

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 216

“A Return to Normalcy”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.

United States Senator Warren Gamaliel Harding.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 216. A Return to Normalcy.

Warren Gamaliel Harding was born on November 2, 1865, in Blooming Grove, Ohio. His father was a Baptist; his mother a Methodist who later became a Seventh-Day Adventist. She's the one responsible for giving her son that middle name; it was an expression of her desire that her first-born child would someday become a minister and a teacher of God's word. She gave him a strict fundamentalist upbringing.

But fate had something quite different in store for him. Accounts of his childhood tell us stories typical of an energetic boy growing up in a small town. He was not gifted academically, he was not an athlete, nor was he a leader, but he was friendly and popular, and could usually be found running with the crowd of local boys. There you have Warren G. Harding in a nutshell.

But even in his boyhood, Warren Harding, like his father before him, was haunted by rumors that his great-great-grandmother had been African American. The fact that the Hardings had always been staunch abolitionists probably have had something to do with this rumor getting started, but in the United States of this era, such an accusation could quickly turn even someone as well liked as Warren Harding into a pariah. Even as a child, young Warren would sometimes be taunted with racial slurs, and these whispers—sometimes amplified into shouts—would hound Warren Harding throughout his life. There are numerous instances recorded in which Harding threatened

violence against various people spreading this story, so it must have hurt him deeply. To the extent that it matters, in our time genetic testing of Harding's descendants has shown zero evidence of African ancestry.

At the age of 14, Harding enrolled in Ohio Central College, his father's alma mater. This was a normal school, that is, a school meant to educate teachers. Harding graduated in 1882, at the age of 16, in a graduating class of exactly three. Sadly, no record survives to tell us whether he was first in his class, or last in his class, or somewhere in between. We do know from his letters that he had little to say about his academic pursuits, much more to say about the friendships he had made, but most of all he liked to talk about the little school newspaper he and one of his classmates created, called the *Spectator*. It only lasted six issues, but the teenage Warren Harding sure seems to have enjoyed working on it.

One of Harding's college friends was a religious skeptic, who engaged Harding in religious discussions that appear to have led him away from conventional Christianity. For the rest of his life, Harding would be a reluctant churchgoer, although he probably still believed in the existence of God.

Harding taught for one year in a one-room schoolhouse in Marion County, Ohio, and that was all it took for him to decide that this wasn't the life for him. He tried studying law and selling insurance before returning to the only work for which he had ever shown any passion. He wrangled \$300 to buy a failing newspaper, the *Marion Star*.

Harding was reputedly good looking and charismatic. Frankly, I've looked at photographs of him in his young adulthood and I'm not seeing it, although it is the case that the preferred photographic portrait style of the time was to ask your subject to adopt a pose as if they had just taken a big bite out of a lemon, and if you want to tell me that maybe Warren G. Harding is no Michael B. Jordan, but he was at least the most eligible bachelor in Marion, Ohio, population 8,000 in 1890, well, maybe I'll buy that one. He was six feet tall and two hundred pounds, which would have made him a strikingly big guy by the standards of the time. Maybe that was it.

But the eligible young ladies of Marion, Ohio must have been sorely disappointed when the 25-year old Warren Harding married the 30-year-old Florence Kling DeWolfe, who was usually called Flossie. She was the daughter of one of the richest and most important people in town, Amos Kling, and had already defied her father once before by marrying Peter DeWolfe, who gave her a son, but nothing else. He abandoned her, they divorced, and Pete DeWolfe eventually drank himself to death. So not what you would call grade-A marriage material. Flossie's parents agreed to raise her young son, but they would not support her, and so Flossie made her living giving piano lessons. One of her students was Charity Harding, Warren's little sister, and the rest, as they say, is history, although Amos Kling also refused to give his consent to this marriage, because he believed the story that Warren Harding was part African American, and he would have nothing to do with his daughter or son-in-law for the next fourteen years.

Warren Harding would prove to be a much more dependable provider for Flossie than Pete ever was, although they would have no children together, and there is solid evidence that Warren was involved in at least two—and probably more—affairs with other women, although none of this came out until after his death. He had an illegitimate daughter with one of these women; she would be his only offspring.

Flossie Harding was a tough and ambitious woman, but in those days the only outlet an ambitious woman had for her ambitions was her husband. Flossie Harding dedicated herself to her husband's career, so much so that he and other people took to referring to her as "the Duchess," which was not always meant as a compliment. The Duchess would boast that Warren did well when he took her advice, when he did not, he did poorly. Some accounts of Warren Harding's life give Flossie most of the credit for Warren making it to the White House.

By her own account, the Duchess dropped by the offices of Warren's newspaper, the *Marion Star*, to help out one day, and stayed on for fourteen years. She managed the business side of the newspaper, while Warren managed the editorial side. He also sold advertising; Warren was nothing if not a salesman, and his advertising calls gave him the opportunity to build relationships with the wealthiest and most influential people in his community.

The *Star* was one of three newspapers in town when Harding bought it, and the only daily. It was also losing money. The other two papers had a Democratic and a Republican editorial perspective. Harding himself was a committed Republican, and Ohio was a staunchly Republican state at this time, but Marion County voted Democratic. For business reasons, Harding chose an editorial stance for his paper that you could call moderate Republican or reasonable Republican. Definitely Republican, but tailored so as not to be needlessly antagonistic toward those who disagreed. This was a successful formula for the paper, and there you also have as good a summary as any of Warren Harding's political views.

[music: Von Tilzer and Fleeson, "I'll Be With You in Apple Blossom Time"]

Harding became involved in Republican Party politics and was regularly chosen as a delegate to first state and later national Republican conventions. He tried running for office a few times himself without success, until 1914, when Ohio political boss Harry Daugherty persuaded Harding to run for the United States Senate. In the primary—Ohio's first primary election in its history—Harding defeated former US Senator Joseph Foraker, whose name has popped up quite a few times already in this podcast, in episodes 24, 43, 53, and 97, specifically. Foraker was attempting a political comeback and Harding was drafted to oppose him. Harding went on to win the general election convincingly against Democratic candidate Timothy Hogan, an Irish Catholic. The Republicans fully exploited anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment, declaring that Hogan wanted to hand Ohio over to the Pope.

Harding's victory in what was otherwise a bad year for Republicans nationally attracted attention, although being a first-term Senator of the minority party didn't give him much

opportunity to make a name for himself in Washington. It got better for him after the Republicans took the Senate in 1918. Harding was a reliable vote against Wilson and against the Treaty of Versailles. He did vote in favor of both Prohibition and women's suffrage, despite being personally opposed to both; his justification was that his constituents in Ohio supported both of these Constitutional amendments.

It was widely believed in 1918 that Theodore Roosevelt would run for President once again in 1920, but as you know, Roosevelt died in early 1919, episode 173, leaving something of a vacuum in the Republican Party leadership. Roosevelt had split the party in 1912, then reconciled, but the bitterness lingered. The party's 1916 candidate, Charles Evans Hughes, who might have made a good compromise choice, declined to run a second time.

The leading candidate for the nomination, and the one who positioned himself as Roosevelt's political heir, was Leonard Wood, the army physician who had been close to Roosevelt ever since Roosevelt first became Vice President. But Wood was a military man. He supported the League of Nations, but his positions on domestic policy were murky and difficult to square with his professed Progressivism. Then there was Senator Hiram Johnson of California, a former Progressive who, you'll recall, had been Roosevelt's Vice Presidential running mate on the 1912 Progressive ticket, which gave him impeccable Progressive credentials, but he was an Irreconcilable on the League of Nations question, which made him unacceptable to Eastern Progressives.

The favorite candidate of conservative Republicans was the governor of Illinois, Frank Lowden, who had made a name for himself with his judicious handling of the 1919 Chicago race riot, episode 204. Lowden was not gifted with great political skills, but he certainly married well. His wife, who was also named Florence, was the daughter of the fantastically wealthy George Pullman, he of railroad car fame. Leonard Wood also had a political angel, in the form of William Procter, heir to one of the founders of the Ohio firm Procter & Gamble, best known at that time for its signature product, Ivory Soap, touted as 99 ⁴⁴/₁₀₀% pure, so pure, it floats! Actually, it floats because it has air in it. In 1911, Procter & Gamble introduced the first all-vegetable shortening, made through a newly discovered process of hydrogenating cottonseed oil until it is hard at room temperature. This hydrogenated cottonseed oil was originally intended to be used as an ingredient in the soap, until someone realized it could also be marketed for cooking. It was sold under the trade name Crisco, which was coined as a contraction of "crystallized cottonseed oil."

But I digress.

Republicans had good reasons to hope that 1920 would be their year. Woodrow Wilson had squeaked into the White House in 1912 thanks to Theodore Roosevelt's apostasy, but the 1918 midterms had sent a clear signal that the voters' dalliance with the Democratic Party was over and they were ready to return to the Republican status quo that had been in place since Abraham

Lincoln, sixty years ago. The reality was that, no matter how much you admired Woodrow Wilson's peacetime policies of his first term, no matter how happy you were that the war was over and the USA had played an important role in securing an Allied victory, the truth was that in the two years between the Armistice and the 1920 election, very little in the United States had gone right. You know this if you've been listening to the podcast. Americans of this time had to confront the high cost of living, unemployment, collapsing farm prices, unprecedented racial violence, and the Red Scare. Woodrow Wilson had offered virtually no leadership on any of these pressing problems, preoccupied as he was by the Treaty of Versailles, which he could not get the Republican Senate to approve, and later impaired by his failing health.

But the contest for the Republican nomination would be bitter. Lowden had his in-laws' money behind him; Wood had the Procter money, and both their campaigns would spend freely; more than had ever been seen before in a Presidential campaign, so much in fact, as to be off-putting. We're talking about amounts of money that are pocket change by the standards of today's Presidential elections. Even adjusting for inflation, the dollar amounts spent in 1920 are comparable to no more than a medium-sized Senate campaign a hundred years later. Still, in 1920, there were many who took offense at campaign expenditures of this magnitude and wondered aloud if American democracy was up for sale.

And then there was Warren Harding. His convincing Senate win had people speculating about his Presidential prospects from the very beginning. Ohio had a powerful and influential Republican Party. Consider the fact that Harding's home state produced six out of the past ten US Presidents. Ohio had voted Republican in almost every Presidential election since the Republicans first put up a candidate, back in 1856, the two exceptions being the two occasions when Woodrow Wilson was on the ballot. If Ohio could be brought back into the Republican fold, that would probably clinch the election right there.

It was the Ohio political boss Harry Daugherty, the same man who had recruited Harding to run for the Senate six years ago, who convinced him to run for President. Now in those days, there was often something called a "favorite son" candidate, who would "run" for President only in their home state, as a way of keeping that state's delegation independent of any of the real candidates, with an eye toward cutting some kind of deal at the convention in exchange for that state's support. But let's be clear here. Harding was not a favorite son candidate. He said so on the day he announced his candidacy in December 1919, and he stuck to it. The whole "favorite son" thing was falling out of favor in this, the Progressive era. Ohio had a primary now, and primary voters weren't going to vote for a favorite son just to give a handful of political insiders some clout. They were going to vote for the person they wanted as President.

But the stigma that Harding was a mere favorite son candidate despite his denials handicapped his campaign, as did that fact that he only had a fraction of the funding the frontrunners enjoyed. Nevertheless, he and Daugherty plugged along with their campaign, essentially a two-person operation. In February 1920, before the primary season even began and months before the

convention, Daugherty explained the Harding campaign strategy with an eerily prescient prediction:

I don't expect Senator Harding to be nominated on the first, second, or third ballots, but I think we can afford to take chances that about 11 minutes after two, Friday morning of the convention, when 15 or 12 weary men are sitting around a table, someone will say: "Who will we nominate?" At that decisive time, the friends of Harding will suggest him and we can well afford to abide by the result.

Harding himself was less optimistic. He told a friend, "The only thing I really worry about is that I might be nominated and elected. That's an awful thing to contemplate."

Harding campaigned in several states in early 1920, but he didn't have the resources to mount anything like a national campaign. The bulk of his effort was focused on his home state of Ohio, and next on the neighboring state of Indiana.

The Wood campaign was the best funded of them all and they saw an opportunity to close the door decisively on Harding's Presidential aspirations by beating him in his own home state. They spent freely, but obtained a mixed result: 39 delegates for Harding, nine for Wood. It was not the decisive defeat Wood was hoping for, but it was enough of an embarrassment for that result, plus Harding getting shut out in the Indiana primary despite investing a lot of effort there, to lead some of the political press to declare Harding's Presidential hopes dashed.

But at the same time, the large sums of money being spent by Wood and Lowden continued to offend many, including the less-well-funded Hiram Johnson. Johnson's fellow Progressive and political ally, Senator William Borah of Idaho, persuaded the Senate to pass a resolution directing the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to investigate campaign spending in the Presidential race. The committee investigation revealed unsavory practices in both campaigns, but it also drew the ire of both front runners against Hiram Johnson.

When the Republican convention met, in Chicago in June 1920, no one had enough delegates to win outright, and there was so much bad blood between the campaigns of the three leading candidates, Wood, Lowden, and Johnson, that none of them was willing to concede to either of their main opponents. But first, the convention had to hammer out the party platform, including the most contentious issue facing Republicans that year, the League of Nations. The party position was a masterpiece of political obfuscation. It condemned the League of Nations, but then called for an international organization to enforce international law and protect the peace. As long as it's *not* called the League of Nations, the platform did not say, but might as well have. Supporters and opponents of the League both declared themselves satisfied with this Solomonic compromise, authored by our old friend, former Secretary of State Elihu Root.

Meanwhile, Harry Daugherty was campaigning in the background for Warren Harding. Harding had been a visible presence at the previous two Republican conventions. He was known, he was liked, and Daugherty emphasized that he had one strength none of the leaders had: nobody hated him. He was a figure the whole party could rally behind. And don't forget, he's from Ohio.

On Friday, June 11, the convention got down to the business of selecting a nominee for President. Four ballots were held. In all four ballots, Wood got the most votes, with Lowden second. Both candidates got more votes on each succeeding ballot, with Lowden gaining them faster, so both campaigns had reason to want to keep going. At 7:00 PM, though, a motion was made to adjourn, and despite a loud chorus of "noes," the convention chair, Henry Cabot Lodge, declared the convention adjourned until Saturday morning.

That night, a meeting was held in a suite at the Blackstone Hotel, and it is here that Harry Daugherty's uncanny prediction became reality. That's the story, anyway. In fact, this was not a meeting of powerbrokers who made a decision and then foisted it on the convention. It was more like an informal discussion group among party elders who were concerned about the deadlock and didn't know what to do about it. The meeting lasted six hours, with various figures coming and going throughout, but the name of Warren Harding kept coming up as a potential compromise candidate, simply on the basis that he was the choice most palatable across the party factions. No one was excited about him, but at least no one hated him. Also, the Democrats were rumored to be considering the governor of Ohio for their nomination. Do you really want to concede the home state advantage in such a pivotal state?

It took six more ballots on Saturday to make it happen, with Harding only moving into first place on the ninth ballot and clinching the nomination on the tenth. Harding had his own choice for Vice President, but before that name could be put into nomination, rank-and-file delegates on the floor began calling out the name of Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge, and that was that.

[music: Gershwin, "Swanee"]

If you'll indulge me for a moment, I'd like to say a word about Harding's speech, given in May 1920, during the run-up to the convention, the speech I quoted at the top of the episode, and particularly its use of the word *normalcy*, which became associated with Harding and his 1920 Presidential campaign as a result of that speech.

When I was a lad, my high school history teacher taught me that *normalcy* is not a proper English word. The correct word would have been *normality*, but Harding used "normalcy" because he didn't know any better, and you sometimes still hear the word *normalcy* used even in our day, but that's only because Warren Harding introduced it into the American vocabulary, and his use of the word is as good an example as any of how Warren Harding was an amiable doofus who didn't really know much of anything.

Huh. Well, it turns out that none of this is true. Except for the amiable doofus part, but we'll reserve judgment on Harding the man for now. Even in 1920, there were those who challenged Harding's use of the word *normalcy* and suggested it was evidence of lack of education. Harding defended himself by noting he had consulted the dictionary when he wrote the speech, and the word was right there.

I checked my Oxford English Dictionary, and it backs up Harding, or at least his claim that the word was in the dictionary. The OED cites an 1857 use of the word, so Harding certainly didn't invent it. The sources I consult treat *normality* and *normalcy* as virtual synonyms. I think I detect a slight difference in meaning between the two, but never mind. There's also the word *normalness* to consider, if you consider that a word. Anyway, the sources seem to agree that *normalcy* is more common in the US than in other English-speaking countries, and you can probably credit that to Warren Harding, and one of my sources suggests that the word *normalcy* is most frequently used in the US when describing the political state of the country, which I'm sure you can credit to Warren Harding.

On the Democratic side, the two obvious front-runners were Attorney General Mitchell Palmer and Presidential son-in-law and former Treasury Secretary William McAdoo. The problem here was that Woodrow Wilson was still hoping to be nominated himself for an unprecedented third term, despite his illness, which meant Wilson wouldn't be endorsing anyone else, which helped open the door to other candidates, the next two most popular being the governors of New York, Alfred E. Smith, and of Ohio, James Cox.

In fact, no one in Democratic Party leadership wanted to see Wilson nominated for a third term. They all knew he was in no physical condition for it, and they also knew what Wilson apparently could not accept, that he was no longer all that popular. Party leaders pulled strings to prevent anyone from putting Wilson's name into nomination, out of fear that the rank and file, who perhaps weren't fully aware of Wilson's condition, might vote for him out of sentimentality.

McAdoo was unwilling to campaign too openly, out of respect for his father in law, while Palmer's star faded in May, once the absurdities of his Red Scare campaign became apparent. The Democratic convention was held beginning June 28 in San Francisco, the first time a major party sited its convention on the West Coast. The balloting for the nomination ran in a manner similar to what the Republicans had seen. The two front runners got the most votes on the first few ballots, then faded. Only the Democrats require a two-thirds vote, so it took 44 ballots before the number three candidate, James Cox, governor of Ohio, secured the nomination. Cox was popular in the party, and a moderate Progressive, so he seemed a good compromise choice. For their Vice Presidential candidate, the Democrats turned to Assistant Navy Secretary Franklin Roosevelt, whose name was thought to be helpful to the ticket.

The Republicans outspent the Democrats four to one in this election. Harding attempted a “front porch” strategy, of the kind used by William McKinley back in 1896, while Cox and Roosevelt traveled the nation energetically.

A common complaint you hear during US Presidential elections is that there is no real difference between the two candidates. This election, the 1920 election, might well be the place where those complaints got started. The two parties had put up the governor of Ohio and one of the state’s two Senators. Both of them had been in the newspaper business before entering politics. Both of them were compromise candidates. On the biggest issue of the day, the League of Nations, both candidates hedged. One reporter noted that “[t]he people indeed do not know what ideas Harding or Cox represent; neither do Harding or Cox.”

Irish-American voters, traditionally Democrats, were unhappy with Wilson and his party for their failure to support Irish independence. German-Americans, who perhaps leaned Republican anyway, were unhappy with having had their patriotism questioned. Harding courted the African-American vote, a constituency that had gotten little love from Wilson and the Democrats, with calls for equal rights and a federal anti-lynching law. Flossie Harding had proved a valuable campaign asset in this, the first Presidential election in which women could vote. She received thousands of visitors at their house in Marion with grace and charm. The economy, which had been strong for most of Wilson’s Presidency, had gone weak. But most important of all, the American public was tired of all the drama. Tired of war and riots and strikes and unrest and the endless bickering in Washington. What they wanted, what everyone wanted in 1920, was for everything to just go back to the way it was before the war. And Warren Harding, by accident or design, had struck a chord with his call for a return to normalcy.

The Democrats went into the campaign with high hopes, since the Republicans had proved to be so bitterly divided. But the Republicans put aside their differences and united behind Harding. By October, party insiders were debating not whether Harding would win, but by how great a margin.

But there was one more shock before the election, the dreaded “October surprise” that haunts everyone involved in American political campaigns. This one was delivered three weeks before the election, courtesy of one William Chancellor, a professor of social science at The College of Wooster in Ohio. Chancellor was a supporter of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations. He was also a nut case on the subject of race, and now he was publicizing those old rumors that Warren Harding’s ancestry was part African American. He produced documents purporting to prove it, and to prove that Harding’s candidacy was part of a secret plot to impose Black rule on white America.

Most reputable newspapers refused to carry this story. The Cox campaign and the Democratic Party, to their credit, also refused to circulate the story. Warren Harding, characteristically, threatened privately to go to Wooster and beat Chancellor up. Harding and Dougherty wanted to

issue some kind of rebuttal, but Flossie Harding convinced them the best approach was to ignore the story. And she proved to be right about that. In the end, the story had little impact, other than that Professor Chancellor lost his position at the College of Wooster in 1921.

By Election Day, Harding was widely expected to win, but even so, the results were surprisingly lopsided, with the Republican ticket taking just over 60% of the popular vote, the largest vote share ever taken by a Presidential candidate since they started compiling the popular vote. The Electoral College vote was 404-127, with the Republicans prevailing in 37 states. The Democrats took only eleven, losing even Tennessee, the first time one of the former Confederate states went Republican since the disputed election of 1876. The only non-Confederate state carried by the Democrats was the border state of Kentucky.

Socialist Party candidate Eugene Debs came in third in the popular vote, with 3.4%. This was his fifth and last Presidential campaign, but the number of votes he won, almost a million, was remarkable in view of the fact he was in prison at the time for violating the Espionage Act, episode 158. Woodrow Wilson's Attorney General, Mitchell Palmer, favored clemency for Debs, but was unable to persuade Wilson to approve it, even as late as January 1921. Warren Harding would eventually commute Debs's sentence to time served and he would be released on Christmas Day 1921.

This was the first Presidential election in which women were eligible to vote everywhere in the country, and there are those who take advantage of Harding's poor reputation in historical hindsight to attribute his victory to his alleged good looks and charisma swaying women voters in particular. This is historical nonsense. First of all, I still question how good looking this guy actually was, and charisma isn't really much of a factor in an election in which most voters never got closer to either candidate than a black-and-white still photograph in the newspaper. Second, there's no evidence of a difference in women's votes versus men's votes. In our day, we often speak of a gender gap in American politics, but the gender gap didn't appear until 1980. If American voters were indeed wooed by Harding's good looks and charisma, then the men fell for it just as much as the women did.

In American politics, we often think of the US Senate as the talent pool for the Presidency. That's not quite true; state governor is also on the résumé of a lot of US Presidents, but it may surprise you to learn that Warren Harding was in fact the first person to go directly from the Senate to the White House. It has happened twice since then, to John Kennedy and Barack Obama. Warren Harding was also the first, and as of the date I release this podcast, the only, US President who came from a background in journalism.

James Cox retired from public office after this election and the expiration of his term as governor of Ohio in 1921. He would continue to be active in Democratic Party politics and his newspaper business grew into a substantial media empire that still operates in our time as the privately held Cox Enterprises, which to this day is owned and operated by his descendants.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt returned to New York City to practice law. He still held political ambitions, but in August 1921 he contracted polio. After a lengthy and debilitating illness, he was left paralyzed from the waist down, his future political prospects very much in doubt. We'll have to wait and see.

The 1920 election result in the United States shows the appeal of the promised return to normalcy. There was nothing unique about the American public's feelings in that regard; the mood was much the same everywhere in the Western world, and the decade to come would be a happy one in many countries. But the good times would be temporary, and the inability of the Western world to return to pre-war normalcy, that will be the overriding story of the next twenty years. So stay tuned, and expect to hear a lot more about that.

On inauguration day, March 4, 1921, the car carrying the President-elect pulled up to the White House to pick up the incumbent. Woodrow Wilson was still in poor health; he made his way out to the car propped up with his cane on one side and his successor on the other. Together they drove to the Capitol, where Wilson concluded some final business with Congress. He begged off from attending the inauguration ceremony, pleading poor health. The sight of the failing Woodrow Wilson side-by-side with the younger and larger and more vigorous Warren Harding must have been striking. Few would have dared to predict that in less than two and a half years' time, it would be Wilson attending Harding's funeral.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Matt for making a donation, and thank you to Other Matt for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Matt and Other Matt help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to both Matts and to everyone who has pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to join these fine gentlemen named Matt by becoming a patron or making a donation, just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

The website also contains notes about the music used on the podcast. Sometimes it's my own work, sometimes it's licensed, but most of the music you hear here is free and downloadable. If you hear a piece of music on the podcast and you get curious and would like to know more about it, including a link to where you can download it, that would be the place to go. While you're there, you can leave a comment and let me know what you thought about today's show.

Today's music happens to be two of the most popular songs in the US of 1920, "I'll Be With You in Apple Blossom Time," by Albert Von Tilzer and Neville Fleeson, and "Swanee" by George Gershwin, an up and coming young musician we'll be hearing more about soon. Music from 1920 is no longer in copyright in the United States, so I can use it freely, but let me just alert you this will change after we reach 1925, and I won't be free to play period music anymore. That will be, oh, less than a hundred episodes, so just be alert about that.

Now that the Great War is over, and the postwar questions have been worked out, for now, it's time for the podcast to resume normal peacetime operations. In reviewing the state of the podcast so far, 216 episodes in, the biggest gap in the narrative that I can identify is a distinct lack of coverage of South Asia, specifically what is in 1920 called simply India, or British India.

This isn't because I forgot about you, India. I've been looking for an opportunity to talk about India for a while now, but other topics kept distracting me. That means I've got a lot to make up for. So coming up next is a six-episode survey intended to bring us up to date on that region of the world. As is the case with many other lands that are ruled as European colonial possessions at this time, India has gone through a period when even many Indians thought British rule was for the best, through the Great War, when Indians came to the rescue of the Empire, to a postwar dissatisfaction that asked why Indians didn't get to share in the benefits of the Empire, even after they were called upon to sacrifice for it, and on to a growing suspicion that, whatever they may promise, European rulers are never going to accept their non-European subjects as equals.

Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we begin this series with a survey of Indian history and examine how India came to be ruled by the British in the first place. The Unending Quest, in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. War often stimulates the development of new technologies, and the Great War is a good example. One of the most important technologies that emerged after the war was AM radio. As you'll recall from episode 52, before the war, radio communication mostly meant Morse code. But the discovery of the electron and the invention of the light bulb led to vacuum tubes which led to electronic amplification and made AM radio feasible.

This technology was just getting off the ground in 1920, and this is something we'll definitely want to be looking at on the podcast real soon, but for now I'll note that among the pioneers of the radio era was the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the radio broadcasting station it developed there, known at the time as 8ZZ, which broadcast the election news on election night 1920, as it came in via telegraph, over a 100-watt transmitter that could be heard over hundreds of miles, a dramatic example of the potential of the new medium to rapidly disseminate news and information.

A few days later, radio station 8ZZ was redesignated with the call letters KDKA, and KDKA has been broadcasting AM radio in Pittsburgh under that designation ever since, and they still do in our time.

[music: Closing Theme]