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Analyzing Populist Party Primary Documents: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources

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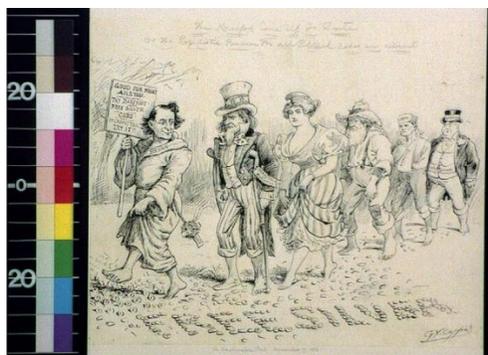
Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources
in the Gilded Age, 1877-1900
by
Cassandra Nelson

Primary Sources:

Chapman, Charles H. "The Right of Woman to the Ballot." *The Ballot and the Bullet* 3, no. 3 (1897): 36-53. Accessed December 5, 2015. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/nawbib:@field\(NUMBER @od1\(rbnawsa n2415\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/nawbib:@field(NUMBER @od1(rbnawsa n2415))).

In this essay Chapman defends woman against a statement made by Mr. Rossiter Johnson, a prominent editor of the nineteenth century. The statement that was made by Mr. Rossiter Johnson states "Woman cannot vote because she cannot fight." Throughout his essay, Chapman continues to contribute facts and examples to refute the statement made by Johnson. One statement made by Chapman in defense of woman states "Many women are skilled in the use of firearms and other weapons and use them well enough to defeat the average man in any contest of expertness." An interesting portion of Chapman's essay is when he continually compares woman to strong animals of the wild. "The lioness, tigress, and she-wolf are less aggressive than their consorts, but the hunter knows them for much more dangerous foes when they turn to bay in defense of their litters." Chapman also takes the opportunity in his essay to make the point to Johnson that "Women have had a chance of creating riots and of overthrowing governments in the French Revolution and elsewhere, and also in suppressing sedition and sustaining governments at various times and in various capacities, and have proved not wanting in power and wisdom, and these facts have to be recognized." Chapman continues to make a strong argument against Johnson by presenting the fact that "Not one but many politicians and statesmen have admitted that when women unanimously, or in a large majority, demanded the ballot, it would be given them; no power, they say, can withhold it." To end his substantial argument Chapman proclaims "We gave life, work, intellect, and money in untold profusion to free the slaves. Are we not generous enough to do the same for the rights of our mothers, wives, and sisters?" In the classroom I would have students examine this source and create a discussion where students can choose whether they agree or disagree with Chapman.

Coffin, George Yost. "The Kneipp Cure up to Date, or the Populistic Panacea for All Political Aches and Ailments." Cartoon. *Washington Post*, September 7, 1896. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog. <http://www.loc.gov/item/acd1996001882/PP/#about-this-item>. (Accessed December 5, 2015)



This political cartoon shows William Jennings Bryan leading an array of characters through the Free Silver movement. Most prominently, Uncle Sam. He is holding a crutch under his left shoulder and is frowning to the best of his ability. It is obvious that Uncle Sam has no interest in being led through the Free Silver movement. Behind Uncle Sam is a woman dressed in a patriotic dress with the stars of the flag on the top portion of the dress and the stripe portion of the flag extending on the bottom of her dress. Behind her is what

looks to be a farmer in his ragged clothes. It looks like the farmer is so poor that he cannot buy new clothing and the Free Silver Movement would help him to earn more income and buy new clothes. Behind the farmer is a wounded soldier who looks determined to follow a movement that will support his efforts in the United States Civil War. Behind the soldier is a business man in a suit and I could not tell you why he is present in this cartoon. Of course Bryan has his cross of gold and is smiling about/at his followers. The sign that Bryan is holding states "GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YOU. THE BAREFOOT, FREE SILVER CURE. IT CANNOT FAIL. TRY IT." In the cartoon it can be seen that Bryan's followers are barefoot and walking on what can be assumed as silver coins. "The Kneipp Cure" was popular in the nineteenth century which stated that by pouring water on the patient a quicker reaction would be brought on than by bathing. We can infer that the author of the cartoon felt that Bryan's belief of free silver fixing all financial problems was similar to Kneipp's medical water pouring idea. In the classroom I would ask students to individually analyze the photograph then join into groups of three to discuss what each other inferred from the cartoon and brainstorm more inferences through their peers in their group.

Donnelly, Ignatius. "The Omaha Platform: Launching the Populist Party." *The Omaha Platform: Launching the Populist Party*. 1893. Accessed December 5, 2015.

The Omaha Platform established the main issues that the Populist Party wanted to combat. The document also contains logic as to why the Populist Party was created for the people. A statement made at the beginning of the document states "The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty." After making this bold statement the document turns to say "...we seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of 'the plain people'". It is stated that the Populist Party wanted free government, but more importantly it wanted the government to be run by the people. This proposal would encourage that "...every wrong is remedied and equal rights and equal privileges securely established for all the men and women of this country." The platform of the document contains three separate declarations which include, the union of the labor forces of the United States, wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery, lastly, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil-service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees. The platform also includes the financial demands which include a national currency issued by the general government only and distributed directly to the people, free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold, lastly, a graduated income tax. Also included in the platform are the demands for government owning and operating the railroads in the interest of the people and that natural sources of wealth should not be monopolized for speculative purposes. The document finishes with a resolutions expressive which includes a free ballot and a fair count in all elections, shortening the hours of labor and that the president and vice president should only serve for one term. In the classroom I would have students compare The Omaha Platform to the Mission of the Populist Party.

Higginson, Thomas Wentworth. "Individuals vs. Classes." In *Women and the Alphabet*, 346-350. Vol. 4. Boston and New York: Riverside Press, 1900.

The essay begins by stating the final objections that people of this time period had to deny women the right to vote, "The final objection, that the majority of women have not yet expressed themselves on the subject." The essay continues by explaining that even if a specific number of women said that they wanted the right to vote that the number of women needed to earn the vote would continue to increase because people did not want women to vote. The main point of the essay is to emphasize the idea that women should be treated as individuals and not as a class. As stated in the essay, some women strongly wished to vote and others had different priorities which is why it was important that women be considered individually rather than as a class or group of people. On page three hundred and forty eight it is stated that "Emancipation swept this all away, in most cases: classes ceased to exist before the law, so far as men at least were concerned; there were only

individuals.” Shortly after this statement is made by Higginson another strong quote can be found “The most progress, the less class in legislation.” There are also portions of the essay that had a small amount of humor. One of these portions reads “If a woman wishes to travel alone, to walk the streets alone, the police protects her in that liberty. She is not thrust back into her house with the reproof, ‘My dear madam, at this particular moment the overwhelming majority of women are indoors: prove that they all wish to come out, and you shall come.’” The essay closes by expressing that it is a person’s right to be involved in the government under which they lived and to have a say as to what they want as an individual. In the classroom I would use a few more of Higginson’s essays’ from his book and have students compare and contrast his writing and word choices in each.

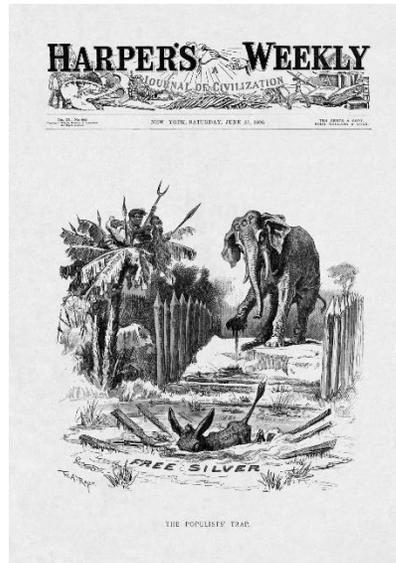
Lease, Mary Elizabeth. "A Woman's Work: Mary Lease Celebrates Women Populists." *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*. 1890. Accessed October 13, 2015.

Lease begins her speech by stating that “...old ideas, traditions and customs have broken loose from their moorings...” and that “...there is no difference between the brain of an intelligent woman and the brain of an intelligent man...” Lease uses these statements to advance into her speech to the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Lease continues her speech by describing how the time period that they are living in is similar to battles and events that they have read about in the bible since they were children. Lease advances in her speech by stating that “...the farmers and laborers could not well exclude their mothers, wives and daughters, the patient burden bearers of the home, who had been their faithful companions, their tried friends and trusted counselors through long, weary years of poverty and toil.” Lease’s objective was to grab the attention of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and explain joyfully that they are the futures of this beautiful country. But without change, Lease explains, this country will never return to its bountiful beginnings but stay in this time of turmoil. Lease concludes by stating “...when we shall have not a government of the people by capitalists, but a government of the people, by the people.” In the classroom I would have students analyze the speech made by Lease and answer questions that will help students build on their understanding of politics at this time in history.

Peffer, William Alfred. "The Mission of the Populist Party." *The North American Review* 0157, no. 445 (1893): 665-78.

Peffer clearly lays out the expectations of the Populist Party and the goals that they hope to reach as a political party. The document begins by emphasizing a need for people as a whole by stating “...all the people...”, “...common weal”, and “...public good...” within the first three sentences of the document. It is reiterated throughout the document that it is absolutely necessary that everything in the country is public. There are four demands of the Populist movement state in the document that include an exclusively national currency for which money is needed by the people, interest reduced to the level of average net profit, public transportation be brought under public control and finally that large private land-holdings be discouraged by law. The document continues on to say that the “...party deals with live issues only” and they are the only ones who had a clear position on the “money question.” The document shows how focused the Populist Party was on finances. The document includes four financial objectives that the Populist Party held. The first financial objective states that too much money in circulation is worse than too little. The second financial objective states that “...paper money cannot safely issued except on a specie basis...” the third financial objective states that “...no more silver should be coined...” and the final financial objective states that “...gold is the only proper and safe money material...” The document continues on with examples of money distribution and why certain individuals may be richer than others and how the Populist Party wants to fix this finance gap. In the classroom I would have students compare this document with a similar document of the Democratic or Republican Party that existed around the same time.

Rogers, William. "The Populists' Trap." *Harper's Weekly*, 1896, 601. Accessed October 20, 2015.
<http://elections.harperweek.com/1896/cartoon-1896-Medium.asp?UniqueID=10&Year=1896>.



The cartoon titled “The Populists’ Trap” depicts the Populists’ as savages and evil humans with spears and pitchforks. There is an elephant in the cartoon that has GOP on its forehead. The GOP elephant is standing on a bridge and has a sticky substance stuck to his front right paw. On the bridge you can see that the stakes constructing the bridge are pointed at the top. We can assume that the “savage” populists shaved the posts down to this dangerous point. The GOP elephant is angrily looking at the spot on the bridge that has fallen into the water over which it spanned. In the water, where the bridge collapsed, is a donkey half submerged in the water. On the cartoon donkey’s back you can faintly see an inscription that says “Democrat.” The most obvious portion of the cartoon is drawn right in front of where the donkey fell into the water. It is two simple words that state “Free Silver.” The “Free Silver” in this cartoon can be inferred as the pond/water that the Democratic donkey has plunged into. What can also be noted about this cartoon is the fact that the “savage” Populist’s faces are a darker shade. The artist obviously wanted to portray the “savage” Populist’s as similar to Native Americans. In the classroom I would have my students join in groups of three students to analyze and discuss the messages implied by this political cartoon.

Secondary Source(s)

Postel, Charles. *The Populist Vision*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009

The Populist Vision is split, first, into two sections titled “Farmers” and “Populists.” The book is then further broken down into eight informative chapters on the Farmers’ Alliance and the Populist Party with a ninth chapter that concludes all of the ideas and information provided. The first chapter in this monograph is titled “Push and Energy.” It discusses the formation of the Farmers Alliance as founded on business principles and exclusion of African Americans and the claims to private property rights. The second chapter is titled “Knowledge and Power.” It discusses the needed to close the gap in education in the rural areas and the exploration of introducing programs for agriculture at institutions of higher education. The third chapter is titled “A Better Woman.” This chapter discusses the status of women and their proper role in modern society as well as focusing on some of the more prominent woman of the Farmers’ Alliance. Chapter four is titled “A Farmers’ Trust.” It discusses how members of the Farmers’ Alliance blamed hard times on the middleman and the ideas that they created to help solve this issue. Also discussed is the advancements of agriculture that specific states

experienced. Chapter five covers “Business Politics” and is the first chapter of sections two. The Populist Party felt that “government functions” should be reduced to business terms. This chapter also discusses the farmers’ realization of the importance of holding political power. Chapter six discusses the “Race Progress.” Many Populists believed that segregation actually encouraged progress for both blacks and whites. Postel argues at the end of the chapter that the Farmers’ Alliance was instrumental in the creation of Jim Crow laws in the 1890’s. Chapter seven discusses “Confederation.” The relationship between The Knights of Labor and farmers was interesting in the fact that The Knights of Labor looked to the business politics of the farmer as the path to reform. Chapter eight discusses “Shrine of Science.” The topic of science and church is discussed and how different members of the Populist Party leaned on the decision of science or church and whether the two could ever work together. The final chapter is the conclusion. In the end Postel suggests why Populism failed and how Populist ideas continued to effect events in the 20th century. In the classroom I would use bits and pieces of the book in lessons that I feel the monograph would fit well into.

Websites

"History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web." History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web. September 28, 2015. Accessed October 19, 2015. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>.

The History Matters website offers hundreds of primary source documents. It also offers a digital blackboard which includes teaching assignments using Web resources. One of these assignments is, “The Historian’s Sources”, that include free iBook’s students can download that include primary sources so your students can become familiar with using primary sources. It also includes “Scripting the Past: Exploring Women’s History Through Film.” This includes activities for students to do throughout the lesson and objective questions and much more. Another portion of the website is the reference desk. This includes copyright, standards, and evaluating website resources. It gives you external links to visit if you have questions about evaluating websites. *History Matters* also includes talking history, archived forums with teachers and scholars. These include forums on an array of subjects that include strategies that worked for teachers in the classroom. Also included on the website is “syllabus central.” This link shows you a plethora of different syllabi and how they are written for specific classes on specific subjects. The syllabi are written for college classrooms but can easily be altered to fit a high school class. “Students as historians” is another section that will be helpful in the classroom. This section of the website can be used to show your current students work that is being completed by other students around the country. It can encourage your students to strive to be a student historian as well. The last two sections are mainly for teachers use. They include, “secrets of great history teachers” and “puzzled by the past.” The first gives insight to teachers on how to be a great history teacher. The last section is filled with different quizzes that you can give your students on different subjects. The amount of sources that this website includes is endless and gives students and teachers the ability to excel in history and its content. In the classroom, I would ask students to find a primary source using this website and analyze the primary source that they found.

"Votes for Women: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921." Votes for Women: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921. October 19, 1998. Accessed December 6, 2015. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawshome.html>.

When you first log onto the webpage you are greeted by a banner that states “VOTE FOR WOMEN.” If you scroll down from the greeting banner you will see an introduction paragraph that explains what can be found on this webpage. The collection includes one hundred and sixty seven books, pamphlets and other artifacts documenting the suffrage campaign. At the very bottom of the front page you can find a section titled “Understanding the Collection.” Here, you are able to read about the collection, view a timeline titled “One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage”, related resources that may be helpful in your search for historical material, and collection connections which allows the user to find a classroom standard that the resource may meet, a

collection overview, special features of the collection, historical eras covered in the collection and related collections and exhibits that you can explore for hours. When you return to the front page there is another column parallel to the “Understanding the Collection” column. The second column is titled “Working with the Collection.” Here you are able to learn how to view the collection and how to use the collection in the most effective way possible. There are tips on “how to view” which include texts and images and illustrations. Some text that you will come upon will be text from a book in image form because it was scanned to the website by The Library of Congress. This column also shares copyright and other restrictions as well as how The Library of Congress built the digital collection. In the classroom I would have students find images and primary documents to use for a poster board project on women’s suffrage.