For decades historians have been writing our national history almost entirely in terms of what happened at Washington. Important developments in our national life have received attention only when they attained the dignity of consideration as a part of the national scene. Sweeping generalizations have been offered regarding national elections, and explanations glibly presented for this or that change in our national politics despite the obvious complexity of any national election or political shift in the United States.

After all, the authors of our national history undoubtedly are not to blame for this situation. It would be impossible for any one person to investigate the ramifications of our national political life in terms of the individual states. It is a task, however, which ought to be performed, the fulfillment of which would enrich and broaden the scholarly evaluation of our history. It is one which must be undertaken, if at all, by hundreds and even thousands of students of state and local history. Many of the studies may seem at the time to be petty and insignificant in themselves, but taken together they will be very valuable.

Pennsylvania, especially, is rich in its possibilities for this type of historical research. The important contributions of the commonwealth to the political, social and economic evolution of the

1 Presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, Reading, Pennsylvania, November 13, 1936.
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nation since the Civil War have been neglected. On the surface, in terms of the type of history to be found in a broad national view, the rôle of Pennsylvania seems somewhat insignificant. It is this situation, perhaps, which has given rise to the querulous inquiry, "What is wrong with Pennsylvania?" Underneath, in the actual forging of that history and determining or influencing its trends, Pennsylvania has occupied a place of genuine importance. There has not been so much wrong with Pennsylvania, but the query may well be raised, "What is wrong with Pennsylvania historians?"

The election of 1896 has come to be regarded increasingly as one of the more significant in our recent history. The majority of the electoral contests from 1868 to that date had been meaningless and indecisive in so far as their results either way promised any sharp alteration of the trend of governmental policy and administration. European commentators were agreed that few important differences existed between the two major parties. In 1896, however, this situation was corrected. The capture of the Democratic national leadership by the more liberal western element, strongly imbued with the doctrines of Populism, radically altered the character of the party. This change was further accentuated by the Hanna-izing of the Republican party, which repudiated the western heresies tinging its previous currency policy and became the party of the gold standard with virtually solid support from eastern financial and business interests.

With the surface issue the question of the currency policy to be pursued by the national government, the more fundamental underlying issue was that of the general policy of government in the United States. Were we, or were we not, to be dedicated to a political program which involved departure from the tradition of non-interference by government with the free operation of economic processes and laws, regardless of their social consequences? To adhere to the gold standard meant a rigid adherence to the faith in the operation of uncontrolled economic laws. The use of free silver to halt the processes of deflation meant interference with those laws and an assertion that human beings were more important than the gold standard. Beyond that, there were such important questions as the attitude of government toward the regulation of business, the relations of labor and capi-
ELECTION OF 1896 IN PENNSYLVANIA

Election and the sanctity of the courts. It was an English commentator who wrote wisely, "Socialism, anarchy and the threat to pack the Supreme Court frighten the property classes as much as free silver." In many respects, this election became the first modern class-struggle political contest of the industrial epoch of our history.

Pennsylvania provided a splendid laboratory in which to test the ingredients of such a struggle. Predominantly an industrial state, it had in the past its share of labor difficulties, some of which had attracted national attention. In 1894 the English journalist, W. T. Stead, had described the conditions existing in western Pennsylvania in the great iron and coke area as resembling "a seat of war." "We read of forts and cannon, of Gatlings and Winchesters, of revolvers and of dynamite, of cavalry and militia, and even of the formal exchange of prisoners of war," he wrote, describing the labor unrest of the times in picturesque if somewhat lurid terms. Certainly, an election fought along lines of class division should have found Pennsylvania one of its focal points.

It should not be forgotten, however, that Pennsylvania was not only an industrial but also an agricultural commonwealth with a large and varied agricultural interest. What appeal would the doctrines of Populism and free silver hold within the rural areas? Would Pennsylvania farmers follow thousands of their western and southern fellows in the demand for governmental action to relieve the prolonged agrarian distress of the times?

In general, Pennsylvania presented a definitely conservative force during the pre-campaign status of the election. The Republican party of the state was controlled, of course, largely by Matthew S. Quay. The redoubtable Mr. Quay had weathered successfully the attempt to break his power made by the reformers in 1895 and now held Pennsylvania Republican reins with a fairly firm grip. The firmness of his hold was demonstrated by a carefully staged Quay presidential boom begun early in the year by

2 The New Era (Lancaster), October 24, 1896, quoting Thomas Lloyd of The Statist (London).

Republican leaders in Pennsylvania and culminating in his endorsement by the April state Republican convention.4

This boom was created in the face of ridicule naturally by such journals of political reform as the New York Nation. Within the state leading Republican organs condemned Quay in bitter terms and deplored the political disgrace to the commonwealth involved in his persistent candidacy in the face of his nationally dubious political reputation. In Philadelphia, the Ledger asserted he was not a “serious candidate,” and that if he were, “Then other and more disagreeable things would be said about him.” The Telegraph denounced the “autocratic will” exhibited by Quay and declared that “once more a national campaign is to be entered upon with Pennsylvania coming in bedraggled at the foot of the procession, presenting a spectacle that the smallest state in the Union would be heartily ashamed of.” The Harrisburg convention, it affirmed, had “defied decent public sentiment in fostering an unworthy ambition that is based upon the most selfish motives . . . .”5

The Republican press likewise found reason to criticize the currency stand assumed at Harrisburg. The state platform had declared for international bimetallism and opposed silver coinage “except upon government account” until such agreement could be secured. While expressing adherence to the gold standard, it left the door wide open for hopeful silverites to enter. This the Philadelphia Ledger condemned as an attempt to please everybody and “keep alive an idle hope,” while the Telegraph found the state placed in a “false position upon the financial issue, necessitating explanation and apology.”6

Whether the political leaders meeting at Harrisburg were following the time honored political practice of leaving all doors open to those who might enter, or expressing some genuine skepticism of wholehearted endorsement of the gold standard is a matter for conjecture. The point should not be overlooked that Pennsylvania Republicans with their industrial connections were not necessarily devoted to sound money dogmas. As has been pointed out by Dr. Jeannette Nichols, there existed in the nineties a defi-

4 That Quay expected the nomination is to be doubted. His boom and support throughout the national convention were designed probably for political effect.
5 Cited in The Lancaster Daily Intelligencer, April 24, 1896.
6 Ibid.
n late cheap money movement among Pennsylvanians of generally conservative politics. In 1894 both Quay and Cameron in the Senate had been expedient in arranging an alliance with the silverites to bargain effectively in checking the danger to protectionism embodied in the tariff program of the Cleveland administration. The Manufacturer, Philadelphia organ of the Manufacturer's Club, was characterized by The Nation as a dangerous propagandist for cheap money, and it was not until late March, 1896, that the club itself voted against free silver except by international agreement. It was reported at this time that a strong free silver minority in the club had vigorously opposed a resolution endorsing the gold standard as an alternative to international bimetallism. In the active political arena, a meeting of Pennsylvania Republicans with western silverites was reported to have taken place in Washington March 20, 1896 to consider the possibility of a coalition in defense of protection and silver.

Indeed, at this stage of the political drama it appeared in many quarters that an attempt of the Republicans to declare for the gold standard in June might lead to political division in the party. Senator Cameron was believed by The Nation to be the logical leader of such a movement should it materialize and the “most formidable” to be found. Quay was declared to be working closely with Platt to set up a boss control of Republican political affairs, and willing to sanction almost any desperate move to attain that end. Chairman Carter of the Republican National Committee reported at the same time that Cameron would find overwhelming support from Western Republicans for the Presidential nomination. It is not improbable that Pennsylvania industrialists, at least in the preliminary stages of the 1896 campaign, would have been willing to have sacrificed a strong stand on the currency in favor of a vigorous declaration for protection. It is significant in this connection that this is exactly what was done by the assembled Republicans at the Harrisburg convention. Protectionism was declared to be the outstanding issue in 1896.

8 The Nation, April 2, 1896.
9 Ibid., March 26, 1896.
10 Ibid.
11 The Lancaster Intelligencer, April 15, 1896.
The tone of the Pennsylvania Republican press, however, was not so compromising. It was prevalingly for sound money at all costs, asserting it to be the paramount issue of the campaign and in some instances specifically opposing the tendency to stress protection as more important. The generally critical attitude of the Republican organs toward the McKinley candidacy rested upon the allegedly unsound views of the Hanna protégé upon the currency. The newspapers, both for and against the Quay candidacy, made common cause in attacking the failure of McKinley to make known his currency stand. A McKinley meeting in May at Pittsburgh was contemptuously referred to in the Press as the McKinley "mask meeting." From one end of the state to the other, the "straddling," "dishonesty," and "evasion," characteristic of McKinley met with disfavor. So powerful was this sentiment that Democratic papers were quick to appreciate the situation and advocate a strong sound money candidate and declaration by their convention to capitalize upon the uneasiness of conservatives at the McKinley candidacy.

The position of Pennsylvania Democrats was more conservative than that of their Republican rivals. As was characteristic of the national situation, the only important difference between Republicanism and Democracy in Pennsylvania was in the support of political reform by the latter. Through the two divided terms of Governor Pattison, the state Democracy had won recognition as a party committed to the reform of the state government. The existence of a strong protectionist wing within the party made any difference over that issue with the Republicans more illusory than real. Party control of the Democrats was in the hands largely of conservative eastern Pennsylvanians prominent in business circles with a mixture of Cleveland political appointees. The titular leader of the party was the vigorous, conservative, capable William F. Harrity. Lawyer, banker and business man, Harrity had behind him in 1896 a distinguished career. The tendency to underestimate Pennsylvania influence in national politics has led to the overlooking of many such figures who, largely unknown today, were actually prominent and influential in much fuller measure.

12 The Pittsburgh Press for May and June, as indeed throughout the campaign, is especially valuable because of its copious extracts from editorial opinion from leading papers of the state and nation.
than popular opinion is today inclined to grant. Within this group Harrity must be placed. His rise from the chairmanship of the Philadelphia City Democratic Committee to headship of the National Democratic Committee, and the successful direction of the Cleveland campaign in 1892 mark him as a brilliant and nationally influential figure. Under his able guidance Pennsylvania became a real power in the national Democracy, despite her prevailing Republicanism at the ballot box.

There was little free silver sentiment in the ranks of Pennsylvania Democrats on the eve of the campaign of 1896. As early as April 12th the Democrats of Philadelphia endorsed Pattison as presidential nominee along with the currency policies of the Cleveland administration. By late April when the Allentown state convention got under way, state-wide action along the same lines was a foregone conclusion. The Democracy of Pennsylvania presented proudly the name of its great reform governor of former days as worthy of consideration by the Democrats of the nation in selecting a national standard bearer. In the platform, after time honored declarations of opposition to federal centralization as opposed to state’s rights, the convention proceeded to endorse without reservation the policies of the Cleveland administration with the significant exception of the tariff. A vigorous sound money plank found a place in the declarations. The repeal of all legislation authorizing the Greenbacks was demanded on the ground that these and the treasury notes “are a constant menace of financial disaster and national dishonor; they should have no place in the currency of the nation.” “We are in favor of a firm, unvarying maintenance of the gold standard,” declared the platform, “and we are absolutely opposed to the free coinage of silver and to the compulsory purchase of silver bullion by the Government.” All in all, the Democratic platform was a more vigorous presentation of the sound money cause, with fewer catch phrases, than that of the Republicans.

Leading Democratic papers were unwavering in their support of a similar policy, and until early June seem to have been confident that the sound money forces would control the party nationally. A tendency to poke fun at the Republicans for their dilemma with a silver candidate was exhibited in some quarters. In Philadelphia the Record on June 9th exclaimed, “What a figure
Major McKinley would cut if the St. Louis convention should nominate him on a straight anti-silver platform,” and went on to chuckle that it would hardly be more incongruous “if the Democrats at Chicago should adopt as a platform the Ten Commandments and nominate Tillman and Altgeld.” In Pittsburgh, the Republican Press expressed the view that McKinley’s nomination by the party would result in a sound money candidate and platform by the Democrats. National Chairman Harrity, en route to Chicago to make preliminary preparations for the convention in early May, expressed the view in a Pittsburgh interview that the party would declare for gold. Even upon the part of those favorable to cheap money there were evident no fears of difficulty over the currency question at Chicago.13 Pattison himself was reported in the press as not unyielding in his views on the currency and inclined to accept any action taken by the national convention. The whole issue of the currency he refused to regard as vital and one that “would work itself out in time.”14

Such was the pre-campaign situation in Pennsylvania. The story of the national conventions is too well known to justify but passing reference. Suffice it to point out that Pennsylvania presented no less than three favorite sons for presidential honors before the major conventions in 1896. At St. Louis, the Republican forces held so tightly in hand by Quay were unmoved by the McKinley landslide and remained steadfast to the candidacy of the redoubtable Republican leader from Pennsylvania. If Quay and Platt nurtured any plans for the unseating of the Hanna control over the convention they did not materialize, but the appointment of Quay to a responsible position on the National Executive Committee showed that he had made peace with the Ohio Warwick.

In Chicago, the Pennsylvania Democrats manifested no less vigorous support of their favorite son, Pattison. The few silverites in the Pennsylvania delegation united with their more conservative brethren in supporting the choice of the Allentown convention. The extent of the silverite rebellion, was three votes for the majority report of the Committee on Platform endorsing free silver, while the remaining members of the Pennsylvania group

13 The Lancaster Intelligencer, April, May and June.
14 Duck hunting in the Dakotas, Pattison was reported as little interested in the currency issue at the time of his selection as Democratic nominee.
in frowning dissent voted for the report of the minority endorsing Cleveland and condemning the silver heresy. Once the silverites were in control, the most notable Pennsylvanian at Chicago became, not ex-Governor Pattison, but Joseph Sibley, millionaire free silver advocate and Populist-Democrat of Franklin. Considered seriously at one time by the Populist as their presidential candidate, and mentioned by free silver Democrats on occasion, Sibley received one hundred and sixty-three ballots on the first ballot for the vice-presidential nomination. Absent from the convention by this time, Sibley withdrew by telegraph on the third ballot.

The Republican campaign in Pennsylvania presented little that was exciting. Pennsylvania Republicans, despite earlier skepticism, fell into line behind the McKinley candidacy with little difficulty. The currency plank satisfied the critical sound money press, while any wavering industrialists certainly were converted to the cause by the magic of the “Napoleon of Protection.” There was little doubt of the ability of the ticket to secure the traditional Republican majority. The only cloud in the horizon was the possible desertion of silver Republicans, a prospect which earlier in the year had been considered by serious commentators, as has been noted. Any such possibility in Pennsylvania, however, was ended definitely by mid-July when Don Cameron announced his support of the ticket. The most serious difficulty of the Quay state leadership was the possibility of local factional struggles forwarded by the reformers, who had been campaigning with increasing vigor against Quayism. In Philadelphia such a struggle assumed serious proportions as a result of the revolt of David Martin, which made the election in the city almost entirely a local affair conducted with little reference to national issues.

Late July and early August marked the preliminary active political skirmishing following the usual post-convention lull. The definite organization of the business group behind the McKinley leadership was undertaken by members of the Manufacturers

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17 The North American was critical of the boss tactics of Hanna, however, and as late as July the Philadelphia Ledger remained critical of the McKinley currency declarations.
Club of Philadelphia in late July. Rudolph Blankenburg and a committee of business men undertook a crusade to organize the business men of the nation against Bryanism, and by July 21st a delegation departed for Boston to undertake the missionary enterprise. By July 25th the system of sponsored visits to the shrine at Canton by workingmen was underway. A group from the National Convention of Window Glass Workers meeting at Pittsburgh visited McKinley at that time. Early August found Mark Hanna in Philadelphia meeting with the newly organized Business Men’s Committee and greeting Republican and Democratic business men desirous of securing the defeat of Bryan. In a public statement the Republican chairman hailed the Philadelphia organization as “inaugurating” the idea of the association of business men, regardless of party, to secure the repudiation of Bryanism. “I shall advise the extension of the work of this committee in all cities of the country,” affirmed Hanna. By August 7th the committee had begun the systematic solicitation of funds and announced a service designed to supply speakers and literature for any political meeting. It thus appears that Philadelphia business men must be given credit for originating this feature of the Republican campaign.

From the beginning, the Republican emphasis was placed upon the radicalism of Bryan and the Chicago platform. Rather typically the Pittsburgh Press greeted the Democrats on July 14th as “The Party of Anarchy,” and referred to its rival the Post, supporting Bryan, as “the organ of anarchy.” In Lancaster, the New Era asserted on July 11th that the Democratic Convention had been controlled “by the spirit of Populism and Anarchy,” and the platform to be the work of “a conglomeration of political cranks” dominated by the “anarchistic Altgeld.” Two days later it referred scathingly to the “Democratic Communistic Convention” and declared “Patriotism Against Populism” to be the issue. A tide of similar invective continued until the closing moments of the campaign. In a final fling, the New Era of October 31st asked, “Is there any one man in Lancaster county outside the ranks of the Anarchists, who would like to see either Tillman or Altgeld in the Cabinet of a President? If he does, he is an anarchist at

20 Ricker, op. cit.
heart. If you cast your vote for Bryan, that is just what you will be voting for."

It is interesting to note that Bryan was charged frequently by the Republican press and orators with arraying class against class and introducing the class struggle pattern into American politics. Appeals to patriotism as against anarchism, with proper reference to the names of Altgeld and Tillman, were sure to be utilized by at least one orator at any Republican rally. From the beginning, Republican strategy was designed to stress these two figures in the Democratic picture and either to minimize or dismiss Bryan as a young "Popocrat," the tool of Altgeld. The latter was generously referred to as the "boss" of the Chicago convention. No doubt the many personal appearances of Bryan where he made a uniformly favorable impression influenced this strategy. In contrast to the evils flowing from the triumph of Bryanism, were portrayed the advantages of Republican rule under McKinley, frequently referred to as the "second Lincoln" who would free the nation from economic bondage.

"The workingmen constitute the unknown quantity that is most difficult to measure and which is giving the managers more concern than all the others," wrote a political analyst in the Philadelphia Ledger, October 30th. This was true certainly in an election of the social implications involved in that of 1896. In industrial Pennsylvania, the votes of workingmen might well have proved the key to the election, as indeed they probably did in 1936. The Republican problem, therefore, was to counteract the appeal of the Democratic social reform program. The endorsement of Bryan by the forces of organized labor as their champion, and the stress placed by Democrats upon the advantages of currency reform to the common man, combined with the assault upon the trusts and money power placed their tickets in an advantageous position with the laboring classes. The final results of the election in Pennsylvania show, however, that the Republicans overcame this initial handicap with thoroughness and despatch. From a very early date in the campaign there is evidence of unusual political activity by corporations in the direction of "educating" their workers. Running through newspaper files, one is impressed with the number of workingmen's McKinley clubs, marching organizations, etc., which featured the contest. Natural-
ly, these were sponsored by industrialists and furnished with an abundance of literature supplied by the business men's committees. Probably the most potent argument utilized was that of the threat of free silver inflation to the wage of the workingman. The press and speakers ran the changes on this issue so vigorously that fear for the future buying power of their pay envelope must have influenced the political action of thousands. Secondly, there was the ill disguised threat that the election of Bryan would result in business stagnation and widespread unemployment. How much of this constituted so-called intimidation, and how much reflected the honest concern and reasoned conclusion of employers is impossible to determine.

Those who have analyzed the election in its national aspects have differed over the importance of the tariff as an issue. In Pennsylvania, there is abundant evidence to show that it was given almost equal emphasis with the currency as a major issue. It was important especially in convincing the working population that its interests were with the Republican party. In 1895 the Republican State Convention had denounced the Cleveland tariff policies and the "infamous Wilson tariff bill," congratulating the nation and state upon the fact that Pennsylvania Senators had assisted in emasculating the measure in the Senate. Again in 1896 the state platform returned to the attack and charged the Democratic tariff policy with producing the business stagnation of the times. The restoration of protection, coupled with the system of reciprocity made prominent by James G. Blaine, was advocated. "First among all National issues stands Protection, and first among its advocates have been the Republicans of Pennsylvania," declared the platform.

In The Manufacturer of Philadelphia—that perfect reflection of the Pennsylvania industrial viewpoint—we find in August, sage counsel to the Republicans against the abandonment of a strong position on the tariff in order to attract Jeffersonian Democrats to the party standard. The Cleveland administration, it asserted, had endeavored consistently to deceive the people with the theory that the currency was the sole cause of the business prostration evident since 1893. The true cause of economic distress was declared to be the tinkering with the tariff by Cleveland Democrats. "If the eagerness among some classes of people in the West for
free silver is intense, so is the eagerness among millions of other people, all over the land for higher tariff protection," affirmed this Philadelphia journal.20

Delegations of workingmen and other Pennsylvania groups visiting McKinley at Canton were regaled with talks upon the importance of the tariff to their interests. For example, a delegation of Pennsylvania workers, mechanics and farmers appearing before McKinley on August 22nd bore a huge banner, "Give us Back the Prosperous Days of the McKinley Tariff." In his carefully prepared reply, the Republican nominee launched into an attack upon free trade and eulogized the tariff as the salvation of the toiler.21 On September 17th a delegation of steel workers from the J. Edgar Thompson works received much the same address and the chairman introducing them stressed protectionism as the issue in 1896.22 Examination of the Republican press indicates much emphasis upon the low tariff record of Bryan during his brief Congressional career. Many were inclined to link the currency with the tariff as the keys to the well being of both capital and labor.23 It is not uncommon to find accounts of Republican meetings at which the major portion of the speeches were devoted to the tariff, and the currency ignored or shoved into the background. Typical of the exaggerated demands made in this connection was that of the speaker at Millersville September 26th, who called for a "protective tariff so high that not a single thing can get into this country that can be grown or made here."24 Such an emphasis upon this issue justifies the conclusion that the "full dinner pail" was not an unimportant factor in the apparent success of the Republicans in capturing the labor vote from Bryan.

If the course of the Republican campaign ran smoothly, that of the Democrats was as stormy as a wintry sea. Weakened by defeat in the gubernatorial contest of 1894, when its vote declined more than one hundred thousand under that of Pattison in 1890 to the lowest point since 1888, the party was ill prepared to stand division within its ranks. Such division must be fatal to any

20 Cited, Literary Digest, August 15, 1896.
21 Lancaster New Era, August 22, 1896.
22 Ibid., September 17, 1896.
23 Ibid., August 22, 1896, letter by "Gold Standard."
24 Ibid., October 3, 1896.
hope of success in 1896, and it was apparent even before the final proceedings of the Chicago convention.

As noted earlier, the sentiment of the Allentown gathering of the state Democracy and that of the leading Democratic press organs was strongly conservative in general and for sound money in particular. While the early belief seems to have been that sound money forces would dominate the national convention as well, by June the prospect of silverite control was admitted in most quarters. On June 3rd Chairman Harrity agreed, in contrast with his May pronouncement, in the probable control by the western silver interests of the Chicago gathering. Victory by the silver forces in the Kentucky elections and other developments in early June confirmed this view.\(^2\) This realization was met with open threats of secession from the party by gold Democrats. Such an ultimatum was issued by the *Philadelphia Record* by June 11th and renewed frequently until the national convention. The *Times* of the same city announced likewise its intention to support McKinley unless a sounder money platform and candidate emerged at Chicago, affirming the currency "an issue high above candidates or party, for it is an issue between national honor and national dishonor."\(^2\) The Bryan nomination, and prior to it the adoption of the silver platform, had come in the face of virtually united opposition by the Pennsylvania delegation. For five ballots the sixty-four votes of Pennsylvania were cast unwaveringly for ex-Governor Pattison. Earlier, three silverites out of the possible dozen with silver leanings on the delegation had deserted the group to vote for the adoption of the silver platform.

In view of this situation it was not surprising that the work of the Chicago convention met with instant opposition in Pennsylvania, and the prediction of Harrity that there would be no bolt rudely upset. While the former national chairman affirmed he was still both a Democrat and a sound money man, the dominant leadership of the party in the state was quick to express vigorous dissent. In Philadelphia the *Times* and *Record* joined other great Democratic papers in not only deserting Bryan but uniting in condemnation of him and the notorious, as they viewed it, Chicago platform.

\(^2\) The *Philadelphia Record* through June presents fully the conservative reaction to developments nationally in the party.

The *Record* declared July 11th, "The platform adopted by the Chicago Convention is such a declaration of purposes and principles as no consistent Democrat and no lover of the country can conscientiously approve." The *Times* urged another convention adopting the minority report on the platform and endorsing McKinley. From other sections of the state came similar desertions by the Democratic press.\(^{27}\) The Pottsville *Chronicle* hysterically announced, "Populism and Anarchy have builded the platform for the Democratic party."\(^{28}\) Similar sentiments were expressed by the *Herald* at Columbia and the *Sun* of Williamsport.

Important leaders were not slow to manifest equal displeasure. State Chairman Wright by July 11th was quoted as denouncing the "Populistic tendencies" of the platform and the impossibility of supporting it. William B. Given of Columbia, temporary chairman of the state convention in April, publicly declared, "The platform violates every cardinal principle of our Democratic faith." In Allegheny county Chairman Fagan had resigned by the 17th and in Bucks, Judge Yerkes, long prominent Democratic leader, joined those who refused to go along with the party.\(^{29}\)

These scattered blasts at the national leadership were less important, however, than the serious activity of a group of Philadelphia conservatives who gathered July 17th at the law offices of John C. Bullitt. These men took what perhaps was one of the earliest organized steps in the country to combat Bryanism by the coalition of conservative Democrats.\(^{30}\) This gathering represented some of the most prominent leaders in Pennsylvania Democratic circles. Present were William Singerly, candidate for governor in 1894 and owner of the powerful *Record*; Henry D. Welsh, Pennsylvania Railroad director and presiding officer; Charles H. Jones, vice-president of the Trust Company of North America; J. Simpson Africa, head of the Union Trust Company;
James F. Sullivan, director of the Union Traction Company; George F. Baer, director of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad; John R. Read, collector of the port, and others of similar affiliations. The Bourbon Democracy of Pennsylvania was fully aroused. The potential rebels, however, were in evident doubt, as were their brethren nationally, as to the proper course of action. Some advocated open coalition with the Republicans, while others favored political independence in the effort to bargain without losing identity. The general opinion seemed to incline toward a waiting policy and an effort to retain control of the party machinery as long as possible. This proved to be the course adopted through July and part of August.

It proved a vain hope, however, and by early August the rank and file of the party were to be found staging a counter attack upon the conservative leaders who insisted upon retaining their party posts despite open rebellion against the national candidate and platform. From every section of the state came news of action by county committees endorsing both Bryan and the Chicago declaration of Democratic faith and thinly veiled demands for the ousting of leaders who refused to follow the national standard. Typical of the situation was the position of County Chairman Given of Lancaster county. While publicly denouncing the platform, as has been noted, by mid-August he still remained in charge of the party machinery. An emergency meeting of the county committee called over his head resulted in forcing his resignation, however, by August 17th. Somewhat earlier State Chairman Wright had resigned on August 8th and a meeting at Harrisburg on August 13th was called for the reorganization of the state committee.

The masterly political strategy of Harrity, which challenges the primacy of Quay as the master political mind of the period, was never more cleverly displayed than at this meeting. The leading candidate for the chairmanship of the state was James Kerr of Clearfield, prominent silverite and supported by National Chairman Jones who was anxious to secure a sympathetic leader in Pennsylvania. In spite of this support, and the fact that Kerr displayed his prominence by acting as presiding officer, Harrity secured the selection of John M. Garman of Luzerne, his personal political henchman in the coal counties. Despite a rising criticism of his own continuance on the national committee in view of his
known gold sympathies, Harrity later likewise survived a determined effort to unseat him. Throughout the campaign he remained aloof from actual participation with either the regulars or Jeffersonians.

There is room for the belief that the newly constituted state organization, in which the more positive silverites had been pushed into a secondary position, did not carry on the state campaign with too much vigor. While plans were announced immediately for an intensive effort to carry the state, it was reported in early October that Garman privately conceded the commonwealth to the Republicans. To this report the loyal Intelligencer at Lancaster answered, "We will carry Pennsylvania; but not by the force of the Democratic organization." Charges of lukewarmness upon the part of supposedly responsible leaders continued until the eve of election.

The result of the unseating of the more pronounced conservatives from Democratic leadership was the intensification of the activity of the bolting "goldbugs." The Philadelphia meeting of July had been followed by some activity during early August, but after the August 13th plans matured rapidly. In Pittsburgh the bolt formally took place August 22nd with a meeting of gold Democrats. These gentlemen were similar in character to their Philadelphia brethren. All of them were characterized by the Press as "well known in the business world." The main strength of the gold democracy remained, however, in Philadelphia and it was the early leaders there who dominated the state activities. John C. Bullitt and George F. Baer became delegates to the preliminary conference of the gold supporters called at Indianapolis, August 7th. On the eve of departure for this gathering, Baer declared, "I do not know of a single Democratic manufacturer or business man who will support Bryan, nor have I met any Democrat interested in business who will support that ticket."

The state convention of the goldites was held fittingly enough at Philadelphia, August 25th and was presided over by Mr. Bullitt. The temper of the gathering is to be gathered from the remarks from the floor. Singerly denounced Bryanism with vigor and

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31 October 10, 1896.
32 August 23, 1896.
33 Philadelphia Record, August 7 and 8, 1896.
called for a return to "true Jeffersonian principles." Bullitt asserted that the Chicago platform if carried out "would lead to disorder, rioting, destruction of property and disintegration of our social organization. . . ." There was a general call for return to the Allentown platform. The convention produced its own platform, which denounced the "betrayal of true Democracy" at Chicago and affirmed in seriousness that the purpose of "Populistic Democracy" was "to revolutionize the Government, to confiscate the property of its citizens and to arbitrarily divide it amongst the thrifty and unthrifty." The term "Jeffersonian Party" was formally adopted and delegates were appointed to the Indianapolis convention. But thirty-four counties were represented, and the proceedings were strongly Philadelphian and the delegates representative of prosperous business and financial interests with a sprinkling of the political appointees of the Cleveland regime.44

On August 31st the Pennsylvania Jeffersonians, sixty-four strong, departed in three Pullman sleepers, a diner and baggage car for Indianapolis, openly declaring for the first time their support of an independent political movement. The delegates wore huge badges consisting of a portrait of Jefferson under the name of the state. At the gold convention, the Pennsylvanians played a respectable rôle. George F. Baer was a member of the resolutions committee, and it is an interesting commentary on the depth of the Jeffersonianism exhibited by some of the delegates that Baer fought hard for the inclusion of a strong protective tariff plank in the national platform. According to press accounts there was no little protectionist sentiment manifested by the Pennsylvanians.45

That the Jeffersonians did not relinquish their attempt to stem the tide of silver, however, is indicated by the events connected with the second state convention held by the reorganized regular Democracy at Harrisburg on September 10th. While "goldbugs" were declared to be a rarity, and less than one third of the delegates to the April convention were present, a minority did attend and attempted to influence the convention. Singerly, ex-chairman Wright, Given, now Jeffersonian state chairman, and others equally prominent were on the scene. In spite of much booing and

44 The Philadelphia Record reported fully Jeffersonian Democratic activity.
disorder, they succeeded in presenting a protest by a minority committee before the convention. The threat to the judiciary, state's rights and financial integrity embodied in the national platform was scored. "We are ready to battle with those who have stolen the name and the banners of our party and would prostitute them to purposes of Populism and repudiation," warned the minority.  

The silver forces remained in control, however, and endorsed both Bryan and the national platform with evident enthusiasm. A formal motion for the unseating of Harrity from the national committee was tabled by the narrow margin of five votes. A formal union with the state Populist party by granting to them four electors was approved by the convention. The way for this fusion had been paved by the action of the state Populist convention at Pittsburgh in early August.

Handicapped from the beginning by this serious internal disension and the loss of old leaders, the state Democratic campaign was doomed to failure from the start unless a political miracle could be worked. To work a miracle funds must necessarily have been in abundance, and this proved to be an added difficulty. From the beginning of the campaign Democratic representatives complained of lack of funds and literature to spread the silver gospel. In Lancaster county the free silver Intelligencer found it necessary to turn over to the county leaders the propaganda material which it received at its offices, so great was the deficiency of regularly acquired printed matter. Even the magic voice of Bryan indeed was unavailable. In view of the general political situation, Bryan could not have been expected to campaign with vigor in Pennsylvania. In August, en route to New York to deliver his acceptance address, he crossed the state from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia. At the former city he was greeted by a considerable crowd and delivered two addresses the evening of August 10th. Journeying eastward over the Pennsylvania Railroad brief stops were made at such points as Greensburg, Altoona, Harrisburg and Lancaster. The appearances of Bryan were limited, however, to the back platform and he was denied even the opportunity to say a few words to the assembled throngs due to the very bad condition of his voice. Handshaking and remarks by lesser lights in

Ibid., September 10 and 11, 1896.
the party were the extent of the campaigning. In Philadelphia on August 11th, his visit was limited to twenty minutes while changing trains and no speaking was in order. He was greeted, in spite of this, by a large crowd described derisively by the North American as made up mainly of people with long whiskers and curiosity seekers. It is interesting to note that Bryan made a favorable impression wherever he appeared, and the bitterest of the opposing press representatives were forced to admit the grace and charm of his personality. The Democratic candidate returned to Philadelphia for an address at the Academy of Music on September 22nd, but any influence upon the campaign in Pennsylvania must have been of the slightest.

Obviously, any hope for Bryan in the state must have rested upon the possibility of active support by the laboring and farm population. As noted earlier, Bryan possessed the endorsement of organized labor as represented by the American Federation of Labor, the Knights and the American Railway Union. In spite of this, his chance of reaching the laboring classes of the state was limited. Inadequate funds made impossible the educational activities necessary. As has been pointed out, unusual activity by industrialists in the way of organizing their workers and encouraging meetings addressed by the proper persons with floods of literature on the dangers of inflation and free trade to the worker made the task of counteracting this by a full presentation of the other side virtually impossible. As the election neared, charges of actual intimidation of employees appeared and public notices of intention to close plants should Bryan be elected were sometimes posted. When charges of coercion of employees were raised, however, the friendly press countered with assertions that the representatives of organized labor were themselves engaged in bludgeoning the labor vote into line.37

The Bryan candidacy was endorsed by the Farmer’s Alliance, which had a weak following in the state. More important in potential influence was the aid of Leonard Rhone, head of the state Grange. As early as August 3rd Rhone declared in an interview at Bellefonte that the Republicans were overconfident and much free silver sentiment existed among Pennsylvania farmers in general, while those in the Grange “will be almost a unit for free silver sentiment existed among Pennsylvania farmers in general, while those in the Grange “will be almost a unit for free

37 Cf. Philadelphia Record, November 3, 1896. The press generally did not reveal marked concern over such activities in Pennsylvania.
silver. It is likely that Mr. Rhone in his own exuberance overstepped the bounds allowed the cautious prophet. His liberal views were not to the liking of all members of his organization and resulted in a movement for his removal before the end of the campaign.

Regardless of the volume of free silver sentiment which may have existed within either the ranks of labor or agriculture early in the campaign, there is little in the election returns to warrant a conclusion that the silver crusade made any final impression upon either of these two groups. The total Bryan vote for the state, including those on Populist and Silver Party ballots, was 433,228, compared with a vote of 452,464 for Cleveland in 1892. This was a decrease of nearly 20,000, and not to be accounted for by Jeffersonian desertions, whose vote totalled but 11,000.

On the other hand, McKinley polled 726,998 votes as compared with 516,011 for Harrison, an increase of even more than 200,000. The Populist vote for Weaver in 1892 had been 8,714 as contrasted with 6,103 Populist supporters for Bryan. In brief there was a marked increase in the total vote cast in the state over that of 1892 of nearly 190,000 for the three principal parties. McKinley garnered the whole of this plus about 20,000 drawn from the Democrats and Populists, failing to indicate any success for the discontent movement.

The counties carried by Bryan were Berks, Clarion, Columbia, Crawford, Fulton, Greene, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Pike, Sullivan and York. All these, with the single exception of Crawford, had been carried by Cleveland in 1884, 1888 and 1892, indicating their traditional Democratic inclination. The only county gained for the Democrats which could be classed as a Republican county under normal conditions was Crawford, home of Sibley, millionaire free silverite. This was a meager gain, however, and won at the expense of the loss of Adams, Carbon, Centre, Bucks, Cambria, Clearfield, Clinton, Cumberland, Elk, Juniata, Lehigh,
Lycoming and Wayne counties which had been carried by Cleveland for three successive contests. The bulk of these counties was predominantly agricultural, hence it would be difficult to adopt any other view than that Bryanism lost ground in the agricultural areas. A more conservative candidate, avoiding the silver issue, would no doubt have carried a large part, if not all of these counties. The margin of the Bryan defeat in all of them was not large.

The Republican vote was overwhelming in the two great business and industrial centers of the state, Allegheny and Philadelphia counties. However, the absence of any definite social or economic interest in the state as a basis for political cleavage is to be seen in the fact that McKinley likewise carried by even greater margins running two or three to one in such rural counties as Potter, Tioga and McKean in the northern tier, and Lancaster and Lebanon in the south. Traditionalism, generally predominant in American politics, evidently dictated the majority of Pennsylvania ballots in 1896.

Where traditionalism was abandoned, it was more common apparently among the well-to-do classes. There could not have been any strong labor vote for Bryan in the industrial centers if election returns indicate anything. In Pittsburgh, for example, the Republican vote increased from 18,656 to 32,409 between 1892 and 1896, while the Democrats dropped from 13,818 to 12,925 and the Populists picked up a meager forty-five vote increase. In Schuylkill county the Republican vote increased from 11,426 to 16,985 in the same elections and the Democrats from only 13,677 to 14,552 while the Populists gained fifty-one votes. Any wholesale swing of labor to Bryan could hardly have taken place in view of such returns. That the total Populist vote declined from 8,714 to 6,103 between 1892 and 1896 is another indication of the absence of any mass uprising by the lower class element politically in 1896.

On the other hand, the expanded Republican vote very probably came from those with some property interest, aroused by the nature of the anti-Bryan campaign in and outside the state. The effect of a threat of Populism upon the well-to-do is best illustrated by the Jeffersonian movement among the Democrats. Here political traditions were broken more completely by the impact
of the threat of radicalism within the party. The evidence is clear that the 11,000 Jeffersonian Democratic votes cast in Pennsylvania were almost entirely from what Hamilton termed the "rich, able and well born." How many other conservative Democrats voted for McKinley is impossible to determine.

In Pennsylvania, then, the appeal to social unrest upon the part of the masses inherent in the Populist-Democratic alliance in 1896 was unsuccessful. Rather than accomplishing the object of solidifying labor and agriculture against the economic and political power of the new industrialism and finance, it seems to have produced a tightening of political bonds among those who were small or large holders of property against repudiation, socialism, anarchism and what not as portrayed by the propagandists of Hanna. Those without property, or with very little, were divided and swayed by the fear for jobs, the effects of inflation upon wages, loss of land values, or loss of savings. That is about as near as a candid historian can come to analyzing the results of the election, for after all each voter carried into the polling place his own individual bit of traditionalism, fear, desire, or other interest which determined the result. What these interests were the historian cannot determine with the precision of the scientist. He can only surmise.