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A HISTORY OF RADICAL POLITICAL  
MOVEMENTS IN KANSAS

APPROVED A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Thesis Advisor. *E. L. Kahler, Chairman*  
of Master of Science

Chairman of Thesis Committee. *E. W. Trout*

Chairman of Graduate Council. *O. P. McLehman*  
JCM  
13

By

O. D. McClellan

KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Pittsburg, Kansas

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preceding the Alliance--Emergence of  
the Populists

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and the Kansas City Journal-Post as well as those which were  
not so heartily engaged. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no state has had, in such a short period of its history, a more colorful series of radical political movements and personalities than Kansas. A number of writers, each taking a single movement, have written in this field. This writer has attempted, as his contribution, to bring these movements up to date, therefore, this is a survey of the major radical movements in Kansas and especially of that movement which brought into political prominence Dr. John R. Brinkley. What were the causes and results of these movements? Were they brought about by agitators or was agitation a result of political and economic conditions?

This is an attempt to show that these movements have perhaps not been isolated ones but that there may have been a continuous stream of dissatisfaction flowing down through the years, at times sluggish and in some years but a bare trickle but at others breaking into rapidly flowing currents and forming whirlpools and eddies that have left some impress upon the political landscape of this State.

In writing about such a controversial figure as John R. Brinkley it has been necessary to be continually on guard both against the enthusiasm of his followers and the attacks of his enemies. Therefore a newspaper which attacked him such as the Kansas City Star has been compared with those which were friendly toward him such as the Wichita Beacon

and the Kansas City Journal-Post as well as those which were not so heatedly engaged in the controversy represented by the Topeka papers and the New York Times. From them has been taken what the facts seemed to warrant. The battle was a hectic one and one that inflamed the entire State. The embers are still smouldering and may yet blaze anew.

raise one of the staple products of third party movements in the United States. Beginning with the "Guide," the first third party in our national history,<sup>1</sup> and continuing down through the years, third party movements have been raising a great deal of this staple article of protest until the conditions against which they rebelled have, to some degree at least, been remedied.

During the past one hundred years of our national history temporarily powerful third parties have been before the voters in at least three-fifths of the presidential elections.<sup>2</sup>

Where the demands of these movements have had merit they have been ultimately translated into law. However, in practically every instance, a victory for a third party has resulted in its death in as much as one of the major parties, seeing the handwriting on the wall, has adopted its program. By thus

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth H. Barr, "The Royalist Uprising," in William E. Connolly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1188.

<sup>2</sup>James Albert Woodburn, Political Parties and Party Problems, 245.

<sup>3</sup>John D. Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX (June, 1933), 26.



## CHAPTER I

### RADICAL MOVEMENTS IN KANSAS (1870-1890)

When Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease advised the Kansas farmer to "raise less corn and more hell"<sup>1</sup> she was advising him to raise one of the staple products of third party movements in the United States. Beginning with the "Quids," the first third party in our national history,<sup>2</sup> and continuing down through the years, third party movements have been raising a great deal of this staple article of protest until the conditions against which they rebelled have, to some degree at least, been remedied.

During the past one hundred years of our national history temporarily powerful third parties have been before the voters in at least three-fifths of the presidential elections.<sup>3</sup> Where the demands of these movements have had merit they have been ultimately translated into law. However, in practically every instance, a victory for a third party has resulted in its death in as much as one of the major parties, seeing the handwriting on the wall, has adopted its program. By thus

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth N. Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in William E. Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1166.

<sup>2</sup>James Albert Woodburn, Political Parties and Party Problems, 245.

<sup>3</sup>John D. Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), 26.

relieving it of the sustenance necessary for its existence an early grave has become inevitable.<sup>4</sup> The abolition of slavery, the restoration of "home rule" to the South, the regulation of railroads by the state and the nation, the revision of banking and currency systems to secure a more adequate and a more elastic supply of money and credit, the various attempts to curb "trusts," and the conservation of natural resources are only a few of the most obvious of third party principles which have met success in this manner.<sup>5</sup>

The years following the Civil War had been years of hardship for the western farmer. The price of farm produce steadily fell while mortgages mounted, interest rates increased, and farm machinery advanced in price. Then to make matters worse, money was scarce.

In 1866 the United States entered upon a period of currency contraction. Greenbacks were redeemed in interest bearing government bonds. This withdrew money from circulation and made additional interest charges. By the Credit Strengthening Act of 1869 bonds, bought with greenbacks, were to be paid in gold. In 1873 silver was demonetized and the value of silver coin as legal tender was limited to five dollars.<sup>6</sup> The Sherman Act of 1875, to take effect January 1,

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<sup>4</sup>Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), 26.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connolly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1120.



1879, provided for the redemption of paper money in gold. The circulating medium which had amounted to \$52 per capita in 1866 had dropped to \$12.28 in 1877 and before the Populist uprising came to a head it amounted to less than \$5 per capita.<sup>7</sup>

As one writer has stated,

The United States paid its war debt, money borrowed under par, in gold and at high rates. Paid it in gold of stable or increasing value as against commodities, though the population and business of the country increased a hundred, even to a thousand per cent. Steadily the profits accrued in eastern centers. . . . The cities bought wheat and corn and pigs; they bought through commission-merchants who associated and all but fixed their own prices. If a farmer sold in a home market he received the price, less freight, he would have received in London.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the farmer paid increased prices for the things he must buy. High tariff caused the farmers to lose from a third to a half of the value of their exports for they paid a duty of twenty-five per cent to fifty per cent on American made goods.<sup>9</sup>

During this entire period the western farmer was helping to pay the war debt. "Western farmers who fought so valiantly for the Union went home in 1865 to pay themselves the cost of their fighting by wheat-growing and stock raising."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1121.

<sup>8</sup>William E. Dodd, "The Passing of the Old United States," Century, CXIX (October, 1929), 43.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.



Inasmuch as the farmer produced three or four times as much as before, due to new and amazing inventions, the price of wheat fell (1866-1896) almost every year.<sup>11</sup>

With the decline of the farmer's income came a decline in his ability to pay the mortgage and interest on his land. And with this came the realization that there was very little free land left. The farmer had his back to the wall.

So long as there was free land, every man had the opportunity to create new wealth for himself by the simplest and oldest means known to humankind. With the end of free land, American men for the first time had occasion to look with envy upon the wealth of others, or with jealous scrutiny upon how they had acquired it. The end of free land was the beginning of those political issues which had to do, in one form or another, with "dividing up," or with curbing those who had much.<sup>12</sup>

Corn cost twenty-one cents a bushel to produce and sold for ten or fifteen cents a bushel while grain speculators received from forty-five cents to sixty cents a bushel. It was so with all farm products. Banks, by their control of currency, could withdraw notes from circulation at will. This made money scarce and produce cheap when the farmer had to have cash for interest and taxes, while money was plentiful and manufactured articles were high in the winter, when the farmer had to buy.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Dodd, "The Passing of the Old United States," Century, CXIX (October, 1929), 42.

<sup>12</sup>Mark Sullivan, Our Times, II, 147-148.

<sup>13</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1123.



Eventually these conditions resulted in loud protests from the western farmer. Nowhere were these protests more violent than in Kansas.

It was not until almost twenty-five years after the Civil War that third partyism gained much strength in the Sunflower state;<sup>14</sup> by that time the Greenbackers had begun to find comfort here; the Prohibitionists were to hold the state and in 1890 and 1892 fiat money, as a means of relieving the poor, was to have its appeal. During the 90's free silver swept the state<sup>15</sup> and by 1900 Kansas had definitely committed itself to the third party tradition.

In 1872 the Liberal Republican movement had failed to arouse enthusiasm in the West for it did not meet the needs of that section. While it touched on reform it did not strike deep enough. Aside from the public land plank there was little of interest in the Liberal Republican platform for the western farmer except a protest against corruption and extravagance in public office, and against inequalities in taxation.<sup>16</sup>

The Grange movement, while not a political party, cut across party lines. Intended as a ritualistic lodge, nevertheless several state parties in 1873 and 1874 were of

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<sup>14</sup>W. P. Harrington, "The Populist Party in Kansas," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 404.

<sup>15</sup>William Allen White, "Fifty Years of Kansas," World's Work, VIII (June, 1904), 4872.

<sup>16</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1146.



Granger origin. Farmers were elected to office as Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Reform, Antimonopoly or on Farmers' tickets, with Grange backing. It was, in a large measure, responsible for the railroad regulation of the 70's. Much of this was soon repealed yet it set the precedent for the national government in the field of regulation.<sup>17</sup>

The Grange was first brought into Kansas in 1872. In April of that year an organization was formed at Hiawatha. Its growth was rapid. It favored railroad legislation, opposed the mortgage system and had, as its object, the promotion of cooperative buying and selling. It finally went over to the Greenback party (1876) which had its origin in the financial legislation growing out of the Civil War. Its chief protest was against the deflation of the Civil War dollar.<sup>18</sup> It held that gold payments on bonds multiplied the profits to the bankers and the bondholders, and with the accompanying contraction would crush the life out of legitimate business and industry. The movement was given impetus by the Panic of 1873. The farmer and debtor communities of the West gave it most of its strength.<sup>19</sup> The Greenbackers believed in "fiat money" only in the sense of believing that money is the creature of law, not of nature or

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<sup>17</sup>Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), 16.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>19</sup>Andrew Cunningham McLaughlin and Albert Bushnell Hart, (Editors), Cyclopedia of American Government, II, 101.



of custom. They held that paper money limited in supply, put forth by a financially responsible government with the unlimited power of taxation and made receivable for all debts public and private without exception would be the best and most rational money that could be devised.<sup>20</sup>

The party polled 80,000 votes in 1876 and may have decided the election. Winning the balance of power in the Illinois legislature it helped to send David Davis to the United States Senate.<sup>21</sup>

In the campaign of 1878, and in the following years, in Kansas and in many other states of the West, Republican conventions adopted the demands of the Greenback party as a financial plank. Thus, in this state the Greenbackers were absorbed by the Republicans.<sup>22</sup>

The farm organization that succeeded the Grange in Kansas was the Farmers' Alliance. It found nearly every farm encumbered. Chattel mortgages in Kansas were drawing from forty to seventy-five percent annually, and farm mortgages nine per cent. In 1890 one county had a farm indebtedness amounting to eighty-three per cent of the total farm valuation. During the 80's mortgages were foreclosed on

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<sup>20</sup>Andrew Cunningham McLaughlin and Albert Bushnell Hart, (Editors), Cyclopedia of American Government, II, 101.

<sup>21</sup>Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), 18.

<sup>22</sup>W. F. Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas-- Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX, (1905-1906), 2.

more than one-third of the 440,000 Kansas farms or the property deeded to the mortgagor without foreclosure.<sup>23</sup>

The Alliance was first mentioned in Kansas in connection with the fight of the settlers on the Osage ceded lands to hold their homesteads, which they had taken from the government in good faith, against the claims of the railroads which sought to make them pay, not only for the lands they had preempted from the government, but for their own improvements which they had made. Finding that they were spied upon in their open meetings, the settlers formed secret societies known as the Settlers' Protective Association or the Settlers' Alliance. Mr. G. Campbell, of Oswego, received a letter from New York State inquiring about the form of organization. In reply he sent the plan of organization to New York State and alliances were formed there.

The Populist movement of a few years later was based on the Southern Alliance. This Alliance too was first introduced into the South from Kansas. A man by the name of Farmer from Parsons, Kansas, moved to Texas and introduced the Alliance into that state.<sup>24</sup>

A Farmers' Alliance was organized at Poolville, Parker County, Texas, on July 28, 1879, and received a charter in 1880. In 1882 a State Alliance was formed having as its

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<sup>23</sup> Henry J. Allen, "Sectionalism in American Politics," Review of Reviews, LXXVII (June, 1928), 613.

<sup>24</sup> Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1158.



motive the betterment of general conditions for the farming class. The Farmers' Union of Louisiana soon followed and in 1887 the Texas and Louisiana organizations united. In 1888 there was a union of various organizations in the southwest.

In the Northwest farm alliances were also spreading. A local farmers' organization was started in Cook County, Illinois, in 1877. The National Farmers' Alliance was formed in 1880 with thirteen states represented. This organization was especially opposed to railroads and speculators, who seemed to act together to take most of the value of the western products in freight charges and speculation. This organization was usually known as the "Northern Alliance." In 1889 there was a union of several organizations into the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union.<sup>25</sup>

On August 8, 1882, the Texas state alliance meeting at Mineral Wells, Texas, had adopted a resolution framed to keep the alliance non-partisan.<sup>26</sup> The Kansas organization, however, was planted by a few persons for a distinct political purpose. Its introduction was preceded by a number of third party movements in the state beginning with the Workingman's party of 1870. On February 9, of that year, a meeting was held in the State House at Topeka at which W. V. Barr made a

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<sup>25</sup>McLaughlin and Hart, (Editors), Cyclopedia of American Government, I, 711.

<sup>26</sup>Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas--Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX (1905-1906), 2.



speech in which he urged the distribution of public lands in small tracts to the people, instead of granting them in large tracts to corporations. This was regarded as the view of a red handed anarchist.<sup>27</sup> A Labor convention meeting at Leavenworth July 20, 1870, sent delegates to the National Labor Congress. The National Reform Party was the outgrowth of this Congress. The Workingman's party of Kansas in state convention at Topeka, September 22, 1870, endorsed the platform of the National Reform Party and urged a tax exemption of \$1000 rather than \$200 for each householder. It declared that every human being was born with a natural right to land and it further stated that no legislative enactment ought to become a law until passed upon by the people. The convention nominated a full state ticket led by W. R. Laughlin, who polled only 108 votes.<sup>28</sup>

The Liberal Republican movement of 1872, as has already been mentioned, made no real appeal to the western farmer. In 1873, however, the Independent Reform Party in the state, while putting no state ticket in the field, elected enough members to the lower house of the legislature, by local efforts, to give the opposition twenty votes more than the Republicans and as a result ex-Governor James M. Harvey, a farmer and an independent, was elected to the United States

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<sup>27</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1123-24.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 1124.



Senate.<sup>29</sup>

The Greenback Party, whose later absorption by the Kansas Republicans we have noted, polled 7,000 votes in 1876 and 19,000 votes in 1880. In 1884 the Anti-Monopoly Party succeeded in polling 16,000 votes.<sup>30</sup>

The middle 80's were years of labor unrest in Kansas as well as agrarian discontent. Much of this was centralized in the railroads. Three great railroad systems, the Santa Fe, the Rock Island, and the Union Pacific, governed Kansas. The Missouri Pacific was more or less an outsider allied with the Democrats. This was probably to keep the minority party "right" in the legislature. The railroad domination was complete. Legislators were classified by the roads they represented. There were so many "Santa Fe Counties" so many "Union Pacific Counties" and so many "Rock Island Counties." Railroads dictated the election of United States senators<sup>31</sup> and by their influence they avoided taxation, secured the legislation they wanted, and made and unmade officers. Public officials, state and national legislators, as well as newspaper men, rode around on free passes.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1147.

<sup>30</sup> Harrington, "The Populist Party," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 405.

<sup>31</sup> "How I was Converted--Politically," The Outlook, LXLVI (December, 1910), 857.

<sup>32</sup> Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1122.



The companies had required localities, which they purported to serve, to vote vast sums in bonds, generally more than the cost of the roads. Sometimes a locality was given stocks. These, however, were generally lost when the companies decided to reorganize. Tariffs high enough to pay big dividends on "watered stock" were charged. Through the use of discriminating freight rates they virtually controlled the distribution of products. Hundreds of independent Kansas salt producers as well as oil and mineral producers were ruined in this way. Packing houses were given rebates and the independent shipper stood no chance in the market.<sup>33</sup>

On top of all this, the wages of their employees were frightfully low. In 1886 the Kansas Bureau of Labor reported that the railroads did not pay a wage on which a family could subsist comfortably while employment lasted. Aside from this there were periods of enforced idleness.<sup>34</sup> During 1885 the Knights of Labor had called a strike on the Gould lines but had lost. These conditions led to the union of the dissatisfied labor and agrarian elements in Kansas into the Union Labor Party.

At a state meeting in Topeka, August 9, 1887, two factions assembled, the United Labor group who were single taxers, and the Union Labor group who represented the

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<sup>33</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1122.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 1123.



Greenback-Labor element. The latter won and succeeded in polling 37,000 votes in the local and congressional elections. Labette County elected the entire ticket.<sup>35</sup>

It was this party that introduced one of the most unusual of all the political organizations of this state-- the National Order of Videttes. This was a secret, oathbound society which sought to prevent the fusion of the Union Labor Party with either the Democrats or the Republicans. It was organized in Cincinnati, Ohio, May 15 and 16, 1888. It was brought to this state by a few Kansas leaders the same year.<sup>36</sup> Some of the leaders were the Vincent brothers, publishers of a reform paper the Non-Conformist, at Winfield, C. B. Hoffman of Enterprise, and John W. Breidenthal.<sup>37</sup> It spread rapidly over the state. The ritual, in which the cause of humanity was made paramount to the cause of the country, was exposed by a member and the members of the organization were branded as traitors.<sup>38</sup> It was disbanded December 19, 1888, and with it the Union Labor Party. In its place a state Reform Association was organized. A Committee of this association was instructed to select an existing order into whose ranks the

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<sup>35</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1155.

<sup>36</sup>Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas--Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX (1905-1906), 2.

<sup>37</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1155.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.



reformers and farmers and laborers of Kansas could be enlisted.<sup>39</sup> The State Reform Association committee found the secret Farmers' Alliance of the South embodied every tenet of the platform of the old Union Labor Party.

Consequently, three editors went to Texas and were initiated into the Southern order. They returned and planted a suballiance in Cowley County by changing a Northern suballiance into a secret alliance.<sup>40</sup> This alliance, however, prohibited any resident within an incorporated town or city becoming a member. As a result, an organization was perfected at Olathe of residents of towns and cities. This organization was known as the Citizens' Alliance. The president of the Reform Association, W. F. Rightmire, was elected secretary of the state Citizens' Alliance.

In response to a demand he issued a call for a secret order along the line of the old Videttes. The new organization was known as the National Citizens' Independent Alliance and claims the credit for the call issued for a conference to meet in Cincinnati to organize a third party.<sup>41</sup> As a result, this Alliance held a convention with the Knights of Labor at Cincinnati on May 19, 1891. By that time, the tide of sentiment in favor of a new party was running strong. Some

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<sup>39</sup>Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas--Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX (1905-1906), 3.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 6.



fourteen hundred delegates, a majority of whom were from the five states of Ohio, Kansas, Indiana, Illinois, and Nebraska attended the convention and provided for a committee to make arrangements, in conjunction with other reform organizations if possible, for a convention of the party to nominate candidates for a presidential election in 1892.<sup>42</sup> The Populist Party had begun to take form.

In the meantime, the Kansas Alliance already had begun to make itself felt in state politics. At a meeting of the county presidents at Topeka on March 25, 1890, the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved, that we will no longer divide on party lines, and will cast our votes only for candidates of the people, for the people, and by the people."<sup>43</sup> On March 26 they adopted a resolution stating that they would not support any candidate for the legislature who favored the re-election of John J. Ingalls to the United States senate.<sup>44</sup> They resolved not in vain for when the legislature met to select a senator the great Ingalls went down to defeat. The Alliance had tasted victory and the crusade was launched.<sup>45</sup> William A. Peffer, an ardent

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<sup>42</sup>Solon J. Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, p. 140.

<sup>43</sup>Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas--Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX (1905-1906), 5.

<sup>44</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Party in Kansas," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 410.

<sup>45</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1148.

advocate of currency inflation, was elected to the Senate.

The 70's and 80's prepared the soil of revolt in Kansas. The financial legislation, growing out of the Civil War, caused a contraction of the currency and a subsequent enrichment of the eastern manufacturer and materially contributed to the amassing of huge fortunes by the eastern capitalist.

To the Kansas plowholder, these years were years of hardship. Though his production of crops increased, the prices he received for his produce suffered a continuous decline.

Mortgages and interest rates mounted steadily. His grievances against railroad and elevator rates went unredressed. To these grievances were united those of the Kansas laborer.

The Grange, the Farmer's Alliance and similar organizations found fertile soil for growth amid such conditions. At first there was a vague feeling that something was wrong.

This feeling grew, through the years, into a conviction that the farmer was the victim of an organized scheme of exploitation. *on the belief that the government could and should*

The third party movements of these years were but of murmurings of discontent but they were, nevertheless, murmurings that grew increasingly loud with the passage of the years. They were to reach their culmination in the violent protest of the Populist Party in the next decade. The farmer had found it was no longer profitable to raise corn.

He was now prepared to take the advice of Mrs. Lease. He began to "raise hell."



## CHAPTER II

### POPULISTS AND PROGRESSIVES

#### The Populists

As we have seen the Populist Party had for its antecedents the "Greenbackers," the "Grangers" and the "Union Labor Party" and was the immediate outgrowth of the political activities of the Farmers' Alliance. Formed primarily to champion the interests of the agrarian classes and of the workingmen it gave expression to the social discontent with existing economic conditions, especially in the agrarian West. It came as a result of low farm produce prices and of the large number of mortgaged farms. Its major protests were against the alleged domination of government and of society by the railroads, the money power and the high protection manufacturers in the East. Its appeal was based largely on the belief that the government could and should regulate the economic functions of life in the interests of the common people.<sup>1</sup>

It was built upon a well prepared foundation. The government ownership of the railroads which it advocated especially appealed to the farmer who was suffering from high transportation charges. On the money question it was in

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<sup>1</sup>McLaughlin and Hart, (Editors), Cyclopedia of American Government, II, 757.

hearty accord with the old Greenback position. The southerner was witnessing a rapid decline in the price of cotton. In the western mining states the same thing was happening to silver.<sup>2</sup>

As one writer puts it there appeared

In wild protest. . . . men scattered over the South and West, Marion Butler, James B. Weaver and the Boy Orator of the Platte. . . . Their language sounded like that of 1776. Their history and their economics were not perfect, but their sense of grievance was as great as that of the Boston rioters.<sup>3</sup>

In Kansas, ninety delegates met in Representative Hall, Topeka, on June 12, 1890, in response to a call for a conference by President Clover of the Alliance. This call was sent to members of the Grange, the Alliance, the Knights of Labor, and the Single-tax clubs. Of these ninety delegates, there were forty-one from the Alliance, seven from the Grange, twenty-eight from the Knights of Labor, ten from the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association and four from Single-tax clubs. The conference adopted a resolution that full state, congressional, legislative and county tickets be put in the field. It adopted the name "People's Party" and elected a committee of one from each congressional district.

A delegate state convention called by this committee met at Topeka August 13, 1890, and nominated a state ticket

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<sup>2</sup>Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XX (June, 1933), 20.

<sup>3</sup>Dodd, "The Passing of the Old United States," Century, CXIX (October, 1929), 43.



for the People's Party of Kansas.<sup>4</sup>

The crusade of 1890 has been aptly described as "a religious revival, a crusade, a pentecost of politics in which a tongue of flame sat upon every man, and each spake as the spirit gave him utterance."<sup>5</sup>

In the ensuing years, under the spell of Jeremiah Simpson and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease the party elected two governors and a United States senator who pulled down from his high place John James Ingalls.<sup>6</sup>

After the farmers deserted the old parties the reactionary element came into control making them even more reactionary than before.<sup>7</sup> By 1892, however, the Democrats had practically forced themselves upon the Populists. Democrats and Populists supported the same tickets, state, electoral, and congressional; but nearly all the nominees were Populists, and all the electors were pledged to Weaver.<sup>8</sup>

The 90's were colorful years in Kansas politics with such figures as "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, "Mary Yellen" Lease, Mrs. Anna L. Diggs, and William A. Peffer, to mention

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<sup>4</sup> Rightmire, "The Alliance Movement in Kansas--Origin of the People's Party," Kansas Historical Collections, IX (1905-1906), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1165.

<sup>6</sup> Henry J. Allen, "Sectionalism in American Politics," Review of Reviews, LXXVII (June, 1928), 613.

<sup>7</sup> Harrington, "The Populist Party," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 411.

<sup>8</sup> Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 256.



only a few, occupying the center of the stage.

Jerry Simpson moved to Kansas in 1878 after having served as a captain in the Union army. For a time he lived in Jackson County, later moving to Barber County and locating near Medicine Lodge.<sup>9</sup>

In 1890 Simpson was forty-eight years old. A tall man who wore clerical eye-glasses, he had a long square-jawed face, tanned skin, and a mustache cut in a long straight line over a large, straight mouth.<sup>10</sup> He opposed for Congress James R. Hallowell, whom he dubbed "Prince Hal," pointing to Hallowell's silk stockings as evidence of aristocracy. Victor Murdock, a red-headed cub reporter, wrote a story that Simpson wore no socks at all.<sup>11</sup> This was taken for the truth the country over and Simpson was dubbed a clown, a clod-hopper and an ignoramus.<sup>12</sup> His courage and independence in politics are shown in his refusal to support a plank in the platform of the Populist Party in the seventh district, which declared for the pensioning of all honorably discharged soldiers, their widows and their orphans. He expressed himself as in favor of pensions for deserving old soldiers but

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<sup>9</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1168.

<sup>10</sup>Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, 136f.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1168.



not in favor of wholesale pensioning.<sup>13</sup>

Elected to Congress he acquitted himself creditably there.<sup>14</sup> On the day of the triumph of the Populist Party he stood on the steps of the State House before a large crowd and said: "Fellow Citizens, we have come to-day to remove the seat of government of Kansas from the Sante Fe offices, back to the State House where it belongs."<sup>15</sup>

Another outstanding figure was Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease who is reported to have made 160 speeches during the summer and autumn of 1890. She was of Irish birth and New York upbringing. At the age of twenty she married Charles L. Lease and twelve years later was admitted to the bar. In 1890 she was thirty-seven years old and the mother of four children.<sup>16</sup> She had made her first speech in 1888 in the Union Labor Convention. Refined and magnetic, her ready wit took care of her under all circumstances.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Anna L. Diggs was also a colorful figure in the Populist crusade. She possessed a good speaking voice and was able to handle the Populist arguments as well as the immense crowds. A small woman weighing only ninety-three

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<sup>13</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Party in Kansas," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 412.

<sup>14</sup>Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1122.

<sup>16</sup>Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1166.



pounds she had made her debut in 1877 in a temperance crusade in Lawrence. Chosen by the Populists to reply to the platform utterances of John J. Ingalls, she contributed no small part to his downfall.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately she and Mrs. Lease became involved in a bitter controversy. The campaign of 1894 opened July 12 with a big old-fashioned Populist rally in the City Park at Topeka. After the speech of Governor Waite of Colorado Mrs. Lease got up and verbally attacked Mrs. Diggs. Sister Diggs in turn called Mrs. Lease a liar and the campaign was off to an inauspicious start.<sup>19</sup>

William A. Peffer was made colorful by his long whiskers which made him a favorite subject of ridicule and caricature in Eastern papers. He was above all an ardent advocate of currency inflation. Coming to Kansas in 1870 he had played some part in Republican politics. He became editor of the Kansas Farmer in Topeka in 1880 remaining so until his election to the United States senate. He had been a member of the Knights of Labor and an ardent prohibitionist.<sup>20</sup>

These are only a few of the luminaries in the Populist firmament in Kansas. The doctrine which they enunciated was essentially the same as the Liberal, Independent Reform, Greentack, Anti-Monopoly, and other parties preceding the

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<sup>18</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1168ff.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 1201.

<sup>20</sup>Buck, The Agrarian Crusade, p. 139.



Populist.<sup>21</sup> They found an efficient champion in the party press which sprang into existence fully equipped at a single bound. Many country editors became enthusiastic advocates of the new doctrine. Some probably were forced to change in order to retain their subscribers.<sup>22</sup>

The Populist doctrine included the secret ballot and a corrupt-practices act. It called for the abolition of the convention and caucus system and the establishment of a system by which the people could directly initiate laws, vote on laws and refer laws which legislatures passed to the people.<sup>23</sup> It sought the free and unlimited coinage of silver; the abolition of the national banking system; the issue of fiat money in sufficient quantity to transact the business of the country on a cost basis, and the loan of such currency to the people at not more than two per cent per annum on nonperishable agricultural products; national ownership of all the means of public transportation and communication; graduated income tax; popular election of senators; and the prohibition of the alien ownership of land.<sup>24</sup>

In Kansas in 1892 the Populists came nearest to a

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<sup>21</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1116.

<sup>22</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Uprising," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 413.

<sup>23</sup>William Allen White, "The End of An Epoch," Scribners, LXXIX (June, 1926), 564.

<sup>24</sup>The New International Encyclopaedia, XIX, 54.



thoroughgoing victory. Even here there had been far more reliance upon Democratic votes to secure results than was flattering to the new party, while the sad fact remained that the lower house of the state legislature remained in the hands of the Republicans.<sup>25</sup>

After 1896 Populism began to decline. There were three principal reasons for this: the first of which was the alliance of Populists with Democrats resulting in the absorption of a large portion of the Populist Party by the stronger organization; second, the extraordinary prosperity of the agricultural classes during the first decade of the twentieth century; and third, the fact that a large number of their progressive demands were incorporated into the platforms of the traditional parties.<sup>26</sup>

In Kansas Populism left its impress upon the state and through its influence had come the regulation of the Kansas City stockyards, the weighing and inspecting of grain, state uniformity of textbooks with a reduction of prices, and a general reduction of fees and salaries.<sup>27</sup> Some parts of their program had been too broad for the Kansas of the 90's to swallow and some of the measures nearest to Populist hearts had been lost, among them the initiative and the

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<sup>25</sup>Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 268.

<sup>26</sup>McLaughlin and Hart, (Editors), Cyclopedia of American Government, II, 758.

<sup>27</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Uprising," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 44.



and the referendum, a bill to reduce interest rates, and a railroad bill.<sup>28</sup> However, our present laws for the arbitration of labor troubles are founded on a plank which the Populists borrowed from the Union Labor Party.<sup>29</sup>

Not the least contribution which the Populists made to the state, as one writer points out, was that

They taught, and were really successful in getting men and women to understand, that this is our government, made to serve our needs. . . . Populism educated the grass roots, and bequeathed to posterity a knowledge of politics and government such as has probably never been in the possession of so large a mass of people in the history of civilization. . . . in the days of the Civil War just after its close, it was rank heresy for a voter to think. He was made to believe that if he doubted the wisdom of his party he was a traitor. To doubt Grant was as bad as to doubt Christ. The populists educated us out of this condition of mind, and left us both example and precept to think for ourselves.<sup>30</sup>

In protest against its more radical element it had set one young Kansan on the road to national fame. On August 15, 1896, a young man, twenty-eight years old, about to go on a trip hurriedly wrote some editorials which he left on his desk to fill the columns during his absence. One of these happened to be the now famous editorial "What's the Matter with Kansas?" The East was quite ready to accept the

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<sup>28</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Uprising," Kansas Historical Collections, XVI (1923-25), 444.

<sup>29</sup>Barr, "The Populist Uprising," in Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 1204.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 1203.



following diagnosis as correct:

What's the matter with Kansas? We all know; yet here we are at it again. We have an old moss-back Jacksonian who snorts and howls because there is a bath-tub in the State House. We are running that old jay for Governor. . . . We have raked the ash-heap of failure in the State and found an old human hoop-skirt who has failed as a business man, who has failed as an editor, who has failed as a preacher, and we are going to run him for Congressman-at-large. . . . Then we have discovered a kid without a law practice and have decided to run him for Attorney-General.

A copy of his paper fell into the hands of Paul Morton (later secretary of the navy in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet) a Chicago man but a native of the country west of the Mississippi. He showed it to Herman Kohlsaat, publisher of the Chicago Times-Herald who reprinted it. The New York Sun gave it a second impetus. Mark Hanna immediately circularized it, and used it in the campaign for McKinley more widely than any other pamphlet.<sup>31</sup> William Allen White had stepped into the national political arena from which he has never yet retired.

Attesting to the permanent impress which Populism left upon his state White wrote that

"Bull Moose" it sprang upon its feet, virile and vigorous, . . . long after Populism was defeated and forgotten Kansas clung to it, adopted its creed, and forced a dilution of Populism upon an unwilling nation. The insurgence of insurgency, the progressiveness of the Bull Moose, was the restless spirit of Kansas trying to realize the dream of Populism.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Sullivan, Our Times, I, 138f.

<sup>32</sup>White, "Kansas a Puritan Survival," Nation, CXIV (April 19, 1922), 460.



Fusion with the Democrats meant the end of the Populist party in Kansas. In 1901 the legislature enacted a law that "no person shall accept more than one nomination for the same office."<sup>33</sup> It furthermore provided that "the name of each candidate shall be printed on the ballot once and no more."<sup>34</sup> Due to the new election law the Populist and Democratic parties agreed upon a state ticket in 1902 which went on the ballot under the Democratic name.<sup>35</sup>

With the emergence of the progressive element in the Republican party many Populist ideals were absorbed by the major party; nevertheless the Populists had proved the efficaciousness of organized protest which was to make itself felt in the Progressive party of the second decade of the twentieth century.

#### The Progressive Party

During the first decade of the twentieth century Populism was not dead; it was merely sleeping. Nor was it a sound sleep, for under the cover of prosperity signs of restlessness were apparent, and at the clarion call of the "Bull Moose" it sprang upon its feet, virile and vigorous, ready to do battle for the cause with all of its old vitality.

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<sup>33</sup>Revised Statutes of Kansas, Section 25-306.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Section 25-602.

<sup>35</sup>Harrington, "The Populist Uprising," Kansas Historical Collections XVI (1923-25), 413.

In the eight years in which Theodore Roosevelt was the dominant leader of liberalism in the United States, "liberalism, which had been illicit, covert, and shunned under Populism, even under Bryanism, grew vigorously, acquired prestige"<sup>36</sup> and became a motivating force in American politics. "Populism, driven from the skin was in the blood of the American people."<sup>37</sup> These years saw trust methods assailed and changed, the secret ballot became universal, railroads were regulated, and food manufacturers controlled. The direct primary, the initiative and the referendum were the impulse of the day. Soon the direct election of United States senators was to be achieved.<sup>38</sup>

It was in these years that Kansas witnessed a rebellion within the Republican party in the state. As early as 1890 the Kansas City Gazette had warned that

The just reform asked for by the Farmers' Alliance can never be obtained through a new party nor by the Democratic Party. The strong element of the Progressive reform is found in the Republican Party, and the surest way for the farmers to come in control in the legislative body is to add to their forces to [sic] the reform forces within the Republican party and thereby control its nominations not only [sic] but legislation through it.<sup>39</sup>

A group of Kansas liberals had started what has come to be

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<sup>36</sup>White, "The End of an Epoch," Scribner's, LXXIX (June, 1926), 567.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Kansas City Gazette, October 28, 1890.



known as the Murdock Rebellion during the administration of Governor John A. Martin.<sup>40</sup> This was brought forth by the combined efforts of Marshall M. (Marsh) Murdock, editor of the Wichita Eagle and Thomas Benton (Bent) Murdock, editor of the Eldorado Republican against the wholesale foreclosing of farm mortgages, and the political manipulation of state, county, and city business.<sup>41</sup> The Murdock Rebellion "struck an optimistic note in this period of economic unrest and aided materially in running parallel with the other great movement of the times which was Populism."<sup>42</sup> This rebellion was largely a struggle for the control of the Republican party.<sup>43</sup> By 1896 the liberal element in the Republican party had grown strong enough in party councils to secure the nomination of William E. Stanley, their choice for governor, and succeeded in naming most of the State ticket.<sup>44</sup> In the first decade of the new century there grew up the Kansas Republican League, often termed the "Boss-Busters." This was a pioneer organization which did so much to reform politics from its "skull and crossbones tendency, which started the movement for the election of the United States

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<sup>40</sup>Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas, pp. 215-23.

<sup>41</sup>George H. Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, Master's Thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas, June, 1933, p. 19.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. pp. 19-20.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

Senators by popular vote."<sup>45</sup> Under the leadership of Walter Roscoe Stubbs this organization, utilizing the propaganda of the Muck-rakers, "did everything possible during Bailey's administration to train the people of Kansas to select delegates to the State Convention so that the 'Boss-Busters' could be in control."<sup>46</sup>

A similar group also under Stubbs' leadership obtained the passage of the direct primary law in the second administration of Governor Hoch.<sup>47</sup>

Two of the early progressive leaders in Kansas were Marsh and Bent Murdock, both pioneers in the State. Marsh settled at Wichita and Bent at Eldorado. Each established a newspaper through which he carried on the battle.<sup>48</sup> Marsh Murdock was an insurrectionist who was generally in revolt against the local Republican machine.<sup>49</sup> Under his guidance the Wichita Eagle was one of the leading Republican newspapers of Kansas. A true Kansas optimist he "trumpeted a prosperous future for Western Kansas"<sup>50</sup> through lean years and fat.

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<sup>45</sup>Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, IV, 2171.

<sup>46</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-44.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.



In later years the progressives were led largely by three colorful and forceful men: Walter Roscoe Stubbs, Victor Murdock and William Allen White.<sup>51</sup>

Walter Roscoe Stubbs was a born fighter. An old type machine politician, he played the game with a steam roller when possible.<sup>52</sup> When he could not get all he fought for he took what he could get. Callis compares him to Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>53</sup>

Victor Murdock was "not afraid of anyone."<sup>54</sup> Tall, blond, solid and strong, he had a genial face and a strong voice.<sup>55</sup> At thirty-two he had become managing editor of the Wichita Daily Eagle. Sent to Congress in his middle thirties he became known as a thorough investigator and parliamentarian who was not controlled by the interests of "Big Business." It was he who made "Insurgency" a new and real movement within the Republican party.<sup>56</sup>

William Allen White "was probably best known as the master penman and speech maker who displayed his genius in

<sup>51</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>"Men We Are Watching--Victor Murdock," Independent, LXVIII (March 3, 1910), 474.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 102.



newspaper, magazine, book, lecture and political strategy."<sup>57</sup> Early in his career he was sort of a political editorial understudy for State Senator Bent Murdock. He had taken Charley Curtis over Butler county in the nineties fighting Populists.<sup>58</sup> He was high in the Progressive Party national councils from its beginning to its fall in 1916. In 1912 he acted as publicity manager for Roosevelt. Callis states that "Much of the liberal progressive movement in Kansas was due to the leadership of this master politician."<sup>59</sup>

At the time of the formation of the national Progressive party these Kansas leaders already had been successful in placing upon the statute books of this State many progressive measures. The filtering of the old Populists into the ranks of the liberal faction of the Republican party had made it possible for the liberals to win with William E. Stanley in the late nineties.<sup>60</sup> During his administration the service at the state institutions had been placed under civil service. The old pardon board had been abolished and the more progressive system of parole instituted.<sup>61</sup> The need for good roads was agitated and some action taken. In 1901, a Board of

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<sup>57</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 103.

<sup>58</sup>White, "William Allen White Talks to His Neighbors," Golden Book Magazine, XI (April, 1930), 95.

<sup>59</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 103.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 28.



Railroad Commissioners was created.<sup>62</sup>

In Governor Hoch's administration the "Boss-Busters" had succeeded in taking the fees away from the State Printer and had put him upon a salary. The State Board of Charities was abolished, State institutions were put under a State Board of Control, and employees were placed upon a merit basis thus shielding them from political control. The State Treasurer's office was also reformed and the number of legislative employees reduced by half.<sup>63</sup>

It was also in Hoch's administration that a contest was waged between the State and the Standard Oil Company. As a result pipe lines were made common carriers and maximum rates fixed for the transportation of crude oil by the railroads. Juvenile courts to provide for the care of dependent, neglected and delinquent children were established and a child labor law was enacted.<sup>64</sup> By 1910 the Republican party in Kansas had become saturated by the great wave of insurgency.<sup>65</sup>

Nor was Kansas alone. All through the Taft administration, Congress, the governors, the legislatures and even the courts were still in the hands of those who had been injected with Populism of one sort or another and so their work had

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<sup>62</sup>Connelly, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, II, 847-9.

<sup>63</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 39-40.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

gone on.<sup>66</sup>

In Washington La Follette and others in the group of insurgent Republican senators were doing their bit for progressive measures in the Senate. In the house of representatives Victor Murdock of Kansas, George Norris of Nebraska, and others of the insurgent group, were "dehorning" the Speaker. By 1912 a wave of insurgency was sweeping the nation and a duel for the leadership of the movement was being fought between Theodore Roosevelt and Robert M. La Follette. Beveridge of Indiana pointed out in a letter to John Roosevelt was robust, enthusiastic, ruthlessly rollicking, but rarely personally bitter. La Follette was the antithesis of "T. R." being dogged, deadly implacable, uncompromising and bitter in his hatreds. La Follette was indefatigable, Roosevelt vigorous. Roosevelt could take half a loaf. La Follette preferred hunger to compromise.<sup>67</sup>

It was Theodore Roosevelt who won out and La Follette sulked in his tent like Achilles.<sup>68</sup> It was Roosevelt too who apparently had suggested to Murdock that the "Insurgents" become "Progressives." But recently returned from his African hunt he had conveyed this message to a couple of his newspaper friends:

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<sup>66</sup>White, "The End of An Epoch," Scribner's Magazine, LXXIX (June, 1926), 568.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>David S. Muzzey, The United States of America, II, 503-520.



Tell Victor to drop that word "Insurgents" and to use the term "Progressives." That term expresses itself. It is what the group really stands for. It is a general and continuing word. Insurgency is simply a passing phase. Remember to call them "Progressives."<sup>69</sup>

The Progressives had failed to win the Republican nomination for "T. R." but they nominated him in a separate convention that has been described as "more like a religious revival than a political convention."<sup>70</sup>

The party thus founded was not to be an enduring one as Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana pointed out in a letter to John C. Shaffer stating "that the Progressive movement was never intended to be a sincere effort to found a great new liberal party."<sup>71</sup> It was simply a revolt "against the established order of 'Big Business' with its vested rights and privilege."<sup>72</sup>

In Kansas the campaign of 1912 was carried on with vigor. Some of the State's most outstanding men got into the fray. Stubbs ran for the Senate on the Progressive ticket. Arthur Capper was the Progressive candidate for Governor; Sheffield Ingalls for Lieutenant-Governor; Victor Murdock and

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<sup>69</sup>William Hard, "More Light on Progressivism," Nation, CXVIII (March 26, 1924), 342.

<sup>70</sup>Muzzey, The United States of America, II, 527.

<sup>71</sup>Claude G. Bowers, Beveridge and the Progressive Era, pp. 487-8.

<sup>72</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 104.



Fred S. Jackson ran for Congress.<sup>73</sup> Only Sheffield Ingalls and Victor Murdock won. The national election resulted in placing Woodrow Wilson in the White House.

In 1914 Arthur Capper had returned to the Republican fold and was successful in winning the governorship, defeating Henry J. Allen the Progressive's candidate. Victor Murdock was defeated for the United States Senate.<sup>74</sup>

Commenting on the results of the election throughout the nation, which had shown a marked decline in the strength of the new party, the Independent Magazine suggested that it had been composed of four elements: first, those Republicans who had revolted at what they thought were unfair tactics at the Chicago convention; second, the Progressive Republican wing of the party who rebelled at what they considered domination of the party by reactionaries; third, social reformers, attracted by planks on social legislation; and fourth, the personal followers of Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>75</sup> Time obliterated the scars of the first group; the third group was absorbed through the other parties adopting many items in the Progressive platform; while Roosevelt found that he could not deliver his personal followers to any candidate other than himself.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 79.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-81. "Progressive," Saturday Evening Post.

<sup>75</sup>"Origin of the Progressive Party," Independent, LXXX (November 16, 1914), 222.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.



In 1916 the Progressives closed up shop in Kansas and returned to the Republican party--except Victor Murdock.<sup>77</sup> By then new issues were arising and the cohesion of old issues was gone.<sup>78</sup>

The Progressives left Kansas with a richer inheritance, however, for through them (1) state institutions were under boards and to some extent out of politics; (2) all banks, both state and national, were operating under a guarantee to pay the depositors; (3) a statute required the regulating and licensing of sellers and promoters of stock; (4) the state treasury now paid interest to the people; (5) a sound control was exercised over all public utilities--railroads, telephones, express companies, telegraph lines, gas and electric companies, and street cars; (6) a just inheritance tax had been enacted; (7) a workingman's compensation law passed; (8) judicial ouster had been established against recalcitrant officials; (9) laws called for a compulsory referendum for all franchises granted in Kansas cities; (10) two-cent passenger fares; (11) a direct advisory vote on United States senators; (12) a maximum freight rate; (13) and a commission form of government for cities.<sup>79</sup>

The party had also

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<sup>77</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 82.

<sup>78</sup>White, "Why I am a Progressive," Saturday Evening Post, CXCI (April 23, 1921), 4.

<sup>79</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, pp. 81-82.

resulted in a greater tendency on the part of the layman to scrutinize men and measures more closely. At times a watchfulness was apparent which is the hope of effective functioning of democracy. The progressive movement was a trend toward democracy.<sup>80</sup>

On April 9, 1930, an editorial appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association that was destined to raise as much "hell" in Kansas as had ever been attempted in their history by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Leach, "Bookless" Jerry Simpson, Victor Mureook or William Allen White. The text of

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<sup>80</sup>Callis, A History of the Progressive Party in Kansas, p. 104.

Wichbein, and reprinted in the Kansas City Star, asserted that Dr. John H. Brinkley of Milford, Kansas, was "A charlatan of the rankiest sort"<sup>1</sup> and called on the Federal Radio Commission to curb the activities of Dr. Brinkley and other medical "fakirs."<sup>2</sup>

It further asserted that Dr. Brinkley was not entitled to practice medicine and charged that of the two diplomas which he held from medical schools in Kansas City, one was issued by a notorious diploma mill and the other by a school that was never recognized by the licensing boards of most of the states.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Wichbein wrote that

Brinkley has been arrested, found guilty and sentenced to pay a fine and go to prison for selling booze and

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<sup>1</sup>Kansas City Star, April 9, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE MAN AT MILFORD--JOHN R. BRINKLEY

On April 9, 1930, an editorial appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association that was destined to raise as much "hell" in Kansas as had ever been attempted in their heyday by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, Victor Murdock or William Allen White. The text of that article written by the Journal's editor, Dr. Morris Fishbein, and reprinted in the Kansas City Star, asserted that Dr. John R. Brinkley of Milford, Kansas, was "A charlatan of the rankest sort"<sup>1</sup> and called on the Federal Radio Commission to curb the activities of Dr. Brinkley and other medical "fakirs."<sup>2</sup>

It further asserted that Dr. Brinkley was not entitled to practice medicine and charged that of the two diplomas which he held from medical schools in Kansas City, one was issued by a notorious diploma mill and the other by a school that was never recognized by the licensing boards of most of the states.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Fishbein wrote that

Brinkley has been arrested, found guilty and sentenced to pay a fine and go to prison for selling booze and

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<sup>1</sup>Kansas City Star, April 9, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

maintaining a public nuisance. . . has been indicted in California for conspiring to violate the medical laws of that state, but escaped extradition because Governor Davis of Kansas refused to honor the requisition

that he "obtained an honorary degree from the Royal University of Pavia through unlimited effrontery" and that he had asked "That his graduation listing in the American Medical directory be changed to show him a graduate of the Royal University of Pavia, and not the Kansas City outfit."<sup>4</sup>

In reply Dr. Brinkley stated over his radio KFKB that he had

received letters from several friends who said they never liked the Kansas City Star and that since this Fishbein attack on me was published they liked it less. I am sure the Kansas City Star has hurt its subscription lists a lot more than it has hurt me.<sup>5</sup>

and that "since this attack upon us by 'Fishy' Fishbein and the ethical doctors we have been doing more business than ever before."<sup>6</sup>

A few days later the Kansas City Star sent A. B. MacDonald, one of its ace reporters, to Milford to investigate Dr. Brinkley and his institution. Through the efforts of Mr. MacDonald and the Star the complaints of some dozen dissatisfied patients received wide publicity and the Kansas State Medical Board demanded that the Attorney General file

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<sup>4</sup>Kansas City Star, April 9, 1930.

<sup>5</sup>Kansas City Star, April 11, 1930.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



charges before it as a means of revoking Brinkley's license. He was charged with being a quack, accused of gross immorality, and his goat gland operation was branded as a "fake."<sup>7</sup> This was soon to become the cause of one of the most unusual political uprisings in the annals of Kansas history.

John Richard Brinkley, whether for good or ill, is an unusual figure. He was born at Beta, North Carolina, in 1885, the son of a mountain doctor in the Tennessee mountains. His mother died too young for him to remember her.<sup>8</sup> According to the story which he told to the Star's reporter, Brinkley learned telegraphy and later entered Bennett Eclectic Medical College in Chicago, Illinois; here he studied three years working as a telegraph operator at night. Unable to pay the fourth year's tuition he quit school. Later he secured a job in Kansas City, Missouri, and entered the Eclectic Medical University there, where he was given credit for his three years at Chicago. After one year he obtained his diploma, the only one ever given him by any medical college in which he took a course in medicine.<sup>9</sup> This school the Star alleged was not recognized by forty states and closed its doors because of attacks for unethical practices.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>8</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930, and April 29, 1930.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

As one writer has said, "In the fog of statement, fact and fable that now envelops the man, it is difficult to distinguish between the true gospel and hearsay."<sup>11</sup> Brinkley claimed that the Eclectic Medical University "was a reputable school of medicine."<sup>12</sup> He admitted he had a diploma from the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery, a diploma "mill" but denied that he bought it.<sup>13</sup> The statements and denials concerning his medical education are too confusing to assert anything as a certainty, however soon after the World War he appeared in Milford, Kansas, and set himself up as a physician after obtaining a license by reciprocity from Arkansas. Dr. Brinkley built a radio station KFKB over which he broadcast jazz music interrupted by lectures on medical subjects.<sup>14</sup> Soon he became successful from a financial standpoint and erected a hospital, a nurses' dormitory, a suite of neat houses for his surgical assistants, a village water supply, and a drug store at Milford.<sup>15</sup> An omnivorous reader, he took to gland lore and rejuvenation practice. Voronoff in Russia and Steinach in Vienna had become internationally celebrated

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<sup>11</sup>Walter Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Colliers, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>12</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. City Star, April 13, 1930.

<sup>14</sup>"Medicine," Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 40.

<sup>15</sup>Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Colliers, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>16</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.



for experiments in this field.<sup>16</sup>

By 1920 he had gained wide publicity through his goat gland operations.<sup>17</sup> A diploma from the Royal University of Pavia in Italy, and another from a British licensing board were given him in 1925, although he probably went through no course of study to get them.<sup>18</sup> The diploma from the University of Pavia has since been annulled, but he was still listed in 1930 as a physician in the medical register of the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> Probably many legends have been woven around him by those who have written or spoken about him. Take for example his diploma from the University of Pavia.

Walter Davenport writing in Collier's states that he obtained the diploma by demonstrating his theory of rejuvenation by gland grafting at the Royal University of Pavia, Italy. "It conferred an honorary degree in medicine on him it was so impressed,"<sup>20</sup> he states. However, Brinkley told a reporter for the Kansas City Star that he "went to Pavia in 1925, entered the graduating class and took the final examination with it and received a medical degree."<sup>21</sup> The line

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<sup>16</sup>Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Colliers, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>17</sup>Topeka Capital, July 30, 1920.

<sup>18</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Colliers, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>21</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.



between truth and fiction is a particularly hard one to distinguish in Brinkley's case.

By 1930 it was probably true that to have 50,000 pieces of mail come into Milford addressed to Brinkley was not unusual. His mailing list had thousands of names and fifty young women did nothing but open mail.<sup>22</sup>

After Brinkley was interviewed by A. B. MacDonald, the Kansas City Star's reporter, it began to publish a series of articles "exposing" Brinkley. His medical education was discussed, his "ethics" were attacked, and the merit of his operations questioned.<sup>23</sup>

Accusations made by the Star consisted of everything from discrepancies in his statements to Mr. MacDonald down to one accusing him of reading his Sunday radio sermons from Giovanni Papini's Life of Christ and failing to give proper credit.<sup>24</sup> The Star charged that he advised people over the radio not to go to their doctors but to take his prescription number so and so; that he had stated over the air that "any doctor who would cut into you for that should be in the penitentiary"<sup>25</sup> and that such remarks had built up a distrust of physicians in general. For his radio prescriptions he was praised by the Midwestern Druggist, a trade magazine

<sup>22</sup>Davenport, Collier's, (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>23</sup>Richard Hughes Bailey, "Dr. Brinkley of Kansas," Nation, CXXXV (September 21, 1932), p. 254.

<sup>24</sup>Kansas City Star, June 22, 1930.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.



published in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>26</sup>

The Star further charged him with allowing one Dr. Horatius Dwight Osborn to perform operations in the Brinkley hospital. Dr. Osborn, said the Star, "never saw the inside of a medical school before Date R. Alexander issued him a fake medical diploma" yet he had for the past ten years been performing operations for Dr. Brinkley.<sup>27</sup>

Another accusation was that Brinkley had professional testimonial writers and named two of them as William Eschmann of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Solon M. McNab of Indianapolis, Indiana, the latter was charged with receiving thirty dollars a week for answering letters of inquiry about Dr. Brinkley.<sup>28</sup>

The liquor charge made against Brinkley by Dr. Fishbein did not amount to anything in the opinion of the Star's reporter. The reporter stated that neighbors who had known Brinkley for thirteen years asserted that he was never a liquor seller and that the charge had come about through Mrs. Brinkley's selling a small bottle of alcohol to a physician who said he wanted it for medicine. Dr. Brinkley to shield Mrs. Brinkley who was threatened with trouble on account of it, confessed and paid the fine.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kansas City Star, May 2, 1930.

<sup>27</sup> Kansas City Star, April 15, 1930; also May 8, 1930.

<sup>28</sup> Kansas City Star, May 22 and 25, 1930.

<sup>29</sup> Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.

Over the radio Brinkley "Likened himself to Jesus, saying he was being 'persecuted for healing the sick' and was suffering the anger of the 'learned doctors.'"<sup>30</sup> It was his use of the radio which had brought down the wrath of the Journal of the American Medical Association. He was charged with prescribing medicine by radio to patients whom he had never seen but who had written to him describing their ailments. These prescriptions were identified by code numbers and patients were told at what drug stores the medicines could be purchased. Kansas druggists, some of whom had suffered because many Kansas physicians filled their own prescriptions, soon profited by this.<sup>31</sup>

It was rumored that Dr. Brinkley got one dollar for every prescription the druggists filled. Brinkley denied this saying that the druggists sent him whatever amount they chose.<sup>32</sup> The price of the prescriptions was generally from three to five dollars, although some ranged as high as ten dollars.<sup>33</sup>

A circular to the druggists sent out by Brinkley and dated February 15, 1930, contained the following information:

Label: Distributed by Dr. Brinkley, net price \$3.50

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<sup>30</sup>Kansas City Star, April 29, 1930.

<sup>31</sup>"Medicine," Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 40.

<sup>32</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid. City Star, April 16, 1930.

<sup>34</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.



This prescription should be put into an 8-ounce bottle. You sell it for \$3.50 and send me \$1 for every bottle sold either an original or refill or repurchase sale. Your profit comes out of the \$2.50 left over.<sup>34</sup>

Brinkley's income from this one source alone was estimated at \$10,000 a week.<sup>35</sup>

The Journal of the American Medical Association in its editorial had especially taken exception to this use of the radio by Brinkley and had called upon the Federal Radio Commission to curb his activities. Brinkley in his interview with A. B. MacDonald of the Kansas City Star had denied ownership of station KFKB asserting it was owned by the KFKB Broadcasting Association, the principal stockholders of which were: Harry Montgomery, owner and editor of a newspaper in Junction City; John T. Kennedy, president of the First National Bank in Junction City; Ben Fegan, owner of a telephone plant in Junction City; and Hurst Majors, mayor of Manhattan. Brinkley stated that he owned only one share and that he bought his time on the air.<sup>36</sup>

An investigation by the Star showed this to be correct but only half true. The KFKB Broadcasting Association was incorporated under the laws of Kansas with a capital of \$150,000 and 1000 shares of stock. Montgomery and the others held one share each, but 991 shares were owned by Mrs.

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<sup>34</sup>Kansas City Star, May 2, 1930.

<sup>35</sup>Kansas City Star, April 16, 1930.

<sup>36</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.



Brinkley.<sup>37</sup> Brinkley had stated that the income from his radio prescriptions went to the Association; therefore, he must have been giving it to himself and his wife.<sup>38</sup>

It was the use of the radio which also built up Brinkley's hospital. In the early months of 1930 he was doing a roaring business. Twenty-five, thirty, and forty goats arrived daily from Arkansas. He is said to have examined as many as forty patients a day and performed eight and ten operations a day at \$750. It is estimated that he pocketed not less than \$650,000.<sup>39</sup> Attesting to the influence of his radio station KFKB, which had been voted "the most popular in the world" by the readers of the Radio Digest in 1930,<sup>40</sup> he had said to the Star's reporter that "I could send out a cry for help over the radio and get a million dollars in one week, if I needed it."<sup>41</sup>

The Federal Radio Commission declined to renew his license on the grounds of "obscenity" and he was ordered off the air beginning June 20, 1930, but was allowed to operate his station the fall months under a federal court injunction.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Kansas City Star, April 16, 1930. This information the Star obtained at the State House in Topeka.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Collier's, (January 16, 1932), 49.

<sup>40</sup>"Medicine," Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 42.

<sup>41</sup>Kansas City Star, April 13, 1930.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., May 16-June 13, 1930; also "Medicine," Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 42.



In answer to the attacks which Brinkley made upon the radio commission after the hearing George E. Strong, one of the attorneys who had represented him before the commission, stated that "As a matter of fact, this case was remarkably free of attempts to influence the radio commission."<sup>43</sup>

On the same day that the radio commission refused to renew his license to broadcast, the Kansas Supreme Court refused to enjoin the Kansas Medical Board from conducting a hearing on his medical license.<sup>44</sup> The medical board had become aroused as a result of the articles which had appeared in the Kansas City Star.<sup>45</sup>

The charges were brought by Dr. L. F. Barney of Kansas City, Kansas, and included misrepresentation and fraud, conviction on a liquor charge, disturbing the peace, obtaining a medical license in Connecticut by fraud, the impossibility of performing the "goat gland" operation, drunkenness, unethical use of the radio and the mail, and the strangest of all charged that patients had died in Brinkley's hospital.<sup>46</sup>

At this time the Pink Rag, published in Topeka and which later became Brinkley's bitter enemy, was moved to remark that this was the same state board that had given Brinkley

<sup>43</sup> Kansas City Star, June 16, 1930.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., June 12, 1930.

<sup>45</sup> Bailey, "Dr. Brinkley of Kansas," Nation, CXXV, (September 21, 1932), 254.

<sup>46</sup> Kansas City Star, April 29, 1930.

his license and that for years "It was a matter of common knowledge that he was performing what became known as 'goat-gland operations' for he was at no pains to conceal the fact" and that "It was not until Brinkley began to prescribe over the radio that the board of medical examiners raised a fuss."<sup>47</sup>

The hearing before the medical board lasted nearly a month. Dr. Brinkley was represented by his attorneys, Fred S. Jackson, a former Attorney General of Kansas and a former member of Congress, and James M. Smith, son-in-law of Governor Clyde Reed.<sup>48</sup> The state brought in dissatisfied patients and placed many physicians and surgeons on the stand who testified that it was not possible to do what Dr. Brinkley claimed in performing his goat-gland operation.<sup>49</sup> Two of Dr. Brinkley's former nurses testified, one testifying for the board and the other one for Dr. Brinkley.<sup>50</sup>

Considerable expert testimony was offered in Dr. Brinkley's behalf and many witnesses were produced to prove he was a moral and a Christian man. Witnesses came from a half dozen states to testify for him. After listening to Brinkley's witnesses for several days the board unanimously

<sup>47</sup> Pink Rag, May 2, 1930.

<sup>48</sup> Kansas City Star, April 27, 1930.

<sup>49</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>50</sup> Kansas City Star, July 28, 1930.

<sup>51</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.



agreed to curtail them<sup>52</sup> and Brinkley's attorneys filed 357 affidavits of "cured" or "satisfied" patients.<sup>53</sup> The hearing finally resolved itself into the merits and possibilities of the goat-gland transplantation. Dr. Brinkley invited the board members to his hospital to watch him perform the operation. One of the public demonstration patients was the son of a man who had been operated upon by Brinkley two years previously. The next day the board revoked his license.<sup>54</sup>

The charges upon which the board found him guilty were gross immorality and unprofessional conduct.<sup>55</sup> Soon the decision of the board was to reverberate throughout the State, and "Brinkleyites" would be claiming that the board had "railroaded" Dr. Brinkley. It is difficult for a layman to evaluate the weight of the evidence submitted; many, however, have criticized the method of procedure engaged in by the board. There was evidently very little element of delay in passing on the bulky evidence. The introduction of 357 affidavits by Brinkley's attorneys in the final day of the hearing did not

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<sup>52</sup>Kansas City Star, July 25, 1930.

<sup>53</sup>"Medicine," Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 42; also Topeka Journal, September 17, 1930.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 42; also New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>55</sup>Wichita Beacon, November 3, 1930; also Kansas City Star, September 17, 1930.

delay the action a bit.<sup>56</sup> During the hearing Dr. M. C. Jenkins of Pratt had objected to the cross-examination of the board's witnesses by Fred S. Jackson, an attorney for Brinkley, stating that he thought the testimony sufficient and that the board could revoke the license at once.<sup>57</sup> Some degree of premeditation might be seen in the statement of Dr. J. F. Hossig, chairman of the board, issued after the hearing in which he said:

The order of the supreme court required us to go into the testimony as fully as we did, and to give Brinkley's attorneys all the time we did give them to prepare and present their case. And we got through just as quickly as possible.<sup>58</sup>

Soon after the hearing Brinkley began to accuse the American Medical Association and the Kansas City Star with persecution and began negotiations for a Mexican radio station. In a short time he was flying around the State addressing large groups. The farmers were ripe for an economic and political revolt. Wheat was selling at sixty cents and going down. Often from ten to twelve thousand ruralites turned out to listen. Sometimes the audience was more numerous than the population of the county in which he spoke. He was not a candidate for office. Then too late to get his name on the ballot he announced himself a candidate

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<sup>56</sup>Topeka Journal, September 17, 1930.

<sup>57</sup>Kansas City Star, July 17, 1930.

<sup>58</sup>Kansas City Star, September 17, 1930.



for Governor. He had no party and very little platform but the soil of revolt in Kansas was fertile and the same soil had many times before produced abundant crops of reform. Could it do so again? Was John R. Brinkley a new Moses come to lead the people out of bondage?

Kansas in the summer of 1930 was a fertile field for a political and economic revolt. Both the Republican and Democratic primaries had left in their wake scores of disgruntled voters. For the first time in the State's history the Republican party had refused a second nomination to a Governor of that political stripe with the defeat of Governor Clyde H. Reed and the nomination of Frank Haucke, a young Legionaire. The Democrats too had refused to nominate an old Bourbon "war horse," State Senator R. L. Bowman, and turned instead to another Legionaire, Harry L. Woodring. Many in both parties felt that the choices were not wise ones.<sup>1</sup>

The State was seething with unrest. Times were hard in both the towns and the rural sections and taxes were high. Nor were the Hoover administration, the new tariff law and the Farm Board in high repute.<sup>2</sup> As early as February of that year a correspondent for the New York Times in sizing up the political complexion of the State had written:

The Bull Moose rampant might be the proper figure for

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

#### CHAPTER IV

### SHADES OF POPULISM AND ECHOES OF THE BULL MOOSE

#### The Campaign of 1930

Kansas in the summer of 1930 was a fertile field for a political and economic revolt. Both the Republican and Democratic primaries had left in their wake scores of disgruntled voters. For the first time in the State's history the Republican party had refused a second nomination to a Governor of that political stripe with the defeat of Governor Clyde M. Reed and the nomination of Frank Hauke, a young Legionaire. The Democrats too had refused to nominate an old Bourbon "war horse," State Senator N. L. Bowman, and turned instead to another Legionaire, Harry L. Woodring. Many in both parties felt that the choices were not wise ones.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. in New York Times, July 7, 1930.



independent Republicanism's coat of arms if the Kansas party needed a heraldic device. Any Republican in Kansas will tell you that the spirit of Armageddon is abroad and before the election is history a man-sized political fight will have been waged.<sup>3</sup>

Here he had in mind the dissatisfaction with the Farm Board and the fact that Frank Haucke had been brought out against the Allen-Reed wing in the Republican party.<sup>4</sup>

That John R. Brinkley was fully cognizant of the dissatisfaction rampant in the State is indicated in a news story appearing in the Kansas City Journal-Post for August 30, which stated that:

For more than a month now Brinkley, accompanied by Mrs. Brinkley, has been flying over Kansas in his airplane, visiting with the people of Kansas, making speeches at their picnics, fairs and fall festivals. He knows the temper of the people--what they are thinking, what they are suffering, and what they are planning.<sup>5</sup>

That he must have found Kansas politics chaotic is indicated by the violent language of Governor Reed in his campaign for renomination claiming to "have stirred against him the wrath of so many 'liars,' 'lobbyists,' 'grafters' and so on,"<sup>6</sup> and the return of fire by Al Williams, Republican stalwart, in the charge that "The job of Governor has gone to Mr. Reed's head"<sup>7</sup> and his statement that "The late war in

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<sup>3</sup>New York Times, Part III, February 16, 1930.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, August 30, 1930.

<sup>6</sup>Editorial in New York Times, July 7, 1930.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



which Frank Hauke fought, put Kings and Princes in the discard, and the primary this Fall will eliminate Clyde Reed, master egotist and political snake-charmer, from Kansas politics."<sup>8</sup> All of which had caused the New York Times to remark editorially "Oh Kansas, Kansas, wherefore art thou Kansas."<sup>9</sup>

Brinkley's station KFKB was not silent as yet. On June 23, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia had granted a stay order permitting broadcasting while his appeal from the radio commission was pending.<sup>10</sup> It was late in September before the doctor announced himself as a candidate for Governor, but not too late apparently to appeal to the imagination of a large number of Kansans.

The Kansas City Star had printed a character sketch of the two major party candidates, both young men, which showed them in such an unfavorable light that William Allen White wrote an editorial interpreting the sketches as making one appear a "sissy" and the other a "sap." The Brinkley supporters pounced upon this as excellent campaign material.<sup>11</sup>

At first the politicians were inclined to consider his candidacy as a joke. Then, "Thousands began to send letters promising to vote for him."<sup>12</sup> These letters he read over the

<sup>8</sup> Editorial in New York Times, July 7, 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Kansas City Star, June 23, 1930.

<sup>11</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



radio thus luring more promises and more letters.<sup>13</sup> The politicians were slow to attack him, probably because, "No candidate for office enjoys tackling a man who can fire back by air and shoot his remarks to various sections of the country every day."<sup>14</sup> On the other hand few were eager to join him for, lower taxes to the farmers, better compensation

law, and game preservation.<sup>15</sup> In regard to taxes he stated that At the same time there is no sheer enjoyment in gathering the suspicion or antagonism of hundreds of family physicians who pack a lot of weight with patients in every county and town in the state and who are likely to show up at the polls on election day with a nasty disposition.<sup>15</sup> One of

the doctor's topics was always the charge that while the Then, too, there was scarcely a man holding a state office in Kansas City Star did not pay taxes in Kansas it attacked Topeka who in the past had not done an important part of his campaigning over Brinkley's station KFKB and many of them in might not only drive taxpayers out of the state, but also their talks had endorsed him as a great physician and surgeon, for KFKB was the only station they could use without into Kansas unless the Star's control of the state was charge.<sup>16</sup>

Soon they were to grow still more uncomfortable as more driven out and new ones kept from coming in that the people and more the political conversation came to be about Brinkley who remained would have heavier tax burdens to bear, and a large per cent of the automobiles on the state highways Continuing his attack on the Star he would ask his audience in many sections began to carry Brinkley stickers and if they did not think it unfair to him, an American citizen, banners.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> Topeka Journal, April 17, 1930.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>16</sup> Kansas City Star, May 8, 1930.

<sup>17</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

In the meantime the doctor had concocted a platform which included such things as drought relief through the building of an artificial lake in every Kansas county and free health clinics, including assistance for prostate troubles.<sup>18</sup> Other planks declared for free text books, old age pensions, lower taxes to the farmers, better compensation law, and game preserves.<sup>19</sup> In regard to taxes he stated that something must be done about them--that he was opposed to high taxes and believed that an honest, efficient administration could eliminate much waste and extravagance.<sup>20</sup> One of the doctor's topics was always the charge that while the Kansas City Star did not pay taxes in Kansas it attacked Kansas institutions which did pay taxes and that its tactics might not only drive taxpayers out of the State, but also might prevent new citizens and new institutions from coming into Kansas unless the Star's control of the State was broken. He also stated that if the big taxpayers were driven out and new ones kept from coming in that the people who remained would have heavier tax burdens to bear.<sup>21</sup> Continuing his attack on the Star he would ask his audience if they did not think it unfair to him, an American citizen, that the air over Kansas was not as free to him as it was to

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<sup>18</sup>"Political Notes," Time Magazine, XVI (December 1, 1930), 18.

<sup>19</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>20</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, August 30, 1930.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.



the owners of the Star.<sup>22</sup>

Speaking to an audience of 400 people, at the Broadview Hotel in Wichita, he promised a business like management of state funds and said that he intended "to pull Kansas out of the mud" by an additional two cent gas tax to guarantee a \$140,000,000 bond issue. This was to be used to pave about 7,000 miles of Kansas highways. He also promised to increase the cigarette tax to four cents and to compel the wholesaler to stamp the packages.<sup>23</sup>

Over his radio he said that he would put a microphone in the Governor's office and in his bed chamber in the executive mansion so that he could tell the people day and night what was happening at the seat of government and how their representatives in the legislature were behaving themselves,<sup>24</sup> and cried "Let's pasture the goats on the State House lawn."<sup>25</sup>

Never before had Kansas witnessed such political campaign tactics as Brinkley used. Some days he talked over the radio from 6:45 a. m. until dark and then flew to mass meetings. Campaigners spoke over the radio for him in the Swedish and the German tongues. Schools of instruction were held to teach people to write his name on the ballot.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, August 30, 1930.

<sup>23</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 14, 1930.

<sup>24</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

<sup>25</sup>"Political Notes," Time Magazine, XVI (December 1, 1930).

<sup>26</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 2, 1930.

At his campaign meetings both he and Mrs. Brinkley made talks. At most of their meetings they stated that at no time had the Kansas City Star given them fair treatment or printed their side of the story. Dr. Brinkley told the people the greatest menace to the prosperity, happiness and independence of the people of this part of the country is the Star.<sup>27</sup>

Mrs. Brinkley in her talks told of the sufferings and hardships that she said had been imposed upon her family through the attacks of the Star.<sup>28</sup>

These meetings provided plenty of entertainment for both young and old. Steve Love and his KFKB orchestra played. The "Tell Me a Story Lady" amused the children and Mrs. Brinkley contacted the mothers. Seats were often reserved and shrewd psychology used in throwing unfilled seats open at 7:30 p. m.<sup>29</sup> Often a little Father and Son by-play was enacted. Little, berompered "Johnny Boy" Brinkley would scamper from a seat on the stage beside his mother to his daddy, insisting that he take a couple of papers that his father carried. Dr. Brinkley would pause, look down benignantlly at his son and remark to the crowd "he's boss" whereupon Johnny Boy would draw a hand that was deafening.<sup>30</sup>

Sunday meetings were held at which Brinkley "refused to

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<sup>27</sup> Kansas City Journal-Post, August 30, 1930.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Wichita Beacon, October 28, 1930.

<sup>30</sup> Wichita Beacon, October 29, 1930.



talk politics." One was held in the pasture of Cash Davis thirteen miles east of Wichita described by the Wichita Beacon as "one of the largest political gatherings ever held in the history of this section," and headlined as "20,000 Crowd Road to Hear Brinkley Speak on Bible."<sup>31</sup>

The New York Times looking into Kansas from afar saw "a nervous little man with a pink goatee, a radio station and a physician's license that the State Board won't recognize" making himself "the Independent nominee for Governor. He promises everything. He recounts his woes. Kansas bleeds again. Here is a cause to crusade for, a martyr to rescue."<sup>32</sup>

The Brinkley crowds, the Brinkley tactics, and the Brinkley talk were beginning to give the old line politicians the "jitters." While they publicly made light of the good doctor they were privately acknowledging to one another that Brinkley had them worried. The writer recalls attending a county central committee meeting of one of the major parties in which the conversation closely resembled the antics of a small boy whistling in the dark in order to keep up his courage. It was not that they expected the doctor to be elected, but because they could not figure out from which party he was going to draw the most strength. Therein hung the election. Nor was everything smooth sailing within the major parties themselves.

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<sup>31</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 29, 1930.

<sup>32</sup>Editorial in the New York Times, November 8, 1930.

Ex-Governor Jonathan M. Davis, one of the few former Kansas governors of the Democratic faith, was openly flirting with the Brinkley following and although he denied any intention of bolting he publicly stated that he regarded Dr. Brinkley as a man who "is qualified and has a learning gained from contact with men and women that would make him a very human governor."<sup>33</sup> Governor Clyde M. Reed, whom his party had refused to renominate was raking his successful opponent over the coals in the Republican camp for "making misleading statements regarding the state road program and expenditures of highway funds."<sup>34</sup>

Harry Woodring, the Democratic nominee, was making a strong bid for the Reed vote in the Republican party and saying that he did not believe "that to be regular is always to be right,"<sup>35</sup> and confidently predicting that he would receive "sixty per cent of the support that formerly went to Governor Reed."<sup>36</sup>

Late in October the Kansas City Star was reporting that "The Brinkley vote is a ghost vote" and that "It is said one party is afraid that if it starts a fight on him he will throw his strength to the other party." The Star was also acknowledging that the central part of the State was strong

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<sup>33</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 28, 1930.

<sup>34</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 20, 1930.

<sup>35</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 23, 1930.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.



for him, particularly Republic, Washington, Clay, Cloud, Riley, Marshall, Geary, Dickinson, and Saline counties and the cities of Wichita, Hutchinson and Topeka.<sup>37</sup>

On election day (November 4, 1930) many of his watchers were barred from the polls although in many places they were later admitted.<sup>38</sup> Through the day Dr. Brinkley kept up a continuous broadcast of encouragement to his workers, advising them and giving out cheering reports from various parts of the state. When the ballots were counted the doctor was found to have done what no other man in the State had ever done before; he polled over 180,000 votes without having his name printed on the ballot and it is estimated that between 15,000 and 50,000 ballots were spoiled by supporters unable to write in his name correctly.<sup>39</sup> Many of the politicians admitted that if Brinkley had received the votes of all who expressed their intent to vote for him he would have been elected.<sup>40</sup> Actually he received 183,278 votes counted while Woodring, the successful candidate, received 217,171.<sup>41</sup>

All of this had been done without party backing and without the support of any major Kansas newspaper. The Wichita Beacon from which he was to draw many favorable news

<sup>37</sup> Kansas City Star, October 26, 1930.

<sup>38</sup> Wichita Beacon, November 4, 1930.

<sup>39</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 16, 1930.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.; also Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Collier's, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 50.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

stories, if not actual endorsement in 1932, had during this campaign been too busily engaged in its controversy with Alexander Legge, chairman of the Farm Board, to engage itself in the Kansas gubernatorial melee, except to announce editorially "that for the good of Kansas, Senators Capper and Allen and Frank Haucke, and the rest of the state Republican ticket should be elected by substantial majorities."<sup>42</sup>

Many elements no doubt entered into the make-up of the surprisingly large Brinkley vote. Many believed that he had not had a fair hearing on the charges to revoke his medical license which probably gave him sympathy support. His possession of the most powerful radio station in the State enabled him to make daily appeals to more people than any other candidate. Undoubtably he was greatly aided by the distressingly low grain and livestock prices and the unusual amount of unemployment.<sup>43</sup> Party lines, too, had meant little for while Kansas is normally overwhelmingly Republican, Henry J. Allen, alleged Hoover spokesman in the Senate, was defeated, while Senator Arthur Capper was reelected by a plurality of more than 135,000 votes. The New York Times' Kansas correspondent thought that

Capper survived only because he was not as close to the Hoover administration as Allen, and because he was looked upon as being more sympathetic with both the farmers and organized labor.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Editorial in the Wichita Beacon, November 3, 1930.

<sup>43</sup>New York Times, Part III, November 16, 1930.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.



Then, too, the primaries had left many disappointed Republicans and Democrats. Within the Republican party

Hymns of hate were sung. Stories were whispered. Prominent citizens carried tales of alleged drunkenness, of alleged loose living, of alleged extravagance with state funds amounting to debauchery of the public interest.<sup>45</sup>

Those who suffered from hard times felt that they were persecuted. Into their homes came a voice over the radio saying "I am a persecuted man; persecuted by well-to-do doctors and designing politicians." They felt that here was a man in their own boat. When they heard that voice advocating free textbooks and free medical clinics without increasing taxation they felt that here indeed was the poor man's friend.<sup>46</sup> Then again there was probably that feeling of vengeance against the politicians holding office to whom they, perhaps blindly, attributed much of their unfavorable economic condition, however "Such a display of hand-written voting could never have been made if bi-partisan government in Kansas had not been at a lower ebb than ever before."<sup>47</sup>

#### The Campaign of 1932

The Brinkley vote in 1930 was a moral victory. At the beginning of 1932 most of the conditions that had contributed

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<sup>45</sup> Wichita Beacon, October 26, 1930.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> New York Times, Part III, November 16, 1930.

to the discontent of the preceding two years, many in a more aggravated form, still existed. Throughout the State there were probably hundreds of people who were firmly convinced that the Milford medicine man had been counted out in the gubernatorial contest because so many ballots were cast aside as damaged.<sup>48</sup>

The Republican Kansas Day Club met on January 29, 1932. It had been formed forty years before, when the Populists were threatening the State, by a group of young Republicans who met in Topeka on the anniversary of the State's admittance into the Union. Their purposes had been "to rejuvenate the party, to revive interest and enthusiasm in its principles and to restore confidence in its leaders."<sup>49</sup> Forty years before it had been Populism that threatened:

The only difference today is that it goes under the name of Brinkleyism, and has been cultivated among the grass roots. The conditions causing the people to be dissatisfied are very much the same--high taxes, low prices for agricultural products and a belief that the party leadership has deteriorated.<sup>50</sup>

The Republicans were aghast that Kansans could seriously contemplate putting John R. Brinkley in the Governor's chair. They would have done well had they been able to cull thoughtfully through a paragraph in the New York Times which appeared some months later to the effect that

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<sup>48</sup>New York Times, October 17, 1932.

<sup>49</sup>New York Times, February 2, 1932.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.



for Ben Butler would never have been elected Governor of Massachusetts if it hadn't been for the heat and horror of the Republican respectables. The abuse poured out on him attracted sympathy and stirred the sense of humor. "Let's see what the old man will do." There is a perversity in human nature that sometimes prefers the goats to the sheep.<sup>51</sup>

Henry L. Doherty, the public utilities magnate, had projected

In the early months of 1932 even the Pink Rag which was to become one of the doctor's bitterest enemies, thought him "a peach of a surgeon" when he had gone "thru that '4-phase' thing under the eyes of the antagonistic bunch from the A. M. A. that was trying to get his legal goat," although expressing opposition to him as a candidate for Governor.<sup>52</sup>

Walter Davenport, sent to Kansas by Collier's, was in Wichita looking "for the name and address of the one person who was most potent in the farrazo that the perpetually boiling state of Kansas called its political situation."<sup>53</sup> He was told the man was Brinkley and that

Brinkley was more dangerous than he had been two years practically everything in Kansas serves to complicate the situation--everything from the price of wheat and natural gas to the cost of Brinkley's Antispasmodic and Sedative (three dollars), to say nothing of who is going to name the next State Public Service Commission and State Board of Medical Examiners.<sup>54</sup>

combination" nor be "bound by any group or organization"

The doctor had filed suit against the Kansas City Star

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<sup>51</sup> Editorial in the New York Times, October 2, 1932.

<sup>52</sup> Pink Rag, February 12, 1932. "Collier's, LXXIX

<sup>53</sup> Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Collier's, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 12. Part II, July 17, 1932.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Campaign Circular.



for \$2,500,000 actual damages and \$2,500,000 punitive damages charging the Star with having entered into a conspiracy with medical organizations which resulted in cancellation of his Kansas medical certificate and a radio station license.<sup>55</sup>

Henry L. Doherty, the public utilities magnate, had projected himself into the Kansas situation in a determined effort to maintain the price of illuminating gas with which he was supplying the eastern part of the State. He had recently purchased an interest in the Kansas City Journal-Post and he hoped to convince the public utilities commission that neither eighty cents nor one dollar was too much to charge for 1000 feet of gas. Governor Woodring and the Kansas City Star thought it was.<sup>56</sup> With so many ingredients the Kansas political stew was in a fair way to boil over.

With much of his old organization left, if not all of it, it was admitted by Republicans and Democrats alike that Brinkley was more dangerous than he had been two years before.<sup>57</sup> Entering the campaign as an Independent candidate he stated that he would "represent no newspaper, no man, no individual, no association, no organization, no group or combination" nor be "bound by any group or organization"<sup>58</sup> and that he would "remain free as an individual, speaking for

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<sup>55</sup>Topeka Capital, September 23, 1931.

<sup>56</sup>Davenport, "Gland Time in Kansas," Collier's, LXXIX (January 16, 1932), 51.

<sup>57</sup>New York Times, Part II, July 17, 1932.

<sup>58</sup>Brinkley Campaign Circular.



the people and the people only."<sup>59</sup> His platform contained planks on general taxation, lower automobile fees, drastic economy in State affairs, graft and incompetence in public office, a unified State school system, free school books, unemployment, conservation of state resources, state lakes and game preserves, organized labor, and public utility regulation. It also contained planks on such subjects as the highway commission, the sick and afflicted, pensions for the unfortunate, public health, colored citizens, reforestation, industries, the Blue Sky department, state funds, the Basic Science law, and one pledging himself to honesty, frankness, economy and prosperity.<sup>60</sup> At the close of the campaign he was keeping quiet about medical service for the needy and about state lakes, two of the major planks in his 1930 effort.<sup>61</sup> He particularly opposed a state income tax although he promised to apply the first \$5,000,000 received from such a tax to relieve the levy on real estate.<sup>62</sup>

His stand against a graduated income tax was attacked in the Kansas City Star which asked if it was

to the interest of the farmers and workers of Kansas to elect a governor who opposes lightening the tax burden on their farms and homes by shifting it to

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<sup>59</sup>Brinkley Campaign Circular.

<sup>60</sup>"Dr. John R. Brinkley's Platform" Campaign Pamphlet.

<sup>61</sup>Editorial in the Kansas City Star, October 17, 1932

<sup>62</sup>New York Times, October 17, 1932.

an income tax which the well-to-do would pay.<sup>63</sup>

His campaign tactics were similar to those he used in 1930. Using what he called an "ammunition train" equipped with loud speakers he toured the State. The doctor himself rode in his sixteen cylinder Cadillac. Again he provided entertainment with Roy Faulkner, the Singing Cow Boy. The meetings were opened with a prayer by his pastor, who also led the singing. There were solos, music by a band, phonograph records, one of which startled the air with the doctor's campaign song, "He's the Man." Often dances were sponsored by the Brinkley clubs.

At Emporia, speaking in Soden's Grove he thanked William Allen White, who had called persons who voted for Brinkley in 1930 "riffraff" and "morons," for his unconscious services to him. Said the doctor:

From time to time he has had great pleasure, I suppose, in taking the skin off of me. At times he has taken off my hide and my shirt and my pants-- and I have enjoyed it. He helped me to get elected Governor two years ago, and he is doing all he can every day now to help me get elected again.<sup>64</sup>

The western Kansas correspondent for the New York Times wrote that

In Dodge City Brinkley drew more than the combined audiences which heard Republican and Democratic candidates. Most of his hearers are farmers and

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<sup>63</sup>Editorial in the Kansas City Star, October 17, 1932.

<sup>64</sup>Editorial in the New York Times, August 31, 1932.

<sup>70</sup>Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 42.



merchants depending on farm business who needed no unusual imagination to see the point.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the State the Independents talked long and loud about the columns of advertising of real estate to be sold for taxes and called attention to the many mortgage foreclosure notices.<sup>66</sup> Appeals were made also to the Eastern Kansas coal miners. The appeal went also into the railroad centers where lay offs and three day weeks had made livelihood a problem. All through the State there was the factor of thirty-two cent wheat.<sup>67</sup>

There was a good deal in the good doctor's language about skunks which he mentioned as frequently as goats:

He quoted a lawyer who told a banker it were better to turn Kansas into a goat farm than to keep it a skunk farm. He would reduce the price of auto tags to three dollars and lower the cost annually in proportion to the depreciation of a retained car.<sup>68</sup>

At the Kansas State Fair he accused both the Democrats and Republicans of "borrowing" planks from his platform.<sup>69</sup> XER, the Mexican station over which he talked by remote control,<sup>70</sup> carried his voice daily over Kansas.

Throughout the campaign the two major parties continued

<sup>65</sup>New York Times, Part II, October 23, 1932.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., October 17, 1932.

<sup>69</sup>Wichita Beacon, September 20, 1932.

<sup>70</sup>Time Magazine, XVIII (November 16, 1931), 42.

to have difficulties within the ranks. Again the Republican primary had left its aftermath,<sup>71</sup> and the Democratic delegation to their national convention, controlled by Governor Woodring and Guy Helvering, had fought the selection of Jouett Shouse, a Kansan, as permanent chairman. It had also prevented the launching of a boom for Ralph T. O'Neil, former National Commander of the American Legion, and also a Kansan, for Vice-President. All of this left sore spots.<sup>72</sup>

By August there were "so many 'razzers flyin' through the air' in Kansas that Cassandra herself couldn't make anything like a clean score of predictions, even or probabilities."<sup>73</sup> The Wichita Beacon began an attack upon Governor Woodring and Guy Helvering concerning the state highway commission.<sup>74</sup> The Woodring camp charged the Cities Service Company with "directly or indirectly giving financial aid" to Brinkley and the doctor charged that Woodring was controlled by the Kansas City Star and challenged Woodring to a debate on the utility charge.<sup>75</sup> Bad blood existed between Woodring and the Kansas State Teachers' Association over the tax limitation amendment. The Governor charged Frank L. Pinet, secretary of the association, with aiding Brinkley. This Pinet denied but not without

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<sup>71</sup>New York Times, Part II, July 17, 1932.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Editorial in the New York Times, August 4, 1932.

<sup>74</sup>Wichita Beacon, September 5, 1932.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., September 19, 1932.



calling Woodring a "Little Lord Fauntleroy."<sup>76</sup>

Charges and counter charges between the Kansas City Journal-Post and the Wichita Beacon on one side and Governor Woodring on the other over the use of Doherty money to aid the Brinkley campaign flew thick and fast.<sup>77</sup> In the meantime the Republican candidate, Alf. M. Landon, was attempting to keep his skirts clear and plugging away.

The day of the election rolled around. Again Brinkley occupied third place but he had materially increased his vote over the vote given him in the previous election. Again Kansas knew that she had thousands of dissatisfied citizens within her borders. They had not won but they had been heard.

The following year (1933) Dr. Brinkley moved his hospital to Del Rio, Texas. The fight had ended but it had furnished Kansas with the most unusual political battle in her history.

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<sup>76</sup>Wichita Beacon, October 19 and 20, 1932.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., October 21, 23, 28 and 31, 1932.

The years in which the movement occurred were years that also found the grievances of the agrarian and the laboring classes accumulating. The conditions which had grown out of the Great War had finally culminated in a breakdown of the economic system, at least to the extent of causing suffering and hardships for both the agrarian and the laboring classes. Both of the major political parties were too much concerned

## CONCLUSION

It seems to the writer that throughout the years there have grown up radical political movements that have not been brought about by political agitators so much as by the agitation of political and economic discontent, due particularly to the unfavorable position in which agrarian and laboring interests have found themselves placed. At times these movements have assumed one name and at other times another. Underlying all of them have been attempts to alleviate the condition of the farmer and the laborer, and with the exception of Brinkley's campaign have produced well defined issues and organized parties. The Brinkley movement was but a continuation of earlier ones, although in a somewhat different form.

While it may seem to some merely the attempt of one man to place himself in a position to right his own personal grievances and attain publicity, it appears to the writer upon investigation, to be something more.

The years in which the movement occurred were years that also found the grievances of the agrarian and the laboring classes accumulating. The conditions which had grown out of the Great War had finally culminated in a breakdown of the economic system, at least to the extent of causing suffering and hardships for both the agrarian and the laboring classes. Both of the major political parties were too much concerned



with petty bickerings and the spoils of victory to invite the confidence of these classes.

In times of economic unrest there seems to be a tendency to look askance at the powers that be. When relief in some form is not forthcoming there is bound to be resentment and a feeling of being "sold out." The Farm Board in the Hoover administration urged a program that offered no immediate relief and the Farm Board's advice to the Kansas farmer to curtail his production, coming as it did after years of education urging intensified farming, appeared at least to be inconsistent.

The coal region found itself facing a continually diminishing market, while the railroad centers found themselves gradually becoming worse off with the failure of the railroads to become adjusted to changing conditions in the field of transportation. All of this was a fertile field for another great uprising.

When the medical board revoked the license of Dr. John R. Brinkley he found himself voicing a personal grievance. While it may not have been the grievance of those elements who were dissatisfied with the status quo it aroused their sympathy and when he offered himself as an agency through which their protest also could be voiced, they rallied to his banner.

Human nature seems ever inclined to sympathize with the under dog and our emotions rather than our judgement too often rule us. In holding himself up as one persecuted

Brinkley placed himself in kinship with those thousands who felt that they too were victims.

His platform, it is true, held out no hope for the settlement of the great economic and social problems of the State, but on the other hand neither did those of the two major parties to any great degree, and it is difficult to talk reasonably with a man whose mortgage is about to fall due or whose means of livelihood have been swept away.

Some of the proposals in his platform certainly could not have been accomplished without an increase in taxation, and that too in a State already suffering from its burden. His opposition to the graduated income tax was not in harmony with the forces of progressivism personified in the old Populist and Progressive parties. But his call was a call to action and his cause one for which to crusade. He did not create the conditions--he found them waiting and utilized them. John R. Brinkley was not the cause of this upheaval--he was but the agency through which it manifested its discontent.



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