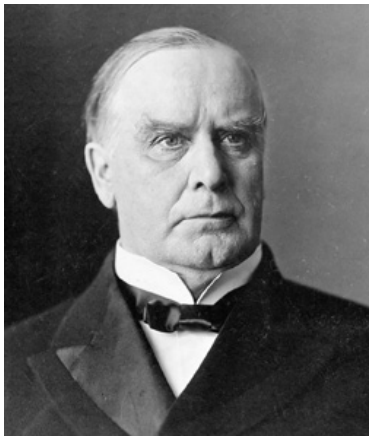

President	William McKinley
Chronological Order	25
Life Span	1843-1901
Home State	Ohio
Elected	1896, 1900
Political Party	Republican
Vice President	Garrett A. Hobart (first term), Theodore Roosevelt (second term)
First Lady	Ida Saxton McKinley
Children	2 daughters
Physical Attributes	5' 6.5" tall, brown hair, blue-gray eyes
Undergraduate Education	Allegheny College (one year). Also attended Albany Law School.
Military Service	Major in the Union Army during the Civil War
Profession	Attorney
Other Political Offices	U.S. Representative, Governor
Nickname	Major McKinley or The Major
Family Lineage	English, Scots-Irish, Scottish
Religious Affiliation	Methodist

Biographical Notes

1. William McKinley was an excellent president. He came into office expecting to spend most of his time on economic issues, but foreign affairs dominated his administration. He deftly handled a succession of foreign policy issues: the annexation of Hawaii, the Spanish-American War, the acquisition of three Spanish territories (the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico), events in China, and relations with the British regarding the building of a canal across Central America.

2. McKinley was modest, a genuinely nice person, and a talented politician. Legislatively, he knew how to get things done – he wisely used a joint resolution of Congress to ratify the annexation of Hawaii when the traditional method (a treaty via a two-thirds vote in the Senate) would have failed. McKinley shrewdly selected three members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to be on his five-man negotiating team at the Spanish-American War peace talks, which helped get the peace treaty ratified in the Senate. In terms of electability, he was a juggernaut – his presidential campaigns collected vast amounts of cash and flooded the country with campaign literature. Also, he came across as an honest and likable candidate.

As president, he paid close attention to public opinion and was popular. While in office, his closest advisor, Mark Hanna, was chairman of the Republican National Committee, and together the two men led the party effectively; there were no crippling internal party squabbles during his administration.

3. McKinley grew up in Poland, Ohio, a small town eighty miles southeast of Cleveland. His father owned and operated a forge. Poland was a stop on the Underground Railroad; citizens defied the Fugitive Slave Law, risked arrest, and helped slaves avoid capture. The McKinley family was strongly antislavery.

Later in life, McKinley was a firm believer in protective tariffs. The roots of this belief ran back to his childhood when he heard his ironmaster father complain that cheap foreign goods made honest men lose their forges.

McKinley enrolled in Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, in 1860, but illness caused him to return home to Ohio after one year. When he recovered, an economic downturn affected his father's business, and William had to work as a teacher.

4. McKinley's service in the Union Army was one of the seminal events of his life. He enlisted in the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment as an eighteen-year-old private in June 1861. His superior officers quickly recognized that McKinley had excellent managerial skills and assigned him to the quartermaster corps. In April of 1862, he was promoted to commissary sergeant, in charge of all non-weapon supplies, e.g., food, clothing, blankets, and fodder for the horses.

Major Rutherford B. Hayes, a future president, was one of the regiment's officers. McKinley's diligence caught Hayes's attention, and the latter looked upon the taciturn young man almost as a son. Hayes quietly supported McKinley's military career and said he was "one of the bravest and finest young officers in the army." After the war, Hayes served as McKinley's mentor in Ohio politics.

At the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, during one of the bloodiest days of the war, McKinley showed great bravery in an episode that remained vivid to spectators years afterward. One eyewitness reported thirty-five years later:

> Our regiment had gone into the fight at daylight without breakfast or rations of food of any kind and was the first command to receive the fire of that memorable day. Our regiment became almost completely exhausted from fighting, fatigue, and lack of food and water. While in this condition, we saw a wagon, drawn by army mules, coming towards us from the rear at breakneck speed through a terrific fire of musketry and artillery that seemed to threaten annihilation to everything within its range.
>
> I have many times since thought that it was a miracle that it and its escort [were] not utterly destroyed. The wagon, when it arrived, proved to be in [the] charge of Comrade McKinley, and contained a supply of cooked rations, meat, coffee, and hardtack, and was heartily welcomed by our tired and half-famished boys.

McKinley received a battlefield promotion to second lieutenant and a nomination for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery at Antietam.

5. In the spring of 1863, McKinley was the quartermaster for Rutherford B. Hayes's brigade. When the part of the brigade commanded by Colonel William Brown became almost surrounded by Confederate forces, Hayes grew alarmed. Looking for someone to deliver a retreat order to Brown, he spotted McKinley. Pointing to the stranded soldiers, Hayes asked the young lieutenant to take the order to Brown. Immediately after Hayes made the request, McKinley wheeled his horse around and headed toward Brown's unit at a gallop. As he watched McKinley ride away, Hayes figured the messenger's chances of survival were negligible. Nearby officers agreed. "None of us expected to see him again," recalled one officer. McKinley spurred his horse through a harrowing patch of land with bullets flying and shells exploding everywhere. He galloped through open fields, over fences, and through ditches. Once, an exploding cannonball generated so much dust and smoke that the young horseman disappeared. But when the smoke cleared, there he was, approaching his destination.

McKinley then guided the beleaguered unit back to safety. When he reached Hayes to report his mission accomplished, Hayes told him, "I never expected to see you in life again." A week after the battle, McKinley was promoted to captain and became acting adjutant general of General Crook's army, i.e., the unit's leading administrative officer.

6. At the end of the war, McKinley mustered out as a brevet major. A comrade from his regiment said to McKinley, many years after the war, "I am at a loss to know how to address you. I knew you as a soldier, as a congressman, as a governor, and now as president-elect. How shall I address you?" McKinley answered modestly, "Call me Major. I earned that. I am not so sure of the rest." Indeed, before he was president, most people referred to him as Major McKinley.

7. After the war, McKinley returned home to Poland. His mother wanted him to become a Methodist minister. Hayes, elected to Congress after his army service, advised him to go West, get into the railroad business, and make money. McKinley made his own decision: he would become a lawyer like Hayes. The law, he believed, would be intellectually challenging and provide him with a base for a political career should he choose that path like Hayes. McKinley was not motivated to accumulate great wealth and probably had doubts about his ability to succeed in the wild and uninhibited business world of the 1860s. Hayes wrote him from Washington:

> A man with half your wits ought to be independent at forty in business. As a lawyer, a man sacrifices independence to ambition, which is a bad bargain at best. However, you have decided for the present your profession, so I must hush. I hope you will come to Washington. If so, [we] will talk it up.

McKinley read law with a local attorney, attended Albany Law School in upstate New York for one year, and was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1867. He then set up a law practice in Canton, Ohio, in Stark County. Canton was his home for the rest of his life.

McKinley's diligence and pleasant personality were assets to his law career, but something deeper drew his fellow townspeople to him. His tolerance of people's differences made him many friends in Canton's Catholic community, and his genuine unwillingness to quarrel or engage in strife made him popular and respected long before he entered politics. He had a gift for reconciling disparate views and warring factions – a gift he would use later as a congressman and president.

8. When Rutherford B. Hayes ran for governor in 1867, McKinley campaigned vigorously for his old brigade commander and helped him win Stark County on his way to a narrow statewide victory. In the process, McKinley earned a reputation as an effective campaigner and gained access to the governor's office on patronage matters important to Canton's political elite. In 1868, he energetically supported Ulysses S. Grant for president by organizing "Grant Clubs," spearheading rallies, and praising the candidate at meetings. He celebrated Grant's victory and enjoyed the attention that his political activities brought. McKinley was elected prosecuting attorney for the county in 1869.

9. In his law practice, McKinley met James Saxton, who had a daughter, Ida. Saxton owned the Stark County Bank and the local Republican newspaper, the *Ohio Repository*. Ida was beautiful, slim, athletic, and well-educated – her father insisted that she learn mathematics, bookkeeping, and other subjects well beyond what most women studied then.

Ida worked at her father's bank and quickly rose from clerk to cashier (chief financial officer). Mr. Saxton was an active investor in everything from real estate to silver mines. He traveled often and left Ida in charge of the bank. Saxton said Ida "could do this work better and more thoroughly than any man."

McKinley married Ida in January 1871, and their daughter Catherine (Katie) was born on Christmas Day that same year. Katie was named after Ida's mother, who was also her best friend. A second daughter, Ida, was born in April 1873. When Ida was pregnant with her namesake, her mother died of cancer. Then, baby Ida died of cholera in September, and Katie died of typhoid fever in 1875. Ida was severely affected by these three deaths and suffered from depression and epilepsy for the rest of her life. McKinley loved her dearly and did his best to help her overcome her difficulties. For example, he broke White House protocol by seating her by his side at state dinners. When shot by an assassin in 1901, McKinley said to his secretary, George B. Cortelyou, "My wife, be careful, Cortelyou, how you tell her — oh, be careful."

10. In 1876, a group of striking coal miners in the Tuscarawas Valley south of Canton clashed violently with strikebreakers and were charged with disorderly conduct. When local attorneys refused to take their case, McKinley did, and only one man was convicted.

One of the mine owners was Mark Hanna, a wealthy Cleveland businessman. Hanna was interested in politics but knew he was not suitable to be a candidate. He saw in McKinley the moderation, the balance and order, and the smoothness and tact that he lacked. Hanna went on to be McKinley's campaign manager and closest political confidant. Their partnership was one of the most famous and successful in American political history.

11. McKinley served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1877 to 1883 and 1885 to 1891. He was Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee from 1889 to 1891. McKinley's signature policy issue was protective tariffs. The primary intention of these imposts was not to raise revenue but to allow American industry to develop by giving it a price advantage in the domestic market over foreign competitors. McKinley biographer Margaret Leech noted that Canton had become prosperous as a center for manufacturing farm equipment because of protective tariffs, which may have helped form his political views. McKinley introduced and supported bills that raised protective tariffs and opposed those that lowered them or imposed tariffs simply to raise revenue.

He authored the Tariff Act of 1890 (a.k.a. the McKinley Tariff), which increased average duties across all imports from 38% to 49.5%. The tariff was not well received by Americans because it caused prices of goods to increase steeply. In the 1890 midterm elections, Republicans lost control of the House by losing 93 seats. Voter anger (plus congressional redistricting) caused McKinley to lose his seat in that election.

McKinley returned home to Ohio and was elected governor in 1892. As governor, McKinley worked to lessen the discord between management and labor. He developed a system of arbitration designed to settle labor disagreements and convinced Ohio Republicans, many of whom refused to acknowledge labor rights, to support his arbitration program. While sympathetic to workers, McKinley proved unwilling to acquiesce to all of their demands, calling out the National Guard in 1894 to curtail strike-related violence by the members of the United Mine Workers. In the face of the economic woes of the mid-1890s, McKinley showed himself to be a skilled and able politician. He even gained widespread public sympathy when his own financial fortunes suffered during the economic depression of 1893—he had co-signed the loans of a friend who subsequently went bankrupt. He was re-elected governor in 1894. With congressional and gubernatorial experience under his belt and widespread popularity in the Republican Party, McKinley was in a position to make a run for the White House in 1896.

12. In May 1895, McKinley was strongly considering a run for president. To gauge his prospects, he sent Mark Hanna to New York to consult with a group of key Republican Party bosses: Tom Platt of New York, Matthew Quay of Pennsylvania, Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island, Joe Manley of Maine, and James Clarkson of Iowa. The bosses agreed to support McKinley for the GOP presidential nomination under certain conditions. Hanna was delighted with the outcome and reported to McKinley: "Now, Major, it's all over but the shouting. Quay wants the patronage of Pennsylvania, Aldrich of New England, Manley of Maine." He added that Platt wanted a more significant reward: "They want a promise that you will appoint Tom Platt Secretary of the Treasury," said Hanna, "and they want it in writing."

McKinley thought for a minute and then replied, "Mark, there are some things in this world that come too high. If I were to accept the nomination on those terms, the place would be worth nothing to me and less to the people. If those are the terms, I am out of it."

McKinley knew instinctively that if he accepted the deal, the later demands of the bosses could go far beyond just making Platt secretary of the treasury. This encounter led to McKinley's campaign slogan: "The people against the bosses." The anti-boss theme propelled his candidacy forward, bringing in support from progressive Republicans like Robert La Follette, a candidate for governor of Wisconsin.

At the 1896 Republican National Convention, Platt, Quay, Manley, and their allies tried to deny McKinley the nomination by encouraging multiple "favorite son" candidates and then fighting for control of the Southern delegations. However, McKinley and Hanna had already made inroads with the Southern delegations via a pre-convention trip down South. Consequently, McKinley won the GOP nomination for president on the first ballot when he won 661.5 of the 924 delegates.

13. In the election of 1896, McKinley faced the great orator William Jennings Bryan. At the Democratic National Convention, Bryan assaulted the Republican support of the gold standard with one of the most memorable speeches in American party politics. "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns," he thundered. "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." His call for the unlimited coinage of silver carried with it the promise of monetary inflation that would ease the indebtedness of farmers in the West and South. In response, McKinley merged the gold standard and protectionism into his "American Program" that promised to restore prosperity and guaranteed social order. Free coinage of silver, he argued, would create a "57-cent dollar" that would rob working men of their wages.

14. The two men campaigned in different ways. Bryan broke with precedent by traveling nationwide by private train, giving hundreds of stump speeches. People turned out by the thousands to see and hear him: 10,000 in Springfield, 30,000 in Toledo, 50,000 in Columbus, and 70,000 in Louisville.

McKinley waged a "front porch campaign." He put out the word that he would welcome delegations of Americans from anywhere in the country who wished to come and see him in Canton and hear his plans for the nation. Any group was welcome as long as they wrote to McKinley and stated their affiliation, preferably ten days before arrival. Before bringing their group to McKinley's house, each delegation leader talked with The Major in private so that he could tailor his message to suit that particular group.

The response was tremendous. Over three and a half months, more than 300 delegations and a total of 750,000 people came to McKinley's home, where he would speak from his front porch to the visitors standing in his front yard. In the process, he produced a steady stream of campaign speeches covered almost daily by newspapers nationwide. And he never had to leave Ida or drag her onto the campaign trail.

Meanwhile, Mark Hanna invented a new form of campaign finance that has dominated American politics ever since. Instead of asking officeholders to return a cut of their pay, Hanna went to financiers and industrialists and made a business proposition. He explained that: (a) McKinley's support for protective tariffs

and the gold standard was good for their businesses, (b) Bryan might win unless something was done, and (c) the McKinley team had a winning counterattack that would be very expensive. Hanna would then ask them how much it was worth to their business to have McKinley as president. He would then negotiate an amount and be happy to take a check. Oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, and investment banker J.P. Morgan each contributed $250,000 ($9.4 million in 2024); various railroads contributed $174,000 ($6.5 million in 2024). Hanna had moved beyond partisanship and campaign rhetoric and appealed to logic about achieving the best results for their businesses. He raised more than $3.5 million.

The McKinley campaign used the money to propagandize voters on a scale never seen before. By election day, the organization had sent out 250 million documents (primarily pamphlets) in every language spoken in the country. This onslaught caused Theodore Roosevelt to exclaim that Hanna "has advertised McKinley as if he were a patent medicine." In its intensity, substance, and magnitude, the 1896 contest was the first modern presidential election. McKinley won easily, 271 to 176 electoral votes.

15. In 1896, McKinley carried the Northeast, the Ohio Valley, and the Great Lakes. Bryan swept the South, the Plains (except North Dakota), and the West (except California and Oregon). His triumph indicated that the Republicans had secured control of America's industrial base. Urban workers, confronted with a choice between job security and class solidarity, crossed class lines to vote with their employers rather than with the farmers of the South and West. Though no one would know it in 1896, workers would continue to do so for decades. McKinley's election inaugurated an era of Republican dominance of the federal government that lasted until 1932 (except for Woodrow Wilson's two terms as president).

16. After the election, McKinley offered Hanna the position of postmaster general. Hanna declined and told his friend that, instead, he would like to be a U.S. senator from their home state, Ohio. To facilitate this, McKinley appointed Ohio Senator John Sherman secretary of state; the Ohio governor then appointed Hanna to fill Sherman's seat. The Sherman appointment was a mistake because he was 74 years old and showing signs of senility. He proved unable to do the job and was replaced after one year.

McKinley's second problematic cabinet appointment was Russell Alger as secretary of war. Alger had an impressive resume: Civil War general, successful businessman, governor of Michigan, and national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization for Union veterans. However, Alger showed poor judgment during the Spanish-American War, clashed with his generals, and was replaced after two-and-a-half years. Elihu Root succeeded him and proved to be an outstanding secretary of war.

17. The Cuban people, frightfully misgoverned, rose against their Spanish government in 1895. Driven to desperation by economic hardship, insurgents organized themselves and adopted a scorched-earth policy, burning buildings, sugarcane fields, and other crops. They reasoned that Spain might be willing to leave if they did enough damage. Or the U.S. might be willing to jump in and help the Cubans win their independence.

Things got worse with the arrival of Spanish General Valeriano ("Butcher") Weyler. He undertook to crush the rebellion by herding 300,000 civilians into concentration camps encircled by barbed wire so that they could not assist the armed insurgents. These enclosures turned into deadly pest holes in which victims died because they lacked proper sanitation.

An outraged American public wanted action, but President Cleveland pursued a policy of neutrality. However, despite his disregard for public opinion, he appreciated the seriousness of the crisis. In April 1896, the administration sent a note to Spain, making it clear that the U.S. could not remain aloof indefinitely while the Cuban people suffered. Spain responded with a three-part reply: (a) the problem was an internal Spanish matter, (b) Spain would crush the rebellion, and (c) no aid could come to Cuba except through Spanish auspices.

Spain removed Butcher Weyler in 1897, yet affairs steadily worsened. There was some talk in Spain about granting the island a type of self-government. However, many Spaniards living in Cuba – who constituted the ruling class – bitterly opposed "surrendering" to the insurgents, and furious riots resulted. Early in 1898, McKinley sent the battleship *USS Maine* to Cuba to protect and evacuate Americans if a dangerous flare-up should occur again.

The situation grew worse when an American newspaper, on February 9, 1898, published the contents of a private letter written by the Spanish minister in Washington, Enrico Duprey de Lome. It said that McKinley's annual address to Congress "shows what McKinley is, weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd, besides being a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party." The resulting uproar of the American public forced De Lome to resign.

18. On February 14, 1898, the *Maine* mysteriously blew up and sank in the Havana Harbor, killing 260 officers and men. McKinley hoped this was an accident because he did not want to go to war. He said, "I have been through one war. I have seen the dead piled up, and I do not want to see another."

One month later, after divers had inspected the wreckage, an American court of inquiry found that the configuration of the hull, with its outside plating "bent inward" and a portion doubled back upon itself, "could in the court's opinion have been produced only by the explosion of a mine under the bottom of the ship." American newspapers, such as William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World,* attributed the explosion – without proof – to Spain. Their newspaper headlines inflamed American public opinion, and the battle cry of the hour became:

Remember the Maine!
To hell with Spain!

On April 25, 1898, McKinley asked Congress to declare war on Spain.

19. The first significant engagement of the Spanish-American War was the Battle of Manila Bay. In late April 1898, Commodore Dewey sailed from Hong Kong towards Manila with nine ships, including six fighting vessels with 1,611 crewmen. Spanish Admiral Patricio Montojo's fleet of eight warships was inside Manila Bay, arrayed in a crescent formation stretching from east to west, with shore batteries close by to protect them.

Under cover of darkness, Dewey navigated his ships through the bay's entrance, with lights covered and gun crews ready to return fire from the nearby hills. Though he knew the entrance to the harbor would be mined, he calculated that the risk was worth proceeding. As it happened, only two small mines went off, causing no significant damage. Moreover, the shore batteries did not seem to be anticipating a night entry; the batteries fired only three shots, and they all missed.

At dawn, on May 1, 1898, Dewey's ships repeatedly fired on the Spanish squadron. In the resulting battle, all eight of Montojo's warships were sunk or disabled. Some 161 Spaniards were killed and another 210 wounded. Dewey sustained no significant damage to any of his vessels and no deaths; nine men were wounded. The U.S. now controlled Manila Bay.

20. Hawaii, located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, was strategically important to the U.S. both militarily and economically. Any hostile nation that wanted to attack the American West Coast would probably launch its attack from Hawaii, the only genuinely viable coaling station in the region. Thus, by annexing Hawaii, America could project its defensive perimeter out into the Pacific, far from its continental shores. Similarly, having a coaling station in Hawaii would allow America to project naval power into Asia and provide access to Asian markets. One evening, McKinley told his aide George Cortelyou, "We need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny." In equating the acquisition of Hawaii with the country's westward expansion across North America, McKinley identified himself as an overseas expansionist.

Initially, McKinley tried to get an annexation treaty ratified in the Senate, but he could not muster the necessary two-thirds vote. However, the thrilling events in the Philippines focused the nation's attention on Hawaii. The impression spread throughout America that we needed the mid-Pacific islands as a coaling and provisioning halfway station to send supplies and reinforcements to Commodore Dewey. Consequently, McKinley was able to get a joint resolution of annexation through Congress, which required just majority votes in each house. The United States annexed Hawaii in July 1898. It received full territorial status in 1900 and became the fiftieth state in 1959.

21. The Spanish-American War was short-lived. In July 1898, the American army defeated the Spanish at Santiago, Cuba. Also, the American navy destroyed the Spanish fleet near Santiago Bay – five hundred Spaniards died and just one American. After Cuba, the United States successfully invaded Puerto Rico. The United States and Spain signed an armistice on August 13, 1898. The terms were that: (a) Cuba would become independent after a short period of control by the U.S., (b) the United States would annex Puerto Rico, and (c) the U.S. would occupy Manila and Manila Bay, with the question of the control of the Philippines to be determined at the upcoming peace conference in Paris.

The primary point of contention at the peace conference was the Philippines: both Spain and the U.S. wanted to control the islands. McKinley's decision to seek control was a significant change in American foreign policy. The Philippines is an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, more than 7,000 miles from California and just 700 miles from mainland China. In 1898, a diverse population of 8 to 10 million lived on

about 600 of those islands. The landmass of the Philippines is approximately the same as that of Arizona. McKinley's stance, which the American people supported, meant that, in effect, the U.S. would be taking on a colony of indigenous people far from our shores. He planned to grant the Philippines independence once the Philippine people were ready to govern themselves.

The U.S. and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris of 1898 in December. The terms were: (a) Spain relinquished all claims to Cuba, (b) the U.S. received three former Spanish possessions (Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands), and (c) the U.S. paid Spain $20 million. Once the treaty was signed, it went to the U.S. Senate for ratification. McKinley had shrewdly chosen three of the five American representatives at the conference to be senators, and not just any senators, but members of the Foreign Relations Committee. This virtually guaranteed that the treaty would be reported out of the committee to the full Senate, significantly increasing its chances of passing. Once it reached the floor of the Senate, McKinley and the GOP leadership used all the weapons in their arsenal (e.g., judgeships, offers of choice committee assignments, and funding for local projects) to entice senators to vote for ratification. The final vote was 57 to 27, one vote more than the required two-thirds.

22. The Spanish-American War did much to alter the nature of the presidency. The White House clerical staff ballooned from six to eighty people to keep up with the enormous increase in paperwork. A War Room was set up with fifteen telephone lines, twenty telegraph machines, and maps to trace troop and ship movements. Also, since the battles occurred so far away, the White House became a primary source for war news. Consequently, McKinley's private secretary became the first (unofficial) presidential press secretary, and the White House set up, for the first time, a press room for reporters.

The tone and character of domestic policy shifted as well. The growing importance of foreign markets eroded support for McKinley's protectionism, and the president himself changed his position on tariffs. "Isolation is no longer possible or desirable," he declared, "The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem." In 1901, one day before his death, he announced his support for reciprocal trade treaties, a considerable shift in his thinking about trade policy.

23. The acquisition of the Philippines caused problems for McKinley. When the Spanish were in charge of the archipelago, a robust native insurgency against Spanish rule existed under the command of Emilio Aguinaldo. When the United States assumed control from Spain, McKinley did not believe the islands were ready for self-governance, and the native rebellion continued. McKinley was forced to land U.S. troops there to suppress the uprising. Eventually, he sent William H. Taft to the Philippines to establish a workable government that included the Philippine people. Taft did excellent job, and McKinley appointed him governor-general of the islands in 1901. The Philippines became an independent nation in 1946.

24. Wilmington, North Carolina, was the state's largest city and most important port in 1898. It had a thriving Black community, which constituted half of the population of 20,000. The city's "Fusion" government was a biracial mixture of Republicans and Populists. In the Wilmington Insurrection of 1898, Southern Democrats led a white mob of 2,000, which overthrew the Fusion government. They expelled opposition Black and white political leaders from the city and assumed their roles. They destroyed the property and businesses of Black citizens and murdered at least 60 people, mostly Black.

The Wilmington Insurrection is considered a turning point in post-Reconstruction North Carolina politics. It was part of an era of more severe racial segregation and the disenfranchisement of African Americans throughout the South, which had been underway since the passage of a new constitution for Mississippi in 1890, which raised barriers to the registration of Black voters. Other states soon passed similar laws. Historian Laura Edwards writes, "What happened in Wilmington became an affirmation of white supremacy not just in that one city, but in the South and the nation as a whole," as it affirmed that invoking "whiteness" eclipsed the legal citizenship, individual rights, and equal protection under the law that Black Americans were guaranteed under the 14th and 15th Amendments.

When the insurrection occurred, McKinley offered to send in federal troops if Republican Governor Russell requested them. However, fearing for his own life if he made such a request, the governor did not ask for federal troops. Instead, Russell sent in the state militia, which sided with the insurrectionists. McKinley then directed his attorney general to pursue the Wilmington murderers. The local U.S. attorney convened a grand jury and sought indictments, but witnesses refused to step forward because they feared the insurrectionists' retaliation. The case languished in the Justice Department for two years until the file was closed. McKinley planned to speak out against the insurrection in his State of the Union address but changed his mind when his civil rights advisors, which included Blacks, advised him not to. They felt that drawing more attention to the

situation might make things worse for African American Wilmingtonians.

25. In the 1890s, Italy, Britain, Germany, France, Russia, and Japan each sought to establish "spheres of influence" in China. Fearful that the Europeans and Japanese might close Chinese ports to U.S. commerce, McKinley authorized Secretary of State John Hay to send a note to these countries in September 1899 suggesting an "open door" policy whereby all Chinese markets would be open to everyone. Italy, Britain, Germany, France, and Japan accepted; Russia was noncommittal.

Then, in June 1900, Chinese nationalists known as Boxers surged into Beijing, where they besieged foreign diplomatic compounds. The Boxers' goal was to drive the "foreign devils" from their country. The affected nations formed the Eight-Nation Alliance (Great Britain, France, the United States, Italy, Germany, Japan, Russia, and Austria-Hungary), an international coalition of military forces that ended the siege and the so-called "Boxer Rebellion." America reacted swiftly and contributed significantly to the coalition because McKinley already had troops in the Philippines and was able to send them to China quickly.

Alliance unity, remarkably tight during the siege, dissipated over questions of Chinese punishment, China's future, and the procedure for the upcoming negotiation. McKinley steadfastly opposed any China dismemberment, Western territorial aggrandizement, or efforts to overthrow the Chinese government. He also advocated accepting China's negotiator, who was somewhat problematic. McKinley never wavered from these positions; eventually, the other powers agreed with him. No previous president had ever exerted this kind of diplomatic sway in a matter involving the world's greatest powers. Later, an open-door policy went into effect.

26. Among the most important domestic issues that McKinley had to deal with during his presidency was bimetallism. Through most of 1897, the McKinley administration pursued an international agreement to include silver, along with gold, as an acceptable backing for the major European currencies. McKinley indicated his support for bimetallism if England, France, Russia, and Italy would go along. When negotiations with these nations over bimetallism failed in late 1897, McKinley began advocating a gold-based currency. In 1900, he signed the Gold Standard Act, which formally placed U.S. money on the gold standard. All currency was fully backed by gold, with a fixed price of $20.67 an ounce.

27. At the 1900 Republican National Convention, McKinley's renomination was a certainty, but one important question remained. Due to Vice President Hobart's death in 1899, a new candidate for vice president was needed. At the same time, New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt, a reformer, was causing problems for New York party boss Senator Thomas Platt, and Platt did not want to see Roosevelt re-elected governor. Platt and Pennsylvania party boss Martin Quay decided to get Roosevelt "kicked upstairs" to the vice presidency, where he would be out of their way.

Mark Hanna vehemently opposed this, because he felt Roosevelt was erratic and would be dangerous if he became president. McKinley privately felt that Roosevelt was not temperamentally suited for the vice presidency. In his opinion, the New Yorker could never be the tactful, level-headed, politically smooth advisor that Hobart had been. But at the convention, a groundswell of support for Roosevelt turned into a tsunami. Accordingly, McKinley announced that he would not suggest a potential running mate and would readily accept the choice of the convention. When it came time to vote, 925 of the 926 delegates voted for Roosevelt – only Teddy voted for someone else. Senator Platt was thrilled; he commented, "I'm glad we had our way." He then corrected himself, "The people, I mean, had their way."

28. Prosperity and empire were the themes of McKinley's 1900 re-election campaign. The economy was performing well, and most people approved of America's acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

McKinley chose not to actively campaign for the presidency in 1900. He did not think it was necessary, and he had no desire to repeat the exhausting front porch campaign of 1896 or damage Ida's delicate health by traveling extensively. It was a risky decision, and Mark Hanna thought it unwise, but the president decided that the best campaign strategy was to just do his job.

The star of the 1900 campaign was Theodore Roosevelt. He campaigned nationwide, traveling 20,000 miles, giving 600 speeches, and being seen by 3,000,000 people. His energy and enthusiasm amazed onlookers. "Has he been drinking?" asked an astonished Iowan as he watched Roosevelt shake hundreds of hands while telling stories and cracking jokes. "Oh, no," came the answer, "he needs no whiskey to make him feel that way – he intoxicates himself by his own enthusiasm." Teddy's campaigning, money raised by Hanna, and McKinley's popularity helped the ticket defeat William Jennings Bryan 292 to 155 electoral votes. Bryan won the Solid South and four Western states; McKinley won the rest of the country.

29. McKinley was shot twice in Buffalo on September 6, 1901, by an unemployed millworker who was an anarchist. The first wound was insignificant; the second was not. The bullet passed through his stomach and lodged near his pancreas, which it did not hit. The surgeon repaired the stomach and left the slug in place. Although the bullet missed the pancreas, it nonetheless caused a kind of ballistic trauma to the organ through heat and vibration. After a few days, the pancreas began to shut down, leaking dangerous enzymes that caused severe inflammation in the area between the stomach and the pancreas. The president's condition slowly worsened, and he asked for Ida.

As family and friends stepped back, she took his hand and leaned down to kiss him. "Good-bye – good-bye to all," the president said in a weak voice. Moments later, he whispered in Ida's ear, "It's God's way. His will, not ours, be done."

"I want to go with you," she whispered back.

He died a few days later, on September 14. When he did, Mark Hanna lamented, "Look what we've got! That damned cowboy is president of the United States!"

30. During McKinley's first term, interest revived in building a canal across either Nicaragua or Panama to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The United States wanted to do this alone, but the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Great Britain prohibited it. McKinley's secretary of state, John Hay, negotiated a new treaty with Britain's ambassador to the United States, Sir Julian Pauncefote, to address this issue. They reached a compromise that allowed the United States to build, fortify, and control such a canal. In exchange, British vessels were granted access to the canal on equal terms to American ships. The Senate ratified the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty three months after McKinley's death. The U.S. began work on the Panama Canal in 1904 and completed it in 1914.

See the next page for a list of references.

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