

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 68

“The New Freedom”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

“We have carried in our minds...the ideals of those men who first set their foot upon America, those little bands who came to make a foothold in the wilderness, because the great teeming nations that they had left behind them had forgotten what human liberty was, liberty of thought, liberty of religion, liberty of residence, liberty of action.

Since their day the meaning of liberty has deepened. But it has not ceased to be a fundamental demand of the human spirit, a fundamental necessity for the life of the soul. And the day is at hand when it shall be realized on this consecrated soil—a New Freedom—a Liberty widened and deepened to match the broadened life of man in modern America, restoring to him in very truth the control of his government, throwing wide all gates of lawful enterprise, unfettering his energies, and warming the generous impulses of his heart....”

Woodrow Wilson. *The New Freedom*.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 68. The New Freedom.

Back in episode 63, we looked at the US Presidential election of 1912, and ended the story upon the election of Woodrow Wilson as the 28th President of the United States. Today, I want to begin to talk about Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, but before I do that, I should introduce him to you properly.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born on December 28, 1856, in Staunton, Virginia, to a Scots-Irish family. His father was the Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, the son of immigrants from northern Ireland who became a Presbyterian minister and a professor of theology. His mother, Jessie Janet Woodrow was born in Carlisle, England, the daughter of a Scottish Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Woodrow.

Joseph Ruggles Wilson was a leader in the formation of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America in 1861, following the outbreak of the Civil War. During the war,

the Wilson family lived in Augusta, Georgia, where the elder Wilson served the First Presbyterian Church and occasionally served as a chaplain in the Confederate States Army. In 1870, the family moved to Columbia, South Carolina, where Joseph Wilson taught at Columbia Theological Seminary. In 1874, they moved again, to Wilmington, North Carolina, where Rev. Wilson became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church there.

Woodrow Wilson attended the College of New Jersey, a Presbyterian college in New Jersey, where he majored in political philosophy, graduating in 1879. He tried to make a go of it practicing law in Georgia for a while. In 1883, at the age of 26, he met Ellen Louise Axson, a minister's daughter, fell in love, and soon they became engaged. Ellen was making a name for herself as an artist, but she gave up her career to marry Woodrow. They would have three daughters.

Wilson himself, in the meanwhile, became bored with the practice of law—I hear you, Woodrow—and, against the wishes of his parents, went to graduate school at Johns Hopkins University, where he earned a Ph.D. in political science. He lectured at Cornell University, then at Bryn Mawr College, and then Wesleyan University. In 1890, he was elected to the Chair of Jurisprudence and Political Economy at his alma mater, the College of New Jersey.

Wilson's doctoral dissertation compared the American and British systems of government and argued that the British parliamentary system was superior. In Wilson's view, the American system was needlessly complex and cumbersome, which made it open to corruption. The complicated system of checks and balances made it difficult for the voters to identify which elected officials were frustrating the public will. Comparing the voting public to a schoolmaster and elected officials to an unruly classroom, Wilson asked, "How is the schoolmaster, the nation, to know which boy needs the whipping?"

In 1890, Wilson published a textbook entitled simply, *The State*, which was in widespread use into the 1920s. *The State* was a work of political philosophy that argued against the view that government was inherently evil and advocated increased government involvement in curing social ills and advancing society. In 1896, the College of New Jersey renamed itself after the town where it was located, and became Princeton University. In 1902, Wilson published the five-volume *History of the American People*, and was appointed President of Princeton University the same year.

As a professor at Princeton, Wilson had been a critic of the institution, chastising it as a small and sleepy school that had the potential to be so much more. As Princeton's president, Wilson was given the opportunity to put his money where his mouth was, so to speak, and he did, raising money and admission standards, expanding the faculty, and opening new schools within the university.

His early years as Princeton's president were promising, but by 1907, he was running into opposition. He had tried to abolish Princeton's eating clubs, which he denounced as snobbish

bastions of privilege, but was stymied when Princeton alumni—many of whom had been members of these clubs—rose up in outrage against his proposal. When Princeton received a large gift for the construction of a graduate college, the gift was conditional on accepting the donor's choice of a location for the building. Wilson wanted the building right on campus, and wanted to refuse the gift, but the trustees overruled him. When that happened, Wilson railed at the power of wealth and wondered aloud if Princeton University was up for sale. Wilson also campaigned to see more public school graduates admitted to Princeton.

It was during this period that Wilson's personal politics went from typical Southern conservative Democrat to full-throated Progressive. In view of where Wilson's career is heading next, his biographers have paid a lot of attention to this period of his life, and wondered whether it was Wilson's experiences opposing the moneyed interests and privileged elites at Princeton that pushed him into Progressivism. On the other hand, this period was also the heyday of Theodore Roosevelt and his trust-busting and Pure Food Act and "Square Deal," as we've seen, so you might be equally justified in asking whether he was inspired by the example of Roosevelt and the Progressives to take on wealth and privilege at Princeton.

I also need to point out the sad truth that Wilson discouraged African-Americans from applying to Princeton, encouraging them instead to go to predominantly African-American colleges. But this unpleasant fact notwithstanding, in this age of Progressive politics, the story of the scrappy Princeton president taking on the trustees and alumni of his own school in a fight against entrenched wealth and privilege made good copy for the muckraker journalists of the era. It probably didn't hurt that Princeton lies right between New York and Philadelphia, two important newspaper and magazine cities at the time. By 1908, George Harvey, the editor of *Harper's Weekly*, was touting Wilson for the Democratic nomination for President. Wilson modestly disavowed any interest, though he made it a point to stay close to a telegraph during the 1908 Democratic convention, just in case. But nothing came of it, and the Democrats, as you know, nominated William Jennings Bryan, although the Democratic powers-that-be in New Jersey took note of the fact that Wilson was developing a national profile as a reformer.

And in view of where we all know Wilson's career is heading, it is interesting to pause here for a moment and look at his tenure as President of Princeton for evidence of the leadership traits we are likely to see again later on. I think there are three things worth taking note of, so let's take note of them now.

The first is really boring, but it's also really important, so listen up. President of Princeton is a good training ground to hone your administrative skills. State governors and US Presidents are, first and foremost, the executives of their governments; they need to be able administrators. Wilson believed this, too, and he wrote about how administrative skill was an important and neglected characteristic in elected officials back in his political scientist days. Soon he is going to have a chance to prove his point.

Second, we can see, even at Princeton, Wilson's willingness to embrace new ideas and tackle tough projects. He was not timid, and he was not afraid to implement a new policy merely because it was new or controversial or stepped on somebody's toes. Which brings us to the third point, that when Wilson thought something was the right thing to do, he went ahead and did it, where other politicians might, you know, try to identify ahead of time who might oppose it, and perhaps take them out for a drink and a little talk and some pats on the back and a friendly handshake. That was not Wilson's way. Even when it might have been helped him get what he wanted, it was not Wilson's way.

By 1910, the fault line in the Republican Party between conservatives and Progressives is under stress, and everyone is arguing over whether President Taft is a "true Progressive" or not. New Jersey's powerful Democratic Senator, James Smith, would shortly be up for re-election. Recall that Senators are elected by the state legislature at this time, and both houses of the New Jersey legislature were controlled by Republicans, so Senator Smith needs 1910 to be a banner year for Democrats. Well as you already know, it was, but Smith urged the party to put Woodrow Wilson at the top of the ticket in New Jersey in the hope that the Wilson name would swing more legislative seats to the Democrats. Wilson was nominated at the Democratic state convention in September, resigned the presidency of Princeton in October, and won the gubernatorial election in November handily.

By the time Wilson was sworn in as governor of New Jersey in January 1911, he was already being talked about as a potential Presidential candidate in 1912. For one thing, it turned out he could give a pretty good speech, which is still important in a candidate today, but was even more important back then, before the advent of radio or television. "College professor" and "popular speaker" are not usually terms you hear in the same sentence, but I guess Wilson wasn't a typical college professor; more the kind of professor whose courses fill up fast and are really hard to get into and scores really well on ratemyprofessor.com.

The Democrats rode Wilson's coattails and took control of the state Assembly, although not the Senate. It was good enough to get Senator Smith, Wilson's patron, re-elected to the Senate. Or I should say, it would have been good enough, had Wilson supported Smith's re-election. He didn't. He endorsed someone else for the position, because he was Woodrow Wilson, and didn't believe in back room deals and quid pro quos. He proclaimed that he had not made any promises in exchange for the nomination, and was beholden to no man.

You can guess what the now-former Senator Smith thought of that. But everyone else loved it. Wilson would go on to implement a number of Progressive reforms in New Jersey, including primary elections and new anti-corruption laws. And Wilson's reputation grew.

We've already gone over the 1912 presidential election in detail, so I won't try to tell the story again. You will recall there was a lot of drama in that election, and a lot of drama around the Democratic nomination. For today, I just want to call your attention to how unusual it was for the

Democrats to nominate the governor of New Jersey, a smallish state not normally thought of as pivotal in national politics. In the eleven US Presidential elections since the Civil War, a total of fifteen major party candidates had run. Of these fifteen, seven were from New York, the most populous state in the union at that time, and four were from Ohio, a state that likes to fight with Virginia for the title “Mother of Presidents.” Strangely enough though, in 1912, both New York and Ohio had Democratic governors. You might have thought one of them would have gotten the nomination, but Wilson was the one who had garnered a national reputation.

The 1912 election had also been good for Democrats in Congress; they retained control of the House of Representatives and secured a narrow majority in the Senate, so Wilson would be dealing with a Congress controlled by his own party. For now.

[music: “Hail, Columbia”]

In those days, new Presidents weren’t sworn into office until March 4. Wilson was still governor of New Jersey. In New Jersey, as in the nation as a whole, the Democrats retained control of the lower house and won control of the New Jersey Senate, which was important because New Jersey did not and does not have a lieutenant governor; if the governor resigns, the president of the Senate becomes acting governor. So when the new Senate convened in January, 1913, it elected a Democrat, James Fielder, a Wilson ally, as its president, which pleased Wilson, as Fielder was someone in whom he had confidence.

It was safe for him to resign at that point, but Wilson did not formally resign as governor until February 25. He pressed the New Jersey legislature to ratify two pending Constitutional amendments we’ve already talked about; the Sixteenth Amendment, which would facilitate an income tax, and the Seventeenth Amendment, to require popular election of US Senators. New Jersey would ratify both these amendments, on February 4 and March 17, respectively.

But Wilson was not neglecting his upcoming Presidency. He began to meet with supporters and discuss appointments. One of his earliest appointments was William Jennings Bryan as Secretary of State. You’ll recall that Bryan ran three times as the Democratic candidate for President and played a pivotal role in winning Wilson the Democratic nomination. I’ve already mentioned how cabinet secretaries were expected to do a lot of entertaining; when Wilson broached the subject to Bryan, the religiously strict Bryan warned him that any entertaining he did would have to be alcohol-free, but Wilson told him that would not be a problem, although later on, Republicans would mock Bryan’s so-called “grape juice diplomacy.”

Wilson had run for President on a progressive platform he had called “The New Freedom.” He now published a book with that title, composed mostly of campaign speeches stitched together, in which he laid out the vision for his administration. He was aware that he owed his election to the split in the Republican Party, and so he worked hard to reach out to disappointed Roosevelt supporters. He talked up wilderness conservation, a subject not close to his own heart, but which

he knew Roosevelt voters cared deeply about. He pledged to continue the zealous anti-trust enforcement of his predecessors, and vowed to work for banking reform and tariff reform.

Wilson and his family arrived at Union Station in Washington, DC on March 3, the day before his inauguration. The little group was a bit surprised that their arrival drew so small a crowd. That was because the real excitement in Washington that day was a huge women's suffrage procession down Pennsylvania Avenue. It was the biggest demonstration for women's right to vote yet in the United States, and it was timed for the day before Wilson's swearing-in.

The demonstration had been organized by the biggest names in the American suffrage movement, notably the 28-year old Alice Paul. Paul was born in New Jersey in 1885. She was not only a Quaker, but a descendant of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. She got a bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College and a master's degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.

After being awarded her master's, she went to England to continue her studies, and there she joined Emmeline Pankhurst's Women's Social and Political Union. She was beaten by the police, arrested and imprisoned three times, went on hunger strikes three times, was released the first two times and force fed the third time. She was in poor condition when released from prison that third time, and returned to the US to recuperate. She also returned to the University of Pennsylvania and earned a Ph.D. in sociology. Her dissertation title was, "The Legal Position of Women in Pennsylvania."

She also became involved in the American suffrage movement, and brought into it a helping of British suffragette militancy. At this time in the United States, women had the right to vote in six of the 48 states, which gave women a certain measure of political clout. The more moderate suffragist organizations were focusing their energies on a state-by-state campaign to gradually increase the number of American women who could vote. Paul rejected this incremental approach, and pushed instead for a national constitutional amendment to guarantee the right of women to vote everywhere in America. And just as the British suffragettes aimed their protests at Herbert Asquith and the Liberal Party, Paul wanted to target Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party in the United States.

Paul moved to Washington in late 1912, and began to organize the procession. It was scheduled for March 3, the day before Wilson's inauguration, to drive home the message of protest against a political system that had excluded most American women from having a say in the election of the new President.

There were over eight thousand marchers, including suffragists from a number of other countries. Women organized into groups by state or country, or by profession. Some of the professional groups included women lawyers, women nurses, business women, women librarians, and women teachers. Under the banner for the state of Montana marched Jeanette

Rankin, who would return to Washington four years later as America's first woman in the US House of Representatives.

Men marched, too, albeit in a separate group. African-American women came to march, too, most notably Mary Church Terrell, a prominent advocate for racial and gender equality. But some of the white suffragists objected, and at the last minute the African-American suffragists were told they also have to march as a separate group. This went down about as well as you'd expect. Many of the African-Americans grudgingly complied, a few didn't, and there was nothing anyone could do about it.

At the head of the march was a prominent lawyer and women's suffrage advocate named Inez Milholland, who donned a long white cape and rode a white horse, cutting an impressive figure as she led the procession down Pennsylvania Avenue. The parade went smoothly at first, but the crowds on the sidewalk, mostly men, began to step out into the street and interfere with the progress of the march. They heckled the marchers, calling out things like "Why aren't you in the kitchen?" to the women marchers and "Where are your skirts?" to the men marchers. And those are the things I can repeat on a family podcast. They also said things I can't repeat, things we like to pretend no one in 1913 ever said, but of course we are just kidding ourselves.

The harassment became physical, as men jostled and shoved the women. Helen Keller was in the march. You may recall we last saw her giving a lecture in episode 26, at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. I neglected to point out then that Helen Keller has been blind and deaf since infancy. Before her time, children with such severe disabilities were regarded as incapable of an education. Keller was among the first to prove the naysayers wrong. She was going to give an address at the end of the march, but she was among the women pushed and jostled by the men, and the experience upset her so much that she was unable to give her address. You can only imagine what it must be like to be blind and deaf and getting pushed around by an angry mob. The police were supposed to control the crowd, but it was clear they were not doing their duty; in fact, they joined in on shouting epithets at the marchers.

Anyway, in spite of this opposition, most of the marchers made it to their goal and put on a pageant in front of the Treasury building. The march is regarded as a landmark moment for women's suffrage in the United States. The event attracted much attention to the issue, both for the marchers themselves and the way they were treated. Congress held hearings on the conduct of the District of Columbia police, which led to the firing of the superintendent.

Woodrow Wilson was sworn in as the 28th President of the United States the following day. There were many balls and other celebrations, but Wilson, not exactly what you'd call a party animal, did not attend them, or organize an official inaugural ball. The Wilson family spent their first night in the White House at a family dinner, and then watched the fireworks.

Wilson came to the presidency as a former governor, and was quoted as saying that being President was much like being a governor, and he expected to approach the position much the

same way. Of course, the biggest difference between the two offices is that a President has to conduct the nation's foreign relations. A few days after the election, Wilson is reported to have said, "It would be an irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign problems, for all my preparation has been in domestic matters." Fate did indeed deal out an irony to Wilson, as his presidency is destined to be remembered primarily for matters of foreign policy.

It didn't take long at all for foreign affairs to intrude into Wilson's presidency. You'll recall from episode 55 that the elected President of Mexico Francisco Madero had been overthrown in a coup and murdered just three weeks before Wilson took office, a coup in which the US Ambassador to Mexico, Henry Land Wilson, no relation, played an instrumental role in organizing. American businesses had large investments in Mexico, and wanted the Wilson administration to recognize the new government, which they saw as providing needed stability in an increasingly chaotic Mexico, while also being friendlier to American business interests.

Not with Woodrow Wilson as President. And double not, with William Jennings Bryan as the new Secretary of State. Anti-imperialism was an important Democratic Party principle, as you may recall from our discussion of the Philippine War, and William Jennings Bryan had been a vocal critic of the Taft administration's policy of promoting and defending American investment in Latin America. Taft's foreign policy had come to be referred to derisively as "dollar diplomacy"; it was actually Theodore Roosevelt who had coined that term. He didn't have much good to say about it, either.

But Taft and his secretary of state, Philander Knox, saw dollar diplomacy as part and parcel of Roosevelt's own foreign policy, such as the so-called Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. We've already seen how the powerful nations of Europe have developed almost to an art form the leveraging of unpaid debt and economic instability in a small country into excuses to land troops and take control of the government, gradually turning that country into a protectorate or a colony. France has just recently pulled off this feat in Morocco, for example.

And so, since Roosevelt's presidency, the US has been claiming the right to intervene in the affairs of Latin American states in order to prevent European powers from turning them into colonial possessions, because Monroe Doctrine. In recent years, the US has been buying up Latin American debt from European lenders in order to avoid a debt crisis like the one we saw in Venezuela in 1902. The US government extended new loans to impoverished countries like Haiti, before the Europeans could get a chance to, and were willing to send troops to restore order when trouble broke out, for example, Nicaragua in 1912.

This sort of thing really rubbed Bryan the wrong way. It was sending American boys to fight, not for national interests, but for the very moneyed interests that the populist Bryan had been campaigning against all his life. And so, Bryan and Wilson rejected the calls for them to support the new Huerta regime in Mexico. Instead, Wilson gave out a policy statement that obliquely referred to the situation in Mexico, saying that the US wanted friendship with the governments of

its neighbors to the south, but “only when supported in turn by the orderly processes of just government based upon law and not upon arbitrary and irregular force.”

That sounds nice. And I’m sure it foreshadows a Wilson administration that will keep American military forces at home, and not at all be sending them to Latin America, he said ironically.

Under Wilson’s administration, the United States became the first country in the world to recognize the new Republic of China. It wasn’t that anyone was opposed to the overthrow of the Imperial Chinese government, which most Western governments saw as corrupt, cruel, and hopelessly archaic, it’s just that the situation in China was chaotic, and it was often unclear who was in charge. This is a problem that isn’t going to go away anytime soon, by the way.

There was at this time an agreement under negotiation for an international syndicate to lend China money to build a key new railroad line. William Jennings Bryan saw American participation in this deal as more dollar diplomacy, an infringement on Chinese sovereignty to benefit wealthy bankers. Bryan persuaded Wilson to have the US pull out of the project. It was all done for the best of reasons, though there are those that argue that the US move made China that much more dependent on Japanese loans, which, if you have read ahead in the history of the twentieth century, you know is not a good thing.

Speaking of Japan, US-Japanese relations took a hit when the California legislature took up a bill that would essentially ban Japanese immigrants from owning land in that state. We’ve already seen how touchy the subject of Japanese immigration is in California, in spite of the fact that Japan has already agreed to restrict emigration to the US, and that Japanese immigrants are never going to be a particularly large community in any case. This bill caused outrage in Japan, and put Wilson in an awkward place. During last year’s campaign, the Democrats and Progressives heavily contested California, which ultimately went Progressive, but by only 174 votes out of nearly 700,000 cast. Wilson had explicitly promised to support legislation limiting the rights of Asian immigrants. He sent his secretary of state on a sensitive diplomatic mission to Sacramento, to see if some compromise could be worked out that the governments of Japan and California could both live with, but Bryan couldn’t find one. The law passed, which led to a Cabinet reshuffle in Japan. We really do need to do an episode on Japan, but for now, let’s just say that the Meiji Emperor has passed away, and the Japanese military are feeling their oats as they become a bigger part of the Japanese government. This snub from the United States was one more push—a small push, but a push—away from civilian government and toward more military control in Japan.

This was felt in the US even at the time, as the American press reported Japanese naval maneuvers as possible preparation for a surprise attack. No military action followed from either side, but you can see that things are getting pretty tense.

[music: “Columbia the Gem of the Ocean”]

We can't talk about Woodrow Wilson without touching upon the ugliest part of his legacy: increased racial discrimination and injustice in the United States, and particularly, formal segregation among US government employees. Let's review a couple of things we've already seen in prior episodes about the place of African-Americans in US society. First of all, there have been increasing legal and social restrictions on African-Americans. This process began in the late 1880s or so, since the end of the Reconstruction era in the South, and it's been getting steadily worse for some thirty years now. These restrictions have been enforced by police and courts and the legal system, and also by mob violence, in the form of lynchings.

The United States government, as an employer, has been one of the biggest exceptions to this trend. There has been, officially, no discrimination in hiring by the US government, and this is backed up by a civil service system meant to reduce patronage and promote hiring strictly on the basis of merit. For many African-Americans, US government employment represents the best job opportunity available, especially for office work. There were hardly any office jobs open to African-Americans in the private sector, so although these jobs were sometimes menial, educated African-Americans lined up for them. The flip side of this was that the African-American applicants were often better qualified, since educated white job seekers could probably find something better, and so some categories of government employee were disproportionately African-American. Two government agencies that in particular were noted for African-American employment opportunities were the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the Post Office.

But as segregation increasingly became the norm in the southern states, US government offices increasingly stood out conspicuously in contrast to the rest of the community. A 1907 editorial in the Atlanta *Constitution* grumbled that "there is scarcely a post office of a city in the south that is not overrun by Negroes...."

In 1903, the town of Indianola, Mississippi drove its postmaster, an African-American woman named Minnie Cox, out of town. Rather than replace her, the Roosevelt administration suspended mail service to the town for a year, although it must also be noted that when Cox's term expired, a white man was appointed to succeed her, and mail service resumed. In 1904, white segregationist militants—dare I say "terrorists?"—blew up the post office in Humphrey, Arkansas in response to the appointment of an African-American postmaster. And there were many other cases of violence and threats against Post Office employees.

Southern Democrats in Congress blamed this violence on the Federal government, arguing that it was the administration's insistence on racial equality that was inciting all this lawlessness in the South. And the Federal government would gradually succumb to this way of thinking. Theodore Roosevelt, as you may recall, invited Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House in 1901, but by 1906, was ordering dishonorable discharges of 167 African-American soldiers because of uncorroborated claims by white civilians that some of them had broken the law. The Taft administration never appointed a single African-American to a postmaster position in the

South. The lunchrooms in Federal office buildings in Washington refused to serve meals to African-American employees.

So it's not as if the US government was some sort of color-blind utopia even in the Roosevelt and Taft administrations. There were injustices, and things were getting worse, not better. But the cause of equality in Federal employment took a big step backward when Wilson became President. There were few southern Republicans in Congress, which made it easier for a Republican administration to resist Southern pressure. But the new Democratic administration needed the votes of Southern Democrats in Congress, and Wilson, a Southerner himself, would be expected to appoint Southerners to his Cabinet.

Two important Cabinet appointments that went to Southerners were Secretary of the Treasury, which went to William McAdoo, originally from Georgia, and Postmaster General to Albert Burleson, a Member of Congress from Texas. These are the very same two government agencies I just pointed out were known for their African-American employment. They immediately introduced segregation into their workplaces.

Up until this time, it was generally understood that state laws requiring separation of the races, separate bathrooms, separate eating facilities, and so on, did not apply on Federal property. Now, McAdoo and Burleson began applying them. African-American employees were moved to separate rooms, or into sections that were screened off from white employees. Rest rooms and locker rooms were segregated by race.

In 1914, with photography becoming commonplace, the US government began requiring job applicants to submit photographs along with their applications. Ostensibly, this was to reduce fraud in the application process, but of course it also made it very easy to distinguish applicants by race.

This introduction of segregation into the Federal government is the biggest blot on Wilson's record as President. Wilson is generally regarded as one of America's best presidents, but in modern times there are calls to re-evaluate his place in history in light of his policies on race. It's a difficult question. How do you weigh Thomas Jefferson's career as a staunch advocate for human rights against the fact that he was a slaveholder? Wilson presents similar problems, and I suppose it's up to each of us to weigh Wilson's legacy for ourselves. I've laid out the case against Wilson here; we will have to wait for future episodes to examine his greatest accomplishments.

Wilson did not invent segregation. He did not even introduce segregation in Federal employment. It began before his presidency, and it will continue for decades afterward. Still, he did more to advance segregation than did most presidents. True, he was a son of the South, and he had no choice politically but to work with Southern Democrats, but ultimately, the way in which Woodrow Wilson disappoints us the most is that he failed to bring to bear on questions of race the same high idealism and staunch principles he displayed on so many other issues. The

Wilson who stood up to the Princeton trustees and who refused to recommend his own political patron for the US Senate because it went against his principles could have and should have stood firmer against his own Postmaster General.

Instead, Wilson would fall back on the tired argument that segregation was actually a good thing for people of both races. Yeah, tell that to the Treasury Department employees who just got moved to the part of the building that doesn't have heat.

We'll have to stop there for today. Thanks for listening. I'm still behind in my research, so I have to ask for another week off to help get me caught up. So I apologize for that; there won't be a new episode next week, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time to pick up a thread I left dangling back in episode 66. That was the one on the Italo-Ottoman War, and I mentioned at the end of that episode that a new war had broken out in the Balkans just as the old Italo-Ottoman War was winding down. It's "some damn silly thing in the Balkans," in two weeks, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo was a widower, his first wife having died in 1912. In 1914, the 50-year old McAdoo would marry the President's youngest daughter, the 24-year old Eleanor Randolph Wilson. They would have two daughters together; that's in addition to McAdoo's seven children from his first marriage. After twenty years together, they would divorce in 1934.

[music: Closing Theme]