

US History

Progressive Politicians

Learning Target:

I can explain what divisions in the Republican Party led to the formation of the Progressive Party and describe how Wilson was able to win the 1912 presidential election.

5. The Division of the Republican Party & The Election of 1812

William Taft vs. The Progressives –

- When elected many progressives thought Taft would continue with progressive legislation
- Several actions by Taft caused Progressive Republicans to get very angry

Three Anti-Progressive Incidents –

1. Payne-Aldrich Tariff -

- Taft & Progressives both supported low tariffs to keep prices on goods down
- The House sent a low-tariff bill to the Senate for approval
- Senate flipped the low-tariff bill to a high-tariff bill
- Taft still passed it, which outraged the progressives who felt betrayed

2. Ballinger-Pinchot Affair -

- Richard Ballinger –
 - Taft's secretary of interior
 - Felt Roosevelt exceeded authority by refusing to sell public land
 - Authorized the sale of coal-rich Alaskan land
- Gifford Pinchot –
 - Head of US Forest Service & Roosevelt's close friend
 - Angered by Ballinger's sale of Alaskan land
 - Continuously criticized it publicly until fired by Taft
 - Greatly angered Roosevelt, causing a rift in the Republican party

3. The Cannon Debate -

- Joseph Cannon –
 - Speaker of the House
 - Conservative Republican who was greatly disliked by Progressives
 - Very powerful member of the House
- Progressives –
 - Devised plan to take much of Cannon's power from him
 - Taft was unwilling to support their plan
 - Angered many progressive Republicans

The Republican Party Divides

3 Steps to the Division of the Republican Party:

1. Congressional Elections of 1910 – Roosevelt campaigned for every Republican who opposed Taft; despite the help of Roosevelt the Republicans lost control of the House
2. Republican Primaries of 1912 – Roosevelt decided to run for president again and won almost every state primary including Taft's home state of Ohio
3. Republican Convention of 1912 – Taft's allies strongly controlled the party machine and refused to seat Roosevelt's delegates and Taft won the nomination

-In response to the outrage at the convention, Roosevelt supporters walked out and created their own party called the Progressive Party or the Bull Moose Party

Democratic Victory

The Candidates –

Republican – William Taft
Democratic – Woodrow Wilson
Progressive – Theodore Roosevelt
Socialist – Eugene Debs

The winner is . . . Woodrow Wilson but why?

- Wilson was the former governor of New Jersey who regulated business and was the choice of many Democratic progressives
- The fact that Taft and Roosevelt split the Republican vote almost assured Wilson the victory
- Wilson, Roosevelt, and Debs represented reform of one kind or another and Taft represented conservatism; with the Republicans split it was Wilson election to take