

Benjamin Harrison Campaign Poster

This poster for Benjamin Harrison's 1888 presidential campaign harkened back to the successful presidential campaign of his grandfather, William Henry Harrison. Benjamin Harrison used a log cabin to illustrate his Indiana roots but also contemporary political slogans about industry protection and free trade.

7

Progressive Era Politics and Reform

We must turn to these new social and economic questions which have to do with the daily lives and happiness of human beings and which press for answer; questions that involve the righteousness of American business, a juster distribution of wealth by preventing dishonest accumulation of gain; questions that look to the physical, mental, moral upbuilding of all the workers in factory and on farm throughout the entire Republic.

— Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge to the Republican State Convention, 1906

Hoosiers loved politics. On the frontier they gathered eagerly for stump speakers and campaign hoopla. William Henry Harrison's log cabin campaign of 1840 was great fun, but politics could also be deadly serious, as in the Civil War era, when Indiana's political choices helped decide the future of the nation. In the late nineteenth century Hoosiers created their own style of politics to fit their beliefs. Politics became a means by which Hoosiers created an identity, a sense of belonging to the same state and caring about it.

Indiana's Intense Style of Politics

Hoosiers created a political culture that was among the strongest in the nation. They turned out in huge numbers to vote. From 1860 to 1900 an average of 91 percent of the state's eligible voters cast their ballot in presidential election years. This high turnout placed the state far ahead of its midwestern neighbors.

Hoosiers also showed unusually strong attachment to a political party. Nearly all Indiana voters were either Republicans or Democrats. They voted a straight ticket and rarely wavered—few Democrats ever voted for a Republican and vice versa. Intense partisan loy-

alty passed from father to son. Everyone knew there were Republican families and Democratic families. Politics was so intense, in part, because elections were always close. Often Hoosiers divided almost fifty-fifty in their choice of political party. Thus, a shift in a few votes could decide an election. Especially important for each party was to make sure all their loyal voters turned out on Election Day.

To encourage voter turnout, parties provided entertainment. Campaigns became raucous spectacles with parades, barbecues, songs, food, and often whiskey. Banners flew and campaign buttons appeared on coats. What fun it was as an election approached and each party sought to make sure its voters cast a ballot!

Indiana's close elections drew national attention to the state in presidential election years. Indiana was one of a handful of swing states that could tip the balance from one candidate to favor another on the basis of only a few thousand votes. Swing states were so very important because of the Electoral College. In order to win a majority of electoral votes, each party spent most of its time and money in Indiana and other swing states. There was no reason to campaign in the South,

for example, since voters there always chose Democratic candidates. Likewise, there was no reason to campaign in New England, since New England states always voted Republican.

The national parties also sought the Indiana vote by putting a Hoosier on the national ballot, particularly as a vice-presidential candidate. These included Schuyler Colfax (1868), William H. English (1880), Thomas A. Hendricks (1876, 1884), Charles W. Fairbanks (1904, 1916), John W. Kern (1908), and Thomas R. Marshall (1912, 1916). Republican Benjamin Harrison was the only major-party Hoosier presidential nominee (1888, 1892). Harrison served as president from 1889 to 1893.

Political Issues and Progressive Reform

Beneath all the waving flags, buttons, and speeches were real political issues and real differences between the two parties. Indiana Democrats held to the Jefferson–Jackson tradition of individual freedom. They preferred small government and low taxes and claimed to represent the common man. They attracted particularly strong support among descendants of Upland southern pioneers in southern Indiana.

Republicans tended to expect more from government. They wanted local, state, and national governments to play a larger role in such areas as education, public health, women’s rights, and prohibition of alcohol. Republicans believed government could make life better.



Political Event in New Albany

Political events could be grand affairs with waving flags and live music. State politician and attorney Evan Stotsenberg from New Albany spoke at this event, ca. 1895–1937.

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COLLECTIONS OF THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Election Day with Suffragists

Suffragists and other citizens of Brookville, Indiana, gather on Election Day in this photo by Ben Winans, ca. 1900–1909. Although women would not have the right to vote until 1920, they could still be politically active. Here, women encouraged the male voters with signs that stated “Vote ‘Yes’ for Me” and “When you go in the booth think of us.”

There were always new issues to influence parties and voters. An economic depression from 1873 to 1878 touched off a wave of reform across the country, involving farming, education, democratic methods, and the economy. Reformers came together to form the Populist Party in the 1890s. While the Populist Party attracted some notice in Indiana, most Hoosiers rejected this third party because its political and social ideas were radically different than the political beliefs they held traditionally. By 1896 the Populist Party joined the Democratic Party. Although the Populists were largely unsuccessful in Indiana, they laid the foundations for future Hoosier reformers.

New reform issues flooded the political arena in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. Progressive reformers in both parties urged more government action to solve some of the negative consequences of urban and industrial growth. Progressives sought wide-ranging reform: stricter child labor laws, regulation of monopolies, a state income tax, public health measures, conservation of natural resources, prohibition of the sale of alcohol, and expanded democracy through direct primary elections, direct elections of United States senators, and women’s suffrage. Progressives also sought the powers of initiative and referendum on the state level. Initiative gave citizens

CAMPAIGN NUMBER

PUCK BUILDING, New York, October 23rd, 1912.

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PRICE TEN CENTS.

PUCK



Woodrow Wilson and Thomas Marshall

This campaign illustration from 1912 features presidential candidate Woodrow Wilson on the left and vice presidential candidate Thomas Marshall on the right. Wilson and Marshall won and served from 1913 to 1921. Prior to serving at the federal level, Marshall had been governor of Indiana from 1909 to 1913.

ON TO WASHINGTON!

the power to propose laws and referendum allowed citizens to voice their opinions on proposed legislation.

Progressive reform issues bitterly divided Hoosiers. The Republican Party's progressive wing, led by Senator Albert Beveridge, eventually joined Theodore Roosevelt's new political organization, the "Bull Moose" Party. Standpat Republicans, who were staunchly conservative and resistant to change, saw little need for reform. This caused a split in the Republican Party that helped Democrats dominate Indiana's political stage between 1909 and 1916. It also ended Beveridge's political career since standpat Republicans turned their backs on the reformer.

The reform movement divided Democrats as well. However, Democrats found popular leaders such as Thomas Marshall who minimized conflict within the party by implementing programs of slow and cautious reform. As Indiana's governor (1909–1913), Marshall was described as a "liberal with the brakes on." He sought modest progressive legislation that included some increased state regulation. Marshall also wanted the state to write a more modern constitution but this proposal failed. Marshall later served as Woodrow Wilson's vice president from 1913 to 1921.

Indiana's reformers brought many changes to the lives of Hoosiers. Progressives, many of whom were women, fought against alcohol as had Temperance crusaders for many decades. Progressives won a victory with new state and national prohibition laws. Progressives also took up the long-fought campaign for women's suffrage, which also ended victoriously in 1920 with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Indiana at 100

Although there were certainly unsolved problems facing Hoosiers as they celebrated their centennial of statehood in 1916, there were also good reasons to be proud of Indiana. Economic growth had created a booming economy with factories pushing out goods and fields waving with corn. Cities bustled with new cultural and social opportunities. Indiana authors, such as Booth Tarkington and James Whitcomb Riley, and Indiana painters, such as T. C. Steele, were among the best in the nation. For many Hoosiers there was a singular contentment in their state during the new century. This feeling was captured in a poem published in an Indianapolis newspaper in 1919. The author, William Herschell, had been a young railroad worker and participated in the 1894 Pullman Strike before becoming a journalist. He titled his poem, reproduced below, "Ain't God Good to Indiana?"

*Ain't God good to Indiana?
Other spots may look as fair,
But they lack th' soothin' somethin'
In th' Hoosier sky and air.
They don't have that snug-up feelin'
Like a mother gives a child;
They don't soothe you, soul an' body,
With their breezes soft an' mild.
They don't know th' joys of Heaven
Have their birthplace here below;
Ain't God good to Indiana?
Ain't He, fellers? Ain't He though?*

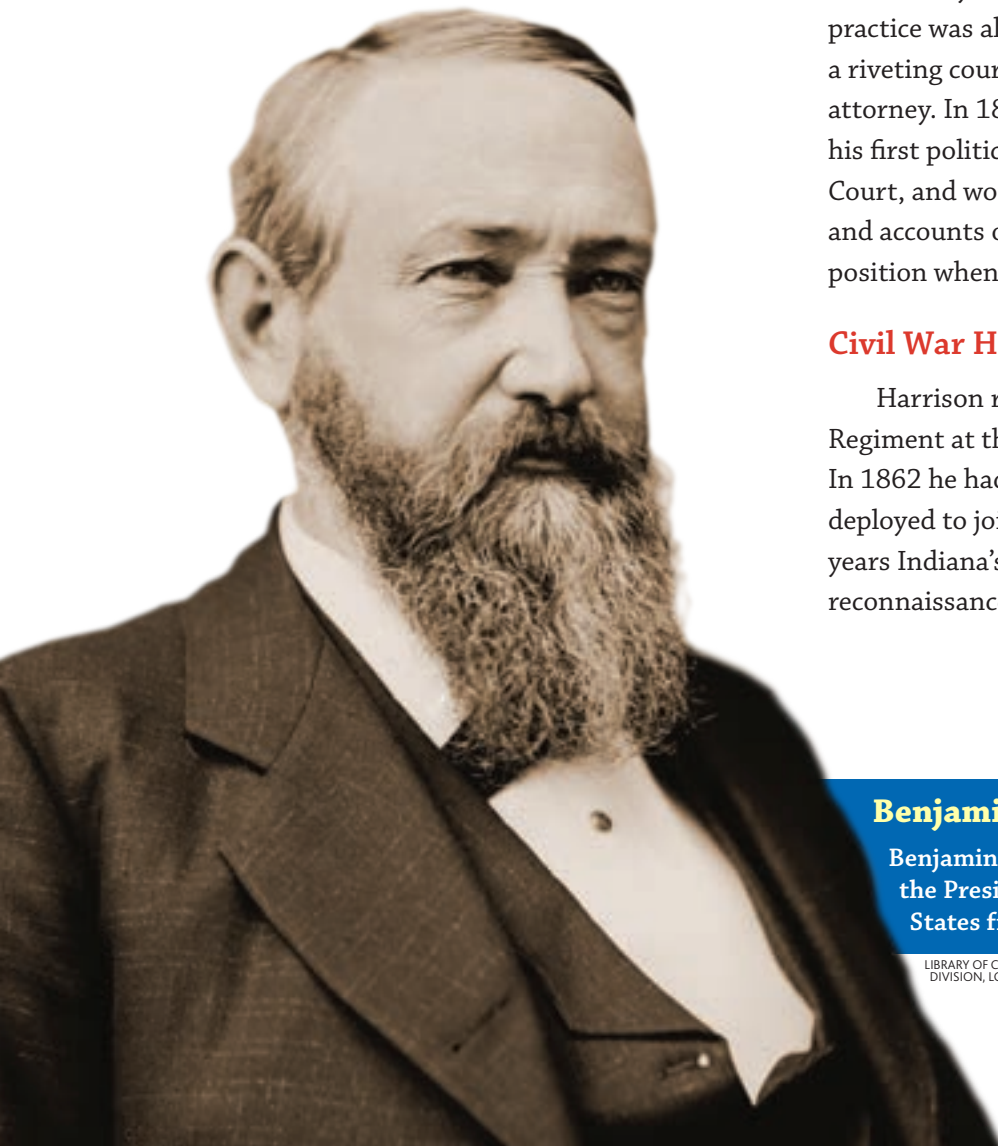
7.1

Benjamin Harrison and Indiana-Style Politics

No other people have a government more worthy of their respect and love or a land so magnificent in extent, so pleasant to look upon, and so full of generous suggestion to enterprise and labor. God has placed upon our head a diadem and has laid at our feet power and wealth beyond definition or calculation.

— Benjamin Harrison, 1889 Inaugural Address

As of 2016, Benjamin Harrison (1833–1901) is the only U.S. president elected from Indiana and is the only grandson of a former president to be elected. He brought to the executive office legal expertise, military service, Christian principles, and a hefty measure of Hoosier pragmatism.



Ancestry and Early Life

Harrison descended from a prominent American family. His paternal great-grandfather, also named Benjamin Harrison, signed the Declaration of Independence and was the governor of Virginia. His grandfather William Henry Harrison, the hero of Tippecanoe and the nation's ninth president, died shortly after his inauguration when Benjamin was seven years old.

Harrison was born on his family's large farm in North Bend, Ohio, on August 20, 1833. He attended Farmer's College where he met his future wife, Caroline Scott, whose father taught at the school. After graduating in 1853 with a law degree from Miami University of Ohio, Harrison married Caroline. The young couple settled in Indianapolis the following year and subsequently had two children, Russell and Mary.

Before he was thirty, Harrison was on his way to becoming a pillar of the Indianapolis community. A devout Christian, he became an elder in the city's First Presbyterian Church at age twenty-eight. His law practice was also successful; he earned a reputation as a riveting courtroom speaker and served as the city's attorney. In 1860 Harrison ran as a Republican for his first political office, reporter of the state Supreme Court, and won. In this office he prepared summaries and accounts of the court's proceedings. He left the position when the Civil War erupted.

Civil War Hero

Harrison raised and trained the Seventieth Indiana Regiment at the request of Governor Oliver P. Morton. In 1862 he had the rank of colonel when the regiment deployed to join the U.S. Army in Louisville. For two years Indiana's Seventieth guarded railroads and did reconnaissance, exploring and reporting on enemy

Benjamin Harrison

Benjamin Harrison served as the President of the United States from 1889 to 1893.

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President Benjamin Harrison Home

Benjamin Harrison's house in Indianapolis was not only where he lived with his family before and after his presidency but was also the scene of his "front porch" political campaign. Today the home is a National Historic Landmark and a popular house museum containing original Harrison furniture, which is open for tours and programs.

FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER

No. 1,723.—Vol. LXVII.]

NEW YORK—FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 17, 1888.

[PRICE, 10 CENTS. *ESTD. 1842.*]



THE LATE ELECTION.—POPULAR DEMONSTRATION AT THE RESIDENCE OF GENERAL HARRISON, IN INDIANAPOLIS, IN HONOR OF HIS ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY.

FROM A DESIGN BY FRANK LESLIE—SEE PAGE 212.

Harrison's Election Day

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of November 17, 1888, depicts how Benjamin Harrison's supporters swarmed the yard of his Indianapolis home after he won the presidential election. His campaign was a "front porch" campaign in name only, as Harrison did not add a porch to the house until after he returned from the White House.

territory for the army. In 1864 the regiment moved to the front lines of Major General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign.

Harrison commanded troops and fought valiantly at numerous battles, including Resaca (Georgia, May 1864) and Peachtree Creek (Georgia, July 1864). While his regiment continued in General Sherman's campaign, Harrison was promoted to brigadier general and transferred to Tennessee to lead troops in the Battle of Nashville. After winning this battle, Harrison was sent to rejoin the Seventieth Indiana Regiment, but due to illness, he reached the regiment only after the war was over. In 1865 Harrison left the army and returned to civilian life a decorated war hero.

Legal Career

Benjamin Harrison was a typical citizen of the Hoosier capital and wished always to be known as such. It was his chosen home.

— Historian Ross Lockridge, 1938

Back in Indianapolis, Harrison picked up where he had left off before the Civil War. After serving out his term as State Supreme Court reporter, he resumed his law practice and was extremely successful. In 1881 alone Harrison tried six cases before the United States Supreme Court, which enhanced his national reputation.

By 1874 Harrison's income was large enough to build a sixteen-room brick home on a lot that he bought in 1868 at 1230 North Delaware Street. At the time the house was outside Indianapolis's city limits, but it is well within city limits today. In time, many prosperous Indianapolis citizens also made their home in the north part of the city. Today, the Benjamin Harrison Home is open to the public and hosts many exhibitions and events.

In 1876 Harrison ran for governor. Although he lost, he assumed the mantle of the state's leading Republican when Oliver P. Morton died the following year. Five years after running for governor Harrison was elected to the United States Senate. An outspoken advocate of legislation for veterans' benefits, such as pensions, he was referred to as the "soldier's friend."

The "Soldier-Citizen" and the 1888 Presidential Election

In 1888 the Republican Party chose "soldier-citizen" Benjamin Harrison as its presidential candidate. Harrison conducted his presidential campaign in a typical fashion for national politics of the time. Instead of roaming the nation giving speeches, he held a "front porch" campaign, delivering many of his most important speeches from his Indianapolis home. Harrison's adoring public grabbed many souvenirs from his family's home on Delaware Street, including sections of their white picket fence. His wife Caroline is said to have joked, "If we don't go to the White House we'll go to the poor house, with all of the repairs we'll have to make."

Go to the White House they did. Even though Harrison lost the popular vote by 90,000 votes, he defeated Democratic incumbent Grover Cleveland by carrying the Electoral College 233 to 168. Winning in New York and Indiana, both important swing states, sealed his victory. Harrison was called the "centennial president" because he was sworn in a century after George Washington's inauguration. His inauguration speech was brief compared to that of his grandfather, William Henry Harrison, who set the record for giving the longest inaugural speech in United States history.

President Benjamin Harrison, 1889–1893

Harrison's administration is considered among the most activist and reform-oriented in the nineteenth century. On his watch, some very important legislation passed, including the Dependent and Disability Pension Act (for veterans, 1890), the McKinley Tariff Act (1890), the Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890), and a Meat Inspection Act (1891). Congress also expanded the size and scope of the United States Navy (1889–1901).

Harrison refused to travel to campaign for reelection in 1892 because Caroline was very ill. She lost a long battle with tuberculosis and passed away on October 25, 1892, two weeks before the general election. Harrison lost his bid for reelection to his former rival Grover Cleveland by a substantial margin.

Final Years

After leaving the White House, Harrison returned to private life in Indianapolis. Even though he traveled for speaking engagements and went to Europe on diplomatic missions, he always came back home to Indiana. In 1896 he married Mary (Lord) Dimmick, Caroline's niece, who was twenty-five years younger than him. Their daughter Elizabeth was born in 1897. In 1901 Harrison died from pneumonia at his home on Delaware Street. He is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery next to Caroline. When Mary died in 1948, she, too, was buried next to the late president.

The Legacy of Caroline Scott Harrison

It has been said "that the men to make a country are made by self-denial;" and is it not true that this Society, to live and grow and become what we would desire it to be, must be composed of self-denying women? Our hope is in unity and self sacrifice.

— Caroline Scott Harrison, Address to First Continental Congress, Daughters of the American Revolution, February 22, 1892, Washington, DC

Long before her husband became president, Caroline Scott Harrison had a reputation as a genteel woman with artistic talents. In Indianapolis many admired her dedication to charitable causes, especially those associated with orphans and veterans.

As America's twenty-third First Lady, Harrison was a role model for subsequent First Ladies. She brought her appreciation of culture to the White House by introducing French language and art classes. Seventy years later First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy also filled the White House with art, from the visual to the performing arts. Harrison started the White House china collection, which Kennedy later took a special interest in. Harrison's "American made" inaugural gown was designed by Mary Williamson of Lafayette, Indiana. More than 120 years later, First Lady Michelle Obama made a commitment to wearing clothes created by American designers.



Caroline Scott Harrison

Caroline Scott Harrison in an 1885 portrait likely painted by Lilly M. Spencer.

COURTESY OF BENJAMIN HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL SITE



COURTESY OF BENJAMIN HARRISON PRESIDENTIAL SITE

Harrison China

Caroline Scott Harrison designed and painted the motif of goldenrod and ears of corn on this plate, which was part of her White House china.

Harrison made America's first home a place that citizens could be proud of as well as a comfortable home for her family. Before the Harrisons moved in, the White House had fallen into neglect. Rats infested it, and it did not yet have electricity—situations that Harrison corrected. A gardener with a passion for orchids, Harrison used the White House's greenhouse and started the tradition of the first family having a decorated Christmas tree.

In 1890 Harrison became the President-General of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a genealogical organization for women who descend from patriots of the American Revolution. In February 1892 she invited the first

Continental Congress of the DAR to the White House for a reception and elegant dinner, which was served on the Harrison china that she had designed. Harrison gave a speech to her guests that evening—the first public address given by a sitting First Lady. A DAR historian and friend of Harrison's commented that it was a great self-sacrifice for Harrison to accept the honor of the office of President-General because even in 1890 the First Lady's health was in decline. In 1894 the Indianapolis DAR chapter was named after Harrison, who, shortly before her death in 1892 had urged a friend from Indianapolis to start a DAR chapter in her hometown. Today the Caroline Scott Harrison Chapter DAR has around 500 members.

7.2

Improving Hoosiers: Dr. John N. Hurty and Progressive Health Reform

“We must not cease our labors, as a body, until the citizens of this State have pure air to breathe, pure water to drink, unadulterated food and medicines, live in buildings that are not sources of infection to themselves or their neighbors, and have an intelligent body of agents to warn and protect them from preventable, indigenous, and importable causes of disease.”

— Dr. Luther D. Waterman, MD, president of the Indiana State Medical Society, 1878

Hoosier moderation largely prevailed during Indiana’s progressive era. Women’s suffrage, prohibition, and public welfare challenged Indiana’s preference for middle-of-the road policies. But in the area of public health, Indiana led the nation.

In 1881 the Indiana General Assembly created the Indiana State Board of Health to collect statistics and disseminate information about disease and sanitation

in order to supervise the health of the state’s citizens. In its first decade, the board’s accomplishments were modest due to lack of funding and weak leadership. It primarily focused on establishing local health boards in counties and larger cities throughout the state.

Dr. John N. Hurty, Indiana’s “Most Useful Citizen”

“Dr. Hurty has been called the most useful citizen of Indiana, and I am sure that no one that knows what he has accomplished will begrudge him this.”

— Dr. W. E. Stone, President of Purdue University, 1915

In 1896 Dr. John N. Hurty became director of the Board of Health. He campaigned for improving sanitary conditions to prevent the spread of disease and made great advancements in public health reform. Three years later, the legislature passed Hurty’s Pure Food and Drug Law, which prevented the sale of contaminated food and drugs. It was among the nation’s first such state laws. Additional reforms by the legislature included state licensing and regulation of medical professionals and expansion of accredited medical education through creation

of the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1908.

John Hurty

John Hurty, head of the State Board of Health from 1896 to 1922, at work with his secretary Louise Lingenfelter in 1917. Posters concerning public health hang in the background. Hurty’s views are expressed through one of the posters that states, “Hygiene can prevent more crime than any law.”



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Baby Class

Mothers in Terre Haute learned how to better care for their newborns in this class held by the Public Health Nursing Association in 1930. Public health efforts aimed to improve the care and nutrition of babies and reduce a troubling infant mortality rate.



Infant mortality plummeted thanks to Hurty's campaign that focused on the health and care of newborns. In 1914 the board printed thousands of copies of *The Indiana Mother's Baby Book* and distributed them to new moms around the state. The wildly popular "Better Babies Contest" held at the Indiana State Fair during the 1920s emerged from this outreach effort. In 1915 the American Medical Association ranked Indiana sixth nationally for the effectiveness of its public health programs largely because of Hurty's pioneering work.

Hurty's Youth

Born in Lebanon, Ohio, in 1852, John Newell Hurty was the son of Ann Irene and Josiah Hurty, a German-American schoolteacher who strongly

believed in the benefits of cleanliness and fresh air. Hurty adopted his father's philosophy, which greatly influenced his career as a scientist and Indiana's first public health reformer.

In 1866 the Hurty family moved to Paris, Illinois, where John, age 14, met Colonel Eli Lilly, who was part owner of a local drugstore. Hurty became Lilly's apprentice three years later. Hurty took Lilly's advice and attended the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. In 1873 Hurty joined Lilly in Indianapolis where he had opened a pharmaceutical laboratory with Dr. John Johnstone, a dentist.

In Indianapolis Hurty married Johnstone's daughter, Ethel, in 1877 and opened his own drugstore and laboratory at the corner of Ohio and Pennsylvania Streets two years later. Even in his early years in

INDIANA STATE BOARD *of* HEALTH



**I AM
DEATH**

**TO EARLY JOIN ME
BREATHE MUCH
FOUL AIR,
DRINK ALCOHOLIC
LIQUORS,**

**EAT MIDNIGHT SUPPERS,
EAT LOTS OF RICH FOOD,
BOLT YOUR FOOD OR WASH IT DOWN
WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF
BLACK COFFEE,
NEGLECT YOUR BOWELS.**

The State Board of Health released this grim poster in 1912 expressing its view of what constituted unhealthy behavior.

FERTIG AND NEVENS, INDIANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH ADVERTISEMENT

Indianapolis, Hurty was obviously concerned about public health. He performed a weekly analysis of the city's water supply and provided his findings to the Indianapolis Water Company. A proponent of education, Hurty was also a founding member of the state's first school of pharmacy at Purdue University where he occasionally taught. He remained friends with Lilly and was a pallbearer at the Colonel's funeral in 1898, when his own career was reaching its zenith.

“Dean of American Sanitarians”

During the twenty-six years Hurty directed the Indiana State Board of Health he zealously championed causes that made Indiana a national model for public health, thereby gaining a national reputation as a cutting-edge progressive reformer. Between 1899 and 1915 more than thirty-five laws were passed to improve the daily lives of Hoosiers. A few of these were the Drug Sample Law (1907)—which prevented drugs from being distributed freely; the Hydrophobia Law (1911)—that required that dogs receive the rabies vaccine; the Cold Storage Law (1911)—which regulated the temperature and time span food could be held in cold storage; and the Anti-Rat Law (1913)—that attempted to reduce the number of rats both for economic and public health reasons.

Sterilization Law and Eugenics

A person who is morally defective has no right to impose another defective on the human family. We take from them their lives when they are murderers—hang them, electrocute them—and it is not nearly so severe to take from them their right to procreate.

— Dr. John N. Hurty, 1909

Among the lengthy list of laws passed on Hurty's watch, one gave Indiana a dubious distinction—the 1907 Sterilization Law, which extended the state's quest for order and cleanliness to human behavior. The first of its kind in the nation, this *eugenics* law empowered penal and mental institutions to sterilize inmates deemed “criminals, idiots, imbeciles, and rapists.” Supporters of the law hoped that sterilization would help improve the human race and decrease social problems.

The first year the law was in effect, doctors sterilized 119 men at the Indiana Reformatory in Jeffersonville and hundreds more later. Genetics was a new field of study and its research was widely accepted. Hurty relied on this new research; he was one of the first in the nation to give talks on “morons” and “making a better race.” He claimed that “all social problems, which we have assiduously tried to solve by education, care, cure and relief, are fast becoming recognized to be biological problems.” Hurty was proud of Indiana's leadership in a movement that he considered a “higher hygiene, through which we can hope to better the race.” Historian Alexandra Minna Stern notes, “Hurty praised his signature quarantine (1903), school sanitation (1911), and pure food and drug (1906) acts in the same breath as the . . . sterilization laws.”

While eugenics crusaders in other states often targeted new immigrants from eastern Europe, Mexico, and China, Indiana more often deemed poor whites to be biologically unfit. The Committee on Mental Defectives researchers, comprised mostly of professional women, found many poor whites to research among the population of Southern Indiana. Families found in geographical edges of the hill country far from mainstream urban life struggled to cope with declining agricultural productivity and lived in extreme poverty.

In 1921 the Indiana Supreme Court overturned the 1907 eugenics law, but remnants of the crusade continued. The 1927 Holmes–Shake Bill legalized the “eugenical sterilization of mentally unfit confined to state institutions.” The following year, sterilizations commenced at the Fort Wayne School for Feeble Minded Youth; more than 1,500 eugenics sterilizations were completed there through 1957. The law stood on the books until 1974 when Governor Otis Bowen finally repealed it.

In 2007, a century after the passage of Indiana's sterilization law, a group of scholars, community leaders, human rights activists, and artists convened at the Indiana State Library for a public symposium to examine the lasting impact of eugenics in the Hoosier state. The centennial included the exhibition *Fit to Breed? The History and Legacy of Indiana Eugenics, 1907–2007*,

created by Indiana University and the Indiana State Archives, which was converted to a digital archive and published online the following year.

On April 12, 2007, the installation of a marker on the state library's east lawn recognized the 1907

eugenics sterilization law. The marker's intent was to raise public awareness of the practice of eugenics in Indiana history and to acknowledge some 2,500 Hoosiers who were sterilized against their will during the movement.

Muscatatuck Sterilization Petition

In 1940 the superintendent of the Muscatatuck State School petitioned to have a "feeble-minded" student of his school sterilized because, in his opinion, it would improve both the welfare of the student and society. This was not a lone case. Sterilizations of young people took place over several decades in the first half of the twentieth century until the sterilization law was repealed in the 1970s. [Names have been edited out of this petition.]

P E T I T I O N

To the Board of Trustees of the Muscatatuck State School:

The undersigned petitioner respectfully represents that he is the duly appointed and acting superintendent of the Muscatatuck State School.

That said institution has the care and custody of _____, a feeble-minded inmate thereof; that the said _____ was born _____ and was committed by or admission authorized through the proper authorities of _____ County, Indiana on the _____ day of _____, 19____, and has been an inmate of the Muscatatuck State School since the _____ day of _____.

That said _____ is definitely feeble-minded and incurable; and that it is the opinion of the petitioner that the welfare of the said _____ and society will be promoted by h_{er} sexual sterilization.

That your petitioner is informed and believes that _____ residing at _____, Indiana is related to said _____ as _____ and is h_{er} nearest or next of kin.

Wherefore your petitioner prays that an order be made and entered by your Board authorizing and requiring Dr. _____, a competent physician to sexually sterilize said _____ by performing on h_{er} the operation of salpingectomy, ~~vasectomy~~.

Signed _____ Supt. Muscatatuck S. S.

State of Indiana }
Jennings County } SS

Cliff Remiah being duly sworn upon oath says; that the matters and facts set forth in the foregoing petition are true as he verily believes.

Signed _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____

My Commission expires _____

Notary Public

7.3

Albert J. Beveridge: Hoosier Reformer in the Nation's Spotlight

It is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world; a land whose coastlines would inclose half the countries of Europe; a land set like a sentinel between the two imperial oceans of the globe, a greater England with a nobler destiny.

— Albert J. Beveridge, “March of the Flag” campaign speech, Indianapolis, 1898

A Hard Worker from Humble Roots

Albert Jeremiah Beveridge was born on a farm in Highland County, Ohio, on October 6, 1862. After his father fought in the Civil War, he faced chronic financial difficulties. When he lost the farm, he moved his family to Illinois. There, Beveridge pieced together the

equivalent of a high school education while doing hard labor as a farmer, railroad worker, and logger.

In 1881, with a few dollars in his pocket, Beveridge entered Indiana Asbury University (now DePauw University) at Greencastle, Indiana, where he distinguished himself as a superb, hard-working student. Industrious and organized, he accounted for every minute of his day, seldom spent time with his peers, and often slept only four hours a night in order to study. He was a talented speaker and debater, winning top prizes at school and in an interstate oratory contest.

In 1887 Beveridge married Katharine “Kate” Langsdale of Greencastle and embarked on a law career in Indianapolis. Beveridge seemed to prefer working on high-profile, public cases that dealt with issues of constitutionality, rather than those that required mostly behind-the-scenes research. His superiors in the Indianapolis legal world, including Governor Alvin P. Hovey and Indiana Supreme Court Judge Francis E. Baker, held the rising legal superstar in high esteem.



Albert Beveridge

This portrait of Albert Beveridge by Frances Johnston was taken in 1900, a year after Beveridge's election to the U.S. Senate. Beveridge grew more progressive during the ensuing decade.

From Indiana to Washington, DC

I shall fearlessly stand in the Senate of the United States for the business interests of this country, when that means the welfare of all the people; and I shall fearlessly stand for the labor interests of the land, when that means the prosperity of all the people; and I shall just as fearlessly stand against the demands of any class, when those demands do not involve the interests of the entire American people.

— Albert J. Beveridge, speech upon inauguration to United States Senate, 1899

Beveridge got his start in Indiana politics in 1884 when he began making stump speeches for Republican candidates around the state. He proved so sensational in this work that he frequently received speaking invitations from the party's candidates in neighboring states. Beveridge found himself part of a new genera-

tion of Hoosier Republican leaders who appeared on the scene in the 1890s. His main rival for party prominence was Charles Warren Fairbanks, a man as cool and reserved as Beveridge was charming and gregarious. Known by his detractors as “the Indiana Icicle,” Fairbanks was a wealthy lawyer and part owner of the *Indianapolis News*. He won a U.S. Senate seat in 1897, and in 1904 gained the vice-presidency as Theodore Roosevelt’s running mate.

Despite their common party ties, Beveridge and Fairbanks differed on a number of political issues, among them the topic of American overseas expansion. Where Fairbanks was cautious about involvement in the affairs of other nations, Beveridge was an enthusiastic promoter of the new American empire. His famed “March of the Flag” speech of 1898, which



Republican Cartoon by Udo Keppler, 1910

This political cartoon titled “The Walls of Jericho” illustrates Progressive members of the Senate, including Albert Beveridge, holding an ark with the words “Square Tariff Deal” printed on its side, protesting what they believed to be an unfair tariff bill supported by standpat Republicans. Tariffs were one of the many issues that caused a split in the Republican Party.

advocated expansion to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, helped propel him to the U.S. Senate the following year. At age thirty-six, he was one of the youngest senators in Congress.

Beveridge and Wiley: Among the Progressive Standard Bearers

In addition to American expansion overseas, Progressive-era reformers, such as Beveridge, called for widespread reform in domestic issues during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. They argued for more vigorous government intervention to lessen the negative effects of industrial and urban expansion. Calls for reform touched on many aspects of daily life. For workers, Progressives demanded stronger child labor laws and workers' compensation laws. They demanded regulation of monopolistic business practices that hindered economic competition, especially with railroads. Reformers also sought conservation of natural resources through the formation of the national park system; expanded opportunities for democratic action through women's suffrage and primary elections, which would give voters a say in which candidates ran for office; and measures to protect public health.

Thanks to public health laws, an outbreak of salmonella or botulism from contaminated food is not an everyday occurrence and makes front-page news around the country today. In large part, we can thank two landmark bills that President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law in July 1906. Both laws gave the federal government the power to safeguard the American food and drug supply. Two progressive Hoosier reformers, Albert J. Beveridge and Harvey W. Wiley, were the driving forces behind those laws.

Beveridge sent Roosevelt a copy of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, a graphic exposé of the revolting conditions in Chicago's meatpacking industry that created a national uproar upon its publication in 1906. With the president's support, he drafted the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) that mandated the inspection of all livestock, slaughterhouses, and meatpacking plants. At the time, the meat from the United States sold to other countries had to be inspected, but no

such safeguards existed for meat consumed by the American public. After an uphill battle in Congress, the FMIA passed. Exhausted, Beveridge wrote a friend, "I was about played out when Congress closed. I was not much more than a fish worm physically." Nevertheless elated and proud of his achievement, he concluded that the meat bill was "the most important exercise of federal power ever sanctioned by Congress."

Harvey J. Wiley, "father" of the Pure Food and Drug Act, was a highly respected chemistry professor and food analyst from Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, before accepting the post of chief chemist for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1883. Wiley was unflagging in his long crusade for food and drug regulation. He released his research on food adulterants—food contaminants that are impure or injurious to the consumer—in USDA bulletins. His research on the impact of certain food preservatives on humans gained national attention. Wiley also worked with pure food activist Alice Lakey from New Jersey to prompt more than a million American women to write letters in support of the 1906 Food and Drug Act. The law is widely considered the hallmark piece of Progressive legislation and a victory for the American consumer. Also known as the Wiley Act, the law gave the Bureau of Chemistry—later reorganized as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—the power to regulate food production. Wiley was the FDA's first director.

As necessary as the reform laws seemed to progressive leaders such as Beveridge, these issues bitterly divided Hoosiers. Despite being too reformist for many Hoosier voters, Beveridge won his bid for reelection in 1905 as the Republican Party split in two. Indiana senators Beveridge and Fairbanks—one an outspoken reformer, the other a "standpat" conservative Republican—stood on opposite sides of the fence. Due to the split in the Republican Party, the Democratic Party dominated the national stage from 1909 to 1916. When Beveridge ran for a third term in the Senate in 1910, he lost. Historian Daniel Levine comments that Beveridge "was convinced that he had failed to be re-elected in 1910 not because he had been too progressive but because the Republican party had not been

progressive enough.” A staunch supporter of President Theodore Roosevelt, Beveridge joined Roosevelt’s new Progressive “Bull Moose” Party in 1912, hoping to resuscitate his political career. However, he lost a 1912 bid for Indiana governor and attempts to regain his senate seat in 1914 and 1922.

Beveridge in Later Years

After the failure of his 1912 gubernatorial bid, Beveridge turned to another of his interests, historical research and writing. He excelled at this as he had in all of his previous pursuits. Beveridge wrote a four-volume biography of U.S. Supreme Court Justice John

Marshall, which won a Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1920. During the 1920s he was an active member of the American Historical Association (AHA). After completing two volumes of a planned four-volume study of Abraham Lincoln, Beveridge died in Indianapolis in 1927. His second wife Catherine (Eddy) Beveridge donated \$50,000 to the AHA in Beveridge’s memory in order to establish an award for the best book written in English on the history of the United States, Latin America, or Canada. The award is still given annually.



COURTESY OF THE FDA HISTORY OFFICE

Harvey Wiley

Harvey Wiley, a chemist at Purdue University who became chief chemist for the United States Department of Agriculture in 1883 is shown in a laboratory late in his career. Wiley was known as the “father” of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act.



FDA Cartoon

As this cartoon depicts, in the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, Harvey Wiley pushed for eliminating harmful additives in food and drugs, as well as “fake foods” and “quack remedies.”

7.4

Albion Fellows Bacon: Indiana's Housing Reformer

I began to notice how the threads of the social problems, the civic problems and even the business problems of a city are all tangled up with the housing problems, and to realize that housing reform is fundamental.

— Albion Fellows Bacon, *Beauty for Ashes* (1914)

Women as well as men were activists for reform during the Progressive Era. Albion Fellows Bacon (1865–1933) was born and died in Evansville, Indiana, but her work in hometown housing reform had both state and national impact. With her upbringing and background, Bacon could have lived the sort of quiet, comfortable life enjoyed by many upper-middle class women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth cen-

turies. But one day in the late 1890s Bacon, a wife and mother in her thirties, visited a tenement in Evansville, and her life changed radically. Years later she said the experience removed the blinders she had been wearing. For the rest of her life, she dedicated herself to the job of improving housing for the poor—an arduous, uphill journey, especially for someone who did not even have the right to vote.

A Sheltered Early Life

Mary (Erskine) Fellows named her third daughter after her recently deceased husband, Reverend Albion Fellows, who is said to have died from pneumonia at age thirty-eight. The young widow soon moved with her daughters Lura, Annie, and newborn Albion, to rural McCutchanville near family. Bacon fondly remembered her idyllic childhood in southern Indiana, where her sheltered life revolved around school and church. She and her sister Annie were passionate about writing poetry and fiction and were thrilled when a couple of their early efforts were published.

In 1881 Mary and her girls moved back to Evansville. Bacon attended the city high school, where she excelled and graduated as class salutatorian. A talented artist, she was disappointed that her mother could not afford to send her to college as she had her older sisters. Instead, Bacon took a job as a secretary for her uncle, Judge Asa Iglehart, and eventually became a skilled court stenographer.

On October 11, 1888, Bacon, then twenty-three, married prosperous dry goods merchant Hilary Edwin Bacon at Trinity Methodist Church in a double ceremony with her sister, Annie, and Annie's groom William Johnston. Hilary and Albion soon settled in a pretty, spacious house on the edge of Evansville where, Bacon later recalled, “My husband, my housekeeping, flowers, music, reading, my friends, and a pleasant social round, filled up the hours.”

The couple welcomed their daughter Margaret in 1889, Albion Mary in 1892, and twins Joy and Hilary Jr. in 1901. Bacon was active in her church but avoided getting involved with local social and political issues of the day, wishing to “exclude every ugly or blighting thing” from her life. It was

Albion Fellows Bacon

Albion Fellows Bacon, housing reformer of Evansville, ca. 1910–15. Bacon was one of the most well-known of the many women reformers in Indiana during the Progressive Era.



An Evansville Tenement, ca. 1914

This cramped tenement in Evansville illustrates just how terrible the conditions were in places where poor families lived. These were the conditions that Albion Fellows Bacon wanted to improve. This photo appears in the book Bacon wrote, *Beauty for Ashes* (1914), with the caption “Day shifts and night shifts used the same beds.”

concern for conditions at her middle daughter’s school that propelled her into civic activism—she led the fight to clean up a blighted lot to establish a safe playground on school grounds. Soon after, Margaret and Albion Mary contracted scarlet fever, a disease that in those days often proved fatal. Although Margaret and Albion Mary survived the fever, Bacon noticed that many of the poorer children in the school were sickly. For example, one child had a mother who had recently died from tuberculosis, a bacterial disease that is spread through the air. Bacon rolled up her sleeves and agreed to serve on the sanitation committee of the city’s Civic Improvement Association.

A Force to Be Reckoned With

Sights and smells rose and assaulted me, choked and gashed me, and the scars remain yet. They will until my dying day. I had never dreamed that people lived like that in our city.

— Albion Fellows Bacon, 1914

Bacon was horrified by what she saw when she went to visit Evansville’s tenements, where the city’s poorest families lived. Women and children “boiled over every window and door” in dilapidated, garbage-

ridden buildings, often with little running water. She had read about such tenement conditions in places such as New York City and Chicago, but she could not believe they existed in her city. She joined the city’s Visiting Nurse Circle, the Evansville Flower Mission, the Working Girls’ Association, and a local chapter of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). Within a few years, state legislators would know her name.

In 1907 Bacon drafted a tenement regulation bill for Evansville that was eventually passed by the city council. The following year, she addressed the Indiana Conference of Charities and Correction in South Bend on the topic “The Housing Problem of Indiana.” Using her Evansville bill as a model, Bacon gradually gained statewide support for a similar housing bill that would apply to the entire state. In January 1909 the homemaker and mother of four spoke before a joint session of the all-male State General Assembly, delivering an impressive, well-reasoned appeal. On March 3, 1909, Bacon’s bill had garnered enough support to become a law, and Governor Thomas Riley Marshall signed the bill. The next day the *Evansville Press* headline declared, “Law Framed by Mrs. Bacon Now on Books.”

AS A WAR MEASURE

The Country is
Asking of Women
Service

AS

FARMERS
MECHANICS
NURSES and DOCTORS
MUNITION WORKERS
MINE WORKERS
YEOMEN
GAS MAKERS
BELL BOYS
MESSENGERS
CONDUCTORS
MOTORMEN
ARMY COOKS
TELEGRAPHERS
AMBULANCE DRIVERS
ADVISORS TO THE
COUNCIL OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE

AND

The Country is
Getting It!

Women Are
Asking of The
Country

ENFRANCHISEMENT

Are the Women
Going to Get It?

Women's Rights Poster

In the early twentieth century, women actively participated in community organizations and addressed political issues. Their move into the public sphere continued during the United States' involvement in the First World War in 1917 and 1918. Yet as this poster points out, for all that they contributed to the country, women still did not have the right to vote.

Bacon considered her achievement merely a beginning. The 1909 bill had been watered down. For several years Bacon worked to build a stronger coalition to refuel Indiana’s housing reform movement. In 1913, with a Progressive climate in state politics, she lobbied for nothing that “decency does not demand . . . simply light and air, water, drainage, provision for waste and a degree of privacy, without which decency is difficult and home life is impossible.” On February 26, 1913, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 118, making Indiana a leader in housing reform legislation.

Women’s Suffrage

It was a point of pride with me to avoid all the little things that cause the reproachful remark “That’s just like a woman,” and to take all the fates of war, at least outwardly, in the calm impersonal way men do.

— Albion Fellows Bacon, *Beauty for Ashes* (1914)

Bacon was aware of other women reformers championing women’s right to vote, but housing reform was always her top priority. She did not publicly hop on the women’s suffrage bandwagon. One historian calls Bacon an “inadvertent” feminist. While she eventually endorsed women’s suffrage, it was from a standpoint of practicality rather than from the basic sentiment of equality. Rather, for Bacon, women’s votes were a means to an end—advancing many of the reforms she worked for.

Bacon remained a social activist, though she slowed down when her health began to decline. She passed away at home at age sixty-eight. Her daughter Joy put it simply, “Mother just burned herself out.” She is buried in Evansville’s Oak Hill Cemetery. Today, part of Bacon’s legacy lives on in Evansville through Albion Flats, a historic housing unit downtown, and the Albion Fellows Bacon Center, a non-profit organization that works to eliminate domestic abuse.

Winning the Right to Vote

Industrialization affected women just as it did men. Time-saving devices aided women in doing household tasks that decreased the amount of time it took them to finish their work, making it possible

for middle-class women to venture from their homes. Some women joined garden clubs and literary societies, while others were eager to improve their communities through charitable work and other forms of community housekeeping. The middle class women who participated in these efforts gained new skill sets in organization and publicity as well as in public speaking. Women civic reformers of Bacon’s day applied these skills in a man’s world to succeed in reaching their objectives in ways they felt would improve their cities—through housing reform, child labor regulations, prohibition, and women’s rights.

Reform was gradual in the Progressive Era, but especially so in cautious Indiana. One by one, new laws improved life for Americans and awarded equal rights to a growing number of people. Although women did much of the heavy lifting in social reform, they did so without the right to vote. Finally, in 1920, thanks to the work of thousands of woman suffragists and social crusaders such as Albion Fellows Bacon, they gained that right with the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



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Votes for Women Button, ca. 1900

Similar to politicians, suffragists used buttons and banners to spread their message.

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Essential Questions

- 1 Why was the political culture in Indiana so intense in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?
- 2 In general, what type of government did Republicans of this era favor? What about Democrats?
- 3 Why is President Benjamin Harrison’s administration considered by historians to be “activist” or “reform-minded”?
- 4 How was the state of Indiana a national leader in public health laws and practices? What role did Dr. John N. Hurty play in making Indiana a leader in public health?
- 5 What does the term “eugenics” mean? How was this practice employed in Indiana?
- 6 What Progressive reforms did Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge advocate?*
- 7 Why did the Republican Party split in the early 1900s?
- 8 What type of Progressive reforms did Albion Fellows Bacon lobby for?*

*See student activities related to this question.

Indiana’s Progressive Leaders

Industrialization, urbanization, and immigration transformed the Indiana landscape in both positive and negative ways. In the early twentieth century, Progressive reformers of both the Republican and Democratic Parties tried to mobilize government to tackle some of the negative consequences of urban and industrial growth. Progressives looked for ways to balance democracy and capitalism and focused on making the world a better place through the democratic process. They attempted to tackle the problems of modern society such as living and working conditions for laborers, the power of corporations, and corruption in government. They also urged people to be active participants in the democratic process as well as in private clubs and organizations as they worked to achieve “the greater good.”

Activity 1: Albert J. Beveridge and American Imperialism

Introduction: In 1898, as a result of the Spanish American War, the United States gained from Spain control of Guam and Puerto Rico. Also as a result of this war, Cuba gained its independence, and the United States won the ability to purchase the Philippine Islands for \$20 million.

In the Indiana Republican Party, Progressive reformers were led by Senator Albert J. Beveridge. Beveridge is best known as a proponent of American imperialism—the extension of American territory and influence throughout the world. Beveridge urged Americans to expand by taking over the governments of other nations, by force if necessary. Read the following passage from Beveridge’s famous 1898 campaign speech, a defense of imperialism, “The March of the Flag,” and consider the questions below it.

The Opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, The rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of selfgovernment[.] We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent. How do they know what our government would be without their consent? Would not the people of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this Republic to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion from which we have rescued them? And, regardless of this formula of words made only for enlightened selfgoverning people, do we owe no duty to the world? Shall we turn these peoples back to the reeking hands from which we have taken them? Shall we abandon them, with Germany, England, Japan hungering for them? Shall we save them from those nations, to give them a selfrule of tragedy?

► With a partner, note vocabulary that is unfamiliar to you. Use the context of the sentence and a dictionary or thesaurus to determine the meaning of new vocabulary. Then, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

- 1 According to Beveridge, opponents of American imperialism argued that a governed people must provide what in order for their government to be just?
- 2 What examples does Beveridge supply to refute this argument?
- 3 Why does Beveridge describe American imperialism as “a duty to the world”?
- 4 How do you think the citizens of the Philippines and of Guam and Puerto Rico might have felt about Beveridge’s comment that they needed to be rescued from “a selfrule of tragedy”?
- 5 How are the reasoning and attitudes displayed by Beveridge in this excerpt consistent with the Progressive *goal* to make the world a better place?
- 6 How are the reasoning and attitudes displayed by Beveridge in this excerpt inconsistent with the *means* used by Progressives to achieve this goal (for example, the democratic process; encouraging citizens to be active participants in their society)?

Activity 2: Albion Fellows Bacon

► Examine the tenement photograph that appears on page 189. Albion Fellows Bacon originally published this picture in her autobiography *Beauty for Ashes*. Bacon, as you have read, also urged Progressive reforms. An Evansville resident, Bacon enjoyed a sheltered upper-middle class life until she visited an Evansville tenement house. There, she witnessed the deplorable conditions in which the poor lived. Although she did not have the right to vote, she began to push for reforms to housing laws that would control or outlaw unsafe and unhealthy living conditions. She played a pivotal role in getting Indiana housing laws passed in 1909, 1913, and 1917.

Mentally divide the photograph into four quadrants. For each section, take note of the objects you see. Then, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

- 1 Based upon the objects you observed in the space, what room does this appear to be (for example, bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.)? Or, does the space appear to have more than one main function? What do you see that makes you say that?
 - 2 What adjectives would you use to describe the conditions in this tenement?
 - 3 How many coats do you see hanging on the wall? How many chairs do you see? How many beds are there? Make a guess about how many people live here.
 - 4 Does it appear that fresh air, light, and fresh water are available to the residents? Cite evidence for your answer.
 - 5 What kinds of laws or housing codes might improve the living conditions in a tenement such as this?
- In 1914, following a visit to an Evansville tenement, Bacon wrote, “Sights and smells rose and assaulted me, choked and gashed me, and the scars remain yet. . . . I had never dreamed that people lived like that in our city.” (Bacon, 88) After studying the image again, close your eyes and imagine how you might experience the space through your different senses. Write a journal entry describing the space using all five senses—sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. Your description should be at least one page long.

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