Leaders of Reform
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EPILOGUE: HOW THINGS CAN END

The three years that followed the defeat in 1914 saw most Kansas Progressives work their way back into the confidence of Republicans and then into the old party itself. Their return did not occur suddenly, since Theodore Roosevelt prevented the reentry of many Progressive leaders until mid 1916. Yet during the twelve months after November 1914 the trip back was made by numerous members of the lower echelons. The enlisted men of Progressivism had good reason for deserting the party during 1915.

According to Roosevelt’s instructions, the Progressive organization continued in Kansas until 1916, but in fact it discontinued operations after the 1914 elections. When the state legislature convened in January 1915, for example, ten recently elected Progressives were seated. They did not organize independently, as they had done in the previous session, but chose to caucus with the Republicans. In February there was no Lincoln Day rally, and except for a state convention prior to the national nominating convention of the Progressives in 1916, not one of the usual committee or council meetings was held. Party leaders accepted Colonel William Rockhill Nelson’s suggestion that they do nothing, “and darn little of that.” The nation, Nelson wrote, was in a reactionary mood and wanted “civility,” and there was no sense in hoping that time would improve things appreciably.

Kansas leaders were disheartened by word that they received from David Hinshaw at national headquarters. According to Hinshaw, the
bottom had fallen out of things there and had somehow gotten lost. "My own opinion," he noted, "is that we are doomed as a party." Moreover, Roosevelt was not encouraging. He told William Allen White that east of Indiana the party did not need to continue, but that it might well go on in the West. Roosevelt's advice was that White should keep the Progressive party of Kansas intact but that he should do nothing until 1916, when the Republicans would nominate a presidential candidate. He was not bold enough to say that he hoped to be that candidate, but White undoubtedly knew that it was possible that Roosevelt would be running again as a Republican when the time came.4

On 2 December 1914 the leaders of the Progressive party met in Chicago. Except for providing that the national committee convene to call a national convention before January 1916, they did nothing to indicate that the organization was going to go on in the same old way. As a matter of note, a statement written by William Allen White and Chester Rowell of California indicated that despite much talk by radical Progressives, who wished to stress more advanced portions of the 1912 "Contract with the People," the entrenched, moderate leadership controlled affairs. In the White-Rowell announcement the social-justice ideas of 1912 received no special mention. Rather than emphasizing reform, White and Rowell explained that the defeat of the Progressives in 1914 had resulted from declining prosperity, which had been caused by the Underwood tariff. So far as reform activism was concerned, White expressed his own opinion that party members were tired and needed a spiritual rest, after which they might again rejoin the battle. Actually, the Emporia publisher was terribly uncertain of any future action, and in late 1914 he wanted to be left alone politically.5

Progressivism as an ideological force was nearly spent in Kansas, although it remained for two more years in the fashion in which it had been strongest all along, as an intraparty question. The progressive-Republican faction had disintegrated after the 1912 bolt. Although Joseph Bristow and Arthur Capper continued the fiction of its survival, they had become the wariest of friends and the most moderate of statesmen. Bristow, after leaving the Senate, was appointed public utilities commissioner by Capper, but instead of appreciating the largess, he called it a bribe to keep him out of the senatorial race in 1918. By late 1914 he was sure that the tempo of the progressive movement had slowed and that progressives would have to yield their extreme position. He agreed with John Harrison's Burkean statement that "the way to being [was] . . . by remembering that the civilization of the present is an evolution
of centuries and . . . can not be made perfect in a day by getting a lot of the truly good in politics together and adopting a high sounding set of resolutions." He was sure that conservatives would be willing to give a little if the progressives would come part of the way.  

Although Capper was able to secure some laws from the 1915 legislature that should properly be considered to be progressive, he, too, was moderate in his political expressions. Rather than describing his administration as one devoted to reform and social uplift, he wrote Charles Gleed that in essence it was "nothing more than a big business corporation." "The same principles which operate successfully in private business," he said, "can and must be applied to the public business." This meant that Capper was not going to be overly concerned about the failure of progressivism's ideals.

Capper and Bristow were reacting to developments that were taking place in Kansas at the time. Prior to the convening of the state legislature in 1915, a series of inquiries was sent to state legislators, asking them to express their views on what laws needed to be enacted at the coming session. Fully two-thirds answered that no new laws were needed and that any legislation considered by them ought to be sound, sane, and conservative. When they met, one of their first orders of business was an expansion of the initiative and referendum, which every party had endorsed in 1914. In February 1915 they defeated this measure by a large majority, causing widespread joy among regular Republicans who saw its rejection as symbolic of the death of reform.

In May, journalist Frederick M. Davenport, on the "trail of progress" in the Middle West, found that in Kansas it had slowed down. He said that "a flabby state of public muscle" had developed as a result of the previous election. Capper, he added, was the kind of leader that Kansans wanted because he was a moderate. Kansas, he concluded, "does not want to do anything, but wants to be left alone."

The dose of moderation or conservatism that was being swallowed by progressive Republicans during 1915 was also being taken by Progressives. Attuned to the times, these leaders made repeated concessions in their letters and published articles, explaining why the movement was not successful in its goals. Since there were no party meetings, nothing like a consensus of party opinion is available, but there is reason to believe that William Allen White and Henry J. Allen, in their ruminations, represented the general attitude of many leaders in the state. During 1915 the Emporia Gazette repeatedly carried stories stressing that issues were no longer important in politics. The real thing, so far as its famed editor
could tell, was the purely strategic question of getting ready for affairs in 1916. But White's new attitude was never better expressed than in November of 1915, when he wrote Charles Gleed that Ed Ripley, president of the Santa Fe, represented what was best in the nation's business world. "I am not . . . sure," said the one-time railroad critic, "whether it was the Santa Fe spirit that made Mr. Ripley or Mr. Ripley who made the Santa Fe spirit. But the Santa Fe spirit as he incarnates it is one of the fine things America has developed."\textsuperscript{10}

The kind of change that was taking place in White's attitude was also occurring in Allen's mind. On a number of occasions the \textit{Wichita Beacon} carried articles that were favorable to the business interests of Kansas; and when it slipped in late 1915 and mistakenly printed inaccurate criticisms of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Allen hastily apologized to Gleed, Bell's manager in Kansas City. "I think," Allen noted, "it is a good thing that public service corporations take the trouble to call down uninformed editors who ought to be just as anxious to be square with corporations as with anybody else." Allen did not overlook the opportunity of applying the "public-service corporation" label to Bell, but, as he said, he was anxious to be "square with corporations."\textsuperscript{11}

Lest the change in their opinions become too obvious, White and Allen had to moderate their growing conservative attitudes. As part of a plan to force the nomination of a reformer as the Republican presidential candidate in 1916, they had to make Republicans believe that they were still committed to the Progressive party and its ideals. Otherwise they would have lost their major bargaining position.

In January 1916 Progressives launched a campaign to persuade Republicans to nominate a reformer as the G.O.P. presidential candidate. Pretending to support the continuation of the third party, White and Allen began to advance reform ideas that they claimed were crucial to Progressives in 1916. Their ideological program, however, was flat; even tactical reasons were not enough to make their statements appear to be sincere. During 1915 White and Allen had followed Roosevelt's advice to do nothing publicly with the Kansas party. Midway through the "watch and wait" period, Allen wrote to his Emporia confederate that Roosevelt's suggestion was good politics. "I don't seem to have any plans or convictions or movements of any kind in my head," he noted. "I'm sitting around about as stale and helpless and useless as the Kansas legislature." A little later he reported that Democrats had asked him to join their party and to run as their gubernatorial candidate in 1916. Repub-
licans, he added, “don’t give a damn if Progressives come back into their party.”

Allen, of course, was incorrect. Standpat Republicans were not overly concerned about the return of White and Allen, but progressive Republicans wanted the Progressives to come back. White, for example, received numerous entreaties to rejoin the Republican fold. By coming back, his friends insisted, he and Allen could make the party progressive again. “Get back into the old party,” one progressive Republican wrote, “and hammer away there for uplift measures.” There, he added, his energy would work and would not be waste. “The Republican party is pretty keen,” another said, “consider what they did to the candidates for Congress [in 1914] who were labeled standpat and also that Curtis got by with less than 4,000 [votes].” This same correspondent told White to reenter the party, where, with Bristow, Capper, Walter R. Stubbs, and Allen, they could “lick the platter clean” before the regulars ate the whole meal. During most of 1915 White and Allen did not show their hand. Late in the year, however, they began to act.

The principal aim of White and Allen in 1916 was to accomplish a return to the national Republican party without losing stature and power as political leaders in the process. In order to do this they hoped to secure the nomination of an acceptable candidate for president on the Republican ticket. In this fashion they believed that they could rejoin the party and that they would be given recognition within the organization for their support in the presidential election. They hoped that the Republican candidate would be Roosevelt, but at first they indicated that they would favor any man of progressive convictions. At no moment when they were being rational did they seem interested in continuing the Progressive party, although their actions after March could have been construed as leaving ample room for doubt.

In January 1916, White’s and Allen’s desire for a reunion among Republicans was advanced in two ways. The Progressive national meeting in Chicago issued a call for a nominating convention to be held at the same time as the Republican convention, and the Progressives indicated that they would support the Republican nominee in 1916 if he were a genuine reformer. Just after the Chicago meeting, Henry J. Allen began to hold discussions with Billy Morgan and Mort Albaugh concerning a possible amalgamation of Progressives and Republicans in Kansas. Morgan suggested that, under the existing circumstances, Charles Evans Hughes would make an ideal compromise candidate for the presidency, and Allen noted that he had given “a rip-snorting sort of approval” to

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the idea. The discussions between Allen and the regular Republicans were hurt somewhat by Allen's insistence that a progressive Republican replace Fred Stanley as the state Republican committeeman in 1916. Allen's attitude caused Albaugh to complain that Allen was unable to "reconcile himself to coming back into the party without immediately assuming leadership of it." Nevertheless, until March it seemed as if the Kansas Progressives would rejoin the Republican party in 1916 without a serious hitch.\textsuperscript{14}

In March, however, White and Allen, possibly because of advice from other national leaders, began to raise the price for reunion. There is no evidence to show what made the Kansans change from moderate demands as the cost of a reunified Republican party to the stipulation that Roosevelt be nominated by the Republicans in 1916. Probably George Perkins or Roosevelt asked them to take this line, since, as George Mowry has pointed out, Roosevelt was becoming anxious over his prospects of securing the Republican nomination. John Garraty has stated that Perkins was becoming aware that a strong line was needed if Roosevelt were to be chosen in 1916. Whatever the reason, in late February, White began to hint that Roosevelt should be nominated by the Republicans, and in early March he warned that this should be done if Republicans expected peace in 1916. When the Kansas Republican convention was controlled by politicians hostile to Roosevelt and when a delegation opposed to the former president was sent to the national convention in Chicago, White realized that if the Progressives were to have any impact on the Republicans, they would have to make a forthright threat of continuing their party.\textsuperscript{15}

At the Progressive State Convention on May 23, both Allen and White, in emotional speeches, specified that compromise with the Republicans would be possible only if Roosevelt were the candidate of the national party. Newspapermen, who were apparently not well informed about the changing tactics of White and Allen, were amazed by the turn of events. They seemed to believe that "harmonizers" and "political pacifists" would control the state convention of the Progressives. Moreover, the Progressive's national executive committee had already announced that state conventions should send uninstructed delegates to Chicago in June. Only the \textit{Topeka Daily Capital} seemed to be well-enough informed to report what happened. Kansas Progressives, the \textit{Capital} headlined, are "FOR TR FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS!" Since a militant "Roosevelt-or-nothing" sentiment carried the day, the delegation that Allen led to the Progressive National Convention was instructed to help nominate
Roosevelt and then to adjourn so that Republicans could endorse this action.\textsuperscript{16}

By June, only two men, White and Allen, were influencing Kansas Progressivism to any extent. Publicly they had taken a "Roosevelt-or-nothing" position, but apparently they were aware all along that Roosevelt would spurn the Progressive nomination if Republicans refused to select him as their candidate in 1916. At least they discussed a list of progressive Republicans whom they considered to be eligible for the presidential nomination, and they expressed the belief that if the Colonel were not nominated by the Republicans, he would endorse any man whose name appeared on the list.\textsuperscript{17}

Victor Murdock was the only other important Kansan who was involved nationally in the Progressive party. He did not seem to be aware that Roosevelt would compromise with Republicans on another candidate. After leaving the House of Representatives, Murdock had been named as national chairman of the Progressive party, and following the tradition of the first chairman, Joseph Dixon of Montana, he had been a party leader in name only. He attended the Progressive National Convention under the assumption that Roosevelt would be quickly nominated, thus forcing the Republicans either to tender the Colonel their nomination or to face a continued split. When the plan failed, Murdock became one of the vocal critics of George Perkins.\textsuperscript{18}

The Republican and the Progressive national conventions were held simultaneously in 1916 in order to allow the two parties to agree on the same candidate. When the Republicans were unwilling to accept Roosevelt as their party's nominee, George Perkins, following Roosevelt's instructions, kept the Progressive convention from nominating the Colonel. Roosevelt and Perkins hoped that when the Republicans made their selection, the Progressives would choose the same man as their nominee. Because Perkins's delaying actions did not fit in with Victor Murdock's plan to nominate Roosevelt before the Republicans had selected a candidate, Murdock raised a number of protests against Perkins and finally joined with Hiram Johnson, John Parker of Louisiana, White, and others in nominating Roosevelt.

White, who had been privy to Perkins's intentions and Roosevelt's wishes, supported Murdock; in later years he insisted that he had been in full accord with Murdock's desire to select Roosevelt over Perkins's protest. Writing in 1924, White claimed that Perkins had betrayed the Progressive party by his actions at the convention in 1916. He later agreed with a similar condemnation of Roosevelt by Harold Ickes in
1941. In his book *Right-hand Man: The Life of George Perkins*, John Garraty has done an excellent job of impeaching White's statements on these counts. It need only be said that White did work with Murdock and recalcitrant Progressives on the day that Roosevelt was nominated.

When Roosevelt refused the Progressive nomination in a letter read to the Progressive National Convention on the afternoon of 10 June 1916, Murdock felt that he had been misled. However, Roosevelt had never stated that he would accept the dubious honor of leading the Progressive ticket again, and his activities after May had indicated that he was really interested in the Republican nomination. Murdock was aware of Roosevelt's flirtations with the Republicans. Nevertheless, Roosevelt had led the Progressives to Armageddon, and to men of Murdock's views this meant that the Colonel was obligated to run for the presidency in 1916 if the Progressives wanted him to do so. Roosevelt's letter of refusal was conditional, suggesting that the national committee, at a meeting that would be held later, be allowed to determine the course of action that Progressives should pursue. This suggestion was approved by the national convention before it adjourned. "I am not sore or sad," Murdock reportedly said, "but I am impressed with the tremendous force against us; power [and] money."19

On June 26 the Progressive National Committee met to consider whether it would endorse the Republican candidate, Charles Evans Hughes. Roosevelt had endorsed Hughes by this time. A heated debate developed at the June 26 meeting, and for a while it appeared that Murdock might be the presidential nominee of "radical" elements within the Progressive organization. To his relief, this move failed. Murdock, however, was dissatisfied by the National Committee's final decision to endorse Hughes. He refused to join the majority of Progressives in this move. He allowed his newspaper, the *Wichita Eagle*, to support President Woodrow Wilson, although he personally did not work for Wilson. Reviewing what had happened, he wrote in August 1916:

> It wasn't so much the collapse of things at Chicago as it was the manner of collapse which galled me and galled me more deeply than I supposed I could be hurt. For, as you know, I have a rather effective barrier against injury in my humor. It didn't serve this time. If I could have figured anything gained by surrender, I could have smiled. But the setback was sordid and without qualifying hope. I seemed to see, for the first time vividly, that futile battles are worse than no battle at all, because the defeat fortifies the opposition against even the efficacy of threat which is the only thing which keeps those in power in anything
like good behavior. I do not identify in myself anything like personal disappointment and I try to boil out of my feelings anything that is mean or cheaply pessimistic. We did stand for advance, which neither of the old parties divine, and our failure spells, to my mind, future disaster for the country.\textsuperscript{20}

When a group of former Progressives met in July to endorse Wilson, Murdock did not attend the meeting, but he did allow them to report that he sympathized with their plans.\textsuperscript{21}

On June 20 William Allen White announced that the Kansas Progressive party supported Hughes. At the same time, he withdrew the party’s list of presidential electors, which had been filed previously with the secretary of state. He said that he had consulted the Progressives’ state chairman, U. S. Sartin, who concurred in the action. His decision to have the party support the Republican candidate resulted from his foreknowledge of what would happen a week later at the meeting of the Progressive National Committee. White’s decision, wrote the editor of the \textit{Topeka State Journal}, means “that all the big league men in the Progressive party in Kansas—with the exception of Victor Murdock—will be back under the Republican banner in November.” It also meant the end of the Progressive party in Kansas.\textsuperscript{22}

“Who are the pussy-footers now,” asked an angry Progressive, “those who returned to Republicans two years ago or those who return now?” White claimed that the party’s support of Hughes was only a temporary measure, but his Progressive followers understood that this was not true. “Are you not aware,” asked A. M. Breese, “that we cannot get on the ballot two years from now if we wished?” Breese, like a number of other party members, indicated that he did not intend to vote for Hughes, and he added that ten thousand other former Progressives would join him in supporting Wilson.\textsuperscript{23}

Despite his having used the Kansas Progressive party to endorse Hughes, White’s private opinion of the Republican candidate differed very little from Murdock’s or Breese’s. In October he told Norman Hapgood that although he could not help Wilson in any positive fashion, he cared not a whit who won the election. White planned to support Republican candidates in Kansas and to avoid the national campaign whenever possible.\textsuperscript{24}

White’s disposition indicated the general attitude of Kansans toward Hughes in 1916. The Republican nominee lacked voter appeal. He took what was essentially the wrong position on the war that was raging in Europe. He failed to handle reform issues as adroitly as Wilson did.
Thus, in November he lost not only the nation but Kansas as well. His defeat, while not totally unexpected, was worse than many thought it would be. In assessing the results, many regular Republicans believed that Hughes's poor campaign, plus Arthur Capper's unwillingness to help Hughes, caused the party's defeat in Kansas. Murdock's *Wichita Eagle*, however, argued that Hughes's campaign had not cost him the election; the public had simply preferred the better candidate, Wilson. Kansans realized, *Eagle* writers continued, that the president was abler and more sincere than Hughes. Capper's *Topeka Daily Capital* attributed the results to America's war prosperity and to the catchy Democratic slogan "He Kept Us out of War!" Henry J. Allen and William Allen White agreed with Capper's opinion, and in a manner that hinted of satisfaction, they suggested that Kansas Progressives had also done their bit to "Keep Republicans out of the White House."25

Progressive voters helped to defeat Hughes in 1916. Refusing to honor the endorsement of their party, about one-third of the former supporters of Progressivism voted for Wilson in Kansas. Returns for the president increased by 10.7 percent over his 1912 figure, but in the thirty counties that Roosevelt had carried in 1912, Wilson's increase was 13.7 percent. Although Hughes received 44.1 percent of the popular vote in Kansas, his percentage in the thirty counties that had formerly gone to Roosevelt was only 42.3 percent. It appears that of the thirty-seven thousand votes that separated Wilson and Hughes in the state, Progressives supplied the lion's share.26

Lost elections rarely revive interest in defunct political organizations, but the 1916 general election did cause this to happen in the case of William Allen White. In December he continued his political wooing of Kansas Republicans by telling them that his ideas were fully compatible with Republican beliefs. To Roosevelt he wrote that he planned to rejoin the old party, since he could not be a Democrat. On December 4 he met with five other Progressives in Chicago to announce his abandonment of the Bull Moose party. But early in 1917, because regular Republicans had begun to prepare for complete conservative control of the national party, he helped to plan for a possible revival of the Progressive party. He suggested to his "radical" allies that George Perkins, who was conducting a bluff similar to White's, be removed from any position in the Bull Moose organization. He also noted that issues that would relate to the European War should be developed for the party.

Until February 1917 White continued to correspond with Progressives, but after February his interest flagged, and by March all trace of any
concern for a revived Progressivism disappeared from his letters. In April 1917 Murdock, who had had little to do with the birth of the Progressive organization, presided over its final meeting. At St. Louis, where he chaired the last convention, this champion of the unrestricted sale of liquor ironically helped to adopt a resolution that joined the Progressive party with the Prohibition party. Like its Kansas offspring, the national Progressive party was at last dead.27

The passing of Progressivism did not end the political careers of many of its key leaders. Of the top six men in Kansas who were involved in either the progressive-Republican faction or the Progressive party, only Murdock immediately ceased to be important in state politics. He did serve, however, as a Wilson appointee on the Federal Trade Commission until 1924. He joined the Democratic party, but in the late twenties and thirties he devoted much of his time to journalism only.28

White, Allen, and Capper survived the storm at the end of the movement and assumed leading roles in the Republican party almost as soon as they deserted the Progressives, either in 1914 or in 1916. Stubbs and Bristow tried to win the seat that was open in the United States Senate in 1918; but after their failures in that election they faded as significant figures in the party. In 1922 Stubbs, backed by White, made an unsuccessful attempt to gain the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Bristow left Kansas, moving to a farm outside of Washington, D.C., and eventually he became wealthy as a result of earlier investments in real estate in the vicinity of the national capital. According to John Harrison, who was still a close friend of the senator’s in the twenties, Bristow remained hostile towards White and other Kansans because of their role in his 1918 senatorial defeat. “Why he [Bristow] should have been embittered at his defeat in 1918,” White noted, “is beyond me.”29

In 1918 Kansans were presented with the interesting spectacle of a four-way struggle for the United States Senate, in which three former progressive friends—Stubbs, Capper, and Bristow—were involved. The fourth candidate was their old enemy Charles F. Scott. In 1918 White tried to revive the progressive-Republican faction in order to clear the way for the nomination of Arthur Capper. When he failed, he washed his hands of the election, writing Henry Allen that he was opposed to Bristow, Stubbs, and Capper because they were anticonscription pacifists and that he was opposed to Scott because he was pro-German. “If you know a good, honest, two-legged man who believed in the Star-Spangled Banner and the Bull-Moose platform,” he wrote, “who would run for the Senate as an American citizen . . . trot him off.”30

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Although each one developed a spirited campaign, Scott, Bristow, and Stubbs did not have much chance against the popular Governor Capper in 1918. Taking a moderate position on the war, somewhere between Bristow's pacifism and Stubbs's belligerency, Capper won easily. Capper's moderation, however, was not the deciding factor. Capper was always exceedingly popular with Kansas voters, to whom he always catered. He was normally able to leave the impression that he stood foremost for righteousness and goodness, tempered with wisdom. Most political leaders did not like Capper, since they considered him at best a spineless wonder and at worst a well-practiced demagogue. But the real masters of political fortunes, the people, heartedly endorsed him, and in 1918, for the first time, they elected a two-term Kansas governor to the Senate. There Capper served continuously and honorably for thirty years, until 1949, when, nearly incapacitated, he relinquished his seat to a new, more conservative Republican leader.31

The major interest of William Allen White, even before mid 1917, when he realized the hopelessness of re-creating the progressive-Republican faction, was the contest involving his friend Allen. Allen had stuck to the Kansas Progressive party to the bitter end, and to White's way of thinking, he deserved a fate other than political failure.32 Early in 1917 White became convinced that Allen was an unbeatable candidate for governor and an ideal choice for regular Republicans to support if they wanted to demonstrate their willingness to compromise with their wayward brothers. With this in mind, he set about seeking support for the Wichita publisher, and luckily he secured the aid of Mort Albaugh. Albaugh was interested in Republican harmony, and he was appreciative of the work that Allen and his Wichita Beacon had done for Hughes in 1916. Albaugh was also aware that the senatorial primary in 1918 could conceivably upset things so badly that Republicans might be split at the polls in November. Albaugh had only one problem confronting him in 1918: Billy Morgan, his confederate of bygone days, was a candidate for governor. From 1914 onward, however, Albaugh and Morgan had moved farther and farther apart. Thus, in 1917 Albaugh did not find it exceptionally hard to support Allen while deserting Morgan.33

Together, White and Albaugh were able to secure additional help from former Senator Chester I. Long, former Governors Willis J. Bailey and Edward W. Hoch, David W. Mulvane, Charles Gleed, and Standard Oil attorney Sam Fitzpatrick. "It looks good," wrote a regular to White, "to see your name and that of Mort Albaugh signed to the same document and with that sort of harmony we ought to be able to make it a parade
for Henry.” Others, such as the third candidate for the gubernatorial nomination, S. M. Brewster, who was an old Lelandite and now attorney general of Kansas, did not agree. “I have just a little curiosity,” he wrote White, “to know how it is possible for Henry Allen to represent your views on public questions and also represent the views of Fitzpatrick and a few others I could name.”

For the first time in years a progressive Republican, or at least a former member of that group, received favorable attention at the Kansas Day Club. What was true in January 1918 was also true in August, when Republican voters in Kansas nominated Allen, who was then in Europe with the Red Cross. Albaugh had encouraged Allen to volunteer for duty in Europe so that the aging Beacon editor could appear to be a war hero. Unfortunately, Albaugh did not live to see the fruits of his planning mature, since he died suddenly in February 1918.

Allen was elected in 1918 and again in 1920. He served two hectic terms as governor, during which he was involved in the great Kansas coal strike of 1919 and in problems caused by his pet project, the Kansas Industrial Court. It has been said that Allen barely missed being nominated as Harding’s vice-presidential running mate in 1920. Had he been nominated, he, rather than Coolidge, would have become president. In 1929 he was appointed to fill the unexpired senatorial term of Charles Curtis when Curtis became vice-president of the United States. Although he failed to secure the Senate seat on a permanent basis in 1930, he continued to be an important politician until the Great Depression. Thereafter, his influence declined.

Allen’s election to the governor’s office in 1918 made White a reconfirmed member of the Republican party, and there he stayed until his death in 1944. He was never a good Republican, although he associated often enough with the party to be considered an acceptable one. In 1924 he ran for governor on an anti-Ku Klux Klan, independent ticket, but he was neither seriously interested in being elected nor was he considered as having left the national Republican party.

Allen’s first campaign helped White make his peace in the state, but Emporia’s most famous citizen also used his own personal charm to win the confidence of other Kansas regulars. The best example of White’s making peace on his own was his reconciliation with Senator Curtis. In December 1916, after twenty years during which the two men had not exchanged letters, White wrote to the senator, congratulating him for his stand in favor of a bill that would require federal licensing in order to sell liquor. Curtis answered that he was pleased to hear from a con-
stituent on issues, and he recalled that midway through the progressive movement, when the two men were barely on speaking terms, the senator had secured an appointment for one of White’s friends. From then on, they continued to have frequent exchanges, and in early 1918 White was admitting that the war had softened his views to the point that he could now understand many things that four to six years earlier had caused him to disagree with Curtis. “Things,” he added, “which justify you in your viewpoint and I presume which allow . . . you to see that many of us who disagreed with you were neither crazy nor selfish in our activities.” The important goal now, said White, was to blast Democrats, so that in 1920 the nation might return a Republican president to lead the country. 37

After 1917 the entry of the United States into the World War and the end of the Progressive party further advanced the conservative reaction that had begun three years earlier in Kansas. From 1917 until 1920 what was once a progressive citadel became a bastion of conservatism, and at the end of that period, one man who was intent on keeping some ideals of the old movement alive, Governor Henry Allen, gloomily admitted that progressivism was dead in his state, even if reactionaries had not completely reclaimed it. White had come to a similar conclusion. The war and a general pattern of cyclical revulsion against reform, he wrote, had placed a check on progressivism. “No one,” he lamented, “pays attention to us anymore.” 38

Before April 1917 there were those who were sanguine enough to believe that after the war, progressivism would flourish once again; but this hope was shattered by the election of Warren G. Harding in 1920 and by the return to power of such Kansas conservatives as Curtis and Mulvane. After Allen left office, a former progressive was not reinstalled in power until Clyde Reed was elected governor in 1928, and he lost his bid for renomination in 1930. A new brand of reformer became governor in 1933, when a former county chairman of the Progressive party, Alfred M. Landon, assumed the office of chief executive. By then, issues and ideas had changed somewhat as a result of the Great Depression. 39

Progressivism had become the dynamic element in Kansas Republicanism beginning with the elections of Senator Bristow and Governor Stubbs in 1908. Its roots had been in the state’s tradition of factionalism, which had caused the creation of the Boss-Busters in 1899 and of the Kansas Republican League in 1904. An equally important origin of the progressive Republicans had been grounded in the protest of the Kansas Civic League and the Square Deal Club of 1906, two organizations that were
devoted largely to the redress of abuses on the part of the railroads. Other factors had contributed to the rise of progressivism in Kansas, including Theodore Roosevelt's inspiration, the work of Muckraking journalists, the motives of small businessmen who were on the make, the ambitions of western-Kansas town boosters, and the lingering influence of populism.

After 1909 Kansas progressive Republicans had their future enmeshed in the party's insurgency movement in Congress. Unable to extricate themselves from national involvement, they had bolted the Republican party with Roosevelt. Although many had been reluctant, they had gone, giving up control of their G.O.P. and the state government. Ironically, their places had been taken in the leadership of the party by the people whom they had initially deposed.

But Kansas politics had been changed forever. Charles Curtis was re-elected to the Senate in 1914, but in a manner far different from his first selection. The sordid practice that gave railroad counsels in Topeka and in places east of the Mississippi an important part in Kansas senatorial caucuses no longer existed. The party primary and the Bristow Amendment to the U.S. Constitution had altered affairs permanently. These artifices had not created the perfect political arrangement, as progressives had believed that they would, but they had solved some problems. Unfortunately, money, biased newsmen, political sycophancy, and modern demagoguery were all elements of power in government that made the new system distasteful. The reformers had been wrong in believing that "perfect" election machinery could be devised to solve the political puzzle. Like many who would do good, they failed to reckon with man's capacity to do wrong. They forgot the human predicament—imperfectability.

In order to create genuinely democratic government they granted home rule to cities, they required lobbyists to register, and they made candidates in statewide elections report their campaign expenditures. Because they supported efficiency, they compromised their commitment to popular government, replacing the old elective railroad commission with a new appointive public-utilities commission. They extended the vote to women, and then advocated electing fewer officials through short-ballot reform. They spoke enthusiastically about the initiative and the referendum, and then failed to act energetically for them.

While many favored the concept of greater human liberty, they improved the enforcement of the state's prohibition statutes and banned the sale of cigarettes for two years. Whether they were serious in this
latter action is doubtful, but many were solemn advocates of Sabbatarian legislation. Only the popularity of baseball and other entertainment saved Kansas from stringent blue laws. The progressive Republicans contributed significantly to the betterment of public education; they reorganized the state eleemosynary system so as to help the helpless more effectively; and they aided workingmen with an employer's liability law and a workmen's compensation act.

Economic legislation was their greatest passion. They tried to restructure the tax laws more equitably with an inheritance tax and a state tax commission. The paucity of complaints about these measures can be used to argue about the justice and wisdom of them or to argue about their inadequacy. Among their railroad regulations, they considered the Maximum Freight Rate Law, the two-cent passenger-fare decision, and the Public Utilities Act the most important. In fact, like so much of their legislation, these acts were not nearly as significant as they believed them to be.

The progressives in Kansas and elsewhere were contributing more than they realized to a new day, one that would make their activities far less momentous than they assumed them to be. Kansas might establish a plan for guaranteeing bank deposits, and it might write a Blue Sky Investment Law, but the statutes that would be most influential and that would endure were not being written in Topeka. Much as was the case with populism before it, the ultimate effect of progressivism was to be felt on a reform movement that came after it. The New Deal laws establishing the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Securities Exchange Commission were the banking and investment legislation that would last. Increasingly, progressives looked to the national government for solutions to their great passion—economics. Thus, there is a degree of irony and pathos in ending this study by suggesting that their greatest reform was unintentional. Without fully realizing it, these state politicians, these progressive Republicans, helped to create the modern national regulatory state.