

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION OF 1896 IN ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is a condensed version of Mr. Douglass' paper, "A Political and Economic Analysis of the Election of 1896 in Erie, Pennsylvania." The full length version discusses whether or not 1896 in Erie was a "critical election" as that term is used by political scientists and historians and analyzes the impact of religious affiliation on the Erie voter. The complete version is available at the Edinboro State College Library.

The period from the beginning of the Civil War to the entrance of the United States into the Spanish-American War must stand socially, economically and politically as some of the most turbulent in our nation's history. Though the memory of the Civil War had not yet waned, it and Reconstruction were being set aside in favor of current problems and projects. Economically, a new industrial order was being formed - business had become big business. Coinciding with this new industrial order and to a large extent because of it, new problems arose associated with modern society - overcrowding, the management of unmanageable cities, and to further complicate matters, the arrival of a large number of immigrants from Europe and Asia. Neither the Congress nor the Executive branch were able to exert concerted leadership to deal with the problems and the solutions thereof. As a consequence, the subsequent unrest manifested itself in labor disputes and the creation of minor political parties to right the wrongs of society.

Aside from the war years of the sixties, the decade of the nineties must be considered as the most crucial of that period. The 1890's was the culmination of the social, political, and economic upheavals of the latter 1800's - "the watershed of American history."¹ The decade of the nineties begun with control of the government by the republicans. the GOP took the opportunity to pass a high tariff bill in 1890. As a result, the electorate turned to the Democrats, electing their Presidential candidate in 1892. In 1893, however, a crippling depression struck and that, combined with dissension within the Democratic party, turned the electorate to the Republicans in 1894. By 1896 the frustration felt by many was ready to be vented. Gradually the currency issue became more intense so that by 1896 the machinery of the Democratic party was captured by those supporting the coining of silver. In 1896, for the first time since 1860, there was a clear difference between the two major parties.

The Presidential election of 1896 remains as one of the most curious and important in American history. It was the year in which the frustration of many groups within the electorate culminated. Those supporting the coinage of silver not only captured the machinery of the Populist part , supplanting other reforms urged by that group, but also captured the machinery of the Democratic party and nominated one of their own for the Presidency. It has been argued that as a result of the issues and stands of the two major parties that a polarization of the electorate occurred. Essentially, "haves" or those who were wealthy supposedly supported the Republican party and the "have-nots" gave their support to the Democratic cause. Further, it has been suggested that in 1896 a realignment occurred whereby each party received their support from groups which had not supported that party previously.

¹Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation Of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 41.

Therefore, an examination of Erie will help determine whether or not this was the case.

The primary issue early in the 1890's lay in the tariff and its use as a revenue device and or for protection of industry. Since the tariff was the primary revenue of the United States at this time its use for providing revenue only and thus a measure of free trade or as a technique of protection for industry was a hotly debated issue. The tariff had sparked serious controversy in 1816 and again in 1832.² Traditionally, the Democratic party had supported a free trade-revenue only position while the Republicans urged a high tariff and thus protection for industry from foreign competition.³ The tariff once again became a major issue when in December, 1887 President Grover Cleveland submitted to the Congress a Tariff Message urging downward revision of the tariff.⁴ As the residential campaign moved on the tariff question was buried. In 1890, the Republicans, having control of the Congress and the Presidency, passed a stiff rise in the tariff. In the fall elections of 1890, however, the Republicans were soundly defeated in the House of Representatives.⁵

The tariff again became an issue in 1892 but in a somewhat different form. Former President Grover Cleveland had little difficulty in securing the Democratic nomination and President Harrison received the Republican nomination.⁶ The newly formed Populist party met in July and nominated former Greenbacker James B. Weaver.⁷ At a time when the tariff was being touted by the Republicans as the reason for the unparalleled prosperity in the country and for a labor's high wages, a confrontation occurred at the Carnegie Steel Works near Pittsburgh.⁸ The steel company had reduced the wages of the workers and the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers went out on strike. The strike erupted into violence as the company brought in Pinkerton guards and strikebreakers. The state militia was called out to quell the violence and the strike was broken. As a result labor turned en masse against the tariff and the Republicans. Cleveland won the Presidency and the Democrats both Houses of Congress.⁹

Soon after Cleveland took the oath of office in March, 1893, the bubble burst and the country plunged into the most devastating depression yet experienced. From November, 1892, to August, 1893, thirty-three stocks lost over 400 million dollars in value.¹⁰ By the end of 1893, 642 banks closed their doors. Farm prices in 1893 fell lower than they were in the early 1880's.¹¹ By mid-1894, thousands of factories closed or slowed production; unemployment reached twenty per cent. President Cleveland responded by calling a

² For a discussion of the tariff controversies prior to the Civil War see, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1945), pp. 95-96, 422-23.

³ John A. Garraty, *The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 245.

⁴ For a discussion of the tariff battles of 1887-88, see Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1966), pp. 367-403, 414-42; and Garraty, *The New Commonwealth* pp. 292-304.

⁵ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 463.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 487-93.

⁷ John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1931), pp. 229-37.

⁸ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 499-502.

⁹ For a sectional analysis of the 1892 election see, Walter Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955); Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 507.

¹⁰ H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), pp. 447-48.

¹¹ Stanley L. Jones, *The Presidential Election of 1896* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 10.

special session of the Congress and urging that body to repeal the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 and to obtain reform of the McKinley Tariff Act.¹² It was the debate on these measures as well as other factors which led to the split in the Democratic party in the mid-1890's and set the stage for the election of 1896.

President Cleveland first called for the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, passed in 1890 to provide for the purchase of limited amounts of silver and at the behest of a small group of silverites. The demand for silver coinage came from the west and the south from those who sought an inflationary currency. By October, 1893 the President had his complete repeal.¹³ The debates revealed however not only the rising strength of the silver forces but the divisive character of the silver issue as the south and west were pitted against the east. In December, 1893, debate opened on the revision of the McKinley tariff. The bill had little difficulty in the House; the problem lay in the Senate, where Cleveland had antagonized many Senators by his refusal to recognize the demands of the silverites in appointments. This situation, combined with those Senators who did not wish a lowering of the tariff resulted in the Wilson-Gorman Act which did not materially affect the tariff schedules. Cleveland allowed it to become law without his signature on August 28, 1894.¹⁴ By now the Democrats were bitterly divided. There were those in the west that were firmly convinced that Cleveland and the Democratic party lay in the hands of the eastern business establishment. Perhaps typifying western reaction was Congressman William Jennings Bryan when he suggested that "if eastern interests continued to exploit the masses . . . 'the rest of the people of the country will drop party lines, if necessary, and unite to preserve their homes and their welfare'".¹⁵ More important however was the notion that the Republicans were pictured as united in the depression while the Democrats were portrayed as incompetent and untrustworthy.¹⁶

Other actions in the next two years were to widen the breach between Democrats on a sectional basis. The actions were brought by labor, the Supreme Court, and the Cleveland Administration. In May, 1894, the Pullman Palace Car workers near Chicago staged a walkout to protest low wages and poor living conditions.¹⁷ In June, the American Railway Union, headed by Eugene V. Debs, voted to support the strike. In July, violence erupted and in an unprecedented action, Attorney-General Richard Olney, on advice from railroad officials and with permission from Cleveland, issued a sweeping injunction against the strikers. Cleveland sent in federal troops ostensibly to protect interstate commerce and to move the mails. Protesting that action was Governor John P. Altgeld of Illinois and four other governors. After Debs was arrested on conspiracy charges the strike

¹² For a discussion of the Sherman repeal see Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 523-28, 533-48; on the McKinley tariff see Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 563-69, and Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley*, pp. 72-88.

¹³ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 538-40.

¹⁴ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 572-86.

¹⁵ Gilbert C. Fite, "Election of 1896," in *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968*, vol. II, ed: Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), p. 1795.

¹⁶ Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley*, p. 476.

¹⁷ For a full discussion of the Pullman strike see Ray Ginger, *Altgeld's America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), pp. 143-67; and Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 611-28.

collapsed. Cleveland, however, lost the support of labor and had embittered Altgeld who had been instrumental in his nomination and carrying Illinois in 1892. Many southerners were upset over Cleveland's actions and his apparent blatant violations of a state's sovereignty over its internal affairs¹⁸ Other conditions and controversies heightened the anxiety in the nation. In March, 1894, one Jacob Coxey set out from Massillon, Ohio, on a march to Washington to protest the condition of the common man. Though the marchers numbered only three hundred when they reached Washington, the talk of an army frightened many. It collapsed when Coxey was arrested for trespassing.¹⁹ An attempt was made at this time to force the government to coin "the silver seigniorage and the loose bullion in the Treasury." Proponents argued that this bill would placate the silverites in Congress once and for all; Cleveland disagreed and vetoed the measure on March 29.²⁰ In an effort to bolster the sagging economy, the Administration issued four sales of bonds in return for gold. Eastern bankers quickly bought up each sale, only fueling the talk of a conspiracy between the administration and eastern bankers. The Supreme Court contributed to the growing rift. In January, 1895, the Court sided with the corporations in a suit brought by the Government charging restraint of trade under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act²¹ In May, 1895, the Court voided the income tax provision of the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act²² One week later, the Court upheld the injunction and conviction of Eugene Debs in the Pullman strike²³ By late 1895, it was clear to many that the Administration and the business establishment was in league against the interests of the west.

A great deal of the growing rift between sections lay in the currency issue. In 1873, the Congress had passed the Demonetization Act in effect going on the gold standard. In passing the Bland- Allison Act in 1878 the government returned to a limited bimetallism.²⁴ By the late 1880's a small but vocal group urged a return to unlimited coinage of silver. The American Bimetallic League had been formed in 1889 to urge congressional action. By 1893 when the Sherman Act was repealed the debate had increased. William Harvey published **Coin's Financial School**, a tract which pitted a boy named Coin against all of the financial wizards of the day, whereupon Coin ably defended the merits of silver against the encroachments of gold.²⁵ In November, 1894, came the decision to form an independent silver party. With Democrats in the forefront, the National Bimetallic Union was formed in May, 1895.²⁶ A letter circulated in the House called for a new silver party; its author was William Jennings Bryan.²⁷ President Cleveland responded by suggesting in a letter to Chicago businessmen that "disguise it as we may, the line is drawn between the

¹⁸ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 625-26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 604-05.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 600-03; Seigniorage represents the gain which the government acquires when it purchases bullion at a price less than the value stamped on the metal when coined; it is the difference between a dollar's worth of raw silver, and a silver dollar.

²¹ *United States v. Knight (E.C.) Co.*, 156 U.S.1 (1895); Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 671.

²² *Pollack v. Farmer's Loan & Trust Co.*, 158 U.S. 601 (1895); Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 667-71.

²³ *In Re Debs*, 158 U.S. 564 (1895); Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 672.

²⁴ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 202.

²⁵ William H. Harvey, *Coin's Financial School*, ed: Richard Hofstadter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

²⁶ Jones, *Presidential Election*, p. 38.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

forces of safe currency and those of silver monometallism.²⁸ In June, 1895, the National Democratic Bimetallic Union was formed. Its aim was to control the Democratic National convention in 1896 with silver as its platform. By early 1896, it was increasingly apparent to many Democrats that if the silver forces did not control the convention outright, at the very least they would be a potent force at the convention.

Throughout all of this the Republican party remained virtually intact. Only a few Republican Congressmen and Senators from the west supported silver as a matter of political survival. The Republicans however, had gained control of the Congress in 1894 as a result of the depression and the disunity of the Democrats. Prior to the convention in 1896 there was only one leading candidate for the nomination and that was William McKinley, former Congressman and author of the 1890 Tariff Act and Governor of Ohio for two terms. With the assistance and organizational skill of Marcus A. Hanna, an Ohio businessman who had taken a shine to politics and McKinley, McKinley had begun to put together a campaign organization soon after the 1892 convention.²⁹ Utilizing friends within regular state organizations, McKinley stayed away from states with legitimate favorite-sons. Considered a liberal Republican for his era, McKinley supported civil service reform, federal protection of voting rights, and some business regulation.³⁰ When the Republican convention opened in St. Louis on June 16 the McKinley forces were in complete control. McKinley was easily nominated on the first ballot.³¹ The only excitement came with the presentation of the platform. Upon the defeat of a minority plank calling for free silver, Senator Henry M. Teller and twenty or so others walked out of the convention.³² The Republican platform declared "unreservedly for sound money" and renewed the party's allegiance "to the policy of protection, as the bulwark of American development and prosperity." Further, the Democratic administration had "precipitated panic, blighted industry and trade with prolonged depression, closed factories, reduced work and wages, halted enterprise and crippled American production, while stimulating foreign production for American market."³³

Unlike the Republicans, there was no clear cut favorite among the Democrats for the nomination. Perhaps the closest to a favorite was Richard P. Bland of Missouri, but other names were mentioned, such as Horace Boies of Iowa, John G. Carlisle of Kentucky, Joseph Sibley and Robert Pattison of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina, and William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska. Even Senator Teller, the former Republican, was considered.³⁴ The silver Democrats were extremely effective prior to the convention, capturing delegation after delegation committed to silver.³⁵ Those Democrats who supported the gold standard found themselves in a

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁹ For a discussion of the McKinley-Hanna relationship, see Paul W. Glad, *McKinley, Bryan and the People* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1964), pp. 97-98.

³⁰ Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley*, pp. 483-85.

³¹ Fite, *American Presidential Elections*, pp. 1801-03.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 1803.

³³ Kirk H. Porter, and Donald B. Johnson, comps., *National Party Platforms, 1840-1964* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1966), pp. 107-08.

³⁴ Fite, *American Presidential Elections*, pp. 1804-05; J. Rogers Hollingsworth, *The Whirligig of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 56-58.

³⁵ Jones, *Presidential Election*, pp. 191-203.

minority. The Democratic convention opened in Chicago on July 9.³⁶ Though the gold forces controlled the National Committee it was not long before the silverites secured control of the convention machinery, seating their own delegations. Aside from the nomination, the most exciting aspect of the convention was to be the debate on the currency platform. There were to be five speakers - two for the silver plank, three for the gold plank. Tillman of South Carolina condemned the Cleveland administration. The next three speakers, Senator David P. Hill, William F. Vilas and Governor William E. Russell of Massachusetts all defended the gold standard and the administration.³⁷ The final speaker for silver was William Jennings Bryan. While a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the general effect of his "Cross of Gold" speech and his subsequent nomination, Bryan's success lay in a number of unusual factors.³⁸ Even Bryan recognized that his nomination would take "an unusual combination of circumstances, including a generous amount of luck."³⁹ Prior to the convention he had not been a credited delegate; the credentials committee ruled in his favor. Once seated, he secured a position on the platform committee and determined that he would speak last on the currency plank; he also wrote much of the currency plank on silver. In his speech he said little that was new; rather, over the years he had just polished certain phrases to perfection. The forcefulness of his speech gave the delegates a picture of his own forcefulness. Yet it was not until the fifth ballot that he received the nomination. As he termed it, the "logic of the situation" determined his candidacy. The Democratic platform declared the money issue paramount.⁴⁰ A gold policy was "financial servitude to London," and "not only un-American, but anti-American." Denouncing any return to the McKinley tariff, they argued that the tariff was for revenue only, not for protection. In searching for labor support, the platform called for the restriction of "foreign pauper labor" so as not to compete with labor "in the home market.

There were still three other parties yet to meet. The Populist Party also convened in St. Louis on July 22. The party's hierarchy had earlier decided to support the free silver cause rather than pursue a broad-based reform effort. A split had developed as a result between those who urged a broad-based reform effort and those who supported free silver as the primary reform. The hope had been that neither party would nominate a silver candidate, thus leaving the Populist party to pick up the discarded silver forces. The action by the Democrats however, threw the Populist party into turmoil.⁴¹ After heated debate, the party sought a compromise. They nominated William Jennings Bryan as their presidential candidate and rather than accepting Sewall, the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee, they nominated Thomas Watson of Georgia. By this method, they were able to fuse and still maintain some semblance of independence.⁴² Though some fusion was accomplished on the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-42; Glad, *McKinley, Bryan and the People*, pp. 132-41; Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 699-704.

³⁷ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, pp. 701-02.

³⁸ Daniel Boorstin, ed., *The American Primer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 593-604.

³⁹ Fite, *American Presidential Elections*, p. 1806.

⁴⁰ Porter and Johnson, *National Party Platforms*, pp. 98-99.

⁴¹ Hicks, *Populist Revolt*, p. 350.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 358-66; Jones, *Presidential Election*, pp. 245-63; Glad, *McKinley, Bryan and the People*, pp. 155-60.

state and local levels, the fate of the Populist party as an independent party had been sealed once it accepted fusion on the national level. After the election it slipped into oblivion. The National Silver party also met in St. Louis at this time.⁴³ The party adopted a silver platform and endorsed the Democratic ticket. It was their hope that they could act “as independent, essentially nonpartisan force working for free silver.”⁴⁴ After the Democratic convention, there were those who felt that they could not support a silver platform nor a Bryan candidacy. In response to a call from the Honest Money League of Chicago to hold another convention - “to afford the Nation’s Democrats an opportunity to register their protest”⁴⁵ - the sound money Democrats met in early September in Indianapolis.⁴⁶ The National Democratic party, as the convention named their gathering, nominated Senator John W. Palmer of Illinois for President and former Confederate General Simon B. Buckner for Vice-President. The platform condemned the Chicago platform, called for a gold standard “and the maintenance of silver at a parity with gold by its limited coinage under suitable safeguards of law.”⁴⁷ It further called for a tariff for revenue only and applauded the administration of Grover Cleveland. The party’s hopes rested on neutralizing or directing as many votes to McKinley as possible, and secondly, to supplement the Republican campaign by sending out educational materials on the monetary issue.⁴⁸ Thus, the campaign of 1896 began with five separate parties, nominating three separate candidates and further with a general confusion over the basic issues of the campaign.

By 1896, the silver issue had become the symbol of “those who were demanding a redistribution of the nation’s economic power.”⁴⁹ Thus, the campaign of 1896 accelerated into a struggle between two ideologies, a struggle between two fundamental concepts of power, a struggle between one candidate who spoke for the new industrialism and another who harkened to the call of the masses. Both parties likened their crusades to the one in 1860. The free silverites viewed themselves in the role of the Republican party of that election, “riding on the wave of the future to great glory.”⁵⁰ The conservatives, seeing free silver as immoral, compared it to slavery, and therefore justifying violent action and personal sacrifice to rid the country of its influences. William McKinley deplored the preachings of Bryan - his “pitting of labor against capital, farmers against bankers and manufacturers, the poor against the rich.”⁵¹ It was Bryan’s campaign to speak for the masses, suggesting that an industrial prosperity rested upon a successful agricultural base. He therefore sought the support of both labor and farmers.

The two campaigns and organizations were antithetical. While Bryan undertook a series of grueling under-financed train trips, McKinley conducted his famous front porch campaign at his home in Canton, Ohio. While Bryan

⁴³ Jones, *Presidential Election*, pp. 262-63.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁴⁵ Hollingsworth, *Whirligig of Politics*, p. 73.

⁴⁶ Jones, *Presidential Election*, pp. 271-75.

⁴⁷ Porter and Johnson, *National Party Platforms*, pp. 101-03.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Presidential Election*, p. 275.

⁴⁹ Fite, *American Presidential Election*, p. 1815.

⁵⁰ Jones, *Presidential Election*, p. 339.

⁵¹ Fite, *American Presidential Election*, p. 1820.

was often poorly informed about local conditions and personalities, McKinley knew in advance the text of the spokesman's remarks and his own. In many cases, McKinley's writers wrote both speeches. The Democratic organization was spread between Chicago, Washington and New York, with a newcomer to national organization, Senator James K. Jones, as the new Democratic National Chairman. In contrast, the Republicans, under the guidance of Marc Hanna, established speakers' bureaus and writing staffs which were responsible for churning out millions of articles and pamphlets to newspapers and the general public. Hanna and McKinley tapped the vast resources of eastern Republican and Democratic businessmen by holding up the specter of a free silver victory. Bryan gave little thought to the details or broad strategy of the campaign; McKinley and Hanna supervised all aspects of their operation. In essence, the Republican organization was able to outspend the Democratic party.

McKinley won, carrying twenty-three states with 271 electoral votes. McKinley's strength lay in New England and the Old Northwest while Bryan carried the deep South and a majority of the states west of the Mississippi.⁵² Edgar E. Robinson had argued that the most striking feature of the election of 1896 "is found in the overwhelming lead for one or the other party in twenty-two of the forty-five states."⁵³ The election of 1896 thus marked a return to sectional politics not known since 1860.

The real issue in the election of 1896 lay in the amount of confidence the people had in either party. McKinley emphasized the "safe" issue, the tariff. His emphasis on the tariff did not lose him support, but rather allowed him to pick up borderline Democrats who would swallow their feelings on the tariff rather than support a silver candidate. The so-called "radicalism" of the Democrats their support of free silver, the youth of the candidate, and their association with the Populists, however slight, would not allow the people to place their full confidence in the party. McKinley reminded business and labor of his support for the protective tariff and warned labor of the loss of jobs if a free silver candidate were to win the election. Bryan sought to effect a coalition of labor and the farm as well as small businessmen, arguing that their problems and goals were the same. This coalition fell apart.⁵⁴ McKinley was looking ahead at the new industrial order; he had only to play on sympathies. Bryan had to change minds.

The election of 1896 gave the Republican party a mandate with which to govern, a mandate not disturbed until 1912. Free silver was destroyed as an election issue, as was the Populist party. The election and the candidacy of Bryan did give impetus to a growing number of reforms. By 1897, prosperity had returned. Bryan was not challenged for leadership of the party, but the Democratic coalition of the south and the west disintegrated as the Southern Bourbons returned to their old methods. McKinley's call for a raise in the tariff lost him some support he had gained from the Democrats in 1896 and efforts to woo back the silver Republicans failed. By 1898, however, the United States was well into foreign affairs and the Spanish-American war. Domestic politics were put aside.

⁵² For a detailed sectional analysis see, Jones, *Presidential Election*, pp. 342-47; Elmer E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 78-92; and Edgar E. Robinson, *The Presidential Vote, 1896-1932* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), pp. 4-7.

⁵³ Robinson, *Presidential Vote*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Hollingsworth, *Whirligig of Politics*, p. 9.

II

As a major state, Pennsylvania contributed a great deal to the national political scene in this period. In 1888, Mathew Quay, a power in the state Republican party, managed Benjamin Harrison's successful bid for the Presidency. William Harry, a Democratic leader did the same for Grover Cleveland's campaign in 1892. Two Pennsylvania men, former Governor Robert Pattison and former Congressman Joseph Sibley, were considered as candidates for the 1896 Democratic Presidential nomination. The Republican party in Pennsylvania generally followed the lead of the national party in its attitude toward the tariff and the currency question. The conservative Democratic party, followed the national leadership in the tariff and currency questions until 1896, at which time it was divided on the currency question.¹

The Republican party in Pennsylvania in the nineties was dominated by Mathew Stanley Quay, chairman of the state party and United States Senator. With very few exceptions, Quay was able to dictate the policy and nominees of the party. In 1890, his choice for the gubernatorial nomination was George W. Delameter of Crawford country, even though Delameter was not the first choice among many in the state.² The Democrats, sensing the disunity among the Republicans, united and nominated former Governor Robert Pattison.³

The campaign turned exceptionally bitter. Issues centered around state tax reform, the tariff, and Delameter's relationship both to Standard Oil and to Quay. A number of Republicans, angered over Quay's choice of Delameter, worked toward his defeat.⁴ Claiming that Delameter had shady dealings with Standard Oil, an independent Republican organization was formed. Pattison was not completely free of corruption charges. Late in the campaign he filed suit against Harrisburg and Philadelphia journalists who had accused him of mishandling funds while Governor.⁵ A labor representative gave Pattison a clean bill of health, while suggesting that Delameter's promises were not always in keeping "with his action" and therefore he was to be monitored carefully.⁶ Delameter supported the party's high tariff while Pattison argued for a lowered, revenue only tariff. Though the charges against either candidate were never proved, the accusations against Delameter generally worked against him. Pattison was elected by just over fifty per cent of the vote.

The issues in the 26th Congressional race (Erie and Crawford counties) centered on the McKinley tariff and the Republican candidate's relationship to Standard Oil. The Democrats nominated A. L. Tilden of Ft. LeBoeuf and the Republicans nominated Mathew Griswold of Erie. Tilden supported the Democratic stand on the McKinley bill. The Democratic convention had termed the bill a "masterpiece of injustice, inequality, and false pretense . . ." ⁷ Griswold supported the McKinley bill and the concept of protectionism. Both candidates passed a questioning by a local labor leader. Contrary to the swing

¹ Sylvester K. Stevens, *Pennsylvania, Birthplace of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 266.

² *Ibid.*, p. 262.

³ Sylvester K. Stevens, *Pennsylvania: The Heritage of a Commonwealth*, vol. II. (West Palm Beach, Florida: American Historical Co., 1968), p. 789.

⁴ *Erie Morning Dispatch*, 3 October 1890, p. -.

⁵ *Erie Daily Times*, 27-28 October 1890, pp. 1, 2.

⁶ *Erie Daily Times*, 13-14 October 1890, p. ; *Erie Morning Dispatch*, 10 October 1890, p. .

⁷ *Erie Daily Times*, 25 June 1890, p. 1.

against the Republicans that year, the Republican won, polling just over 51 per cent in Erie County.

By the summer of 1892 the two major parties in Pennsylvania were in difficulty. The Pattison administration was deeply involved in the labor disputes and controversies surrounding Homestead.⁸ The Quay machine was smarting from charges of corruption in the state offices held by Republicans revealed in 1891. The Quay organization initially supported William McKinley in the Republican convention that year, but reluctantly supported Harrison after his re-nomination.⁹ Erie Democrats were united in their support of Grover Cleveland.¹⁰ The state Populist party met in Franklin on June 23 and endorsed the principles enunciated by the national party at St. Louis in February.¹¹ The Populists voted to field candidates in each Congressional district.

The most interesting story of 1892 however is that of the 26th Congressional race. After disagreement as to which country the nominee would come from, the Republicans settled on Theodore Flood of Crawford county.¹² The Democrats agreed to support Joseph Sibley.¹³ Sibley however, was originally the nominee of the area Prohibitionist party; only later was he endorsed by the Democrats and also the Populist parties. Further, Sibley was not even a resident of the 26th District; he made his home in Franklin as a farmer. The issues in the campaign revolved around the tariff, Sibley, and the relationship of both candidates to Standard Oil. Flood endorsed the McKinley tariff and Sibley was apparently a free trader.¹⁴ The harshest criticism of the campaign was leveled at Sibley. Because of this support from three parties - he was called the "kite-candidate" - there was some question about his actual loyalties.¹⁵ Sibley was elected, in part because of his multi-faceted support, but also as the **Dispatch** suggested, the "result is not due to faith in the Democratic party so much as to the desire for a change of some sort."¹⁶

In 1894, Mathew Quay was forced to accept the nomination of Daniel Hastings for Governor on the Republican ticket.¹⁷ The Democrats nominated William Singerly, editor of the **Philadelphia Record**.¹⁸ Singerly argued that a low tariff meant prosperity and that the legislature should seek to control thrusts and syndicates. In contrast, Hastings felt that the Wilson-Gorman tariff of 1893 was detrimental to prosperity and a return to the McKinley tariff was in order.¹⁹ He suggested that all the voters had to do was compare the present economic conditions under a Democratic administration with those of 1892 under a Republican administration. Evidently, the people did just that because Hastings was elected with just over sixty per cent of the vote.

⁸ See p. 4; Stevens, **Heritage**, p. 790.

⁹ **Ibid.**, pp. 790-91.

¹⁰ Erie **Daily Times**, 30 March 1892, p. 1.

¹¹ William E Lyons, "Populism in Pennsylvania, 1892-1901," **Pennsylvania History** 32 (1965); 52-53; Hicks, **Populist Revolt**, pp. 123-25.

¹² Erie **Daily Times**, 6 April 1892, p. 1.

¹³ Erie **Daily Times**, 27 May 1892, p. 2.

¹⁴ Erie **Morning Dispatch**, 19 August 1892, p. ; Erie **Daily Times**, 27 September 1892, p. 2.

¹⁵ Erie **Daily Times**, 6 October 1892, p. 4.

¹⁶ Erie **Morning Dispatch**, 3 November 1890, p. 4.

¹⁷ Stevens, **Heritage**, p. 791

¹⁸ **Ibid.**

¹⁹ See p. 6.

In 1899, Erie County Democrats again supported Joseph Sibley for Congress.²⁰ The Populist party nominated Sibley on September 8, but it was not until October 10 that Sibley announced that if elected to Congress he would serve.²¹ Both men's records were examined in the campaign. Sibley had supported the income tax of the Wilson-Gorman bill; no statement could be found on the subject by Griswold. The independent Erie **Daily Times** was highly critical of Griswold, claiming that he rarely worked for his district particularly when it came to securing pensions. Sibley, however, "was a true representative of the people," who "worked for the common man," while Griswold represented only the rich interests.²² In the week prior to the election, Governor William McKinley visited Erie to lend support to Griswold's campaign and to lay the groundwork for his presidential bid two years later.²³ It was a Republican year and Griswold was elected.²⁴

In the months preceding the major political conventions of 1896 the major parties in Pennsylvania were generally undisturbed by the currency controversy. Both the Democratic and Republican rank and files were fairly conservative in their approach to the currency question and the coinage of silver. The Republican state convention opposed silver coinage though they did declare for international bimetallism. The convention also endorsed Matthew Quay as a favorite-son for the presidential nomination. The Democratic party in Pennsylvania at this point was also opposed to the coinage of free silver. In their convention they voted for the maintenance of the gold standard and "absolute opposition to the free coinage of silver." Former Governor Robert Pattison was endorsed as a Presidential candidate.²⁶ Former Congressman Joseph Sibley was also talked about as a presidential candidate. He was supported by many Pennsylvania Democrats who supported a silver cause. In fact, Sibley was also considered by the Populists as a possible Presidential contender. Sibley pulled out of contention however, and returned to become the Democratic congressional candidate for the 26th district.

Notwithstanding their initial opposition to McKinley's candidacy, the Republicans in Pennsylvania remained intact after the convention. The Democrats did not. On August 2 the gold Democrats met and renamed their party the Jeffersonian Democrats. They renounced the nomination of Bryan and the silver platform adopted at Chicago.²⁷ Delegates were selected to attend the convention of gold Democrats met on September 10 and endorsed the Bryan-Sewall ticket and the Chicago platform.²⁸ The split in the Democratic party alienated some major party figures, such as William Harry, now displaced as national party chairman. State chairman Robert E.

²⁰ Erie **Daily Times**, 3 September 1894, p. 4.

²¹ Erie **Daily Times**, 8 September 1894, p. 1.

²² Erie **Daily Times**, 29 October 1894, p. 4.

²³ Erie **Daily Times**, 2 November 1894, p. 1.

²⁴ See Appendix

²⁵ Sylvester K. Stevens, "The Election of 1896 in Pennsylvania," **Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography** 4 (April 1937): 68; Stevens, **Heritage**, p. 793; The Republican delegation gave Quay 58 of 68½ votes on the first ballot in the convention. Quay was given partial duties in the campaign, but quit in disgust early in the campaign.

²⁶ Stevens, **Heritage**, p. 794.

²⁷ **Ibid.**

²⁸ Stevens, "The Election of 1896 in Pennsylvania," 86.

Wright and Erie Mayor Robert Saltsman refused to support the silver cause.²⁹ Interestingly enough, Robert Pattison did not bolt the party.

The Populist party in Pennsylvania was forced to make the same decision as its national counterpart, whether to fuse with the Democrats or not.³⁰ At the state convention, the delegates voted to accept the St. Louis platform and the Bryan-Watson ticket.³¹ Fusion on the state level or for local candidates was a different matter. An emotional debate ensued between the two factions. A compromise was reached whereby a committee was empowered to effect fusion with the Democrats where possible. The platform demanded however that the Democrats purge their ranks of all gold supporters prior to the completion of any fusion. Even though this had been done voluntarily by the gold Democrats, large-scale fusion was not forthcoming and where it was accomplished, candidates did poorly in the election.³²

The congressional campaign in the 26th district was one of national importance, not only because of the issues but also due to the candidates. The campaign thus reflected the apprehensions and controversies surrounding the election of 1896. While the Republicans nominated John C. Sturtevant as their candidate, the Democrats turned once again to Joseph Sibley, the free silver champion. Of primary concern early in the campaign was the issue of free silver. Sibley of course supported the free silver cause while Sturtevant accepted the Republican view and rejected such a course. Yet by the middle of August, the Erie **Daily Times** suggested that “the tide of silver sentiment has reached its height and will now be found growing less and less daily ... The silver people have given up the idea of trying to carry Pennsylvania for the white metal.”³³ As Sibley commented on his candidacy; “the gold standard Republicans (would) rather see me beaten than any other man, for I have gone through the country for the past two years talking for silver.”³⁴

The thrust of the campaign soon turned away from the silver issue and became instead the effect that the issue of silver would have upon the business community. As was the case nationwide, many in Erie were concerned over the possible detrimental effect that the election of Bryan would have on the business community. Though the Democrats urged support of free silver and the low tariff to groups of labor, warnings went out from local businessmen to their employees suggesting that “men who wish for steady employment will vote for McKinley ...”³⁵ Letters from area businessmen to newspapers expressed their opposition to Bryan and their concern over the possible institution of free silver. On August 24, the Erie **Daily Times**, normally independent but anti-Bryan in 1896, suggested that “manufacturer’s and merchants in this city say that it is not a question of politics this year, but instead a question of business.”³⁶

Both parties, realizing the importance of the campaign poured money and

²⁹ Marian Silveus, “The Election of 1896 in Western Pennsylvania,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 16 (May 1933): 121.

³⁰ Lyons, “Populism in Pennsylvania, 1892-1901,” 57-59.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

³³ Erie **Daily Times**, 14 August 1896, p. 4.

³⁴ Erie **Daily Times**, 28 August 1896, p. 1.

³⁵ Erie **Daily Times**, 16 September 1896, p. 4.

³⁶ Erie **Daily Times**, 24 August 1896, p. 4.

speakers into the area. The Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, stopped off in Erie on his way to New York. Bryan urged those assembled to elect a Congress favorable to free silver and the reforms which he supported.³⁷ Republican Governor Hastings opened the Republican campaign in Erie by terming the Democratic money plank as completely unsatisfactory. Further, Bryan's election would involve a "business revolution, disaster and ruin."³⁸ On September 3, a number of Erie Republicans traveled to Canton, Ohio to visit William McKinley on his famous front porch.³⁹

Sibley failed in his efforts as both he and Bryan were defeated and Pennsylvania delivered a three hundred thousand majority for McKinley. The Pennsylvania Democratic party was severely hurt by the split in 1896. The Democratic party in 1896 lost "what little chance it had to restore something of a more even balance of party power in the state ..."⁴⁰

In 1898, a severe challenge to the leadership of Matthew Quay was undertaken by the Philadelphia merchant-king, John Wanamaker.⁴¹ Some four hundred Republican leaders pledged their support. Though Wanamaker had to retire in favor of another candidate, the revolt showed that Quay's power in the state was diminishing. Though Quay's candidate won the nomination and the election, he did so with less than a majority vote; the Prohibitionist candidate received 13.5 per cent of the vote.

The congressional race in 1898 was extremely close. The Republican candidate, George H. Higgins, was tied into the Quay organization while Mr. Gaston, the Democratic candidate and a Crawford county farmer, was billed as the local candidate and a non-politician. Some discussion ensued as to whether or not Gaston had supported silver two years earlier, though no evidence seemed to support that charge. Gaston won the election by slightly less than fifty votes. Gaston carried the city of Erie while Higgins carried the county.

It is apparent then that with the exception of 1890 the Republicans were able to carry the state on a consistent basis and with increasing percentages of the vote. The power and organization of Matthew Quay lay virtually unchallenged in this period, and when it was, the challenge was not severe. For the most part, he was able to dictate the candidates and policy of the party. Only in 1892 and 1898 were Democratic candidates successful in the 26th Congressional races. To speak only of the success of various candidates however is not enough. It is necessary to further explore the trends and nuances of voting by examining returns and other data in order to ascertain how and why the electorate voted as it did.

³⁷ William Jennings Bryan, *The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Co., 1896), p. 352.

³⁸ *Erie Daily Times*, 17 September 1896, p. 3.

³⁹ *Erie Daily Times*, 17 September 1896, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Stevens, *Birthplace*, p. 264

⁴¹ Stevens, *Heritage*, pp. 795-96.

III

In determining the political profile of Erie during this period, seven elective offices were chosen for study ranging from local and county positions to state offices and the two national elections held in this period.¹ In all, thirty separate sets of election returns have been analyzed.² The returns have been reduced to ward, city, county and state levels. on the city level three elections for Mayor were held (1890, 1893, and 1896). The Erie County Director of the Poor was an annual office. Elections for the 26th Congressional District (comprised of Erie and Crawford counties) were held every two years. Statewide, the Gubernatorial elections were held in 1890, 1894, and 1898; the State Treasurer was elected in 1891, 1893, 1895, and 1897. As a result of the 1890 Census, Pennsylvania was allotted two seats at-large in the House of Representatives - the first election being held in 1892. In addition, a special election was held in February, 1894 to fill a vacant at-large seat and this has been included. Finally, two Presidential elections; 1892 and 1896, have been included. Thus, a cross-section of elective offices, spanning all levels and years, has been achieved. Though each level may really be treated by themselves in any analysis, it is possible to roughly divide the period into three phases - 1890 through 1892, 1893 through 1896, and 1897 and 1898.³

In the first phase, the Democrats won in four of the ten elections under study, including the Governor's post in 1890 and the Presidency in 1892. In each of these three years the Democrats maintained a majority in the city, carrying four of the city's six wards on a consistent basis. In 1890 and 1891, the Democrats remained relatively close to the Republicans in the county by .3 per cent of the vote, the only time in this study that the Democrats outpolled the Republicans in the county. In 1890, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate won with just over 50 per cent of the vote, the only time the Democrats secured a statewide majority. Within this first phase the Democrats were a viable second party, demonstrating that on all levels the two parties were relatively close as to percentages.

By the beginning of the second phase, 1893, the Republicans were in control on all levels, though by a plurality on the city level. In February, 1893, the Republican Mayoralty candidate had won with 51.9 per cent of the vote. That fall, the Republican vote increased on all levels. In 1893 and 1895 all of the Republican vote increased on all levels. In 1894 and 1895 all of the Republican candidates won. In 1895, the Republicans carried all of the six wards, the only time they did this. 1895 proved to be the high point for the Republicans on the city and county levels; on the state level it was 1894.

Though 1896 falls within the confines of the second phase, it may actually be considered as a transitional year between the second and third phases. In February, 1896, the Democrats elected their Mayoralty candidate and that

¹ See Appendix A for the tables relating to the data in this section. Table G shows the party preference for each level based upon which party received a majority or plurality in that level. Table H shows the average Democratic/ Republican vote in that level, found by averaging the percentage of the vote for each election in that particular year. Tables K through O show the Democratic/ Republican vote for each office studied.

² Though thirty election returns have been tabulated, thirty-one elections were held in this period. There were no records available for the 1896 Mayoralty election.

³ See Appendix A, Table H for the average Democratic/ Republican vote by levels for each year.

fall they substantially increased their percentage of the vote, carrying two of the city's six wards. Though the Republican candidate for President, William McKinley, carried the state with 60.9 per cent of the vote, his city and county vote ran behind his statewide percentage. In contrast, the city and county percentages for Bryan, the Democratic nominee, ran ahead of his statewide vote.⁴ This factor, along with a comparison of his percentage vote with the minor candidates, helps to dispel the notion, at least in this case, that the candidacy of Bryan tended to hurt the candidacies of the local candidates. For example, while Bryan received 45.6 per cent of the city vote, the at-large candidates received 47.3 per cent and the Congressional candidate polled 49.2 per cent. Only the Democratic candidate for Poor Director received a smaller percentage of the city vote - 42.6 per cent. In the county vote, the Congressional candidate and the Poor Director candidate for Democrats outpolled Bryan; only the Congressional-at-large candidates received less than Bryan and this was only .6 per cent. Significantly, the same phenomena occurred with McKinley and the minor candidates. McKinley received 52.3 per cent of the city vote while the Poor Director candidate and the at-large candidates both received 57.3 per cent of the city vote. Only the Congressional candidate of the Republicans received a smaller percentage - 50.7 per cent. In the county vote, McKinley received 54.7 per cent, the Poor Director candidate received 55.4 per cent and the at-large candidates received 54.8 per cent. The Congressional candidate received 53.6 per cent of the county vote. It is evident then that Bryan's candidacy did not tend to affect adversely the candidacy of minor Democratic candidates.

Although the Republicans won both of the offices studied in 1897, the Democrats regained a majority in the city, carrying four of the city's six wards. The Democrats increased their percentage of the vote on the city and county level, but dropped slightly on the state level. The Republicans dropped precipitously on the state level, due to a strong showing by the Prohibitionist candidate for State Treasurer.⁵ In 1898, the Democrats won the congressional race, still controlling four of the city's six wards. The Democratic total dropped slightly in the county but increased by 5.1 per cent in the state.⁶ Again in 1898 the Prohibitionists made a determined effort to capture a state position as they received 12.9 per cent of the vote for Governor. By 1897 and 1898 the Democrats had regained a majority in the city. The trend was evident, however, in the critical year of 1896, a year in which the Democrats nationally were supposed to be in retreat.

In summarizing briefly the support the minor parties held in the county and the city is evident that they did somewhat better on the local level than on the state level. For example, in 1890 the state vote for the Prohibitionist candidate for Governor was 1.7 per cent; Erie County posted 3.5 per cent of the vote for him. The Populist Presidential candidate in 1892, James Weaver, polled only .8 per cent of the state, whereas Erie county gave him 3.5 per cent of the county total. Erie County polled 10.3 per cent of the vote in 1893 for the minor parties; the state vote was only 3.5 per cent. The Populists in this period tended to be stronger in the urban areas, while the Prohibitionists posted their totals in the surrounding rural areas. Thus, a strong Populist vote would

⁴ See Appendix A, Table O.

⁵ See Appendix A, Table H.

⁶ Ibid.

normally hurt the Democrats in the urban areas while a strong Prohibitionist vote would hurt the Republicans. In only a few cases did the minor parties make a significant difference in the vote totals, normally limiting one party to a plurality.

In the thirty-one elections studied within this period, the Democrats succeeded in winning only six, four in the first phase, one in 1896 and one in 1898. A clearer pattern emerges as to the wards and which party they supported. The first and second wards were generally Democratic. The first ward was carried by the Republicans from 1893 through 1895, though in 1896 it was carried by the Democrats. In those two phases when the Democrats controlled the city, the first ward went Democratic. The same was true of the second ward, but only in 1895 was the second ward carried by the Republicans. The third and fourth wards were consistently Republican; at no time did the Democrats threaten control of either of these two wards. The fifth and sixth wards were "swing wards", that is, their allegiance would change back and forth from party to party. In the first phase when the Democrats carried the city, the fifth and sixth wards were carried by the Democrats. From 1893 through 1896 these two wards were carried by the Republicans. Finally, in 1897 and 1898, when the Democrats again regained control of the city the fifth and sixth wards went Democratic. The most significant trend within this period however, is to note that there was a Democratic resurgence in 1896, beginning in February when the Democrats elected a Mayor.

Essentially, the basic argument about 1896 is that because of Bryan's candidacy and the issues of the campaign the Democrats suffered at the polls. It is also believed that minor candidates of the Democratic party tended to suffer at the hands of the national ticket. Neither of these conditions appeared in 1896 in Erie. Not only did the minor candidates of the Democratic party tend to receive a larger percentage of the vote, but the Republican minor candidates received a larger percentage than the popular and successful McKinley. By 1897, the Democrats had regained control of the city.

V

One of the arguments relating to the election of 1896 is that there was a polarization of the electorate. Those who were considered well-to-do or "wealthy" were thought to have supported the Republican party and those who were "poor" backed Bryan and the Democratic party. Through use of economic variables and a quantitative technique known as the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, it is possible to determine the relationship, if any, of the "wealth" of a ward and its support of the Republican party. The economic data that will be utilized are the total salaries per ward, the tax on occupations per ward, the total value of the real estate per ward, and the ward's value of the personal property.¹ Each of these factors will be determined by year and then correlated with the average Republican vote of that year by ward, each on a "highest to lowest" basis. The resulting coefficient, as determined by the Spearman process, will reveal whether any correlation existed between the wealth of a ward and its support of the

¹ The economic data for this section has been taken from Thomas B. Cochran, comp., *Smull's Legislative Handbook and Manual of the State of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: State Printer) and S.B. Nelson and Benjamin Whitman, eds., *Nelson's Biographical Directory and Historical Reference Book of Erie County, Pennsylvania* (Erie: S.B. Nelson, 1896).

Republican party.² Each of the economic variables have been divided by the number of taxables in each ward. The assumption is that use of taxables rather than the total population of each ward eliminates those who are unproductive in a given population and confines the study to allegedly the head of each household.

In analyzing the data in this section it is desirable to place upon the economic variables a ranking as to their importance in relation to one another, to place each of them in perspective. The two most important factors would be the total value of the real estate in each ward and the total salaries by ward. The occupation tax and the value of the personal property would follow next in importance. The total value of the real estate and the total value of the salaries would tend to cut across all segments of the population. These two indicators would tend to reflect more accurately certain trends in the values of the coefficients. The occupation tax and the personal property values would not necessarily do so, in that in some areas the amount of personal property might be very low, the majority of the property being manufacturing firms.

The Table below gives the coefficients for each year for the salaries of each ward. Again, the total amount for the salaries has been divided by the number

TABLE A
COEFFICIENTS FOR SALARIES

Year	Coefficient	Year	Coefficient
1890	+.600	1895	+.486
1891	+.600	1896	+.429
1892	+.672	1897	+.258
1893	+.715	1898	+.829
1894	+.600		

of taxables in each ward and then correlated on a highest-to-lowest basis with the ward's average Republican vote for that year.

Until 1895, there appears to be at least some significance of the coefficients. From 1890 through 1894 there was at least some correlation between the level of the salaries paid in each ward and the support it gave the Republican party. Thus, it would follow that the highest salaries were paid in the third and fourth wards - the most consistent Republican. 1893 proves to be the high-point of the coefficients, in part due to the swing to the Republicans in this year because of the onset of the depression of that year. The more significant year is that of 1896. There appears to be little connection between the level of salaries and the level of Republican support in the wards. If, in fact, the election of 1896 tended to alienate the electorate due to the candidates and issues involved then it would follow that people would have voted according to the level of their salaries. This seems not to be the case in Erie in 1896. The lowest coefficient is in 1897 and the highest in 1898.

² For further information see A. L. O'Toole, *Elementary Practical Statistics* (MacMillan Co., 1964), pp. 247-60, and Russell Landley, *Practical Statistics* (New York: Drake Publishers, 1971), pp. 199-211. A number of cautionary notes must be made in this section. In the case of having only six pairs with which to work, the Spearman coefficient must be very high in order to register significance. For example, the probability is only 0.10 for six pairs that the coefficient would be +.829 (the coefficients range is from -1.00 to +1.000, therefore the greater the plus coefficient the higher the correlation between the two factors). Even though +.829 is the coefficient which is the minimum for showing significance with six pairs, a coefficient of +.600 would still be regarded as showing some significance. Further, it must be noted that the economic data that has been used is not complete in that the values for 1890 through 1895 are those of 1895. 1895 values are also used for 1896 and 1897.

TABLE B

COEFFICIENTS FOR REAL ESTATE

Year	Coefficient	Year	Coefficient
1890	+.943	1895	+.886
1891	+.943	1896	+.943
1892	+.900	1897	+.829
1893	+1.000	1898	+.658
1894	+.943		

Table B clearly demonstrates a correlation between the value of the total real estate in a ward and its support of the Republican party. In every year except 1898 the coefficients fall within the accepted range of the coefficient value of correlation. The peak is measured again in 1893, demonstrating the swing toward the Republicans in that year because of the depression. Contrary to the table before this one, there seems to be a definite swing to the Republicans of real estate holders, 1896 measuring the coefficient plus .943. It is possible to assert that some sort of polarization did occur, in that 1896 measured a decided swing to the Democrats. This would account for a lowered level of the salary level. At the same time it is possible that those wards with real estate voted for the Republicans. The value of the real estate in relation to the amount of support for the Republican party fell in the next two years. The value of the real estate in each ward obviously correlated directly to the amount of support to the Republican party. Again it must be surmised that the more valuable real estate lay in the third and fourth wards, followed by the fifth and sixth wards. The third and fourth wards were always carried by the Republicans and the fifth and sixth wards were the swing wards.

TABLE C

COEFFICIENTS FOR OCCUPATION TAX

Year	Coefficient	Year	Coefficient
1890	+.558	1895	+.472
1891	+.558	1896	+.772
1892	+.586	1897	+.200
1893	+.700	1898	+.315
1894	+.558		

In only two years, 1893 and 1896, it is possible to claim any correlation between the amount of occupation tax per taxable and the degree to which the Republican party was supported. The other coefficients fall below even the minimum necessary for a clear correlation. In this table the peak year is 1896. This might be explained by the observation that in 1896 the third ward recorded the highest Republican vote. As will be seen later this ward had a large laboring population and not many people living within its boundaries. A small number of taxables but a large occupation tax would account for the coefficient being high in that the numbers would be somewhat inflated.

A somewhat similar problem occurs in the Table below, that of Personal Property. The inconsistency is somewhat difficult to explain, but perhaps can be traced to a "sensitivity" of the coefficients for the personal property to which ward received more Republican percentage of the vote and the ranking

of the total personal property per taxable. Thus the coefficient would depend to some extent upon which ward ranked first or generally upon the ward rankings as to Republican support. The coefficient might be low if a large number of taxables lived in a ward with comparatively small amount of

TABLE D

COEFFICIENTS FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY

Year	Coefficient	Year	Coefficient
1890	+.943	1895	+.743
1891	+.772	1896	+.486
1892	+.929	1897	+.600
1893	+.886	1898	+.429
1894	+.772		

personal property. For example, in 1896 the coefficient is relatively small. In this year the third ward registered a higher average Republican vote yet there were many taxables in this ward. Still it would follow that the Republican support would be high. Yet the coefficient for 1896 is low, thus suggesting that in this critical year there was not a high correlation between the amount of personal property held and one's support of the Republican party.

As is evident by the analysis so far the only economic variable which demonstrates a consistent correlation between the Republican vote and support is that of the total value of real estate (Table B). In that crucial year of 1896, there is a clear correlation between the amount of real estate and the degree to which the Republican party was supported. In looking at the coefficient for personal property for the same year it only registers plus .486, well below any possible correlation between the two factors. Thus, the high correlation between land and Republican support must lie in the suggestion that there was not a great deal of personal property in the third ward and to some extent in the fourth ward. The low coefficient for the salaries may be explained in that there were a great many workers or businessmen in the first and second wards which were carried by the Democrats in 1896. In fact, the Democrats scored heavy gains in all of the wards in 1896. Thus, the evidence that a realignment occurred in 1896 is somewhat mixed. If it is assumed that real estate is the basis upon which a ward's wealth is measured then clearly there is correlation and a relationship between the "wealth" of the ward as established by real estate and the ward's support of the Republican party. If salaries are used as a basis for determining wealth then there seems to be a lower support of the Republican party on the basis of the salary level. This may certainly be explained by the resurgence of the Erie Democrats in 1896. To assert however that a definite realignment or no realignment occurred in 1896, whereby the electorate became polarized on account of wealth, though not impossible, is not safe. If in fact a realignment had occurred then it would be expected that all of the coefficients would have registered relatively high and therefore there would have been a clear correlation between the economic variables and support of the Republican party. That this did not occur is indication that Erie did not follow what has been assumed to be the national pattern.

The evidence is clear then that Erie, the county, and the state did not follow what has been suggested happened nationally. There was no overwhelming

movement on any level by the Republicans in 1896; that movement had come three years earlier in 1893 and in essence, on the state level, the Republicans had secured a majority in Pennsylvania in 1891. Only in 1893 had that majority become overwhelming. In the city of Erie, contrary to the national trend, the Democrats gained in strength in 1896, foreshadowing their return to a majority the next year. There is no overwhelming evidence that the city of Erie voted by classes in 1896. Rather, the evidence is to the contrary. A portion of the laboring class in Erie supported the Republicans, but a portion also supported the Democrats. Finally, the thesis that people tended to vote according to religious affiliation has some validity in Erie. It is safe to conclude then that the city of Erie, Pennsylvania in 1896 tended not to follow what has been purported to be the national trend in that year of people voting on a class or wealth basis, rather than by their traditional voting habits on a party basis.

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Table G

Party Preference for Wards, City, County, and State, 1890-1898																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											
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	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																							
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Table G

Party Preference for Wards, City, County, and State, 1890-1898																																				
	1895									1896									1897									1898								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C
President										D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R																		
Congressmen-at-large										D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	R										D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	R
Congress										D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	-										D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	-
Governor																												D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	R
State Treasurer	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R										D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	R									
Mayor										**																										
Director of the Poor	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	-	D	D	R	R	R	R	R	R	-	D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	-	D	D	R	R	D	D	D	R	-

D-Democratic, R-Republican; *A special election was held in February, 1894 to fill a vacant at-large seat; **No figures are available for the 1896 Mayoralty election.

A—City; B—County; C—State

Table H
Average Democratic-Republican Voting Percentages in Wards, City, County, and State, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County	State
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1890	57.1/42.7	63.9/35.9	45.9/53.9	44.4/55.5	56.3/43.6	56.4/43.4	53.8/46.0	45.6/50.7	50.0/48.2
1891	63.4/36.5	67.0/32.9	39.4/60.5	47.3/52.5	62.0/37.9	60.7/39.1	57.6/42.3	44.9/46.9	45.3/52.2
1892	59.2/39.4	63.2/35.0	41.4/55.1	45.8/52.5	57.4/40.3	58.7/39.4	54.5/43.7	49.0/48.7	45.1/51.5
1893	47.7/49.0	51.0/44.5	34.6/62.4	35.4/60.9	44.1/52.2	45.1/49.7	47.7/48.9	33.8/55.8	39.4/56.8
1894	45.9/51.6	53.5/45.1	31.3/68.0	33.6/62.4	46.3/52.2	44.0/54.8	42.7/55.6	34.6/58.9	35.6/60.4
1895	42.3/55.1	47.7/53.9	29.6/69.0	27.5/70.6	39.3/58.1	37.9/60.9	36.4/61.6	27.4/62.5	36.7/59.3
1896	52.6/46.8	60.1/39.4	35.9/63.2	38.6/60.7	48.1/51.2	40.7/58.8	46.1/53.2	43.1/54.6	35.9/61.1
1897	55.2/43.2	66.2/32.2	39.3/58.5	43.6/54.3	58.4/40.3	54.2/44.4	53.1/45.1	44.6/50.1	32.1/49.3
1898	54.0/44.6	63.0/35.4	37.1/61.0	38.2/60.3	53.9/45.2	53.2/45.2	50.4/47.9	43.2/51.0	37.2/52.6

Table I
Democratic/ Republican Voting Percentages for Mayor, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1890 ¹	58.6/41.3	69.3/30.6	57.4/42.5	52.2/47.7	69.7/30.2	68.0/31.9	61.3/38.6
1893 ²	52.5/47.4	54.7/45.2	37.6/62.3	36.3/60.6	51.2/48.7	54.6/45.3	48.0/51.9
1896 ³							

¹Erie Daily Times, 19 February 1890, p. 1; ²Erie Daily Times, 23 February 1893, p. 1; ³No returns could be located. However, by referring to the Union City Times, 20 February 1896, p. 2, it was ascertained that the Democratic candidate was successful by a 285 vote majority.

Table J
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for Director of the Poor, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1890	58.8/41.1	61.3/38.6	40.7/59.2	41.8/58.1	53.4/46.5	55.4/44.5	51.6/48.3 ¹	43.5/52.8 ¹
1891	62.9/37.0	65.6/34.3	45.7/54.2	46.7/53.2	61.0/38.9	60.9/39.0	56.9/43.0 ²	42.0/46.3 ³
1892	57.8/41.8	62.4/37.1	41.2/57.4	44.8/54.8	56.6/43.0	59.1/40.3	53.6/45.7 ³	47.3/49.4 ³
1893	45.0/50.3	49.1/44.4	33.8/62.0	35.3/60.7	40.7/54.0	40.6/51.6	40.9/53.8 ⁴	34.1/55.5 ⁴
1894	52.1/47.8	55.2/44.7	34.1/65.8	35.2/64.7	50.2/49.7	46.5/53.4	45.4/54.5 ⁵	38.4/58.1 ⁵
1895	43.0/56.9	47.8/52.1	31.7/68.2	29.9/70.0	41.3/58.6	39.5/60.4	38.6/61.3 ⁶	27.9/62.4 ⁷
1896	52.6/47.3	59.5/40.4	36.3/63.6	36.4/63.5	48.0/51.9	25.8/74.1	42.6/57.3 ⁸	43.0/55.4 ⁹
1897	55.8/43.8	67.6/31.9	44.2/54.5	44.7/54.6	59.4/40.4	55.5/43.7	54.2/45.1 ¹⁰	47.1/49.6 ¹⁰
1898	54.0/45.9	63.8/36.1	36.9/63.0	39.0/60.9	54.2/45.7	53.6/46.3	50.4/49.5 ¹¹	46.7/53.2 ¹²

¹Erie Morning Dispatch, 6 November 1890, p. 5; ²Erie Morning Dispatch, 5 November 1891, p. 5; ³Erie Daily Times, 8 November 1894, p. 4; ⁴Erie Daily Times, 6 November 1895, p. 8; ⁵Erie Morning Dispatch, 11 November 1895, p. 8; ⁶Erie Daily Times, 4 November 1896, p. 1; ⁷Erie Daily Times, 9 November 1896, p. 2; ⁸Erie Morning Dispatch, 6 November 1897, p. 6; ⁹Erie Daily Times, 10 November 1898, p. 4; ¹⁰Erie Daily Times, 9-10 November, p. 1.

Table K
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for Congress, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1890	50.2/49.7	60.6/39.3	38.8/61.1	40.1/59.8	46.2/53.7	43.8/56.1	47.7/52.2 ¹	45.1/51.2 ²
1892	62.5/35.8	65.3/31.7	46.9/52.1	50.0/48.3	60.3/36.3	58.7/39.2	57.2/40.6 ³	52.9/46.0 ⁴
1894	55.9/43.7	57.9/41.7	35.5/64.2	36.7/62.9	52.3/47.5	46.6/52.7	47.3/52.3 ⁵	41.8/56.1 ⁶
1896	54.0/45.9	62.7/37.2	37.9/62.0	41.6/58.3	49.8/50.1	47.4/52.5	49.2/50.7 ⁷	45.2/53.6 ⁸
1898	55.1/44.8	64.6/35.3	38.9/61.0	41.2/58.7	56.2/43.7	55.3/44.6	52.0/47.9 ⁹	44.7/50.6 ¹⁰

¹Erie Morning Dispatch, 6 November 1890, p. 5; ²Smull's Legislative Handbook (1891), p. 263; ³Erie Morning Dispatch, 12 November 1892, p. 5; ⁴Smull's Legislative Handbook (1893), p. 596; ⁵Erie Daily Times, 8 November 1894, p. 4; ⁶Smull's Legislative Handbook (1895), p. 560; ⁷Erie Daily Times, 4 November 1896; ⁸Smull's Legislative Handbook (1897), p. 632; ⁹Erie Morning Dispatch, 10 November 1898, p. 6; ¹⁰Smull's Legislative Handbook (1899), p. 769.

Table L
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for State Treasurer, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County	State
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1891	63.9/36.0	68.4/31.5	33.1/66.8	48.0/51.9	63.0/36.9	60.6/39.3	58.3/41.6 ¹	47.9/47.6 ²	45.3/52.2 ³
1893	45.8/49.3	49.4/44.0	32.4/63.1	34.7/61.6	40.6/53.9	40.3/52.2	41.0/54.4 ⁴	33.5/56.1 ⁴	39.4/56.8 ⁵
1895	41.7/53.3	47.6/55.7	27.5/69.8	25.1/71.3	37.4/57.6	36.4/61.4	34.3/61.9 ⁶	26.6/63.4 ⁶	36.7/59.3 ⁷
1897	54.7/42.7	64.8/32.5	34.5/62.6	42.6/54.0	57.4/40.3	53.0/45.2	52.1/45.2 ⁸	42.1/50.7 ⁹	32.1/49.3 ⁹

Erie *Morning Dispatch*, 6 November 1891, p. 5; ²Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1892), pp. 504-04; ³Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1892), p. 462; ⁴Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1894), pp. 598-99; ⁵Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1894), p. 553; ⁶Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1896), pp. 516-17; ⁷Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1896), p. 463; ⁸Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1898), pp. 683-84; ⁹Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1898), pp. 683-84; ⁹Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1898), pp. 642-43.

Table M
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for Governor, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County	State
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1890	61.1/38.8	64.6/35.3	47.0/52.9	43.5/56.4	55.9/44.0	58.5/41.4	54.9/45.0 ¹	48.2/48.1 ²	50.0/48.2 ²
1894	47.8/47.7	50.4/43.8	32.3/67.6	32.5/63.5	43.2/50.0	41.9/53.6	41.1/54.0 ³	31.5/58.9 ⁴	34.9/60.3 ⁴
1898	53.0/42.4	59.7/34.7	36.1/57.0	33.0/61.7	51.9/40.0	51.9/42.6	49.1/45.0 ⁵	39.8/48.4 ⁶	36.8/49.0 ⁶

¹Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1891), p. 200; ²Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1891), pp. 166-167; ³Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1895), pp. 476-77; ⁴Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1896), pp. 451-52; ⁵Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1899), pp. 680-81; ⁶Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1899), pp. 627-28.

Table N
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for Congressmen-at-large, 1890-1898¹

Year	Wards						City	County	State
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1892	58.8/39.8	62.8/35.6	43.1/55.3	45.0/52.9	56.7/41.3	60.7/36.6	54.2/44.0 ³	42.9/49.8 ⁴	45.2/51.6 ⁴
1894 ²	31.9/68.0	51.2/48.7	21.6/73.3	30.8/69.1	39.8/60.1	42.0/57.9	37.5/59.9 ⁵	30.8/62.2 ⁶	37.0/60.4 ⁶
1894	48.9/51.0	53.0/46.9	30.8/69.1	33.1/66.8	46.2/53.7	43.3/56.6	42.5/57.4 ⁷	30.9/59.3 ⁸	35.0/60.5 ⁸
1896	52.4/47.5	60.2/39.7	35.4/64.5	39.7/60.2	47.7/52.1	45.3/54.6	47.3/54.6 ⁹	41.9/54.8 ¹⁰	35.7/61.3 ¹⁰
1898	54.2/45.6	64.2/35.5	36.6/63.3	39.9/59.9	53.3/46.5	52.3/47.5	50.4/49.5 ¹¹	41.6/51.9 ¹²	37.7/56.2 ¹²

¹As a result of the 1890 Census, Pennsylvania was allowed to elect two at-large Congressmen, starting in 1892; ²A special election was held in February, 1894 to fill a vacant at-large seat; ³Erie *Morning Dispatch*, 12 November 1892, p. 5; ⁴Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1893), pp. 488-89; ⁵Erie *Morning Dispatch*, 24 February 1894; ⁶Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1895), pp. 425-26; ⁷Erie *Daily Times*, 8 November 1894, p. 4; ⁸Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1895), pp. 435-37; ⁹Erie *Daily Times*, 4 November 1896; ¹⁰Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1897), pp. 463-68; ¹¹Erie *Morning Dispatch*, 10 November 1898, p. 6; ¹²Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1899), pp. 636-37.

Table O
Democratic/Republican Voting Percentages for President, 1890-1898

Year	Wards						City	County	State
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1892	57.8/40.4	62.3/35.6	42.5/55.7	43.7/54.2	56.1/40.9	56.4/41.5	53.1/44.8 ¹	42.3/49.7 ²	45.0/51.4 ³
1896	51.7/46.6	58.2/40.6	34.1/62.7	36.9/60.9	46.9/50.9	44.3/54.0	45.6/52.3 ⁴	42.5/54.7 ⁵	36.2/60.9 ⁶

¹Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1893), pp. 525-26; ²Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1893), p. 484; ³Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1893), p. 459; ⁴Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1897), p. 537; ⁵Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1897), p. 539; ⁶Smull's *Legislative Handbook* (1897), p. 446.

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