

**HANDOUT**

# 1896 ELECTION



**WILLIAM McKINLEY**  
and Garret Hobart

POPULAR VOTE: 7,104,779  
ELECTORAL VOTE: 271

**REPUBLICAN**

McKinley was **Governor of Ohio**.

McKinley's **Front Porch Campaign** used the **railroad** to bring 3/4 of a million people, and the press, to his Ohio home.

Both candidates supported **restrictions on immigration**.

The Republicans had a well-organized campaign with **photo ops**, a tight visitor schedule for McKinley, and more than 100 million pieces of advertising.

McKinley **supported the Gold Standard**.

**"Goldbug Democrats"** left Bryan for McKinley over the Gold Standard issue.

**Industrialists** and Eastern businessmen gave McKinley huge financial support.

**Immigrant Catholics** supported McKinley.

**Expanding women's rights** was part of McKinley's platform.

McKinley supported **protective tariffs**.



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**WILLIAM JENNINGS**  
**BRYAN** and Arthur Sewall

POPULAR VOTE: 6,502,925  
ELECTORAL VOTE: 176

**DEMOCRAT / POPULIST**

Bryan was **Editor** of the *Omaha World-Herald*.

Bryan traveled by rail and made 600 speeches during his famous **"Whistle-Stop" Campaign**.

Bryan was a noted orator; his **"Cross of Gold"** speech at the convention propelled him to the nomination.

Bryan **supported Free Silver** (unlimited coinage of silver).

People in the South and West supported Bryan on hopes that **Free Silver** would solve the debt problem.

**Populists** of the Farmer/Labor Party supported Bryan but lost steam after he didn't win.

**Protestants** supported Bryan.

The **"Panic of 1893"** led to the worst depression in U.S. history up to that point. Because it happened under the Democratic administration of Grover Cleveland, it helped the Republican cause. The stock market crash was exacerbated by a rush on gold at federal banks and helped drive Bryan's populist call for free coinage of silver.

**DID YOU KNOW?** *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, published in 1900 by L. Frank Baum, has been interpreted by some as a parable about the Populist Free Silver movement and Bryan's role in it. Oz is short for ounce, the measure for gold and silver. Dorothy plays the role of the commoner from Kansas. The Tin Woodsman is the worker, the Scarecrow is the farmer, and the Cowardly Lion is Bryan himself with a big roar but little power. The yellow brick road is the Gold Standard and Dorothy's "silver slippers" (changed to ruby slippers for the film) represent Free Silver.