THE PROGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN IN PENNSYLVANIA, 1912

By Lloyd M. Abernethy*

FROM the Civil War to the 1930’s, Pennsylvania politics was dominated by the Republican party, which in turn was controlled for most of that time by a succession of political bosses—Simon Cameron, Donald Cameron, Matthew Quay, and Boies Penrose. With little regard for the public welfare, the bosses used the state government to advance their organization and reward the special interests who financed their machine. They dictated the nominations of both high and low officials; they controlled federal, state, and local patronage; and they wielded a dominant influence over important state legislation. From time to time, factions within the Republican party arose to challenge the rule of the bosses but, before 1912, they remained loyal to the Republican party as a national organization even while castigating the state leadership. In 1912, however, Republican reformers in Pennsylvania carried their dispute with the state machine into the national campaign and joined with insurgents throughout the country to support Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive party.

As President, Theodore Roosevelt had been unusually popular in the Keystone state. His leadership in the prosecution of trusts, his efforts at conservation, and his intervention for the public in the anthracite strike of 1902 convinced many Pennsylvanians that he was dedicated to the welfare of the people. This was most clearly demonstrated in 1904 when he carried the state by an unprecedented majority of 500,000 votes. As the election of 1912 approached it was not surprising, then, that many Pennsylvanians wanted to see him return to the White House, particularly when it appeared that his successor, William Howard Taft, had failed

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to continue the Roosevelt program. Active encouragement of Roosevelt's candidacy in Pennsylvania began in the fall of 1910 when the Pittsburgh Leader—edited by Alexander P. Moore—began running as a daily headline on its editorial page the slogan, "For President in 1912, Theodore Roosevelt." At the other end of the state, the most zealous critic of the state machine and editor of the Philadelphia North American—Edwin Van Valkenburg—launched an appeal for four more years of Roosevelt's "peerless leadership." Other early supporters of Roosevelt in Pennsylvania included his close friend and former conservation chief, Gifford Pinchot; the Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, William D. Lewis; and the former boss of Pittsburgh and longtime enemy of the state machine, William Flinn.

Roosevelt, however, was convinced that 1912 would be a Democratic year and insisted, throughout 1911, that he was not a candidate for the nomination. Unwilling to support Taft, the Pennsylvania reformers joined the movement to nominate Senator Robert La Follette, who had emerged as the leader of the Progressive wing of the Republican party. Nevertheless, even while encouraging La Follette, they continued to urge Roosevelt to reconsider and enter the campaign as the best hope of defeating the conservatives. By January, 1912, impressed by the many expressions of support for him, Roosevelt had reached the conclusion that he had a good chance to win the nomination and the November election and quietly made arrangements to enter the campaign.

2 The Leader carried the slogan until August 21, 1911, when it was dropped at Roosevelt's request. See letter of Roosevelt to Moore, August 18, 1911, reprinted in the Pittsburgh Leader, August 21, 1911. Moore restored the slogan on January 20, 1912, when it became apparent that Roosevelt would be a candidate.

3 In partnership with Christopher Magee, Flinn dominated Pittsburgh politics from the 1880's to 1902 when his organization was defeated by a Citizen's party backed by Matthew Quay. During the period of his semi-retirement from politics which followed he became increasingly progressive, supporting numerous city reforms and urging the state Republican party to adopt an enlightened reform policy. See Eugene C. Thrasher, "The Magee-Flinn Political Machine, 1895-1903," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1951; "The True William Flinn," The Outlook, CII (October 26, 1912), 572; and "Two-Fisted Flinn, the Man Who Overthrew Penrose," Current Literature, LIII (July, 1912), 32-34.

4 George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1946), 175-177.

5 Harold Howland, Theodore Roosevelt and His Times (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 209-212.
On February 26, he officially announced that he would accept the nomination if it were offered him.

Even before Roosevelt's official announcement, activity on his behalf had reached major proportions in Pennsylvania. William Flinn and Alexander Moore, according to Van Valkenburg, had
been busy “lining them up West of the mountains” since early January. On January 20, the Pittsburgh City Council declared its support of Roosevelt. A week later, the results of a poll conducted by the *Pittsburgh Press* gave Roosevelt 11,501 votes; Taft, 1,620; and La Follette, 1,277. On February 19, western Pennsylvania Progressives formed a Roosevelt Republican League to campaign for Roosevelt delegates to the state and national conventions. In Philadelphia, a number of local Roosevelt clubs were organized in late January, and on February 16 a city-wide organization was established to campaign for delegates. Permanent headquarters were opened in the city on February 28, just two days after Roosevelt’s official announcement.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt supporters outside the two metropolitan areas had also begun active campaigning for convention delegates. Even though there was no consolidated Roosevelt organization in central Pennsylvania before the primaries, strong local and county organizations were able to generate wide enthusiasm for the Colonel, particularly in the farm regions of mid-state and the mining counties of the northeast. By the middle of March, Roosevelt workers had been so successful that Van Valkenburg could write, “The entire state is thoroughly organized and a red hot fight will be made in each of the thirty-two Congressional districts.”

The first reaction of the state Republican Organization to the early Roosevelt movement was to ignore it. Senator Boies Penrose, who had become the party chief at the death of Matthew Quay in 1904, had not been disturbed by La Follette’s candidacy nor did he consider Roosevelt to be a serious threat to Taft and the old-guard leadership. After all, Taft was President, and no one ap-

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7 *North American*, January 22, 1912.
8 *Pittsburgh Press*, February 4, 1912.
9 William Flinn was elected President of the League. *Pittsburgh Leader*, February 20, 1912.
10 *North American*, February 17, 1912. The leaders of the Roosevelt campaign in Philadelphia were Van Valkenburg, Lewis, Thomas Robins (a perennial reformer and close personal friend of Roosevelt), and James William White (a professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania). Theodore Roosevelt to Thomas Robins, April 18, 1912, Theodore Roosevelt MSS, Library of Congress.
11 *North American*, March 2, 4, 19, 1912.
preciated the power of federal patronage more than Penrose. Also, Penrose refused to take the Progressive movement seriously in its early stages because of his hearty contempt for all reformers, an attitude which blinded him to the possibility that their "unrealistic" approach to politics could be successful. In a speech at a Lincoln Day dinner in Philadelphia, he called the Progressives "ranters" and "demagogues" who wanted to destroy constitutional government.13

By the end of February, however, the actual entrance of Roosevelt into the campaign and the popular reaction to it in Pennsylvania forced Penrose to acknowledge that a serious threat was developing not only to Taft but to the state Republican leadership as well. Even though the fortunes of the two were closely linked, he was shrewd enough to realize that to win the decisive independent vote in Pennsylvania the Taft campaign had to be identified with the respectable elements in the state rather than the state machine. In line with this policy, he convinced the Union League of Philadelphia—the epitome of respectability in the city—to endorse Taft for the nomination early in March.14 Since this move meant the breaking of the League's long-standing tradition of waiting until after the convention to endorse a candidate, it was apparent that the members were much more alarmed than usual at the threats to conservative Republicanism.

Taft, evidently, was not too concerned about his prospects in Pennsylvania either, at least when he prepared his campaign itinerary; he scheduled only one brief appearance in the state for the pre-primary campaign. On March 30, he delivered a speech before the Ohian Society of Philadelphia in which he denounced the "half-baked plans" of the "noisy so-called reformers."15 Roosevelt, on the other hand, did some of the hardest campaigning of his career in a whirlwind two-day tour of the state. He arrived in Pittsburgh on April 9 and delivered several speeches attacking the corruption of the Penrose machine and the ill treatment of the

13 North American, February 13, 1912. Although two biographies of Penrose have been published—Robert D. Bowen, Boies Penrose, Symbol of an Era (New York: Greenberg, 1937), and Walter Davenport, Power and Glory, the Life of Boies Penrose (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931)—neither is a critical or comprehensive study of Penrose or his times.
14 Philadelphia Press, March 9, 1912.
15 Ibid., March 31, 1912.
working people by corporation owners. The next day, he made a whistle-stopping trip across the state to Philadelphia. All along the way, at Greensburg, Jeannette, Johnstown, Latrobe, Altoona, Harrisburg, Lancaster, and half a dozen other cities, thousands of people flocked to railroad sidings to cheer him. When he arrived in Philadelphia there were more than 30,000 people waiting to greet him. That night, before an overflow audience at the Metropolitan Opera House, he demanded a tariff and other legislation to aid the workingman and insisted, to the roisterous approval of his audience, that the people of the United States had intelligence enough to govern themselves and they did not need a special class to do the governing.

The hearty reception given Roosevelt in Pennsylvania amazed and alarmed Taft. He was quickly reassured by Penrose that everything was under control and that he would get at least sixty, and possibly sixty-five, of the seventy-six delegates to the convention. At the same time, however, Penrose urged Taft workers throughout the state to double their efforts and campaign until the polls closed on primary day. In some election districts the prospects for Taft appeared so bleak that the Republican Organization saturated the ballot with a number of pseudo-Roosevelt candidates in the hope that they would split the Roosevelt vote and allow the Taft delegates to win. Aware of the danger to the true Roosevelt candidates, the mastermind of the Progressive campaign—William Flinn—realized that a drastic counter-measure was necessary. Posing as the head of the Keystone Advertising Company of Pittsburgh, he obtained the names and addresses of the 1,600,000 voters in the state and then purchased twenty-two tons of postal cards. Just before the election, each voter in the state was sent a card with the names of the bona fide Roosevelt candidates.

—— Pittsburgh Leader, April 10, 1912.
—— North American, April 11, 1912. Sensitive to charges by Taft campaigners that the Roosevelt supporters consisted of the “mob element,” the North American carefully emphasized that those attending the Philadelphia speech were “representative of the best elements of citizenship. The grand tier [of the Opera House], occupied by fashionable society in this city on grand opera nights, was largely filled by that same society. They joined heartily in cheering the presidential candidate. In some boxes were eminent jurists, members of the Union League and leading businessmen.” Ibid.
—— William Howard Taft to Otto Barnard, April 12, 1912, William Howard Taft MSS, Library of Congress.
—— Pittsburgh Post, April 12, 1912.
delegates and alternates in his district. It was an enormous task, costing $23,000, and was done so quickly and quietly that the Organization was unable to counteract it.20

The results of the primary on April 13 exceeded the best expectations of the Progressives. Of the sixty-four district delegates to the national convention who were elected, fifty-two were instructed for Roosevelt. In addition, the Progressives won 256 of 373 delegates to the state convention which meant that the twelve at-large delegates elected by the convention would be pro-Roosevelt.21 Taft carried only ten scattered counties, a serious blow not only to him but to the Penrose organization as well. The Baltimore News called the Pennsylvania vote “an unmistakable mandate to the Republican National Convention.”22 Van Valkenburg’s North American had no doubts about the significance of the victory: “The nomination of Theodore Roosevelt,” it assured, “is a certainty.”23

Even though the Progressives had won a large majority of delegates to the state convention some observers believed that Penrose might yet seize control of the convention.24 However, so effectively was the convention planned and organized under Flinn’s direction that when it assembled in Harrisburg on May 1, not one Progressive defected to the Organization.25 In the first test of strength with the machine—the election of a convention chairman—the Progressive candidate won overwhelming endorsement. Penrose, realizing that the machine forces were powerless, had not even attended the opening session. After the first vote, he and several of his lieutenants conceded the convention to the insurgents and left Harrisburg altogether.26

With Flinn in command, the convention adopted a thoroughgoing reform platform of which Van Valkenburg was the chief

21 North American, April 15, 1912.
22 For other comment on the Pennsylvania primary results, see the Literary Digest, April 27, 1912, 872-873.
23 April 15, 1912.
24 Pittsburgh Post, April 23, 1912.
25 In his efforts to hold the progressive delegation together, Flinn received a welcome assist from Roosevelt, who sent a personal letter to each of the delegates urging them to “continue to stand for progressive principles and a reorganization of the party along progressive lines.” The letter was reprinted in the North American, April 30, 1912.
26 Philadelphia Press, May 2, 1912.
The document included not only the most widely advertised progressive principles of the day but, to calm the fears of the more reluctant and conservative Republican rebels, it also included frequent references to the great saint of Republicanism, Abraham Lincoln. The real issue of the day, it declared, was “the conflict between human rights and special privilege.” Corporate wealth with the assistance of political bosses has gained control of the government, industry, and the credit of the nation, it continued, and just as Lincoln fought special privilege in his day so now Theodore Roosevelt has emerged to lead the fight against the special privilege of “our time.” Specifically, the platform pledged the convention to work for the direct election of senators, direct primaries for all elective officials, stricter corrupt practices acts, the recall of judicial decisions, a workmen’s compensation act, public health legislation, more protection for women and children in industry, a downward revision of the tariff, decentralization of the control over money, and a more vigorous conservation program. Furthermore, the platform deplored radicalism as well as unfettered capitalism and demanded progressive action to combat the menace of socialism. “We do not favor confiscation, we do not favor a redistribution of wealth. We reject the principle that all shall be rewarded equally. But most strongly, do we demand a restoration and a continuance in this country of equal opportunity for all and special privilege for none.”

Following the adoption of the platform, the convention directed the state chairman to submit a copy of it to each Republican candidate for the state legislature as a test of his progressiveness. If he endorsed it, the Progressives would support him; if not, they would nominate a progressive candidate who would. In addition, the convention enthusiastically elected twelve pro-Roosevelt delegates-at-large to the national convention and nominated a full slate of progressive candidates for the state offices to be filled in 1912. Domination of the state Republican machinery by the insurgents was completed when Henry G. Wasson, a Flinn lieutenant from Pittsburgh, was elected Chairman of the State Committee.

27 Frederick F. Forbes to Theodore Roosevelt, April 30, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.
29 North American, May 2, 1912.
At the Republican National Convention, which met in Chicago in June, Roosevelt's claim that he was the choice of the rank-and-file membership of the party for the nomination was bolstered by his great victory in Pennsylvania and the staunch support of the Pennsylvania delegation. However, the domination of the party machinery by the Taft forces was an advantage that the Roosevelt backers could not overcome. The National Committee and the Committee on Credentials destroyed Roosevelt's chances for the nomination by throwing out over 200 Roosevelt delegates in favor of Taft men. When it became clear that he could not win, Roosevelt and his followers bolted the convention, bitterly charging that the nomination had been stolen. At a rally on Saturday night, June 23, they announced their intention of forming a new party to campaign for progressive principles and Theodore Roosevelt.30

The Roosevelt delegation from Pennsylvania had walked out of the Republican convention with Roosevelt, joined in the Saturday night rally, and for the most part eagerly awaited the formation of a third party in Pennsylvania. The day after the rally, Flinn announced, "I was in at the birth of the party last night and intend to stay with it to the finish. We expect to start the work of organizing the Theodore Roosevelt campaign in Pennsylvania within a few weeks."31

However, the project was not as simple as Flinn made it seem. The idea of a third party created serious misgivings among many Roosevelt supporters in the state who tended to be more Republican than Progressive and deplored party irregularity. The prospect of another party also presented serious problems for dedicated Republican reformers. After decades of fighting against machine domination of their party, they had finally won control and were not eager to surrender it for a new party with, at best, a questionable future. These problems persisted throughout the campaign; some of the original Roosevelt Republicans—including the newly elected State Chairman, Henry Wasson—remained loyal to the Republican party and supported Taft, a few considered themselves permanently dedicated to the Progressive party, but most con-

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30 For the story of the Republican convention, see Mowry, 237-250; Lewis, 351-367; and Victor Rosewater, Backstage in 1912, the Inside Story of the Split Republican Convention (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co., 1932).
31 Quoted in the Pittsburgh Press, June 24, 1912.
tinued to identify themselves as Republicans even while supporting Roosevelt on the Progressive ticket.\(^3\)

On July 14, the Pennsylvania Progressive leaders gathered in Philadelphia to begin the organization of a state-wide third party. They were confronted with two basic tasks: first, to devise an electoral ticket that would offer the best assurance of the election of Roosevelt electors; second, to settle the question of whether or not separate candidates for state and local offices should be entered on the third party ticket. In the first instance, the previously named Republican electors were favorable to Roosevelt when they were chosen but their understanding had been that they would be voting for Roosevelt as the Republican candidate and not as the candidate of a new party. While many of the electors still favored Roosevelt, some felt obliged to support Taft, and none were bound to support Roosevelt on the new ticket. To clarify the electoral muddle, Flinn proposed that a joint electoral ticket be prepared, namely, that all Republican electors who agreed to vote for the candidate receiving the highest number of popular votes, be it Roosevelt or Taft, would also be placed on the third party electoral ticket. As for the state and local tickets, Flinn suggested that the Progressives support the Republican candidates—including those nominated in the primaries and at the April convention—instead of nominating separate candidates.\(^3\)

Flinn's proposals were based chiefly on his desire to prevent a split in the Republican vote which he feared would make possible a Democratic victory in the state. A political realist, he had serious doubts about the permanent existence of the Progressive party, whether Roosevelt won or lost, and he wanted to assure the future domination of the state by the Republican party under his leadership if at all compatible with his support of Roosevelt.\(^3\) However, Roosevelt had an entirely different opinion on the electoral problem. He believed that they should have a "straight-out progressive ticket" on which progressive Democrats as well as Republicans

\(^3\) *Pittsburgh Leader,* June 24, 1912. Penrose was just as unhappy about Wasson's decision as the Progressives; he let it be known that he did not trust Wasson and demanded that he resign. Taft, however, ignored Penrose's protests and agreed to let Wasson remain as chairman and conduct the campaign. *Philadelphia Public Ledger,* July 9, 1912.

\(^3\) *North American,* July 15, 1912.

\(^3\) William Flinn to Theodore Roosevelt, July 17, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.
could vote for him. "I regard Taft as the receiver of a swindled nomination," he wrote Van Valkenburg. "I cannot consent to do anything that looks as if I was joining with him. . . . My belief is that we should stand straight on our own feet." Flinn met with Roosevelt at Oyster Bay on July 22 in an attempt to resolve their differences, but they decided to delay making definite plans until after the Progressive National Convention in August.

Another problem that complicated the task of organizing a Progressive party in Pennsylvania was the seemingly simple one of selecting a name for the party. Under Pennsylvania law at the time, a party title or titles could be pre-empted by as few as five petitioners, who then became the sole authority for nominations under the titles. Taking advantage of this law, machine leaders pre-empted almost every conceivable party title that could be associated with the Progressives. In desperation, the Roosevelt leaders finally chose the title of "Washington Party" and, sparked by Flinn's adroit maneuvering, managed to cover the entire state with pre-emption papers before the machine could act on the name. The Washington party became the chief Progressive party in the state but it was not the only one supporting Roosevelt. Later in the campaign, other factions which disagreed with some of the tactics and local candidates of the Washington party emerged in some election districts. They appeared on the ballot as the Bull Moose party and the Roosevelt-Progressive party.

The Progressives were also confronted with the problem of devising a representative means of selecting delegates to the Progressive National Convention. They had neither the time nor the organization to go through the formal primary or convention process. It was finally decided to issue a call for all Pennsylvania Progressives to gather in a mass convention in Chicago on August 5, just before the national convention met. Several hundred Pennsylvanians answered the call and met at the Congress Hotel in Chicago on the appointed day. The Washington party convention

21 Roosevelt to Van Valkenburg, July 16, 1912, Roosevelt MSS.
22 North American, July 23, 1912.
24 North American, August 2, 1912.
25 Pittsburgh Leader, July 23, 1912. The call was signed by Flinn, Pinchot, Van Valkenburg, and Lewis.
adopted the new state Republican platform as its own and named a total of 142 delegates to the national convention, forty-six of whom had been present at the Republican National Convention. Flinn was elected chairman of the delegation and also chosen to be the national committeeman from Pennsylvania.40

During the course of the national convention, Flinn and a committee from the Pennsylvania delegation met with Roosevelt to work out their electoral problem. Roosevelt held to his original position and advised them to establish a separate ticket of electors and candidates on the Washington ticket and leave the discredited Republican party to the reactionaries.41 Flinn had already announced that he would abide by Roosevelt's decision but, in practice, he eventually included his own modifications. According to the plan finally adopted by the Washington party, a separate ticket of electors and candidates would be placed on the ballot, but state candidates already named on the Republican ticket would be placed on the Washington ticket if they promised not to campaign against Roosevelt and pledged themselves to support the state platform and oppose the re-election of Senator Penrose.42 Most Republican candidates, it was believed, would accept these pledges in order to win Progressive votes, but those who did not would be replaced by separate Washington party candidates. Flinn justified this plan by saying that a combined Washington-Republican ticket on a progressive platform would assure progressive Republican control of Pennsylvania where separate tickets would split the vote and leave the state to the Democrats.43

Even though they agreed to a separate electoral slate, Flinn and the Progressives retained control of the state Republican party

40 North American, August 6, 1912. Thomas L. Hicks was named chairman of the party; A. Nevin Dietrich, Secretary; and Flinn, Treasurer. Also, a special executive committee, headed by Flinn, was appointed to conduct the 1912 campaign.

41 Pittsburgh Post, August 8, 1912.

42 North American, August 8, 1912. Flinn to Frank Garrecht, August 10, 1912, Copy in Roosevelt MSS.

43 Flinn to Garrecht, ibid. The Republican candidates for Treasurer and Auditor-General as well as the four candidates for Congressmen-at-large agreed to the plan and were placed on the Washington ticket. Of the thirty-two district candidates for Congress on the Republican ticket, eighteen pledged themselves to the plan. In addition, most of the Republican candidates for the state legislature and a few Democratic candidates were pledged and supported by the Washington party. See Snell's Legislative Handbook, 1913, 717-728.
throughout the late summer and early fall. For one reason, they hoped to upset the Republican campaign by keeping the Taft forces confused as to their strategy until the last minute. More important, however, was the possibility that if the Roosevelt electors were withdrawn too soon, the machinations of the Penrose organization might keep the Washington party off the ballot altogether. Under Pennsylvania law, objections to nomination papers could be filed in the Court of Common Pleas up to twenty-eight days before the election. After spending three days going over the electoral muddle with Flinn in Harrisburg, Dean Lewis wrote Gifford Pinchot, “I shall be glad when the Pennsylvania electoral situation is straightened out but in view of the personnel of the Dauphin County Court before whom any attack on the Washington ticket must come it is essential that we be absolutely secure of our ticket before we withdraw from the Republican column.”

By the end of September, however, pressures from within the Washington party and charges of “unfair play” from many independents indicated that the attempt to retain control of the Republican party was doing the Progressives more harm than good. Also, Penrose had counteracted their efforts to cripple the Taft campaign to a large extent by organizing another party, called the Lincoln party, and naming Taft electors under that title. On September 30, Washington party leaders met with the Republican state chairman and reached an agreement that the twenty-seven Roosevelt electors on the Republican ticket would be removed after October 9, the expiration date for filing legal objections to nomination papers. On October 10, after securing certificates from the Secretary of the Commonwealth that no objections had been filed against the Washington ticket, the Roosevelt electors were finally withdrawn from the Republican column. Immediately thereafter, the Taft electors on the Lincoln ticket were also withdrawn and used to fill the new vacancies on the Republican electoral ticket. Significantly, this act marked the end of the state Repub-

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"Lewis to Pinchot, September 24, 1912, Pinchot MSS.
"North American, September 11, 1912.
"Public Ledger, October 1, 1912.
"North American, October 11, 1912."
lican party’s brief fling with Progressivism and the restoration of Penrose as its master.

Nevertheless, the indefinite status of the Republican party handicapped the Taft campaign in Pennsylvania in its early phases. The state chairman normally conducted the campaign, but, for want of control over his own party and the confidence of Penrose, Henry Wasson was unable to wage an effective battle for Taft. Ultimately, most of the real work for Taft was accomplished under the direction of Congressman J. Hampton Moore of Philadelphia. Originally in charge of the Congressional Campaign Committee for Pennsylvania, Moore was asked by C. D. Hilles, the National Chairman, to combine his work with that of state chairman. When Moore asked why Penrose as state party leader and loyal Taft supporter was not chosen to lead the campaign officially, he was told that “this was not considered a good year to have Penrose too conspicuous in the campaign.”

Instructed by Hilles “to make a fight with the tariff as the main issue,” Moore diligently followed his instructions. The great majority of press releases and speechmakers issuing from his headquarters condemned the tariff positions of both the Democrats and Progressives and predicted economic disaster if either of the two should win. To advertise their position even further, the Republican campaigners sponsored an essay contest for school children on the subject “Protectionism versus Free Trade” with a first prize of fifty dollars. But, evidently, the tariff issue did not produce the expected surge of support for the Republican party in Pennsylvania. Moore later complained that manufacturers and businessmen who normally aided the campaign were apathetic and tight-fisted and, as a result, Taft’s campaign in the state suffered from lack of funds.

From the temper of the Progressive campaign one would have thought that Penrose himself was a candidate for the presidency; the bulk of the campaigning was directed against him rather than

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42 Press release of the Republican Campaign Committee for Pennsylvania, October 3, 1912, Moore MSS.
43 Moore, 275.
Tait or Wilson. The chief antagonist of Penrose and principal spokesman for the Washington campaign was the Philadelphia *North American*. In addition to its regular English edition, a special edition in Hebrew was printed during the campaign for distribution to Jewish voters.\(^5\) Gifford Pinchot felt that the *North American* was so effective in presenting the case for the Progressives that he recommended sending it to country newspapers throughout the United States. “The cost would be comparatively small,” he wrote to Roosevelt, “and I don’t believe an equivalent amount of money could be spent to such advantage in any other way. The paper would get itself read almost certainly, and would modify if it did not change the opinion of the men who read it.”\(^5\)

Washington campaigners made a massive effort to contact the voters at the grass-roots level. They took the campaign directly to the workers by going into factories and conducting noontime rallies; they staged block parties in urban neighborhoods; and they flooded the countryside with eager speechmakers.\(^5\) Furthermore, they appealed for and got the support of many women, who—even though they could not vote—took an unusually active part in the campaign. In Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and other major cities, Progressive women organized rallies to publicize the Washington party and opened “Bull Moose” stores to raise funds by selling badges, banners, and other Roosevelt souvenirs.\(^5\)

The climax to Progressive electioneering in Pennsylvania was a massive postcard campaign similar to that of the primary campaign. Under Flinn’s direction, Washington party workers sent 1,300,000 postcards to Pennsylvania voters, each of which contained a short note in a facsimile of Roosevelt’s handwriting urging them to vote a straight Washington ticket.\(^5\)

As the campaign drew to a close, Pennsylvania Progressives were exuberantly optimistic. Flinn said that Roosevelt would sweep the state.\(^5\) Thomas L. Hicks, the Washington party state chair-

\(^{52}\) J. Hampton Moore to C. D. Hilles, November 1, 1912, Moore MSS.

\(^{54}\) Pinchot to Roosevelt, August 24, 1912, Pinchot MSS.

\(^{55}\) *North American*, October 19, 30, 1912; *Pittsburgh Leader*, October 11, 1912.

\(^{56}\) *Philadelphia Press*, October 22, 1912; *Pittsburgh Leader*, October 26, 1912.

\(^{58}\) *North American*, October 31, 1912.

\(^{56}\) *Pittsburgh Leader*, October 29, 1912.
man, predicted that Roosevelt would capture at least 525,000 votes, and the *North American* anticipated a Roosevelt "landslide." Their predictions were borne out in kind if not in degree. Although Wilson won the nation, Roosevelt carried the state with a total of 444,894 votes to 395,637 for Wilson and 273,360 for Taft. The Republicans won only three counties; the Democrats, because of the split in the Republican vote, carried twenty-five counties as compared to eleven in 1908; and the Progressives won the other thirty-nine. In addition, the Washington party elected its candidates for Auditor-General and State Treasurer, sixteen of thirty-two district congressmen, and the four congressmen at large.

Any analysis of the Pennsylvania election or assigning of credit for the victory must begin with Roosevelt himself. Although his political enemies and some historians have questioned the sincerity of his progressivism, there have been no doubts as to his personal vigor and great popular appeal. Taft, himself, acknowledged the strength and importance of Roosevelt’s popularity. In a letter to his brother, Horace, written the day after his loss to Roosevelt in the Pennsylvania primary, he said, "Such a defeat is very significant in the hold which Roosevelt still has over the plain people and no explanation of the result is significant which does not make this the chief element." In Pennsylvania, Roosevelt was able to exploit not only his popularity with the masses but his Republican background as well. Together, these two ingredients made an irresistible combination. Republicans in a state that was first and foremost Republican could justify voting for him even though he was the candidate of another party. He won many more votes as a popular hero and Republican cousin than as a reformer. If progressivism had been the controlling issue, Wilson and the Democrats offered as much or more, but the Democracy—progressive or not—was still unfashionable in Pennsylvania. Roosevelt

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80 *North American*, October 24, November 2, 1912.
82 Of the sixteen Congressmen elected on the Washington ticket, fourteen were also on the Republican ticket. Only four Republicans were elected without Washington support. While the Democrats elected twelve Congressmen, it should be noted that they did not win in any district where the Republicans and the Washington party supported the same candidate. Ibid., 580-581, 717-728.
83 William Howard Taft to Horace Taft, April 14, 1912, Taft MSS.
not only polled a large majority of Republican votes, but, as in 1904, he cut into the usual Democratic vote as well.63

While Roosevelt was the fundamental attraction of the Progressive party, it is doubtful that the Roosevelt personality alone could have won boss-dominated Pennsylvania. He attracted votes, but it was up to a dedicated group of supporters to combat the manipulations of the Penrose machine and get out the vote. Gifford Pinchot, Edwin van Valkenburg, William D. Lewis, Alexander P. Moore, and a dozen other outstanding Roosevelt leaders helped produce the Progressive victory, but, more than anyone else, William Flinn was responsible for the final result. Although he was criticized severely by some Progressives who resented his reputation as a boss and political manipulator, most of those close to the scene of action agreed that his role was vital. William D. Lewis thought that his “ability and experience in politics” were chiefly responsible for the Washington party victory.64 Roosevelt, on numerous occasions, said that “there would not have been any Progressive party in Pennsylvania if Flinn had dropped out of the fight.”65 Just after the election, he wrote to Gifford Pinchot: “I am receiving the bitterest attacks against Flinn in Pennsylvania; but we could not have done anything in Pennsylvania without Flinn—and I have the heartiest regard and respect for him.”66

Pinchot, too, agreed with Lewis and Roosevelt, and defended Flinn against his critics. “Flinn . . . appears to have justified his connection with the Progressive Party pretty much everywhere,” he said, “at least so far as my experience goes. His outspoken blunt vigor, and the other qualities which have made him a master of rough men, have carried him through. I have found but little objection to him still surviving among the rank and file.”67

Flinn’s enemies and a recent historian have charged that he was not a real Progressive interested in achieving progressive goals, but rather an opportunist using the Roosevelt movement to seize

63 Wilson’s total in 1912 was 395,637, while Bryan had polled 427,125 in 1896, 424,232 in 1900, and 446,782 in 1908. Parker polled 337,998 against Roosevelt in 1904. Smull’s Legislative Handbook, 1913, 618-619.
64 Lewis, 348.
66 Roosevelt to Gifford Pinchot, November 13, 1912, Pinchot MSS.
67 Gifford Pinchot to Roosevelt, November 9, 1912, Pinchot MSS.
control of Pennsylvania. It is doubtful that anyone—including Flinn himself—could fully explain his motivation. However, it should be pointed out that he had publicly endorsed many progressive goals before the Roosevelt movement and that he continued to support them long after the campaign of 1912. He was a shrewd and practical politician but that did not mean he was driven by self-interest any more than the other Progressive leaders, including Roosevelt. Whatever the validity of the charges of his critics, they do not diminish his contribution to the Progressive movement. He brought to the movement the experience and resourcefulness of the professional politician which made possible the successful fight against the seasoned forces of the Penrose machine in 1912.

George E. Mowry, in his book *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement*, has written: “Other men, like William Flinn of Pittsburgh, a typical boss without a shred of interest in progressivism as such, saw in the Roosevelt rebellion a chance to upset the reigning machine dynasty in their states and capture it for themselves.”

For example, see his thoroughly progressive speech before the Young Men's Republican Tariff Club of Pittsburgh, January 29, 1910, in which he called for progressive taxation; civil service reform; the initiative, referendum, and recall; and other reforms. Copy in William Flinn Collection, Darlington Library, University of Pittsburgh.