A number of Kansas progressives played important roles in Theodore Roosevelt's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination in 1912. Governor Walter R. Stubbs and Congressman Victor Murdock spoke in support of the former president in several middle western states, spending considerable time in the important Ohio primary. William Allen White wrote magazine articles extolling the Colonel's virtues, while other less significant Kansans contributed everything they could to make Roosevelt the popular candidate. But the wide public appeal of Roosevelt was to prove of no avail. National conventions are not often guided by grass-roots sentiment, and in 1912 the entrenched party leaders spurned the mandate of Republican voters, as revealed in the presidential primaries, and renominated William Howard Taft.

In 1912, as in other years, the question of contested delegates played a significant part. This time Roosevelt failed in the struggle to secure seats for his followers. Before the Republican National Convention met at Chicago in mid June, Roosevelt's managers knew that with his contested delegates voting, he could be an easy winner. Without them, he was sure to lose. It fell to the national committee, which was controlled by Taft, to decide to whom the 254 challenged delegate seats belonged. There was never much doubt about how the committee would vote. Governor Stubbs, as a proxy, was included in the national committee meeting, which convened for this purpose on June 7. In almost every instance he and other
Roosevelt managers protested the committee’s decisions, but they were overruled. In all, Taft received 235 of the contested seats to Roosevelt’s 19.

Despite having lost before the national committee, Roosevelt would not concede defeat. When the convention opened on June 18, he tried to get the credentials committee to reverse the previous action. But the credentials committee upheld the earlier opinions, and when the conservative Elihu Root was elected temporary chairman, Roosevelt realized that he had lost. In the confusion after June 18, while Root and Taft were winning on the floor of the convention, other important developments were taking place.

The possibility that Roosevelt would lose had entered the minds of Kansas progressives at least a month earlier. Aware of the unrepresentative methods used to select convention delegates, they felt Roosevelt’s chances were definitely doubtful. If he were not nominated, they wondered what they should do. The idea of bolting the Republican party had crossed their minds, but almost all of them opposed this. Senator Joseph Bristow felt that public opinion would force the national committee to rule in Roosevelt’s behalf, but he also contemplated what might happen if the committee did not. He was against any suggestion of bolting, claiming that it was a device fashioned by regular Republicans to rid the party of its progressive element. Congressman Rollin Rees, who reluctantly switched to Roosevelt in June after working for Robert La Follette, was also against bolting. He said that he “preferred to stay with the old party” and “support its duly selected nominee.” He added that he believed that if Taft were nominated, it would be possible to campaign for state Republicans and still support some candidate for president other than the one chosen by the party. White, Arthur Capper, Stubbs, and Murdock also opposed the idea of bolting.

Their resolution was severely tested on June 17. During his first use of the famous Armageddon speech, Roosevelt stated that he would not be bound by the convention if certain contested delegates were to help organize it. This raised the possibility of a bolt. On June 21, when the credentials committee indicated that the Taft delegates would be seated, Roosevelt called leaders of his forces to his hotel, and there they agreed to quit the Republican convention the next day. On June 22, prior to the nomination of Taft, Henry Allen rose to explain why Roosevelt’s supporters could no longer take part in the proceedings. Amidst a tumult that drowned out his booming voice, Allen said: “We do not bolt, we merely insist that you, not we, are making the record, and we refuse to
be bound by it. . . . We fight no more, we plead no longer, we shall sit in silent protest and the people who sent us here shall judge." Ominously, a majority of the Roosevelt Republicans left the convention hall after Allen's speech. Afternoon newspapers carried stories about a rally, planned for that evening at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, where a new party would be formed. Roosevelt, the stories said, would be endorsed at that meeting. The bolt had taken place.³

It is fair to say that the majority of progressive Republicans in Kansas were sore at heart about what had happened. Pleas made by his political friends kept Stubbs from leaving Chicago on the day of the bolt. Capper and Harold Chase were beside themselves with anger, criticizing Roosevelt for not having compromised after his defeat. White, too, was against the formation of a third party, as was Senator Bristow. Among the eighteen-man Roosevelt delegation sent to Chicago by Kansas Republicans, only Allen, U. S. Sartin of Kansas City, and Harry Woods of Wellington favored the move. “Henry Allen,” wrote Jay House, “cried like a baby when the delegation voted not to bolt, and announced he would bolt alone.”⁴

There were other Kansas Republicans who were far from sorry about these developments. Charles Scott wrote on June 21, “Aren't things going beautifully in Chicago? I have been on a broad grin for two days. If only Stubbs and the rest of the Kansas bunch could be induced to follow T.R. off into the wilderness.” David Mulvane had already stated his views on the matter. “We can't elect Taft,” he said, “but we are going to hold on to this organization, and when we get back four years from now we will have it and those damned insurgents.”⁵

A number of Kansas progressives attended the Orchestra Hall meeting called by Roosevelt on June 22. It was with trepidation that they heard the Colonel call men of their faith to his banner. “Go to your several homes,” he said, “to find out the sentiment of the people at home, and then . . . come together . . . to nominate for the Presidency a Progressive candidate on a Progressive platform.” If the future convention desired, he would be available as that candidate.⁶ Kansas progressives desired, but they were not interested in a third party. Before Governor Stubbs had reached home, he was explaining that in Kansas, Roosevelt could remain in the Republican column and run as a Republican. Senator Bristow noted that leaders of the third party had promised that they would not oppose any Republican candidates who supported Roosevelt. There was one big problem. In every presidential election since 1864 the candidate chosen by the Republican National Convention had headed
the Republican ticket in Kansas, and Taft was the Republican nominee in 1912.7

The Progressive National Convention met on August 5 in Chicago. By that time, Kansans had created the semblance of a state Progressive party, although one had not been formally organized. William Allen White, one of the seventeen leaders who had signed the call for the national convention, controlled the Roosevelt organization in Kansas. He had been elected Republican national committeeman for Kansas, but had resigned to serve in a similar capacity for the new party. On July 7 his confederate Henry Allen had issued a call for delegates to the August meeting, and enough activity had developed to send a group headed by White and Allen to Chicago. Enthusiasm for the Progressive party was not great in Kansas, since, except for White and Allen, none of the major political leaders took part in it. The resolution to remain within the old party was firm, even though the commitment of key Republicans to Roosevelt's candidacy was complicating matters.8

The Kansas delegation was only moderately important at the Progressive national convention. Allen, who had been scheduled to make a seconding speech for Roosevelt at the Republican convention, did so this time; and the remainder of the group contributed to the revivallike atmosphere in Chicago's Coliseum. Their voices helped to raise the cry for "Battle Hymn, Battle Hymn." They bowed reverently while chanting the doxology at the end. A number of suggestions by White and by Bristow, who did not attend, were incorporated into the platform of the Progressive party. They encouraged the statement on the protective tariff. White also was a leader in the effort to withdraw a planned temperance plank, although he was theoretically a supporter of prohibition. Bristow sought a more moderate statement on the recall of judicial decisions than that voiced earlier by Roosevelt at Columbus, Ohio. The senator also favored a compromise position on the question of trusts. He noted that many progressives had been wanting a strong antitrust plank, but he suggested that Roosevelt and the new party endorse the idea of preserving competition where practical and that they "state that under modern conditions in many instances competition has been eliminated and cannot be successfully restored" even if it were desirable.9

White was instrumental in the struggle over the antitrust plank in the platform. George Perkins, the financial angel of Roosevelt's campaign in 1912, wanted a statement that would not place the Progressive party in opposition to business consolidation. Supposedly, White and other radical Progressives fought unsuccessfully, as things developed, for a
strong antitrust position. It was presumed that Perkins's activity in the affair had made White his avowed enemy, but such was not the case. After the national convention White nominated Perkins as chairman of the party's executive committee, and while the Emporian did state on numerous occasions that he was dubious about Perkins as a reformer, more often than not White spoke favorably of him.\textsuperscript{10}

The Progressive National Convention unanimously chose Roosevelt as its presidential candidate. It then named Governor Hiram Johnson of California as his running mate. Kansans left Chicago pleased with both choices and with the platform. According to White, the document included all the promises of David Lloyd George, Aristide Briand, Georges Clemenceau, the German liberals, and the Italian radicals, as well as the combined wisdom of Wisconsin, Kansas, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{11} His enthusiasm would have been less had he reflected for a moment about the agrarian ideas of his native state.

The Progressives' "Contract with the People" was designed largely to appeal to the so-called subdued masses, but few Kansas voters were included in this group. Moreover, the document was urban and industrial in its emphasis, and Kansas was 66 percent rural in population. Roosevelt, to be sure, was a knight in shining armor in the minds of many voters, but his sword of righteousness was blunted because of the wrong pattern in the Sunflower state. It did not augur well for his chances that a staunch Kansas Socialist should joyously describe the new movement as a "half-baked" kind of socialism. Even in a half-baked form the doctrines of Karl Marx were unpopular with most Kansans.\textsuperscript{12}

A month before Roosevelt was nominated by the Progressive party his presidential campaign had begun in Kansas. Like leaders of the party in other progressive-Republican states, Kansas leaders planned to place his name at the head of the Republican ticket in the November election. A number of Republican voters indicated that they agreed with this idea, since it would not necessitate the formation of a third party. Stubbs, Bristow, Murdock, and White all concurred. Roosevelt, too, approved of the plan, having wired the governor on July 3 that he was pleased with the way that Kansas Republicans were standing by progressivism. The rationale for putting Roosevelt's name in the old party slot was that Taft, through "corrupted" means, had "stolen" the nomination; thus, in states where Roosevelt had been endorsed, the only honest action was to keep his name in the Republican column.\textsuperscript{13}

Not all Republicans agreed with this simplistic notion. Former National Committeeman Mulvane, upon returning from Chicago, was informed
of the coup that was under way, and he prepared to block it. Because a number of electors chosen before the Chicago convention had publicly announced that they would vote for Roosevelt, Mulvane filed a new list of names with Secretary of State Charles Sessions. These men were bona-fide Taft supporters, and Mulvane asked that their names be printed on the Republican ballot in place of the old Roosevelt electors. Sessions, aware that the Progressives would fight any attempt by him to remove the old list, did nothing at first. He was a regular Republican, but he was standing for renomination in August, and he wanted both factions of the party to support him at the primaries.

Hoping to satisfy both sides, he figured a way out of his dilemma. County clerks, rather than the secretary of state, determined the final form of the primary ballots. He could send both lists of electors to the counties, thus letting the clerks decide. In the second week of July he carried out his plan, which favored the Progressives. Most county officers were supporters of Roosevelt, and since Roosevelt state headquarters informed them that the primary was to be used to determine who would head the Republican ticket, chances were nearly certain that the two sets of electors would be printed in most of the hundred and five counties.

But Dave Mulvane was not defeated. On July 17 his attorneys secured a temporary injunction from Judge C. E. Branine of the Harvey County District Court, restraining county clerks from putting the Roosevelt electors on the Republican ballot. Because two of the old electors had indicated that they would vote for Taft, Judge Branine’s order dealt with only the eight remaining Rooseveltians. On July 18 Attorney General John Dawson, acting on an order from Governor Stubbs, filed for a writ of mandamus from the state supreme court that would compel county clerks to include the eight Roosevelt electors on the Republican primary ticket. He asked the court to assume jurisdiction over Branine’s injunction.14

The supreme court heard arguments on the request on July 22. The Roosevelt presentation was handled by a former standpatter, Frank Martin, the recently defeated candidate of the Seventh Congressional District, while Chester Long managed the defense for the regular Republicans. United States Marshal John Harrison has left a brief account of the hearing. For once, the chambers of the Court were overrun with spectators, but they were of the sort who voted for Topeka’s regular-Republican organization. Harrison wrote that Martin was magnificent in arguing for the writ, although the audience thought otherwise. Long made an impassioned plea for upholding the injunction. He compared
the Republican party to the Methodist Church, likening the power of
the National Convention to that of the Methodists' National Conference.
His argument was popular, Harrison added, but "it convinced me the
court would decide against him." The court did. The justices refused
to involve themselves in a "political matter," and they suggested that the
district court lift the injunction. The next day Branine removed the
temporary restraining order and denied the regulars' request for a perma-
nent injunction. 16

Mulvane and Long quickly appealed again to the Kansas Supreme
Court. On July 27 the state tribunal refused to hear the appeal. 16 Claim-
ing that a federal question was involved, the Taft supporters sought a
writ of errors from the United States Supreme Court. In a special hearing
in New York City on August 1 Justices Mahlon Pitney and Willis Van
Devanter, Taft appointees, upheld the writ but decided that both sets
of electors should be printed on the Republican primary ballot. They
indicated that a full review of the obligation of state parties to respect
the proceedings of national nominating conventions would be made
when the High Court reconvened in October. The Kansas cases had
been given nationwide attention, and they had become intermixed with
similar problems in Iowa and Pennsylvania. Before further legal action
took place, however, the state primaries were held on August 6. 17

Even in the days of populism, Kansas had not witnessed an election
whose final outcome depended on a judicial decision instead of votes.
In spite of statements made by regular Republicans that they were not
working to nominate the Taft electors, since they deserved to be on the
Republican ballot anyway, their election preparations were carried on
in the usual manner. The Taft-Roosevelt question was not the only
issue at stake in the primary. Arthur Capper was opposing Frank Ryan
of Leavenworth for the gubernatorial nomination, and in a much more
hotly contested election, Stubbs was seeking Charles Curtis's Senate seat.

There was never too much doubt about a Capper victory. The pub-
lisher was not yet the veteran campaigner who would command the
Kansas vote better than anyone else, but he was a better vote-getter than
his opponent, and he had a statewide reputation. His candidacy was
hurt somewhat by the Republican split, but he stood by Roosevelt and
seemed to be a sure winner. Ryan, who was a member of the Kansas
Railroad Commission, was brought into the race by Congressman Dan
Anthony in order to keep Capper from concentrating the power of his
newspapers on the primary in the First Congressional District. Anthony
was being opposed by a popular district judge, William I. Stuart of Troy,
and he feared the effect of an all-out effort against him by the *Topeka Daily Capital* and other Capper publications. Although Ryan had little chance of being elected, his presence did keep Capper neutral in the district. Both Stuart and Anthony, who had voted and acted with the congressional progressives in 1911, claimed to be reformers, but Anthony supported Taft. Nevertheless, he won by a small number of votes.  

The most important race in August, other than the contest over electors, was that between Stubbs and Curtis. Since 1908 it had been apparent that they would clash in 1912. Curtis had tried to avoid the inevitable by attempting to defeat Stubbs in the 1910 gubernatorial primary. From then on, unkind words passed repeatedly between them. In 1912, however, Curtis was involved in Senate affairs until late July and thus was unable to campaign effectively. He entrusted his campaign for renomination to Albaugh and Long, as well as to federal officeholders that he had recommended. The campaign that they conducted left much to be desired. Rather than taking a positive stand, they directed their literature and speeches at Stubbs’s activities. Curtis had remained loyal to the presidential choice of the National Convention; his regularity was stressed as the reason why he should win the party renomination. The brunt of his campaign centered on Stubbs’s extravagances as governor and upon his role as a party wrecker. The old charges of increased taxes were renewed, and Stubbs’s position on the inheritance tax and the income tax was attacked. “Governor Stubbs,” one Curtis supporter stated, “says he wants to go to the Senate to work for an income tax. This will tax the income of every farmer and every property owner of Kansas. It will add to the present burden.”

Stubbs, while staunchly supporting Roosevelt, used the income tax in addition to his accomplishments as governor as the basis for his personal platform in the primary. He felt that he had to refute charges that he was a radical and that his reforms were costing undue amounts of money. He maintained that the changes that he had brought about were business-like reforms, designed to secure continued prosperity. One campaign circular, reused in the general election, illustrated Stubbs’s fear of losing the support of small-town merchants who had hitherto automatically voted for him. “As a large employer of labor, . . . as a man of wide business experience, as a contractor, as a banker, as a farmer,” the circular read, “Governor Stubbs will approach the business of changing conditions with first hand knowledge of business conditions.” He understood the “needs of business, because his life has been spent in business and not in politics.” For the first time in his career, the governor was en-
dorsed by organized labor, with Sim Bramlette, head of the Kansas Federation of Labor, and E. L. Blomberg, of the powerful railroad brotherhoods, supporting him.  

Despite an extensive campaign, Stubbs failed to win the popular vote in 1912, but an unusual method of counting primary returns by legislative districts gave him the election. He received 1,216 fewer votes than Curtis—48.9 percent of the total, in comparison to Curtis’s 51.1 percent; but he carried 71 of the 105 counties. His greatest strength was again in mid central and western Kansas, although Wyandotte and Sedgwick counties returned slight margins for him. Curtis’s victories were mostly in the northeast and southeast, where he registered majorities of from 60 to 70 percent in 12 of 25 counties; winning 14 in all. When this campaign was compared to the senatorial race in 1908, one fact became obvious. Regular Republicanism, more than ever, was located in the populous eastern areas, while the farmers in the western part were more strongly committed to progressivism. In 1908 Long had carried 22 western counties; here Curtis won only 9.

In the presidential vote, the Roosevelt electors won easily. Samuel A. Davies, a Roosevelt supporter, polled 76,610, for the highest total among the eight men committed to the former president, while John Gilmore topped the electors who were unquestionably committed to Taft with 41,565. The largest number of votes was cast for B. F. Blaker, a Taft elector who had been previously considered to be a Roosevelt supporter. Blaker was one of the original group of electors, but on July 29 he announced his intention of voting for Taft. Accidentally, White had included Blaker’s name in the instructions that he had circulated concerning Republican electors, and White could not effectively change Blaker’s pro-Roosevelt designation. Discounting the votes for Blaker, Roosevelt electors carried 101 of the 105 counties, losing only in Allen, Cherokee, Jefferson, and Leavenworth.

Roosevelt’s victory in the primary was a personal triumph for White. With the help of Earl Akers, a state employee and the Republican candidate for state treasurer, White had solicited funds, scheduled speakers, distributed campaign literature, and found time to write articles that were distributed to Kansas newspapers in July and August. His political effort, however, had just begun. Roosevelt’s success caused another series of court actions, as well as an important protest about the Progressives’ theft of the Republican column. It took considerable effort on White’s part to organize his party’s defense on these counts. White also had to prepare for the general election, in which three major presidential
candidates in addition to state nominees were involved. In all, he was extremely busy from August to November.

The organizational structure that White used in the primary was the one that Henry Allen had created before the State Convention in May. By establishing local Roosevelt clubs during April, Allen had won every congressional district for Roosevelt except the First, and he had carried the State Convention for him on May 8. Allen had been aided by White and Ralph Harris of Ottawa. The Roosevelt clubs did not fall into disuse after the State Convention but were converted by Akers into the nucleus of a progressive-Republican group. Akers continued to add the names of sympathetic Republicans to the rolls of the clubs, hoping by June to have ten men in each county ready to support the Progressive cause. When the decision to bolt was made, White assumed control of Akers's work, and with the approval of Stubbs, White kept Akers on the job. The main headquarters of the movement was transferred to Emporia, but a subheadquarters was kept in Topeka.²²

Prior to the primary, White used this organization to accomplish two tasks: he labored to increase voter support for the Roosevelt electors, and he instructed potential voters on how to mark their ballots. To accomplish the first he brought national figures such as James R. Garfield, Gifford Pinchot, Moses Clapp, and Hiram Johnson to the state. He also used Stubbs, Murdock, and Jackson to campaign for the former president. During July, he complained in pamphlets and news articles about Taft's "stolen nomination." In mid July, to insure that voters who favored Roosevelt would mark their ballots properly, he published lists of Roosevelt electors through paid advertisements in state newspapers, and he sent form letters to nearly every registered Republican. Replies to White's letters indicated that the idea of the "stolen nomination" carried the state for Roosevelt. White's argument was a rather twisted one, linking the theft to greedy corporations. By stealing the nomination, these avaricious corporations had stolen the presidency and the national party. The only way to redeem these institutions was by defeating Taft in August and then electing Roosevelt in November. After August 6 it appeared that perhaps this would be done.²³

But regulars would not allow the decision of the voters to go unchallenged. Fred Stanley, who succeeded White as Republican national committeeman, continued to assert that the Roosevelt electors had no place on the primary ballot, and after the primary, he demanded that they be removed in favor of Taft. Regular Republicans began to charge that the real theft was being carried on by White in Kansas. Taft may
have "stolen" the nomination, as Roosevelt claimed, but his theft was hidden from the voters. The taking of the Republican column and the Republican emblem by Roosevelt was obvious to everyone. More and more the question was being asked, Who is guilty of violating the slogan of the Progressive party, "Thou Shalt Not Steal"?

On August 7 the regular Republicans reopened legal proceedings against the Rooseveltians by appealing to the state supreme court in regard to its earlier opinion and by initiating actions once more in the state district courts. They received an injunction restraining the printing of the November ballots, and they were involved in a suit before a federal district court when a nonjudicial decision gave them what they sought. On September 21 Secretary Sessions, with the acquiescence of White, ordered that the Taft electors be placed in the Republican column.

White's resolution to continue Roosevelt's name under the Republican emblem had diminished rapidly after late August. Only Roosevelt's desire to remain under the old party banner kept White from switching the Colonel's electors to an independent column. White became increasingly discouraged by the entire affair. He was certain that Republican charges of "party stealing" would hurt Roosevelt at the general election. He could think of no way to offset this complaint, and he believed that only by relinquishing the column could the Progressive campaign be free of this distasteful issue. He was also swayed by the possibility that the federal courts would order that the Roosevelt electors be removed from the Republican ballot. According to White, if this were to happen after mid September, it would be impossible to include Roosevelt on the ballot. The regulars seemed to be willing to have their man eliminated from the ticket if they lost in the courts; but White, believing that Roosevelt could carry Kansas, was not. He could hardly prepare for having the Roosevelt electors in a separate column while still claiming that they belonged in the Republican column.

By September it was apparent that Sessions would order Taft's name placed at the head of the Republican column no matter what happened. This, then, would mean that court action would be needed in order to stop the secretary of state. It would leave things undecided until just prior to the election. Then, too, pressure from Republican candidates who were lower on the ticket became intense. That the regulars planned to oppose Stubbs was common knowledge, but they had not threatened to vote against every progressive Republican on the ticket. They began to hint that they would do so if Taft electors were not given their proper place.
An epic struggle had already occurred over the ballot question. Considerable resentment had resulted from actions in August. The state committee, for example, had met to demand that the names of the Roosevelt electors be removed from the ballot, but on the same day the party council had voted to retain them. The votes, however, indicated that many progressive Republicans were discouraged by developments. Sixteen reformers voted with regular Republicans at the committee meeting. At the party council, hitherto a progressive stronghold, 62 of the 142 members present favored removal of the Roosevelt electors. White, not relishing his uncomfortable position, tried to have Stubbs call the legislature into session to settle the matter. Stubbs refused to do so.

During the first week of September, then, White began to indicate privately that he was ready to compromise on the problem. He had previously claimed that Kansas law made it impossible for Roosevelt's name to appear safely on the ballot, since all sorts of cranks could be included along with the set of Roosevelt electors in an independent area of the ballot. Regulars, especially Sessions, were anxious to assure him that this would not happen. They promised that Roosevelt would be given a separate column in which the names of no other candidates would be placed. Roosevelt had insisted all along that he remain in the Republican column, but White, who understood the local situation better, could not do his leader's bidding.

White's first meaningful step towards compromise came on September 7, when he wrote to Mort Albaugh, suggesting a number of alternatives with regard to the electors. He asked whether or not the regulars were willing to split the Republican column five and five with Roosevelt. If this were unacceptable, he wondered if they would leave the Republican column blank, running Taft and Roosevelt electors in separate columns. Taft's supporters, acting under instructions from the president, were not willing to compromise.

For another week White refrained from withdrawing the Roosevelt group. He indicated that he felt that a withdrawal was imminent and that it would be done with the assurance that Roosevelt would have a protected independent column. Then, on September 18, he yielded. He formally withdrew the Roosevelt electors, and on September 24 he replaced them with ten members of the Progressive party in a separate column. At last Roosevelt was to be the standard-bearer of the Progressive party in Kansas. Chester Long, who had helped to prepare the Republican court cases, rejoiced. His happiness was not due to an expected victory for Taft, but rather because he believed that Roosevelt

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would lose the state under these circumstances. "It is gratifying," he wrote, "to know that Roosevelt is out of the Republican party at last." He anticipated a Democratic victory.27

Predictions that the Democrats would win in 1912 had been current for two years in Kansas, but after Woodrow Wilson’s nomination for president in early July, they increased. On a number of occasions White himself predicted as much, but he said at other times that Roosevelt would win. He recognized in Wilson the main opponent of the Progressive party, and for this reason he had been particularly disturbed by the struggle over electors. Having resolved this problem, he could begin to concentrate on the general-election campaign. Roosevelt, who had broken a promise to tour Kansas in July, arrived in late September, speaking in eastern Kansas for two days. Bristow also took to the hustings for the Colonel in September. He was unenthusiastic about his role, but he decided not to forsake his friends. Victor Murdock, seeking reelection, also helped out. But in the remaining congressional areas, progressive-Republican candidates were less responsive. To substitute for local talent, national Progressives, including Jane Addams of Hull House, former Senator Beveridge, and Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, were used until October 8. After that date the Progressives’ speakers bureau in Chicago refused to send other leaders to Kansas.28

Speaking tours were not the main things emphasized in Kansas. The only address that seems to have made any impression was Roosevelt’s Milwaukee speech, when an attempt to assassinate the Colonel failed. After this incident, White wrote a letter to Roosevelt, saying that sentiment had switched wholeheartedly to him and emphasizing that there was now "a big, beautiful, generous, expansive feeling for you."29 The major effort in support of Roosevelt came in newspaper articles, letters, and pamphlets that were mailed across the state.

Earl Akers, who did yeoman’s work until the primaries, resigned in mid August to supervise his own campaign. To replace Akers, White used an employee of the Gazette, David Hinshaw. It was Hinshaw who amassed a list of 300,000 names before the general election and who inundated the voters with literature supporting Roosevelt and with instructions on how to split their ballots. Since Roosevelt electors were listed in one column and progressive Republicans in another, this seemed crucial. Upon entering the campaign, Hinshaw was shocked by the "horrible" condition of mailing lists, and he quickly set about requesting names from every precinct in the state. He was equally discouraged by the state that existing Roosevelt clubs were in, and he discarded them
as being ineffective. He helped to organize the Negro vote, the Jewish vote, and the "college boy" vote, although he doubted their importance. He helped White solicit for money, and he also wrote form letters and newspaper copy.

Among the many pitfalls in the campaign for Roosevelt, finances were an urgent problem. White had had a difficult time raising funds for the primary, but after August his task was doubly hard. He refused to take money from national headquarters because of George Perkins's connection with the campaign treasury. He summoned large contributions from Capper, Stubbs, and other relatively well-to-do men, but his main source, as he later said, was the common man. He received letters from "hundreds enclosing dollars and fifty cents and twenty-five cents in stamps."30

Where finances were concerned, Roosevelt's candidacy in Kansas certainly took on the appearance of a people's crusade. "I am an old Methodist preacher and a Civil War veteran," wrote one contributor, "but I will gladly [give] . . . one dollar per month till election time for the support of the progressive cause." This performance was repeated endlessly. Nevertheless, in early October, White and Hinshaw felt that the campaign was faltering from lack of funds. They launched a "corps of solicitors" to raise money; with the help of these funds, as well as money diverted from what was owed to the national party, they broke even. White could not afford to pay for the usual poll workers on election day, but he secured enough canvassers by enrolling people in the "Kansas Corporation of Good Government" as recompense for their helping out. In all, it cost about $8,000 for Roosevelt to lose the Sunflower State in 1912, but this did not include the endless hours that White, Hinshaw, and people at the Emporia Gazette spent on the struggle.31

While Roosevelt's friends worked feverishly for him in Kansas, both Democrats and Republicans were busy trying to offset their efforts. The campaign for Taft was never impressive, since the major efforts of regular Republicans were devoted to defeating Stubbs and Capper. Some did take time to write letters to White, criticizing the Emporian and thus, indirectly, the Colonel. Midway through the race F. Dumont Smith, for example, fired off a letter to White in which he contended that Taft was responsible for the current prosperity in the country and that Roosevelt's campaign would upset it. He suggested that when White sent forth instructions to voters on splitting their ballots, he should also include a list of prices for horses, cattle, hogs, wheat, and so forth, for 1912 and 1893. In this way, voters would be able to appreciate Taft's greatness.32

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Another Republican answered a plea from White by declaring that he “respected good Socialists and Democrats” but had no use for “traitors.” “I beg to advise,” he added, “there is nothing doing here for T.R. or his kind of mice.” There was a crueler description of Roosevelt and the Progressives in the offing. One irate citizen described the movement as follows: “A freak party headed by a selfish and insincere egotist, a man of infinite inconsistencies, a habitual liar, a modern Jehu, backed up by rich blackmailers, manipulators, swindlers, . . . [and] cranks.” Another one thought it best to attack the real culprit, “Bill Allen White, the new boss of Kansas Republicanism.” “He . . . has undertaken to fix the standard,” this critic wrote. “No man is a progressive Republican unless he thinks just as White does, or agrees to do as White does.”

But White was not the real issue in the election. A more damaging charge was raised by Charles Gleed, although it was more effectively used by Democrats and other opponents of the Progressive party. Gleed asserted that the Progressive party, with a membership that included William Rockhill Nelson, Stubbs, Perkins, Medill McCormick, and William Flinn, could hardly claim to be the party of the poor or claim to be untainted by wealthy connections. The Democrats hammered away on this count. Statements of the Progressive party about the need to curb great wealth were hollow, wrote the state’s Democratic national committeeman, Colonel Bill Sapp. In a letter to White he added:

If I am correctly informed, you have J. Pierpont Morgan who through his leading satellite, Mr. Perkins, is financing the Roosevelt campaign, and Perkins means the United States Steel crowd; the Wall Street money trust; the tobacco trust; the Standard Oil Crowd; and their kindred interests that have dominated this government for a quarter of a century. The real truth is, you, representing Mr. Roosevelt, are not fighting for the people any more than Mr. Stanley representing Mr. Taft is fighting for the people. You both represent enormous wealth.

Sapp’s explanation hurt. Kansas Progressives were unable to answer him satisfactorily.

Difficulties caused by Perkins’s presence in the party were burdensome, but they were not nearly as important as the nomination of Woodrow Wilson. For a year, progressive-Republican newspapers had been extolling Wilson’s virtues and describing his triumphs in New Jersey. As fate would have it, after a hard-fought convention in July, Wilson was nominated by the Democrats as their presidential candidate, and their choice of him did not splinter the Democratic party.
After the Progressive bolt, White and his Kansas supporters had hoped to woo Democrats to Roosevelt's banner. In the past they had always asked Democrats to vote against party regulars and to vote for progressive Republicans. Now their position was complicated by the fact that the Democrats had a progressive of their own to vote for. What could Rooseveltians do? White had the answer, but it was not a very convincing one. He said that just as the nomination of Taft had not represented the true sentiment at Chicago, the nomination of Wilson had not been the result of the true feeling at Baltimore. Wilson, to be sure, was a progressive, but his party was the stronghold of reactionaries from the South and corrupt politicians from New York. Even if Wilson were elected, he would not be able to work with his party, because they were ideologically miles apart. It would be better, he concluded, to elect Roosevelt, who could function with the progressive element that dominated Republicanism. There was a monstrous flaw in his logic. If the Republican party was progressive, why was Taft its nominee? Having read earlier descriptions of Taft that White had written, Colonel Sapp decided that instead of the Democrats joining the Progressives, these former Republicans should come over to the really advanced party. “Get out of that old bunch,” he told White, “and get on the side of the people!”

Wilson’s candidacy was disturbing not only because of his reputation, which was problem enough, but also because of his “New Freedom” platform. The Progressives’ “Contract with the People” was an advanced reform document dealing with what were essentially urban problems. The Democrats, on the other hand, because of William Jennings Bryan’s influence and because of Wilson’s predilections, wrote a traditional, rural-oriented reform platform.

On one issue Roosevelt was particularly vulnerable in Kansas, and to make matters worse, his supporters created another for him. Roosevelt opposed broad antitrust actions, favoring rather the regulation of monopolies. During his September speaking tour he explained his position in favor of a federal commission to control business and to channel bigness into constructive lines. Bigness itself was not a crime; the crime was in how great wealth was used. If it was properly regulated, it could be made into a positive force. Two weeks after Roosevelt’s visit, Bryan and Wilson came into the state and spoke exclusively about antitrust laws and the “mother-of-the-trusts,” the tariff. They attacked Roosevelt’s idea of regulation with an old Kansas progressive cry of “Who would regulate the regulator?” and they asked Kansas voters to support a man who

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would increase the power of the federal government not in order to encourage monopolies but in order to dissolve them.

Wilson spoke in favor of a lower tariff that would give farmers a fair opportunity to buy as well as sell on an international market. Everyone knew, he stated, that the tariff helped to foster trusts by making high prices possible. If trusts were to be effectively broken, this action had to be accompanied by lower tariffs or free trade. But the local Progressives mistakenly attacked his assertion. The tariff, they argued, was not related to the trust question, nor could it solve this problem. Protection benefited the working man by insuring his wages. Because of this, they could not simply be lowered; they had to be studied by experts. Only after a tariff board had made recommendations could revisions be undertaken. Statements such as these coming from Kansas Progressives seemed unusual and particularly disquieting. Two years earlier, progressive Republicans had promoted lower tariffs and better antitrust laws for exactly the same reasons that Wilson now offered. The thought that perhaps Perkins and the J. P. Morgan money trust had seduced the state leaders of the party undoubtedly crossed the minds of many Kansas voters.37

However, when prices were high and crops were good, issues were never exceptionally important factors in Kansas' general elections, and 1912 was not greatly different. In prosperous years, party designation was the all-powerful force. Thus, the decision in November, as in the past, turned not on Wilson's views on the tariff and Roosevelt's position on the trusts but rather on party loyalties. Roosevelt lost Kansas in 1912 because many Republicans refused to desert the party of their fathers for a new political organization. Since only a few Democrats failed to support their party's nominee, Roosevelt fell roughly 26,000 Republican votes short of what was needed to win. Many of the 75,000 Republicans who voted for Taft in the election had favored Roosevelt before the Chicago convention. The split had tested their fundamental reason for being members of the Republican party, and this "unthinking electorate," as White called it, would not leave the old party ranks. A Democratic candidate with less to offer than Wilson would probably have been unable to keep the allegiance of his party. Alton B. Parker had not done so in 1904 against the Colonel. But where Parker failed, Wilson succeeded. His totals in Kansas indicate that he lost only 3 percent of the Democratic vote that had been given to Bryan in 1908. In 1912 Wilson received 143,795 votes, approximately twice as many as Taft and about 26,000 more than Roosevelt.
Considering that Roosevelt represented a new party, his returns were not completely disheartening. In 89 of the state's 105 counties he was either first or second in total votes. He carried a number of counties in southwestern Kansas, as well as Wyandotte and Sedgwick counties. Despite his appeal in urban areas, he lost Wichita, Kansas City, and Topeka, in addition to the semi-industrial southeastern corner. He ran second to Wilson in the three cities, and he trailed the Socialist candidate, Eugene V. Debs, in the southeast. Because his name appeared at the head of the Progressives' column, Roosevelt ran well behind Stubbs and Capper, who had supported him, but whose names appeared in the Republican column. Party loyalties were the major reason for Roosevelt's defeat, but party sentiment was not strong enough for Stubbs and Capper to win.38

Regular-Republican opposition to Stubbs and Capper was too strong to be swayed by party feeling. At the time of the state committee and council meetings on August 27, a number of regularlys formed a Taft Republican League in Topeka. It was designed to promote the candidacies of Taft Republicans and to "defeat every candidate on the Republican ticket who is lined up for Roosevelt." A week earlier the State Republican League was organized for the purpose of defeating Stubbs and Capper. Former Boss-Busters such as Patrick Henry Coney, Al Williams, David Mulvane, and Charles Curtis organized these groups.

At first only Stubbs and Capper were designated as Republicans who should be defeated, but later the names of some congressional nominees were added. The meetings of these organizations were not kept secret, and the enthusiasm of each group was comparable to the revivalistic atmosphere that accompanied the formation of the Progressive party in August at Chicago. When the State Republican League was founded, the Reverend John Bright of Topeka led the regularlys in singing an 1896 campaign song, "It's the Old Time Party and It's Good Enough for Me." Resolutions were adopted unanimously at this meeting, and according to one reporter, every speech was aimed at "roasting" Roosevelt and "drawing and quartering" Stubbs. By late August the Taft League claimed that ninety-five counties were organized against the progressive Republicans.39

It was no surprise, then, that Stubbs was roundly beaten in 1912. For one thing, Curtis campaigned actively against him. The senator had been unable to stump Kansas prior to the primary, but he made up for his absence after he had lost that election. In typical Curtis fashion he campaigned with half-truths and exaggerations. He concentrated on
Stubbs’s reluctance to support women’s rights and on the traditional charge of his lack of economy. He justified his actions on the grounds that Stubbs was no Republican because he was not supporting Taft, but Curtis’s real reasons were to get revenge and to prepare for the future. Stubbs had been the biggest problem within the party for a politician of Curtis’s style, and Stubbs could be eliminated politically in 1912.

The Republican League circulated pamphlets describing traitors to party fidelity, and it always insisted that Stubbs was the head of this immoral conspiracy. It worked closely with Henderson Martin, the Democratic campaign chairman, supplying him with literature and information designed to damage the governor’s chances for election to the Senate. But fate had an even more unexpected reversal in store for Stubbs. He had hoped that his opponent in the general election would be the conservative Democrat Hugh Farrelley, but at the August primaries the Democrats chose Judge William Thompson of Garden City. The Judge was relatively unknown over the state, but he was considered a Wilsonian progressive and a devotee of reform. Thus, much like Roosevelt, Stubbs seemed to have little or no chance of picking up desperately needed Democratic votes.

Stubbs, however, made his usual strong campaign, and in spite of Thompson’s reputation, he tried to win Democratic support. There were the normal complaints from White that Stubbs was concentrating too much on his past record and too little on national issues. But in his speeches the governor discussed the income tax, a federal inheritance tax, the direct election of senators, workmen’s compensation, child-labor laws, and so forth. Although it was unwise of him to champion national prohibition in eastern Kansas, he courageously advocated it anyway in the “whiskey counties.”

His pamphlet literature, while of a much more general nature than his speeches, indicated that he continued to worry about the support of businessmen. His reputation as a radical bothered him, and he tried to show that as a business leader himself, he would look after business interests best. Once again Stubbs was endorsed by labor organizations, with Sim Bramlette “acknowledging the many courtesies and kindly interests shown by Governor Stubbs towards labor in the past.” In his bid for Democratic votes, Stubbs used the Republican split to advantage. Arguing that the old-guard Republicans were helping the Democratic candidate, he asked all loyal progressives of both parties to put their “shoulders to the wheel” in the last final charge against “corrupt rule.”
"Let us not drop from the ranks," he urged, "but lead on the final victory."

Stubbs got few if any Democratic votes. He received thirty thousand more votes than Roosevelt, but twenty thousand fewer than Thompson. He carried only thirty-one counties and lost a majority of the all-important legislative districts. His strength, as before, was in western Kansas, but he lost numerous votes there and in other areas because of the split. Actually, fewer Kansans voted in 1912 than in 1908. In the 1908 gubernatorial election roughly ten thousand more votes were cast than in the senatorial contest in 1912. The same was true in the presidential race. In the gubernatorial election itself, fifteen thousand fewer ballots were registered. It appears that apathy had nothing to do with the 1912 election; instead, a number of Republicans chose to stay home. Roosevelt's candidacy injured Stubbs's chance for election everywhere except in Harvey County. He carried this previously Democratic stronghold by a slight margin in 1912.

Of the major political contestants in 1912, Arthur Capper made the strongest showing among Progressives and progressive Republicans. In his first attempt to become governor of Kansas he lost by just twenty-nine votes. Capper, who sacrificed his credentials as a harmony candidate by endorsing Roosevelt, faced the popular Democrat George Hodges in the race. From 1911 onward, the Democrats had shown unusual interest in the contest for governor, sensing that 1912 would be their year. A few had tried to clear the way for Hodges by keeping him free of a primary fight in August. But Democrats also had intraparty problems. Colonel Sapp and J. B. Billard of Topeka did not like Hodges's views on woman suffrage and prohibition. Hodges supported both reforms, while Sapp and Billard were wet and antisuffrage.

Knowing that their party might win the governor's chair, they shuddered to think that a Democrat could be in a position to advocate such "damn foolishness" as women voters and temperance. To avoid such a result, Billard was encouraged by Sapp and other Democrats to seek the party nomination. Billard was strong in the German beer-drinking communities of western Kansas. He was, of course, popular in the "whiskey counties," and he had large followings in Kansas City and Wichita. For some his candidacy represented Kansas' last chance to keep free of "manifold attempts . . . by a few all too ambitious women to foist electoral duties upon their sex." "If this is accepted," wrote a worried Democrat, "it will prove . . . disastrous to the entire population . . . and bring about many other evil results too numerous to men-

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tion." One thirsty Wichita citizen stated that Billard was the last hope for defeating "the whole bunch of hypocritical grafters" in this town. But the last stand of "sanity," as one voter called it, failed in August. Hodges defeated Billard by nine thousand votes, amassing a total of 57 percent of the Democratic ballots.

After Billard was defeated in the primary, the Democrats closed ranks, partly because they wanted to obtain office and partly because Capper was a more determined advocate of prohibition and woman suffrage than was Hodges. Capper's campaign, however, rather than illustrating great devotion to reform, indicated why he was considered a moderate by many and a conservative by others. His speeches and his pamphlet literature did contain some amount of progressivism, and he was a resolute champion of Roosevelt, but there was much in his utterances that the next generation of Muckrakers would consider Republican conservatism. At Coffeyville, during his campaign, Capper stated, "I can only say to you that I stand pledged to a BUSINESS administration—and by that I mean an administration that will look after the business of the STATE, first, last and all the time." He continued: "I think the people of Kansas should regard their state government as a great big corporation, in which every citizen is an equal stockholder. Your chief executive is the man whom you choose to manage the business of this corporation, with fairness and justice to every stockholder." He promised economy, good roads, and a progressive-Republican party; and he stood staunchly behind the church, labor unions, and the G.A.R. His personal approach was magnificent. To voters he wrote: "I thought it best to write now to say I would like very much to count you one of my friends, and if you will speak to a few of your friends in my behalf it will be of great assistance." It is doubtful that he intended not to count anyone as his friend.

Capper correctly assumed some responsibility for the progressive achievements in Kansas from 1906 onward, and he told voters that he had long led in "the great battle for clearing out the wrong and purging out the evil . . . in all departments of our state and national activity." After the formation of the Progressive party, he made it clear to voters that he intended to remain a Republican even though he supported Roosevelt. He could support the Colonel because "highway robbery" had been used by the national committee to nominate Taft, and thus it was all right to vote for Roosevelt. But the voter needed to remember that Capper had "always been a Republican, . . . always supported the Republican ticket, and . . . expected to remain a Republican." He would
accept the “support of every good citizen,” he said, “I will make no brassband campaign . . . [but] shall go before the people with nothing more than a plain, straightforward platform of the things I believe my business experience equips me to do.”

He did not make a “brass band campaign,” but his friends, and perhaps he, slung mud pretty hard at Hodges. Towards the end of the struggle, the Hodges Brothers Lumber Company was excoriated for its activities as part of the lumber trust. Hodges answered in kind. He renewed the charges against Capper for printing indecent literature, and he stressed the publisher’s connection with mail-order houses, the enemies of small-town businesses. Hodges’s campaign was far from negative. He spoke in favor of lower tariffs, antitrust laws, economy in government, decreases in state taxes, and the entire run of progressive legislative and political reforms, such as the initiative, referendum, and recall. He emphasized his moderate wealth in contrast to Capper’s riches. At Pittsburg, he said: “I don’t want to be elected because of the demerits of the Republican party and its split. I want to be elected on my own merits.” He accepted his victory graciously, nevertheless.

After the general election on November 5 there was still considerable doubt concerning the outcome of the Capper-Hodges race. At first the Topeka Daily Capital announced a Capper victory, and not until November 12 did it report that the publisher had lost to Hodges. Later it again claimed a victory for Capper, but when the official returns were made available in December, Hodges had received twenty-nine more votes than the Topekan. Because improperly marked ballots were cavalierly discarded in Wabaunsee County, Capper contested the election commission’s report in a state district court; but though the tribunal held in his favor, it refused to order the commission to reconvene and recount the ballots. Capper could have appealed to the Kansas Senate for a full review, but since Democrats had captured the legislature as well, he felt that it was useless to do so. If the returns reported by the secretary of state were correct, Capper received 167,408 votes and Hodges received 167,437. There was .008 of one percent separating the two candidates. Capper carried sixty-two counties, while Hodges won only forty-three, but Hodges’s counties were in the populous eastern part of the state. Like other progressive-Republican candidates, Capper was strongest in western Kansas.

In the congressional elections, Democrats won five of the eight seats, losing to regular Republicans Daniel Anthony and Phil Campbell in the First and Third districts, respectively, and to the popular progressive
Victor Murdock in the Eighth. The Republican split caused the defeat of five progressive-Republican candidates, three of whom were nominated for the first time at the 1910 primaries. The Democrats also won a majority of seats in the state legislature, but in contests for minor offices, Republicans were returned to offices from the secretary of state down. By comparing the county returns of the Republican candidate for secretary of state to those of Stubbs and the five defeated Republican congressional candidates, it becomes obvious that the secretary received in most instances from 5 to 8 percent more votes than these candidates. While there is no way of determining whether 5 to 8 percent of the voters who supported the secretary of state refused to vote for Stubbs and the congressmen, or whether 2 to 4 percent split their votes, it was this difference in percentages that made Democrats jubilant in 1912.48

While it might seem to those who know what happened to the Progressive party after 1912 that party hopefuls would have been saddened by the results, such was not the case. In fact, most Kansas Progressives were as exuberant as their Democratic counterparts. In their mind, Roosevelt had made an impressive showing. Senator Bristow called it a “magnificent success,” and White, in a telegram to George Perkins, noted that, all things considered, the party had done well. Naturally, Stubbs and Capper did not feel requited by the defeats they had suffered, so they had little encouraging to say. The election had demonstrated, however, that about a hundred thousand Kansas voters were devoted to progressivism and that many of them would support a Progressive party. Since it seemed to progressive Republicans that their leaders had not received the votes of many regular Republicans, a number of them concluded that they had no need for the old party connection and should begin to work seriously at organizing a third party. These people were convinced that harmony within the old organization was useless and that now a party of their own should be formed in Kansas.49

The progressive movement within the Republican party had reached a crossroads in 1912. With a national Progressive party in existence, Republicans of the progressive inclination had to decide whether or not they should join the new organization. Decisions were made by many in the three-month period following the November election. By February 1913 Kansas possessed a state Progressive party.
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