negroes in the United States. Such a situation would be embarrassing to a

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[23] Ibid., December 8, 1898.

sovereign nation and unfair to both American and Philippine Negroes. "Will the word black creep into the constitution of the United States? If the white man votes in Manila and the black man does not, there will be a voting class and a slave class with no political rights. This island business is no easy job to tackle."[24] In the issue of imperialism White began to manifest clearly the long range vision and sagacity which characterized his later years, but which were usually obscured by personal and party considerations in these, the early days of his editorial career.

In March, 1899, White entered his second phase of thinking on imperialism and reluctantly bowed to the inevitable tide of expansion. He demonstrated his deep-rooted conviction of Anglo-Saxon superiority and editorialized in a philosophic vein, "It is the Anglo-Saxon's manifest destiny to go forth as a world conqueror. He will take possession of all the islands of the sea. He will exterminate the peoples he cannot subjugate. This is what fate holds for the chosen people. It is so written. Those who would protest will find their objections overruled."[25] He was compelled to yield to destiny but felt regret that the old order had changed.

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[24] Ibid., December 1, 1898.

[25] Ibid., March 20, 1899.

The editor feared that our deepening responsibilities would bring us hardship and a loss of our old-time individual freedom. He gauged the national feeling for imperialism correctly and feared the enthusiasm that he felt everywhere for expansion. To White, bred in a tradition of individualism, the imperialist sentiment which swept the country was an unhealthy symptom of departure from time honored traditions which had served us well. "This promiscuous throwing about of the boundaries of the world, this widening of duties," was an ill wind.[26]

White's surrender to the imperialist sentiment was complete when the Republicans of his home county, Lyons, in whose organization he was a powerful and active member, framed their platform with an expansionist clause included. On the front page of the Gazette he featured the platform which he had helped to draft and which endorsed the retention of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines as necessary to the national welfare.[27]

In the closing days of the last year of the nineteenth century White clarified his current position on imperialism in an editorial entitled, "Americanism is not Imperialism."

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[26]Fitzgibbon, Russell H., (Ed.) Forty Years on Main Street (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), p. 248.

[27]Emporia Gazette, September 28, 1899.

The editorial attempted to whitewash McKinley and the Republican party of the charge of expansion. White defined imperialism as "kingly government . . . in the interest of the crown at the expense of the people. No act or work of President McKinley has hinted toward a doctrine of that kind. On the contrary, every work and act of the President has been the idea of Americanism."[28] He referred politely to our territorial gains as our "newly purchased possessions in the Philippines," and he compared them with the original thirteen colonies, the Louisiana purchase, the Gadsden purchase, and the territory acquired from Mexico. He no longer referred to our dealings with subject people as cruel, but "simply the time-honored American doctrine of 'enemies in war, friends in peace'."[29]

The peace treaty with Spain which was signed on December 10, 1898, followed the protocol in regard to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Ladrones Island and in addition it provided for the cession of the Philippine Islands to the United States. The President had instructed that the treaty should provide for the extension of the military government then at Manila to all of the ceded territory to "give to the people

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[28] Ibid., December 14, 1899.

[29] Ibid.

security in life and property and encouragement under a just and beneficent rule."[30] White hailed these words as proof of good intent and purpose, and asked what more could one want. He began referring to expansion in the past tense and spoke occasionally of "the ghost of imperialism."[31]

The editor was satisfied that we had entered the Philippines not as conquerors, but as friends, and he began to speak of our little brown brothers in the same manner which had roused his wrath against rhetoricians in the past year. White enjoyed finding historical precedents to bolster actions which he supported and on the issue of our expansion into the Philippines he was happy to report that there were just such precedents.

> Those familiar with American history need not be reminded that within our own borders we have more than once been confronted with the monsters of treason, secession and rebellion and no thoughtful American will deny the correctness of the doctrine that this is a government of law administered by the people and for the people . . . . The same rule that applies in the United States will be applied to the people of the Philippines.
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> The position of President McKinley is . . . 'If a man attempt to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.' That doctrine has been maintained in the United States over every inch of American soil and it will be maintained in all of the territory recently acquired. . . . When the question is, shall the flag remain unsullied and its glory maintained, it is best to stand in line with the President who stands in line with all of his predecessors in upholding that symbol of unity, the honor and glory of the United States.[32]

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[30] James D. Richardson, A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington D.C.: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1910) Vol. IX, p. 6322. Hereafter cited as Richardson, Messages.

[31] Emporia Gazette, December 14, 1899.

[32] Ibid., December 14, 1899.

William Allen White seemed no longer concerned with the problems of constitutional amendment, inhumanity, lack of ability to govern, or neglect of domestic matters. He was now satisfied that our expansion policy was Americanism, not imperialism.

White's last stage of thinking in regard to imperialism was a wholehearted support of American action in the Philippines, action which he had first opposed and then reluctantly accepted with certain provisions. It seems significant that in this phase of his philosophy he seemed to grow progressively more conservative while in all other matters he was tending toward more liberal and democratic thinking in the latter years of his first decade as the editor of the Emporia Gazette.

After carefully distinguishing between Americanism and imperialism the editor drew an even finer distinction, separating Democratic imperialism from the Republican variety. As was characteristic of him he felt that imperialism would be all right in the capable and efficient hands of a Republican administration, but feared what might happen if less stable persons such as Democrats or reformers were to hold the national reins.

According to White, the Republicans would establish a good, stable government in our new possessions and then for the good of the natives and the "twenty million good American

dollars which they cost," the Americans would stay in the islands to "boss the job." This would be cheaper in terms of dollars and lives in the long run. Nor would America have to tolerate a lot of "foreign complications that a lot of treacherous savages get into when they try to run a republic."[33]

The Democrats on the other hand, would "establish a stable government---just as McKinley is trying to do now--- and then turn the island over to the savages. He((Bryan)) does say that he would establish a good government and that could only be done by force of arms. He does not say he would make the Filipinos pay the twenty million that America paid Spain for the islands. . .((but would))then cut loose and still protect the islands from foreign interference."[34] Such a proposition just didn't make sense to the practical editor who was an ardent admirer of business methods. This type of thinking was to White typical of William Jennings Bryan's slip-shod logic and lack of common sense in practical affairs.

White took advantage of many opportunities to slap slyly at his enemy, Bryan, while the national sentiment favored expansion. Although Bryan opposed our expansionist policy

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[33] Ibid., August 16, 1900, August 23, 1900.

[34] Ibid., August 16, 1900.

and was the spokesman for the Democrats, he had come to Washington in 1898 and urged enough Democrats to support the peace treaty to secure ratification of that document. Despite this, White could not overlook the fact that Bryan had opposed the policies of the nation on expansion under a Republican leadership. He said of Bryan's views on American policy in the Philippines, "White man's might has made right for three thousand years. It is in every deed or conveyance or legal instrument in the civilized world and it's not going to change for Mr. Bryan."[35]

The editor became more deeply convinced than ever that a strong hand and aggressive policy was not only expedient but wise and morally justified. He declared that the Philippines would have to be held by the army for centuries and that the army always preceded the schoolhouse, a reversal of his earlier, more pacific view, when he looked to education and enlightenment as the great equalizers.

In his opposition to Bryan he became an even more ardent expansionist. He had previously hailed McKinley's proclamation that the Philippines would be governed so as to protect the rights, welfare, and property of the natives as all that one could ask for as an assurance of good intent and good

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[35] Ibid., August 9, 1900.

government.[36] This had been a potent factor in reconciling him to our Pacific expansion. Now he went even further and insisted that the stable government which Bryan spoke of could not be established by proclamation. It could only be established by guns and soldiers. He no longer favored returning the islands to the Filipinos at the earliest possible moment, but spoke instead in terms of centuries. "We will establish a stable government there if it takes a hundred years to get it. The cheapest thing the governed can do is to consent early and often."[37] If a final straw was needed to break any hesitancy which White might have about expansion, it was supplied by Bryan's opposition to imperialism and his criticism of Republican methods in handling the whole affair.

By the middle of 1900 White's views on imperialism had solidified. No more doubting editorials slipped through. He had satisfied himself that

> Government is force. The consent of the governed has nothing to do with it. . . .The Filipino savage is not the equal of the American whose ancestors for two thousand years have been climbing upward by slow degrees in civilization, nor is Aguinaldo with his veneer of education. It is absurd to say that all men are created equal.[38]

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[36] Ibid., December 14, 1899.

[37] Ibid., August 16, 1900.

[38] Ibid., August 23, 1900.

As the national interest in imperialism lessened White once more seemed to abandon the issue in favor of the more engrossing topics of national, state, and local affairs. By 1901 he had penned an editorial entitled, "What Has Become of Imperialism?" which considered the issue as dead. He questioned whether it might not have been buried with McKinley and doubted that Roosevelt and the Republicans would continue the policies initiated by the dead president. He ended the editorial on a provocative note which might indicate that he considered the issue a part of the past. "Can it be that imperialism was only a political scarecrow. . . to be reanimated once again with the hot wind of some other campaign issue?"[39]

White wrote finis to imperialism as far as the Emporia Gazette and its editor were concerned with a two line item buried in a corner of the editorial page. "Why buy Greenland?" he asked. "We have money to burn but have we money to freeze?"[40]

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[39] Ibid., September 26, 1901.

[40] Ibid., August 21, 1902.

CHAPTER V

"THE BEST ADJUSTED TARIFF"

The years from 1893 to 1897 were years of depression in the United States. The Republicans felt that one of the reasons for the depressed economy was the Wilson-Gorman Act of 1894, a Democratic tariff which lowered the rates of duty which had been set by the McKinley Act of 1890. Actually, the bill was a moderate one which made no far reaching changes in our tariff legislation except for the removal of the duties on wool. The bill, however, had gone into effect shortly after a commercial crisis and during a severe depression, and was, therefore, unpopular with the general public.[1] The Republicans were largely united in their belief that the country needed a high protective measure to allay its economic ills.

Although many of William Allen White's opinions were subject to frequent change, he maintained his original position on the tariff with only moderate changes throughout the years. In 1895 he supported the conservative Republican stand on protection; in 1905 he still believed in the theory of protection, but he favored lowered duties and the abolition of duties where they were no longer necessary for revenue

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[1]Frank W. Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), pp. 317-320.

or to protect domestic industry. As a practical "hard-headed" business man he had no sympathy for the advocates of free trade, a scheme which he regarded suspiciously as somewhat radical and more than a little impractical.

In his later years White was to claim that he was never a true supporter of the protective tariff.[2] This statement, however, does not ring true in view of his early editorials on the matter. Moreover, protection was a strong Republican policy in the last half decade of the nineteenth century, and the editor rarely wandered far from the fold of Republican doctrine.

White, who was usually opposed to any form of paternalism, supported the tariff principle because he felt that it would aid not only the industry of America, but also the laboring man. His failure to include the farmer in his argument for a high tariff suggests that at this time his feelings against the Populist party in general, and the embattled farmers of the middle-west in particular were yet too strong to overcome. He disregarded the role of labor in the Populist drama to the extent, that he was willing to advocate the passage of a tariff with the special plea that the lot of the laboring man would be improved.[3]

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[2]White, Autobiography, pp. 269-270.

[3]Emporia Gazette, August 25, 1896.

The editor did not regard the Wilson-Gorman Act of 1894, which had been enacted during the Cleveland administration, in a very favorable light. He felt, as did many others, that "the injury to the business interests of the country cannot be computed."[4] He complained that this tariff devised by the Democrats put American workmen out of jobs since they could not compete with the low priced products from Europe.

In the presidential campaign of 1896 the Republican candidate, William McKinley, and his friend, Mark Hanna, would have liked to wage the campaign on the popular issue of protection. They were disappointed in this desire and had to fight the campaign with the currency question as the main issue. McKinley declared, "I am a tariff man standing on a tariff platform," and was disappointed when this issue was overshadowed by the free silver controversy.[5]

The Democrats nominated William Jennings Bryan as their candidate for the Presidency, a development repugnant to White. Bryan epitomized all that he disliked in Populists and Democrats alike, and he feared that Bryan and his followers would "tear down the tabernacle of our national life," and destroy institutions which had stood since our national beginnings.[6]

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[4] Ibid., July 17, 1896.

[5] Olcott, The Life of McKinley, p. 321.

[6] White, Autobiography, pp. 278-279.

White went into the campaign of 1896 working vigorously for a Republican victory. When the McKinley campaign train stopped in Kansas a month before the election, the presidential aspirant surrounded himself only with men of the strictest high tariff views, men such as Cy Leland, the Republican leader in Kansas. Because of his friendship with Mark Hanna the young editor gained access to the train while such entrance was denied to many less fortunate Kansas politicians and more experienced newspapermen. He threw himself into the campaign even more vigourously after this episode, and although McKinley won in the nation White was sorely disappointed when his home county and state went for Bryan and the Democrats. His famous editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?" was written in the heat of this campaign.[7]

Two score years later the editor was to claim that he supported McKinley's candidacy and high protection only as the lesser of two evils after he had become aware of Bryan's plans to tamper with the gold standard policy of the country.

> I had no use for the protective tariff, but I tolerated it because I wished to advocate the gold standard . . . . It is not unlikely that occasional editorials in the files of the Gazette speaking well of the theory of protection were my defense weapons against attack on my gold standard flank.[8]

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[7] Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[8] Ibid., pp. 269-270.

In his inaugural address in March, 1897, McKinley set forth the policies of the new government. He declared that our government needed to maintain its credit and that the revenue for that purpose should come from a system of tariff taxation. The controlling principle of the tariff, however, was to be "zealous care for American interests and American labor." He continued, "The people have declared that such legislation should be had as will give ample protection and encouragement to the industries and the development of our country." McKinley expressed the hope that Congress would enact at the first possible moment revenue legislation which would be "fair, reasonable, conservative, and just, and which, while supplying sufficient revenue for public purposes, will still be signally beneficial and helpful to every section and every enterprise of the people."[9] He also recommended that in any revision of the tariff, the reciprocity principle of 1890 should be restored and extended. Such a measure would extend to products of other lands which we could not produce ourselves, and would not, therefore, involve any loss of labor to Americans.[10]

McKinley called for an extra session of Congress to be held a week after his inauguration to deal solely with the

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[9]Richardson, Messages, p. 6238.

[10]Ibid., p. 6239.

questions of import duties and revenue. The Republican legislators enacted the Dingley bill to replace the Wilson-Gorman Act of 1894, and the President signed it on July 24, 1897.

The Dingley Tariff was the highest that had yet been passed in American history.[11] The most controversial item was the removal of wool from the free list and the retention of tariffs on manufactured woolen goods. The woolen industry prospered under this act.[12] Duties on hides were restored and the metal schedules of former tariffs were largely retained. This act also restored duties on works of art which had been free under the Democratic tariff of 1894.[13] The Dingley Tariff remained in force for twelve years, longer than any previous tariff. There are several reasons given for the longevity of this act: it was followed by a period of prosperity, and the public was content to let well enough alone. Then, too, the Republican party which had passed the Dingley Act was in power continuously during those years.

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[11] Edward Stanwood, American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1903) 2 vols., II, p. 391.

[12] Frank W. Taussig, Some Aspects of the Tariff Question (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. 342-347.

[13] Ida M. Tarbell, The Tariff in Our Times (New York: MacMillan Company, 1911), p. 243.

More important, however, was the fact that the more pressing issue of the trusts diverted attention from the tariff.[14] There was an increase in foreign trade in the decade after 1897 which came in spite of, not because of, this tariff.[15]

White was pleased with the Dingley Act and he gave his full editorial support to the bill. He wrote:

> The prediction that the enactment of a protective tariff law would reduce the foreign market for our manufacturers has not been realized. The exportation of manufactured articles since the enactment of the Dingley law is greater than in the corresponding months of last year under the Wilson law and amounts to 113 million for the first five months of operation of the Dingley law . . . . It should be considered that the Wilson law during its first few months had the advantage of extremely heavy importations which had been held back to obtain the lower rates it afforded while the exact reverse was true with reference to the Dingley law. It is apparent that the new measure is a vast improvement, to say the least, upon its predecessor.[16]

Later he wrote another editorial which was very complimentary to the Dingley bill, wherein he quoted Mark Hanna, "who should know," as saying that this bill was the most scientific and best adjusted tariff ever enacted; it would remain in force for years and would be changed by the Republican party only when the requirements of this country demanded that it be changed.[17]

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[14] Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, pp. 361-362.

[15] Harold U. Faulkner, The Decline of Laissez Faire (vol. VII of The Economic History of the United States, New York: Rinehart and Co., 1951), p. 61.

[16] Emporia Gazette, February 17, 1898.

[17] Ibid., November 24, 1898.

The editor rejected the argument that protection might tend to increase prices, and thereby adversely affect the laborer and the farmer as consumers. His reply to this theory was characteristic of him and displays his chauvinistic tendency. He felt that protection would not increase the consumer prices in this country unduly unless the buyers became 'toney' and began demanding British made goods. Nor could he tolerate the idea of any foreign countries raising their tariffs. He declared firmly that protective tariff barriers would not work well outside of this country, and was extremely displeased at Germany's attempt to raise some of her duties.[18]

White continued to support the the Dingley Act as the months passed and became more firmly convinced than ever that this was an excellent piece of legislation. He seems to have gone to some unnecessary lengths to praise this bill and to urge the people to support it when there was no real need to do so and no popular or widespread sentiment against it. In 1899 he wrote an editorial ridiculing those people who had opposed and criticized the tariff when it was first proposed. He claimed that in the three years which had elapsed since

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[18] Ibid., October 1, 1897. In this instance White quoted an editorial in the Lawrence, Kansas Journal to express his views. It was a frequent practice of his to express opinion by quoting the works of other editors and then endorsing them in full with a sentence or two of his own.

the bill was passed it had proven successful, accomplishing all that had been predicted for it by its friends.[19]

In 1899 McKinley declared that all customs between the United States and Puerto Rico should be abolished. This island had become a possession of the United States as a result of the Spanish-American War, and it was now in serious economic distress. This condition was caused partly by her loss of free trade with Spain and Cuba, and partly by a hurricane which had swept the island and destroyed most of her coffee crop. Despite McKinley's request for the abolition of the customs, Congress would grant only an 85 per cent reduction of the high duties levied under the Dingley Act. This was the beginning of a controversy in the Republican ranks over reciprocity.

The Democratic tariff act of 1894 had repealed the reciprocity provisions of the McKinley Act of 1890. The Dingley Act revived the policy of reciprocity and somewhat enlarged its scope. It provided that the President might suspend the free admission of certain specified imports if he were satisfied that other countries had imposed duties that were unjust and unreasonable. There was also provision for lowering duties imposed by this act if reciprocal concessions were obtained, and proposed commercial treaties for the general reduction of duties by 20 per cent. No reductions of the latter type were ever made, however.[20]

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[19] Ibid., October 19, 1899.

[20] Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States, pp.352-354.

In McKinley's last public speech at Buffalo, New York, on September 5, 1901, he asked that we make sensible trade arrangements to extend the outlets for our increasing surplus, a system which would provide for a mutual exchange of commodities. He felt that reciprocity was a natural outgrowth of our industrial development. He said further:

> The period of exclusiveness is past. The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem. Commercial wars are unprofitable. A policy of good will and friendly trade relations will prevent reprisals. Reciprocity treaties are in harmony with the spirit of the times, measures of retaliation are not. If, perchance, some of our tariffs are no longer needed, for revenue or to encourage and protect our industries at home, why should they not be employed to extend and promote our markets abroad?[21]

William Allen White agreed whole-heartedly with McKinley's views on reciprocity and with his desire for free trade arrangements with the Puerto Ricans. He felt, like McKinley, that free trade was necessary to alleviate starvation on that island possession. At this time he voiced his first criticism of the trusts, and declared that they were halting the passage of a free trade measure because of selfish considerations. "Such trusts," said White, had "the greed of a beast and forfeit the consideration of man."[22] He feared for the welfare of the nation if the Republican congress allowed the trusts to influence them in this free trade issue.

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[21] Richardson, Messages, p. 6621.

[22] Emporia Gazette, March 1, 1900.

In March the house passed a Puerto Rican reciprocity measure and the editor was jubilant. He supported McKinley in this "plain duty. If that is party treason make the most of it."[23] He wrote an editorial admonishing party cohorts who had failed to support the measure, and he asked them to put selfish considerations aside.

> The Republican party is in the majority in congress. It can pass the necessary laws for free trade with Puerto Rico. If it values the respect and the confidence of the American people, the Republican party must make such laws . . . . What a travesty it is on the men who gave their lives in Cuba for freedom that the land bought with these men's blood should now be held in a state of commercial slavery. . . . Wherein are Cubans more deserving than Puerto Ricans? Why should we shed tears and blood over the rebellious Cubans and loot the peaceful Puerto Ricans until they starve . . . . And for what? Simply to satisfy a few industrial concerns in the east that would be wrecked--or think they would--by Puerto Rican free trade. The trusts are against colonial free trade. It would wreck some of them. If the Republican majority in congress is to decide between humanity and the trusts there should be no debate about the decision.[24]

When it became obvious a short time later that the senate would kill the tariff bill passed by the house, White was despondent. He called it a most shameful thing and conjectured that if we could impose a tariff tax on the territory of Puerto Rico, which was a United States possession, then we could impose another on the territory of New Mexico.[25]

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[23] Ibid., March 8, 1900.

[24] Ibid., March 1, 1900.

[25] Ibid., March 8, 1900.

A few weeks later a compromise measure was proposed which stood a good chance of being passed in both houses. The President was pleased and considered the proposed tariff just and fair. White was puzzled and disgusted at McKinley's acceptance of the compromise plan. He could not understand how the President was able to consider the proposed 15 per cent tariff a satisfactory substitute when he had asked for the whole loaf of free trade for Puerto Rico, and he felt that McKinley in his about face had broken the faith. Nor could he accept the President's statement that this new policy was necessary to Republican success at the polls in November; he did not feel that this was a correct interpretation of the public sentiment. Furthermore, even if this interpretation were to be proven accurate, he felt that the President and the legislators should rise above party considerations on this matter and work for the greater good. He considered Puerto Rican free trade a moral as well as a constitutional issue. It was "the old issue of taxation without representation which we have traditionally disfavored and are now overturning in Puerto Rico."[26]

In April the Senate passed the Puerto Rican tariff by a small majority. White bitterly deplored this as a "shameful" action, and felt that the only recourse left was with the

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[26] Ibid., March 15, 1900.

people. He argued that the measure must not be allowed to stand because "America cannot afford to begin its colonial career by creating an Ireland."[27]

In a short time White recovered from the depressing effects which this struggle had wrought in him, and with characteristic party loyalty and inconsistency he decided to champion the Republican measure now that it was an accomplished fact. The clause which helped to placate him most was that which provided for absolutely free trade between the United States and her island possession at the end of two years.

By June, the Puerto Rican measure which had seemed shameful and unconstitutional a few short months before was now hailed by the Gazette as the most liberal law concerning the island of Puerto Rico which had ever been enacted.[28] It was characteristic that White, a practical man, could so easily accept and rejoice in this thing which he had so bitterly opposed, once it had become a law of the land, particularly since it had been the product of a Republican administration.

On September 14, 1901, President McKinley died. During his administration there had been some downward revisions of

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[27] Ibid., April 5, 1900.

[28] Ibid., June 21, 1900.

the tariff accomplished by means of reciprocity treaties under the Dingley Act. One of his last acts was his Buffalo speech which favored an expansion of this policy of reciprocity. Roosevelt, pledged himself somewhat ambiguously to continue the McKinley policy toward the tariff. On the one hand he declared that he had early been taught the "doctrines of laissez-faire and free trade."[29] But, on the other hand, he insisted that there was a "general acquiescence" in the present tariff and that nothing could be more unwise than any general tariff changes at that time.

> Reciprocity must be treated as the handmaiden of protection. Our first duty is to see that the protection granted by the tariff . . . is maintained, and that reciprocity be sought for so far as it can safely be done without injury to our home industries . . . . Every application of our tariff policy to meet our shifting national needs must be conditioned upon the cardinal principle that the duties must never be reduced below the point that will cover the distance between the labor cost here and abroad . . . . Subject to this proviso of the proper protection necessary to our industrial well being at home, the principle of reciprocity must command our hearty support.[30]

White was very enthusiastic about Roosevelt's opinions on the tariff issue. They were cooly and sensibly presented by a practical man, and they were moderate.[31] He became a little worried, however, when enthusiastic Republicans began

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[29]Roosevelt, Autobiography, p. 350.

[30]Richardson, Messages, p. 6650.

[31]Emporia Gazette, October 3, 1901.

to climb onto the Roosevelt bandwagon and not only supported his tariff position, but began to embellish his views with their own. White feared that such actions might ruin the President's already "perfect" opinions on the tariff, and felt that some Republicans were beginning to go too far with their interpretations of reciprocity. He agreed with Roosevelt that there was danger in tinkering with the tariff, and began to write about reciprocity more cautiously.

> Reciprocity is a good thing on paper but it won't work as well in the law books. There is more danger of the prosperity of this country evaporating in the hot fight over what shall be put on the reciprocity list than there is from any other source.[32]

The editor became convinced that Wall Street and certain politicians in Washington were attempting to distort, for their own selfish ends, the reciprocity views which had been set forth by Roosevelt. To counteract this White resorted to a device which had served him well throughout his journalistic career. He drew a careful line of distinction between "just any reciprocity" which was confused, economically motivated by capitalists, and used as a political bandwagon by "fanatics and machine politicians", and the Roosevelt brand of reciprocity. Roosevelt reciprocity was moral, good, and instituted in the best interests of both American and foreign markets.[33]

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[32] Ibid., October 24, 1901.

[33] Ibid., July 24, 1902.

Joseph R. Burton, the senior Senator from Kansas, had long been a fly in White's political ointment. He was tried for irregular practices in office and ended his term in prison.[34] Evidence supplied by White was instrumental in bringing about his conviction. Before Burton was imprisoned, however, he had made the public statement that some states, such as Kansas, did not approve of reciprocity. White had sometimes said that for Burton to support something was enough to provoke his own opposition. Conversely, if Burton was against something, White was for it. He flatly stated that there could be no question about Kansas' approval of reciprocity; opinion in his state was unanimous and clear. It was not a business question but a moral issue, and "when it comes to a moral issue Kansas is never divided."[35] He also wrote what became a widely quoted magazine article which reiterated this theme.[36]

Senator Burton then lowered himself even more in White's opinion when he broke a promise which he had made to President Roosevelt to support a reciprocity agreement with Cuba which was pending. Although Burton had never favored reciprocity he had given his word to support Roosevelt, and had then withdrawn

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[34] White, Autobiography, p. 293.

[35] Emporia Gazette, June 19, 1902.

[36] W. A. White, "Cuban Reciprocity-A Moral Issue," McClure's Magazine, v. 19 (September, 1902), pp. 387-394.

that support. He began preaching a rebate plan in connection with the contemplated Cuban measure. The editor was irate and tore Burton apart editorially, while pleading passionately for public support of Roosevelt on this matter.[37] He became convinced that Burton and Wall Street were joined in an evil cabal aimed at discrediting the President and harming the laborer and farmer, for whom he had recently developed a deep concern.

> Whenever a tariff is found to be too high, it will come down. And whatever of evil there is in the system will be corrected. Roosevelt will not play favorites . . . . It is encouraging to find the new leader of the Republican party dragging the party away from the rut of commercialism. . . . Wherever the influence of Wall Street falls, the sentiment will be against Roosevelt.[38]

In the contemplated reciprocity agreement with Cuba the chief items under consideration for tariff reduction were Cuban sugar and tobacco. In November, 1903, Roosevelt convened the Congress in a special session to ask for this commercial treaty with Cuba, assuring them that such a treaty would not harm our industry and would secure the United States as well as Cuba, many economic advantages.[39] The reciprocity treaty with Cuba was consummated over the protests of American sugar producers and tobacco growers. It provided that we would admit all the dutiable products of Cuba at a reduction

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[37] Emporia Gazette, July 31, 1902.

[38] Ibid., September 25, 1902.

[39] Richardson, Messages, pp. 6781-6783.

of 20 per cent from the general tariff rates. Goods on the free list of either country were to remain there. Cuba agreed to admit most American products (tobacco was a significant exception) at reductions ranging from 20 to 40 per cent.[40] The agreement proved to be mutually advantageous and within ten years of its enactment trade between the two nations was tripled.[41] Roosevelt had conferred a "boon" upon Cuba,[42] or so he thought.

White rejoiced that the Cuban reciprocity measure was in accordance with what the well informed electorate demanded and expected. The treaty seemed to him a moral victory and the credit was due entirely to the President's undeviating determination to keep the faith with the new republic of Cuba. At last this country had "a leader who knows how to lead."[43]

In 1904 Roosevelt was nominated by the Republicans as their candidate for the Presidency, and the Democrats named Judge Alton B. Parker. Roosevelt and Senator Lodge agreed on a tariff plank to be included in the platform which stated that protection was a cardinal principle but that the schedule of duties could be altered from time to time if it became

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[40] Ibid., pp. 6783-6787.

[41] Faulkner, The Decline of Laissez Faire, pp. 65-66.

[42] Roosevelt, Autobiography, p. 545.

[43] Emporia Gazette, November 19, 1903.

evident that such alterations would be beneficial to both the people and the business interests of the country. White whole-heartedly supported this plank but cautioned that such a delicate task as tariff revision could only be entrusted to a Republican administration. He felt that such a tariff plank should please both sides. However, to elect a Democratic administration and expect them to enact a better tariff would be to invite once more the panic and disaster of 1893.[44]

Although forty years later William Allen White was to declare that he was never for a protective tariff his writings have shown that he supported the protective policies of first McKinley, and then Roosevelt. If we can accept his statement that he never sincerely and whole-heartedly accepted the theory of protection, then there are several factors which would help to explain his public support of the Republican measures in the decade after 1895. Party loyalty, which he possessed in a large degree, would be an important factor; the editor's views usually changed only as the party leaders altered theirs. His affection for Theodore Roosevelt and his loyal support of that man would be an important influence. His dislike of Senator Joseph Burton, and Burton's opposition to the Roosevelt policies would tend to make the editor even more determined in his stand. In the case of Cuba and Puerto Rico there were important considerations in

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[44] Ibid., May 19, 1904.

that this highly moral man was firmly convinced that tariff agreements with these countries were moral issues which America could not honorably ignore.

He was never an advocate of free trade, nor did he extend his support of reciprocity measures to countries other than those to which we were obligated as a result of the Spanish-American War. There was little agitation for a revision of the tariff in this decade. The general prosperity, coupled with Roosevelt's reluctance to alter the tariff, and the emergence of more pressing national issues, such as the trust problem, all tended to make this a comparatively quiet period in the tariff history of our country. White rode with the Republican tide.

CHAPTER VI

"TRUSTS AND THINGS"

The years from 1897 to 1904 were marked by a tremendous increase in business consolidation in the United States. Some of the causes for the national trend toward consolidation were the returning prosperity after 1893 and the national optimism in the years after the Spanish-American War, the legislation in such states as New Jersey, Delaware, and West Virginia which encouraged the growth of monopolies, the American patent system which in itself granted a type of monopoly control, the increased tendency toward large manufacturing establishments in this country, the desire of manufacturers to eliminate competition, and the desire for promoters' profits.[1]

Consolidation in this period was largely confined to the railroads and the manufacturing and mining industries. Certain industries such as shoe manufacturing and the cotton goods industries were relatively unaffected by the general increase in size and output which was occurring in the American industries; other industries such as the silk, carriage,

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[1] Mark Sullivan, The Turn of the Century (Vol. I of Our Times, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), p. 299.

lumber, and shipbuilding industries actually decreased in size during these years.[2]

Some forms of business consolidation which were popular in this period were the pools, trusts, holding companies, mergers, and variations on these forms. The holding company, or holding corporation as it was sometimes called, was the most effective form of business combination.[3] In this form of combination, as with the trust form, the Standard Oil Company took the lead. In 1899 that company had reorganized under the laws of New Jersey, and changed their corporation from a trust to a holding company.[4]

In the decade before 1897 there were less than one hundred industrial combinations in the United States. In the period from 1898 to 1904 there were 149 combinations organized, and 127 more were formed in the next three years. Altogether there were 318 active and important trusts in the United States. Of these, 236 were incorporated after

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[2]Harold U. Faulkner, The Decline of Laissez Faire (Vol. VII of The Economic History of the United States, New York: Rinehart and Co., 1951), p. 156.

[3]Mark Sullivan, The Turn of the Century, pp. 320-324.

[4]Ida M. Tarbell, The Nationalizing of Business, 1878-1898 (Vol. IX of A History of American Life, New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), p. 210.

January 1, 1898, and 170 of them were organized under the laws of New Jersey, where legislation beneficial to such combinations had been passed.[5] The year 1898 marked the beginning of the modern trust-forming period.[6]

The growth of the large business combinations, coupled with the abuses frequently inherent in these organizations and their casual disregard for public welfare, gave rise to anti-trust activities which took the form of muckraking. Ida M. Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, and Lincoln Steffens became familiar names on the American scene as a result of their activities in exposing the evils in business, politics, and our urban society.

When William Allen White became the editor of the Emporia Gazette he was cheerfully optimistic regarding the national prosperity and the good intent of big business in this country.[7] At this time White hated anything that smacked of reform. He and the millions of middle class people whom he represented were still imbued with the frontier belief in the free individual, private enterprise, and the socialistic dangers which lay in any attempt of the government to regulate the business of this country. White betrayed his social Darwinist sympathies with statements such as, "In this American

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[5] John Moody, The Truth About The Trusts (New York: The Moody Publishing Co., 1904), p. 486.

[6] Faulkner, The Decline of Laissez Faire, p. 162.

[7] Emporia Gazette, October 17, 1895.

government, paternalism plays no part. It is every man for himself. It is free for all and in the end the keenest, most frugal, and most industrious win."[8]

White feared that any attempts by the government to regulate business would endanger American institutions which had stood since 1776. The editor praised the Republicans for preserving our national institutions despite the denunciations of Bryan and the Populists. He felt that Bryan and his followers would like to implant socialism in America.[9]

The editor was a vehement champion of the railroads in this country. Consolidation had occurred not only in industry but also in public utilities such as the railroads. At the turn of the century ninety-five percent of the high grade rail mileage in the country was in the hands of six powerful groups. Dissatisfied with even this high degree of concentration the railroads were attempting to draw even closer together.[10] When the Populists complained about the abuses existing in the rail transportation of the nation, the editor was very indignant and when the Populists asked for government ownership of the railroads, he firmly opposed their views. He declared that he was in opposition to any measures which might prevent the railroads from running their own business

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[8] Ibid., July 31, 1896.

[9] Ibid., August 11, 1896.

[10] Harold Underwood Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914 (Vol. XI of A History of American Life, New York: MacMillan Co., 1936) pp. 32-33.

in their own way. He declared further that while the railroads might have some faults, they were the product of a system "which has thus far been found to be the best that has been invented. . . . There is probably more clap trap and flap doodle in circulation concerning the railroads than there is current concerning any other topic."[11]

The editor, like most of middle class America, supported McKinley as the best hope for democracy. He cherished a belief that any industrious, honest, loyal American could succeed as many of his friends had. He felt that the Populists and Democrats who were unable to achieve success for themselves were not looking to the government to help them. Such people were, to White, un-American, and a real menace to the economic well-being of our country. They failed to comprehend that the only hope for good government lay in the hands of safe and sane business men.

In 1889 Kansas had passed the first anti-trust law ever to be passed by a state.[12] In his famous editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?" White satirized bitterly the people and the state that could enact such legislation and then be proud of it. They were too short-sighted to see that they were frightening away capital, and thus prosperity.

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[11] Emporia Gazette, July 17, 1896.

[12] Sullivan, The Turn of the Century, p. 309.

They sought to regulate the very money power which could bring them relief; they criticized the railroads which had done more for Kansas than any other single agency. They sought to hamstring these "philanthropic" and beneficial agencies with government controls.[13]

In his early, conservative years White was particularly sensitive to any criticism of the railroads and their organization. He felt that any talk of a trust 'bogey' was exaggerrated and untrue, and he was even more convinced of this if the business under consideration happened to be a railroad. He replied with heated editorials to criticism that the railroads were robbing the people, frequently proclaiming them to be one of the best things which could happen to an area.

> What has become of the gentlemen who were rampant in Kansas a few years ago with a scheme to confiscate the railroads . . . . They played a steady stream of statistics upon the paralyzed hearers. These figures told them that the people were being robbed by the corporations and the chief robber was the railroad. Where are these gentlemen now? In Kansas there is a disposition to let business people solve business problems in a business-like way.[14]

White claimed that the population of Kansas had remained static for ten years because the railroads had been denounced by "demagogues" and had therefore stopped their labors in Kansas's behalf. Before the Populists had virtually driven

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[13] Emporia Gazette, August 15, 1896.

[14] Ibid., November 24, 1893.

railroad goodwill away, such corporations as the Santa Fe had aided immigration into Kansas by advertisements, capital, and business.[15] The Gazette declared that the railroads would resume their efforts in the state's behalf and predicted unheralded prosperity for Kansas if she would have the sense to silence the reformers and seek the goodwill of the railroad corporations.

The editor was thoroughly convinced that government and all industry should emulate the good example set for them by the railroads, and employ sensible businessmen to guide their affairs. He had a deep admiration for Mark Hanna whom he regarded as an excellent example of a successful business man who had applied business techniques to politics. In his early years he was able to see nothing but admirable qualities in the expanding corporations and business men who ran them.

By 1899 the Kansan began to feel a little uncertain about the increasing number of business combinations in this country. In 1898 the number of trusts and holding companies had sharply increased, and criticism of them was becoming more and more pronounced. The first indication that the editor was undergoing a change of opinion came when he resorted to a characteristic device and began distinguishing

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[15] Ibid., July 19, 1900.

between Democratic, Populist, and Republican views on trusts, and their different methods in dealing with the large corporations. Such distinctions on his part are unfailingly indicative of a pending change in point of view. Whenever he began to reverse his views on a matter he began by qualifying his earlier stand.

When the first faint glimmer of suspicion that the trusts might need regulating dawned on him, he retreated to the folds of Republicanism. As with tariff revision, the editor felt that governmental controls could be beneficially effected only by a Republican administration. No other party knew how to handle such a task for the greatest good of all the parties concerned.

> The difference between the Republican and Populist way of looking at trusts is this: The Republican farmer who has a refractory colt breaks him to work. The Populist farmer who has a refractory colt, kills him with an elm club, then goes around kicking because he has no horse to plow with.[16]

However, in his practical, optimistic manner, the editor did not believe that all trusts were evil. Even before Theodore Roosevelt made similar distinctions, White felt that there were good and bad in combinations as in men. A few refractory and selfish trusts were beginning to mar the economic horizon, but the best method of dealing with such

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16 Ibid., August 10, 1899.

combinations was not government regulation. He had not yet completely reversed his conservative stand but was working around to it gradually.

He felt that those trusts which were guilty of selfishness and disregard for the public welfare could be best dealt with by methods other than government control, which he feared in his early years might tend to advance the Socialist cause. He held that the best way to end such monopolies wasthrough enlightened public opinion and honest men. If such trusts were persistent, they would bring down the last resort, government regulations, on themselves. In an editorial entitled "Trusts and Things," he casually, but concernedly expresses his views at this time.[17]

He even began to view the railroads with a more objective eye. When the railroads in several states began to combine in opposition to the demands of the railroad commissions in those states, he argued that the railroads should pay more regard to the commissions which fairly represented the people and constituted boards of arbitration. He suggested, however, that perhaps the railroads were ignoring the commissions because of the caliber of the men who composed those boards. While cautioning the railroads to heed the will of the people which was expressed through the railroad commissions, he admonished the state governments to be more selective in regards to membership on the commissions.

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[17] Ibid., August 10, 1899.

> Too often the men who form these railroad commissions are ignorant and mercenary, with the morals of bandits and the crude intelligence of arrogant demagogues. These men too often regard the railroad as their prey and the people as their dupes. Too often the railroad commission in a state stands between the shipper and justice. But because these facts exist should be no justification for railroads combining to insult the people by defying the peoples' officers. If these men are bad, the railroads should point out this evil to the people.[18]

When there were rumors that a beef combine was causing much hardship to western cattlemen, White investigated the matter and was displeased with the situation that he found. He felt that there might as well be one big packing house since there was already a virtual monopoly in that industry. Although he found an "illegitimate" profit of five per cent to forty per cent, the butchers were still going broke. There was absolutely no competition among packers. He predicted that the beef combine would come to grief for its excesses.

> ((The beef combine)) is carrying its plans and devices beyond the legitimate paths of commercial profit. Nobody with any sense desires to restrict a business man using business methods. But common sense and common honesty and common courage demand that a brigand's schemes shall be checked. The difference between a packer in honest business and the beef combine, is the difference between a merchant behind his counter and Jesse James behind his gun. . . . The ranter will not stop this business. The politicians will have nothing to do with it. The 'tribune of the people' will only delay the chase. But the business man, the well-to-do, the thrifty, the economical will rise up in either a business or a political revolt and hitch the power gathered by the combines to the engine of government . . . . Someday these outlaws will be rounded up and the Republican party will brand them and put them in cells.[19]

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[18] Ibid., January 13, 1899.

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While the editor retained his faith in the will of the people to right matters, he was not blinded by this faith, nor by his ideals. He looked at the matter in his practical way, weighing what he saw against the already firmly established ways of capitalism and the greed of many men.

> There is a difference between protecting the legitimate rights of capital which ranting Populists would destroy, and legalizing any devilment that capital can devise. It is all right to protect capital in its rights, but it is utterly and criminally wicked to assume that men with capital can do no wrong. Men with capital are just like men without it, a little good, and a little bad, and a pretty average medium. Here and there, there is a Robin Hood in the packing house . . . a Billy-the-Kid on the farm. Both are enemies to society . . . . The trust in and of itself may be a good thing. It has many advantages. It cannot be abolished. But it must be controlled. Greed in man is the mainspring that moves the world. It cannot be abolished, but the penitentiary controls it. That is the trust question in a nutshell.[20]

While White believed that the will of the people was the primary force in our society and could rectify any evils which might exist, he also believed that when a law or institution continued to exist it was an indication that the people wanted it thus. He also seems to believe that because such laws or institutions exist there is an implicit good in them, and therefore the majority of the population are retaining them despite the protests of the few.[21]

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[20] Ibid., August 10, 1899.

[21] Ibid., March 10, 1898.

White was gradually adapting himself to the view that there was more evil in the trusts than he had originally perceived. His pendulum was swinging from a laissez faire policy toward business, to government regulation of those trusts which proved evil or predatory. He had performed the first two steps of his usual ritual in changing an opinion. First, he had distinguished nicely between what he and the Republicans supported as opposed to the distorted views of the hostile camp; second, he had minimized the issue somewhat by pointing out that there were only isolated, not universal, abuses in the trust system. When the abuses and the public clamor grew more insistant he felt that much of the blame should be laid to the individuals responsible, not to the institution itself. Next he labeled the whole trust controversy a red herring which ambitious, opportunist politicians had seized on in the absence of any more popular issues.

The trust, he said, was being used as a bogey man by some politicians to frighten the people. "Let a politician be out of an issue and he takes up the cause of the Great Plain People against the Tyrannical Trusts." The only thing "scarey" about a trust was the fact that it gave manipulators a chance to be greedy. Many economic abuses which were being committed were wrongly attributed to the trusts when the blame could be more properly laid to greedy and unscrupulous men. "It would be as sensible to legislate against the church, or against matrimony, or against banks, or against government

as it will be to legislate against the trusts. It seems strange that . . . no one has thought to legislate not against the trusts, but against the scoundrels that abuse the trusts."[22]

White suggested that if a trust was evil the only moral and practical solution was to destroy it, not with fine words, but with fine deeds. He proposed that buyers boycott unfair combinations because the buyer of a commodity from such an organization shared equally in the guilt, and, therefore, both should be punished. "You can't lift up your eyes in sanctimonious prayer against the trusts' manipulators when you share the booty with them in murderous prices . . . . No reform is accomplished by wholesale."[23] However, the editor did not offer any practical suggestions regarding the punishment which should be meted to the purchasers. He also ignored the fact that his proposal to punish both the buyer and the seller was as paternalistic and un-American as the proposal for government regulations of business which he had once abhorred and still distrusted somewhat. His suggestion went beyond any demands made by the Populists or Democrats. The editor was wont to suffer from a lack of perspective in the heat of a controversy. For the moment his practical nature

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[22] Ibid., September 14, 1899.

[23] Ibid., September 14, 1899.

had abandoned him and he had lapsed into an extremist viewpoint, a situation always repugnant to him.

Belatedly, White discovered Henry George's Progress and Poverty, which had been published in 1879. He did not agree with George that the one solution for the problem of monopoly was a single tax on land values, though he approved George's dislike of too much regulation and restriction. He felt that the idea of abolishing all taxes, save a single levy on economic rent, was just short of idiotic. While gripped by an increasing sympathy for the common man he defended the "poor farmer" whom he had much abused in the past, along with his much beloved respectable middle class. He feared that both of these would suffer should the Georgian thesis ever be put into effect. A single tax would weigh most heavily on the already oppressed farmer and would only add to his burdens.[24]

While still enmeshed in the problem of abuses in the trust system, White extended his criticism to a new type of coercion by combination which had lately appeared. In Patterson, New Jersey, a "labor trust," a union, had prevented a woman from working to support her baby and her dying husband. White looked on this combination in exactly the same light as he had come to look at combinations of capital. "A labor trust may be just as bad as any other trust if it is run wrong."[25]

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[24] Ibid., September 25, 1898.

[25] Ibid., November 9, 1899.

In 1899 the railroads of Kansas decided to raise their rates, much to the dismay of the shippers in that area. White still harbored an especial affection for the railroads and was not as critical of them as he was coming to be of industrial trusts. Though he had proceeded to the point where he acknowledged that some government regulations might be necessary to curb greedy trusts, he did not welcome the idea of politicians "meddling" in a dispute between the railroads and the people. He wrote:

> The railroads of Kansas have decided to increase freight rates to just as steep as the traffic will bear. The railroads are not to be blamed. They are not in business for fun. They are human. They are going to hog the platter if they can just as they would do if they were individuals and not corporations. The rates now are high enough, but if the railroads can increase them, that's their gain. However, if the shippers stand by and don't protest . . .that's their loss and they are fools if they stand it . . . . This is a business question. There should be no rabid addresses, no feeling. It is a cold-blooded business proposition. And it should be settled by the courts as befits business men to arbitrate their differences. (Otherwise) the railroad question will be shifted into politics and there will be the old Harry to pay.[26]

In 1899 there occurred a small panic in Wall Street caused by trouble in industrial stocks. White seized on this opportunity to chide those people who had regarded the trusts as permanent, unshakable institutions. He wrongly interpreted the small flurry as an indication that the trust as a form of business organization was passing from the American scene. He was pleased to note that in their brief

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[26] Ibid., November 30, 1899.

stay as a form of business the dangerous precedent of government regulation had been averted. The people who had been frightened of combination and desired such regulation could once more relax. Their imagined dangers were on the decline and it had all come about without resorting to "Socialistic" measures. Even though the trust was "on the way out," they were still "strictly a business problem, having their life in business laws, and best settled by business men in the ordinary course of every day business."[27]

Although he had predicted that the trusts would survive only a few more months, a few years at most, White still found it necessary to defend combination from the slanders of reformers. He had consistently denied any real or present need for government interference in all but a very few trusts although he had begun to acknowledge occasionally that if abuses became prevalent such a course would be warranted. He was still convinced that trusts were a normal manifestation on our economic scene and in the American tradition. Trusts were, to White, a normal increase and growth, occasioned by the expanded volume of world commerce. They differ, said White, only in extent and degree. He made the mistake of oversimplying the problem and as a result his conclusions were somewhat inaccurate. According to the editor, the evolution of trusts in the United States could be easily explained thus:

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[27] Ibid., June 21, 1900.

> Centuries ago when the individual found that his business was growing too large for him to handle, he took a partner. They formed a trust in a small degree. Fifty years ago the partnership form of business began to give way to the small corporation as business men found that corporations afforded better facilities and protection to their business. More recently corporations grew in size until we have experienced the very large corporations called trusts. In nearly every case they are neither more nor less than partnerships, the only difference being in extent and degree. The increase in the world's volume of business has compelled the growth from the original partnership to large corporations.[28]

Shortly after the middle of 1900 an uneasy note can be discerned in White's views of the trusts. Though his public utterances on the issue were not yet much changed there began to creep into the editorials an occasional note of fear. He even occasionally criticized the railroads. After months of deriding any talk of a railroad trust as a menace, he wrote, "The railroad octopus in the state is unchained; he is roaming the hills and dales of the state dragging his lariat. . . ."[29] Before many more months were to pass, the editor would be advocating many of the same measures which he had denounced when the Populists sponsored them.

He retained his view that not only the capitalist was responsible for the situation, but the consumer as well, and to this duo he added a third responsible factor. This final element which made the trust a possibility was labor. All

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[28] Ibid., June 21, 1900.

[29] Ibid., September 19, 1900.

three were absolute essentials and combined they formed a trust. Unfortunately, White did not elaborate on labor's role as he did the consumer's. He flatly and emphatically stated, however, that labor shared in the guilt of the trusts, if guilt there was.[30]

By 1900 White had further reason to distrust the trusts when he became convinced that they were the chief hindrance to the passage of the Puerto Rican free trade measure which he considered a wise and humanitarian piece of legislation. He considered their actions and attitudes on the matters ignorant, and dangerous to their own best interests. He was uneasily aware that the stand which some trusts had taken on the matter was economically motivated and he felt that the Republicans should most certainly fail to support business in such a stand.[31]

Between 1899 and 1900 White had been engaged intermittently in writing a book entitled Stratagems and Spoils. This book was a collection of stories which reflected his philosophy during his early years as the editor of the Gazette. He ridiculed the Populists and their program. He stated that legislation could not offer any solution for the ills of our society, indeed, it might actually prove harmful to undertake such

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[30] Ibid., June 28, 1900.

[31] Ibid., March 1, 1900.

action. He did not consider legislative reform of business of sufficient importance to discuss since he considered such a course both dangerous and unnecessary. The problems which confronted America could best be met by working toward a more enlightened electorate which would send "good men" into public offices, and, coincidentally, most of the good men were Republicans.[32] By the time that this book was published in 1901 White had almost completely reversed his views on these matters and through his friendship with the new President, Roosevelt, he had become much more liberal in his political and social philosophy. There was no evidence of his current increasingly liberal attitudes in his book. It represented White in his most conservative early years before the turn of the century.

After six years of extolling the virtues of business men White stated editorially that they were as blind and as foolish as the Populists had been at the height of their folly. Once more it was a case of the editor deploring excess where it existed, or sometimes where he imagined it existed. Business men had become "all swelled up with vanity. They imagine that money is bigger than government, beyond control,

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[32] White, W. A., Stratagems and Spoils: Stories of Love and Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), passim.

and an entirely independent creation." White went a step further and not only accused business of ignorance and vanity, but also of corruption.[33]

His wrath had finally been fully aroused by the realization that money had frequently purchased immunization from legislation. Both trust magnates and Populists were reckoning without taking into consideration the "sound racial honesty of the Anglo-Saxon people. Whoever rests his case on corruption, be he Populist or trust magnate, is a stupid fellow who has a great lesson to learn, and teaching is expensive."[34]

Although he was for the moment disillusioned with business men, he retained his faith in the Republican party to right matters. He spoke for his party and claimed that they were seeking a system of control and regulation. Such regulation of business would be accomplished by occasional examinations of business organizations, a course which was naturally opposed by Wall Street. He had no faith in the ability of the Democrats to deal with such a delicate economic problem. The Democrats would confiscate and ruin the trusts, destroying prosperity and business alike. The editor did not advocate the extreme of abolition of trusts, but he had finally declared himself for effective and immediate regulation.[35]

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[33] Emporia Gazette, October 31, 1901.

[34] Ibid., October 31, 1901.

[35] Ibid., October 31, 1901.

White's decision was undoubtedly influenced by his close association with Theodore Roosevelt who was expressing very similar statements, and such friends as Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Ray Stannard Baker. McClure's Magazine had begun a series of reform articles and while White never really became a muckraker these writers were his close friends and he respected their views. His associations with these people further convinced him that the "malefactors of great wealth" must be curbed.[36]

After McKinley's assassination the White House was "crowded with people, mostly reformers, all day long."[37] If this is overstating the case a little, at least the new President could accurately be regarded as extremely friendly to the reform group. Lincoln Steffens, a muckraker and a close friend of William Allen White, suggested to the editors of McClure's that White be retained to write a series of articles discussing corruption in the state governments. This series was to be a follow-up piece to Steffens' series on corruption in our city politics.

White never did write any real muckraking articles in the full sense of that word. He was constitutionally and emotionally ill equipped to do so because of his optimistic,

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[36]Johnson, White's America, p.137-138.

[37]Lincoln Steffens, The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), pp. 502-503.

sentimental outlook on life. He did, however, make half-hearted attempt to write such a series of articles for the Saturday Evening Post. These articles amounted to little more than a eulogy of Theodore Roosevelt's actions in the anti-trust movement. Roosevelt was the "attorney of the people," leading them in their fight against the "barons of high finance."[38] A year later he wrote an article on Roosevelt and his successful prosecution of the postal frauds.[39] Most of these articles were more concerned with glorifying Roosevelt than in exposing evil and corruption.

Although the editor was never a very enthusiastic muckraker himself he did learn a great deal from the reformers and they were instrumental in opening his eyes to the need for some government regulations of business. Although these people were his personal friends and he admired them and respected their views he eventually came to share the President's views on them and in time became a little irritated with their constant hammering on evil. White and Roosevelt felt that these people were seeing only the filth in society.[40] Nonetheless, the reformers were a very important

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[38] W.A. White, "The Politicians: Our Hired Men at Washington," Saturday Evening Post, v. 175, (Mar. 14, 1903), pp.1-3; "The Brain Trust," Ibid., v. 175, (March 21, 1903), pp.1-3; "The Balance-Sheet of the Session," Ibid., v. 175 (Mar. 28,1903), pp.8,9,22,23; "The President" Ibid., v. 175 (April 4, 1903), pp. 4,5,14; "The Fair Play Department," Ibid., v. 175 (May 2,1903), pp. 1-2; "Swinging Around the Circle With Roosevelt," Ibid., v. 175 (June 27, 1903), pp. 1-2. passim.

[39] W. A. White, "Roosevelt and the Postal Frauds," McClure's Magazine, v. 23 (September, 1904), pp. 506-520.

[40] Johnson, White's America, pp. 134-139.

element in the editor's swing away from the laissez faire theory of government toward business.

By 1902 the editor had become thoroughly inured to the idea that wealth needed regulation and his first outburst of hurt indignation and disillusionment gave way to a more sophisticated and cynical attitude toward big business. He wrote:

> A new element has entered into the American government: It is the financial and industrial corporation. It has a part in the government . . . and controls in a measure the laws and customs which affect corporations . . . . The powers which the corporations have, they got from the people . . . . Sensible people no longer grow excited over the fact that corporations help to shape legislation . . . . . they see that the part taken by corporate influence is not necessarily unfairly taken, nor for unfair measures . . . . Dealing with intricate financial and industrial problems requires a technical knowledge and an acumen not possessed by the average man and hence is not reflected in the average legislative majority through the ordinary course of popular government. Hence the change in the form of government, unconsciously, from popular to party government in which the corporation plays a perfectly legitimate, almost open-handed part.
>
> It is not corrupt politics. No one is bribed. There is no lobby. It is all perfectly regular and thoroughly established. The money contributed by corporations is used by committees in a simple legitimate way; it is a matter of public record and no wrong is done anyone. The thing about the system which gives nervous people a shock is the fact that the people no longer have all the power they had under the Constitution. That is gone and will never come back till the people grow wise enough to handle the new conditions wisely, and justly, and intelligently.[41]

This editorial betrays some of White's most consistent characteristics. He always approved of business men and their

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[41] Emporia Gazette, January 9, 1902.

methods in handling affairs practically. He also had always betrayed a tendency to accept and cling to the status quo. Now that the business men were firmly established in our government the editor was satisfied to accept the situation and to make the best of it. This respect which he always seemed to hold for the status quo seems to have been his anchor on a scene which sometimes shifted too rapidly for the country editor's tastes.

Shortly after Roosevelt became President he made clear his position on the trust question and big business in this country. He supported government regulations over all big business combinations engaged in interstate commerce. He stated that he wanted to maintain a position somewhat between that position established by the reactionaries and the extreme progressives, and would like to protect the "good" trusts while exposing the "bad" trusts.[42] The editor was extremely pleased that the President was taking a stand against predatory combinations, an attitude that he considered "most courageous and worthwhile." When Roosevelt had been in office for almost a year White wrote an anniversary article in which he praised his friend and rejoiced that the President had not proven to be the proverbial bull in the china shop which unkind

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[42] Theodore Roosevelt, Autobiography, pp. 431-432.

opponents had predicted. Moreover, Roosevelt had kept his sharp eye on business and the people alike. "The President takes pains to show honor to the masses, even against the classes."[43]

No more congenial administration could possibly have presented itself to the editor than that of Roosevelt. He was happy to be considered a member of that distinct group which believed in "conservative progress."[44] He had been uneasily aware during the McKinley administration that there was an understanding between the Republicans in power and Wall Street that there would be no tampering with the trusts. He was pleased and satisfied that Roosevelt was breaking this unholy alliance and that now the understanding was off. He wrote that the fact that "certain trusts" had contributed heavily to the Republican campaign in 1896 and again in 1900 would impose no obligations on President Roosevelt.[45]

By 1902 it had been definitely established that Roosevelt and White agreed fully in their views on the trusts. Indeed, wherever the editor's views might have differed slightly in the past, he quickly altered them to match the Roosevelt line. He graciously deferred to the President's views on all matters of domestic interest in these years, so deep was his affection and admiration for him.

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[43] Emporia Gazette, September 25, 1902.

[44] Ibid., September 25, 1902.

[45] Ibid., September 25, 1902.

When he was assured that Roosevelt agreed with his increasingly liberal views on combinations in industry, he felt free to unleash more criticism of the trusts. It seems, however, that the editor would have been much more vociferous in his denunciations of business combinations if it had not been for Roosevelt's somewhat moderating influence. Although White was now fully convinced of the predatory aspects of many of the trusts, he assured his readers that Roosevelt's promise to bring these "brutes" to the halter was sufficient assurance of his future plans. He declared that crass wealth was drunk with power, but held that Roosevelt would curb the selfish instincts of the monopolists.[46]

William Allen White was very favorably impressed by Ida M. Tarbell's book, The History of the Standard Oil Company. He felt that all discussion of the trust problem prior to the publication of this book could be compared to a seventeenth century discussion of witchcraft, due to the public's previous ignorance of the real facts. He termed this a serious contribution to our economic literature, and a scientific treatment of the facts. He once more ably set forth the prevalent thinking of the grass-roots and middle class America.

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[46] White, "One Year of Roosevelt," Saturday Evening Post, v. 175 (October 4, 1902), pp. 3-4.

> Miss Tarbell has no prejudices, no theory to prove, no political ambition to gratify, no clients to satisfy. She is seeking facts and interpreting them in truth. Miss Tarbell with her history will do more to solve the trust problem by defining it than any writer or statesman has done to date. . . . . the plain, scientific facts about trusts are set down carefully and sanely . . . . The country owes her a debt of gratitude.[47]

In 1903 White was concerned lest Grover Cleveland receive the Democratic nomination in 1904. He was convinced that J. Pierpont Morgan and Wall Street interests were backing this candidate in a sinister move to unseat Roosevelt whom they feared. He feared that if the move was to prove successful, and Cleveland was reelected, all of the good work which Roosevelt and the Republicans had done on the trust issue might be undone.[48] The rumor proved false and the editor never referred to the matter again.

The railroads had begun to receive their share of criticism from the editor. He had voluntarily surrendered his annual railroad pass, a privilege which he had always enjoyed and made much use of, with the comment that free railroad passes were, "one of the things that((don't))go with me."[49] After he had done this he felt more free to criticize abuses which he saw in the railroads. He was suspicious of the increasingly large part the roads played in the state government.

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[47]Emporia Gazette, November 13, 1902.

[48]Ibid., July 2, 1903.

[49]Johnson, Selected Letters, p. 52.

He conceded that they might have some business in politics just as any citizen did, "but that business should be for self defense only."[50] He asserted that the rails had been treated fairly by the Republican regimes and had grown steadily in power during Republican administrations, and that now they were trying to use this acquired power to interfere in politics. He called such encroachment "mighty poor judgment and the kind of domineering that makes Populists."[51] In all of his increasing criticism of the railroads in this period he always exempted one line from any wrongdoing, the Santa Fé. The Santa Fé, White commented later, had for ten years kept out of politics and had made friends by such a course, unlike other lines who "have been in it to their ears."[52]

In 1902 President Roosevelt launched a suit against the Northern Securities Company, a holding company formed by the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads. After two years this case reached the Supreme Court of the United States and on March 14, 1904, they handed down their decision. The Court ruled that the Northern Securities Company was an illegal combination in restraint of trade. Roosevelt declared that "the power to deal with industrial monopoly and supress

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[50] Emporia Gazette, June 18, 1903.

[51] Ibid., July 2, 1903.

[52] Johnson, Selected Letters, p. 69.

it and to control and regulate combinations, of which the Knight Case had deprived the Federal Government, was thus restored to it by the Northern Securities Case."[53]

Of course William Allen White was pleased and proud that "Roosevelt's case" has been won. Hw wrote of the decision:

> The victory of the national administration over what President Roosevelt has often seen fit to call the "wealthy criminal classes" is one that should strengthen the faith of Republicans. The defeat of the merger is more than a victory for President Roosevelt. He started the suit; he urged it against all the vicious assaults that the vicious element of organized wealth could make on him. The President had good courage and good sense in all the contest, but if the Republican party, which has practically had the naming of the American courts for the past twenty-five years, and has had charge of the public sentiment of the country--if the Republican party had been recreant in all these years the people would have lost. The contest was essentially a victory of the Republican party. It should teach the railroads one thing; that aggrandizement is the most dangerous position for a corporation to take. The railroad should be in politics for defense and defense only, and not to control policies. . . . In Kansas just now the railroads control more thoroughly than they ever did before. They head the national delegation to the Republican convention, and the very men who were most bitter against Roosevelt for his fight on the merger are the employers of the heads of the Kansas delegation to Chicago, The railroads dominated the committee on credentials at the Republican convention . . . . The people demand of the executive that it stand as Roosevelt stands, for the people and against railroad aggrandizement.[54]

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[53] Roosevelt, Autobiography, pp. 423-430.

[54] Emporia Gazette, March 17, 1904.

The editor continued his opposition to railroad interference in politics in general and in Kansas in particular. He accused them of electing corrupt politicians like Senator Burton of Kansas to office; he blamed the railroads for the defeat of fine candidates like Governor Stanley. He predicted that the activities of the Harriman interests in building up political "railroad machines" was going to result in anti-railroad legislation because the wrath of the people has been aroused at their high handed tactics. Once again he admonished the rail lines to emulate the policies of the Santa Fe which "doesn't meddle in politics except for self defense. Why don't other roads do the same? Why not let the people run their own politics?"[55]

At the close of 1904 White had become a "full blown progressive."[56] He no longer wavered in his treatment of American industrial combinations. He vociferously advocated government supervision and regulation of big business. He had at one time reluctantly conceded that the corporation, like the railroad, had a right to interfere in politics in a defensive capacity. Now he wrote of such interference: "When a corporation gets into politics it has to use those weapons of offense and defense that the Lord gives it; in that way it is like

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[55] Ibid., April 21, 1904.

[56] Johnson, White's America, pp. 148-149. passim.

the humble, but much respected skunk."[57] On one fine spring day while commenting editorially on the joys of living he noted that during that week the House of Representatives had passed 319 pension bills in two hours, "And that was better than passing one bill to aid a trust."[58] This was quite a departure in one short decade from his strong beliefs in the self-sufficiency of the individual, and the dangers of Socialism which lay in the aid from the government which Populist and Democratic "failures" had been seeking.

The optimistic editor found a heartening incident on the national scene. A union had had one of its own members arrested for slugging a scab. American Federation of Labor President, Samuel Gompers, endorsed the stand of the union and the editor agreed with him that the only way to win strikes was for a labor union to remain within the law. White found the actions of the union even more meritorious in the light of the bad example which had been set for them by the corporations which frequently took the law into their own hands, or distorted it to suit their purposes, and yet frequently emerged victorious from legal squabbles. He predicted; "In the end the corporations will fail . . . . Every day in this world men who work with their hands are rising in

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[57] Emporia Gazette, April 21, 1904.

[58] Ibid., April 14, 1904.

the scale of social and economic importance because of their mental and moral strength. . . . These words are written by one who believes that ultimately the laborers of this land will come into a broader share in the good things of this land."[59]

Only once in his progressive years did White revert to his early thesis that the ambitious individual could defeat the monster trust, and even succeed in competition with them. Since this occasion was the business anniversary of a close friend, a successful, self-made man, White's words on this occasion cannot be considered too significant, or indicative of his feelings on big business in general. The editor declared that though it had been said that the doors of business were closed to the individuals by the combinations of great capital, A. O. Rorabaugh, a Kansas merchant, had proven this to be false. "The personal element enters into success. This is the way it was in the beginning, and it is the way it will be when the curtain falls, no matter what laws, or trusts, or combinations come up. Energy will win if it is well directed. Nothing can overcome this rule of human conduct."[60]

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[59] Ibid., May 5, 1904.

[60] Ibid., May 12, 1904.

Theodore Roosevelt received the Republican nomination for President in 1904. This was expected and there was no real fight in the convention. White, of course, had been working quietly toward this end for several years and was elated now that his idol could become President in his own right. To the editor the chief force to combat in the election was the money power which he felt was seeking the defeat of Roosevelt. The main theme in White's support of Roosevelt in this campaign was that the President's election was necessary if the prosecution of the trusts was to be continued.

White felt that only Roosevelt and the Republicans could honestly and efficiently enforce the anti-trust laws. The great problem before the country was the distribution of wealth.

> The problem facing the country which demands adjustment is the problem concerning the equitable distribution of wealth piling up in this country . . . . When a man owns more than a million he is using the surplus to promote great deals in which there are unfair profits. These profits come out of someone--partly out of the laborers at the factory, partly out of the general public. This is wrong.[61]

White was jubilant at Roosevelt's election. He said that Roosevelt had now led the Republican party away from the issues of the nineties, away from the problems concerned

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[61] Ibid., November 2, 1904.

with the accumulation of wealth toward problems that were concerned with the equitable distribution of wealth. The trust problem could be attacked sanely and without malice. Johnson, White's biographer, states that this was so close to Roosevelt's views that White was probably paraphrasing one of their conversations.[62]

By 1905 William Allen White supported progressive principles so thoroughly that he supported a state owned refinery. In 1905 Kansas had an oil boom. Governor E. W. Hoch, to off-set the Standard Oil Company's monopoly established a state refinery as a way of checking that company's rates. When the Standard Oil Company sought to place an ad in the Emporia Gazette to present their side of the case, White refused. He wrote them: "I do not wish to be a Pharisee in this matter, and yet it seems to me that in view of the stand that the state of Kansas as a state has taken in regard to the Standard, it would not be right for me as a citizen to take the other side--even to the extent of printing your copy mark advertising--of the controversy for a fee.[63] Ida Tarbell joined White and Governor Hoch in their successful fight to

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[62] Johnson, White's America, pp. 145-146

[63] Johnson, Selected Letters, p. 67.

establish the state refinery, and White observed that Kansas had acted in the interests of all America against unfair monopolies in this matter.[64]

After the Republican victory in 1904 the editor no longer feared that government regulation would lead to tyranny. He was confident that under the leadership of Roosevelt, the United States could regulate the forces of greed and exploitation without endangering individual liberties. Furthermore, he optimistically contended that the nation was in the grip of a moral awakening; crass wealth and vested interests were being driven from the political scene. Not only did big business have the duty to conduct itself morally, but small business men and the middle-class also shared in this responsibility.[65]

White had run the full gamut in the decade from 1895 until 1905 from a conservative, laissez faire attitude toward business, to a progressive, benevolent attitude of regulation for the greatest good of all. He was once more in the familiar position of advocating policies which he had deplored in the hands of the reformers, Populists, and Democrats, now that such policies were advocated by respectable Republicans, the great middle-class, and honest business men.

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[64] Johnson, White's America, p. 149.

[65] White, "The Golden Rule," Atlantic Monthly, v. 96 (October, 1905), pp. 433-441, passim.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Because of the nature of the problem with which this paper deals, the newspaper files of the Emporia Gazette were the most important source materials used. These were available on microfilm at the Michigan State College Library. Unfortunately, there were several gaps of a few weeks or a few months in the early copies of this paper, particularly in the year 1897. This writer was able to fill in some of these omissions with the microfilmed copies of the Gazette and some of the White letters which were available at the University of Chicago.

White's letters were an interesting source and cast additional light on his private opinions and affairs. These were available in Walter Johnson's Selected Letters of William Allen White (New York: Henry Holt, 1947). Elting E. Morison's collection of Theodore Roosevelt letters, The Years of Preparation, Vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) was a little less important but equally interesting in that it revealed Roosevelt's relationship with White more clearly.

White's many books and magazine articles were an invaluable source. Of prime import was his Autobiography (New York: MacMillan, 1946) which is an excellent and full account particularly of his early years, and an equally fine

picture of his time. Other books by White which rendered much information were The Real Issue (Chicago: Way and Williams, 1896) and Stratagems and Spoils (New York: Scribner's, 1901).

A Bibliography of the Published Works of William Allen White (Topeka, 1947) by Walter Johnson and Alberta Pantle, which was first published in the Kansas Historical Quarterly and then reprinted in pamphlet form, was a great convenience. William L. White, the son of William A. White was interviewed by this writer when he visited the Michigan State College campus in 1950 and was able to give some valuable advice on the validity (in his opinion) of certain biographies written about his father and the location of some source material.

Some of the most interesting and informative journal articles by the editor were "Hanna," which was published in McClure's (November, 1900), "McKinley and Hanna," in the Saturday Evening Post (March 12, 1904), "What the West Thinks of Wall Street Now," in Colliers (November 28, 1903), and "The Dollar in Politics: Some Modern Methods in Popular Misgovernment," which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post (July 2, 1904). He wrote a series for the Saturday Evening Post which was supposedly an attempt at muckraking. The best of these articles were "The Politicians: Our Hired Men at Washington," (March 14, 1903) and "The Reorganization of the Republican Party," (December 3, 1904). The rest of the articles in the series were merely a chronicle of Roosevelt's

successes as President. One of his best magazine articles and one which was widely quoted was "Cuban Reciprocity--A Moral Issue," in McClure's (September, 1902).

Autobiographies of some of White's contemporaries, men who were his friends, were valuable sources for background material as well as presenting different aspects of the editor through another person's eyes. The best of these were Roosevelt's Autobiography (New York: Scribner's, 1929) and The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931). Biographies were valuable for the same reasons. Some of these were Charles S. Olcott's Life of William McKinley, 2 vol. (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1916), Joseph B. Bishop's Theodore Roosevelt and His Time, 2 vol. (New York: Scribner's, 1920), Thomas Beer's The Life of Mark Hanna, Herbert Croly's Marcus Alonzo Hanna, His Life and Work, and Henry F. Pringle's Theodore Roosevelt (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931). Special attention should be paid to Walter Johnson's comprehensive biography William Allen White's America. While this is an excellent account of White and his work it tends to paint entirely too favorable a picture of White and treats him more from the standpoint of his published works than his day to day writings in the Gazette. In short, it is too charitable and presents the popular view of White as a wise seer and typical country editor. Unpublished materials presented interesting information but not much that was new or important. An exception to this was Fenstad Trondby's "Political Philosophy

of William Allen White," (University of Chicago, 1928), a Ph. D. dissertation. Unfortunately, this work dealt with his political philosophy in his later, more liberal years.

An excellent account of Populism was found in John D. Hicks' The Populist Revolt, A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1931). Harold U. Faulkner's The Quest For Social Justice, 1898-1914, Vol. XI in Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon R. Fox, ed., A History of American Life, 13 vols., (New York: MacMillan, 1948) deals with certain phases of our economic and social history as does Mark Sullivan's The Turn of the Century, Vol. I in Our Times, The United States, 1900-1925, 6 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1927). An important economic history is Faulkner's The Decline of Laissez Faire, 1897-1917, Vol. VII of The Economic History of the United States (New York: Rinehart, 1951). Raymond Curtis Miller's unpublished Master's thesis and Ph. D. dissertation were excellent accounts of Kansas and Populism in the decade at the turn of the century. These were "The Economic Basis of Populism in Kansas," (University of Chicago, 1923) and "The Populist Party in Kansas," (University of Chicago, 1928). These were very valuable sources for material about the economic history and the political unrest in Kansas during White's early years. James Ford Rhodes' work, The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1922) also provided valuable background information about the years with which this thesis deals.

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