

US History

Progressive Politicians

Learning Target:

I can identify how Taft became president and evaluate what progressive reforms he enacted as president.

4. William Taft Becomes President

Roosevelt Steps Down –

1908 – Roosevelt decides not to run for reelection

- “The country needs a change,” he declared. We have had four years of uprooting and four years of crusading. The country has had enough of me.”
- Roosevelt removes himself from the public eye by going on safari in Africa

1908 Presidential Election –

The Candidates –

Republicans – William Howard Taft

-Roosevelt’s secretary of war

-Helped receive the nomination with Roosevelt’s support

Democrats – William Jennings Bryan

The Results –

-Taft easily defeats Bryan in a landslide

William Howard Taft –

- Many assumed Taft would be progressive like Roosevelt: True & False assumption
- Taft was very uncomfortable in the public eye, not comfortable with politics, & had always been appointed to positions instead of being elected
- His personality & Roosevelt’s differed greatly

Progressive Accomplishments of Taft –

1. Mann-Elkins Act (1910) – Extended regulatory power of the Interstate Commerce Commission to telephone and telegraph companies
2. National Forests – Added vast reserves to the national system while in office
3. Department of Labor – Created by Congress to enforce labor laws and enforced an eight hour work day for companies holding government contracts
4. Sixteenth Amendment – (1909 proposed; ratified 1913) Allowed Congress to levy taxes based on individual income to be more fair to poor