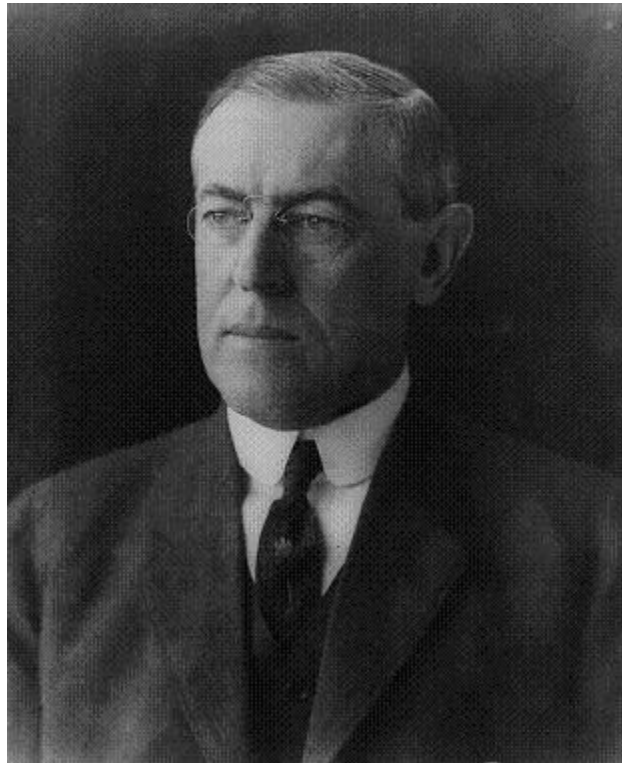


Woodrow Wilson

Castaway

Twenty-Eighth, 1913-1921



Nicknames: "Tommie", "The Professor", "The Coiner of Weasel Words", "The Phrase-maker"

Birth: December 29th, 1856, Staunton, Virginia

Death: February 3rd, 1924, Washington, D.C.

Significant Events During Wilson's Terms: Federal Income Tax Introduced ... Hetch-Hetchy Dammed ... First Coast-to-Coast Paved Road in the U.S. ... Refrigerator Invented ... Harriet "Moses" Tubman Dies ... The Great War/World War I Begins in Europe ... John Muir Dies ... Lusitania Sunk ... Transcontinental U.S. Telephone Service ... U.S. Enters World War I ... Spanish Flu ... "Black Sox" World Series Scandal ... 8-Hour Workday ... Prohibition ... NFL Formed ... Women's Suffrage ... Number of States remains at forty-eight

Quotes: *"Our life contains every great thing, and contains it in rich abundance...But the evil has come with the good, and much fine gold has been corroded. With riches has come an inexcusable waste. We have squandered a great part of what we might have used, and have not stopped to conserve the exceeding bounty of nature, without which our genius for enterprise would have been worthless and impotent, scorning to be careful, shamefully prodigal as well as admirably efficient. We have been proud of our industrial achievements, but we have not hitherto stopped thoughtfully enough to count the human cost, the cost of lives snuffed out, of energies overtaxed and broken, the fearful physical and spiritual cost to the men and women and children upon whom the dead weight and burden of it all has fallen pitilessly the years through. The groans and agony of it all had not yet reached our ears, the solemn, moving undertone of our life, coming up out of the mines and factories and out of every home where the struggle had its intimate and familiar seat. With the great Government went many deep secret things which we too long delayed to look into and scrutinize with candid, fearless eyes. The great Government we loved has too often been made use of for private and selfish purposes, and those who used it had forgotten the people...There has been something crude and heartless and unfeeling in our haste to succeed and be great. Our thought has been 'Let every man look out for himself, let every generation look out for itself,' while we reared giant machinery which made it impossible that any but those who stood at the levers of control should have a chance to look out for themselves."*

-- from Woodrow Wilson's Inaugural Address, March 4th, 1913

"A world supergovernment is contrary to everything we cherish and can have no sanction by our Republic. This is not selfishness, it is sanctity. It is not aloofness, it is security. It is not suspicion of others, it is patriotic adherence to the things which made us what we are."

-- Warren Harding (#29), March 4th, 1921, referring to Wilson's idea for a League of Nations

"I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested." -- General Smedley Butler

"Any man who carries a hyphen about with him, carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic whenever he gets ready." -- Woodrow Wilson

"The President is the most prejudiced man I ever knew and likes but few people."

-- Colonel E.M. House, one of Wilson's advisors, 1919

"He thinks he is another Jesus Christ come upon the earth to reform men."

-- President of France Georges Clemenceau, 1919, speaking of Wilson

"[Wilson is] the greatest individual disappointment the world has ever known!" -- Helen Keller

How his term ended: Wilson retired from the presidency after his two terms.

Other Professions: Professor of History, Politics, and Jurisprudence; College Football Coach, Author, University President

Worst Mistakes: Of all the racist Presidents – and there have been many – Wilson was quite possibly the most virulent bigot of them all. One way he showed this was in his unwillingness to help blacks achieve equality (Wilson segregated the federal government). He was a fan of D.W. Griffith's white supremacist movie “Birth of a Nation,” which lionized the Ku Klux Klan and called for its rejuvenation (the movie's original title was “The Clansman”). Wilson censored mail that was socialist, anti-British, or pro-Irish (though Wilson was himself, like many Presidents, part Irish).

Wilson lied when he said the United States was not going to war, whereas he was apparently all the while maneuvering to do just that, or was obviously at least willing to do so. Wilson was reelected at least partially on a peace platform (“He Kept Us Out of War” was the campaign slogan he used in 1916).

Adding insult to injury, Wilson was behind the so-called Sedition Act of 1917, which curtailed many civil liberties.

Saving Grace: None come to mind, although his first quote above, would lead one to believe that his heart was not always in the wrong place.

Notes: Wilson's first name was Thomas.

Although he did not enter school until he was nine (because of the disruptions caused by the Civil War) and didn't learn to read well until he was eleven, Wilson ended up being the most highly educated President, ultimately amassing over a dozen college degrees.

Wilson lived in the South during the Civil War and always considered himself a Southerner. He was a white supremacist who felt the South was fully justified in seceding from the Union. His first memory was of hearing a man outside his family's gate calling out, “Mr. Lincoln elected. There'll be war!” He also recalled looking up at Robert E. Lee astride his horse, and seeing Confederate President Jefferson Davis a captive of Union soldiers following the war.

Like many Presidents (and Jesse James), Wilson's father was a minister. His parents had wanted him to follow in his father's footsteps.

Many controversial changes came about during Wilson's administration, such as the introduction of the Income tax, Prohibition, and Women's suffrage. Perhaps surprising to people today, many of the “common folk” back then supported an income tax, reasoning that corporations would then have to pay their fair share. Little did they know then that many profitable corporations would end up paying *no taxes*, and others would be able to prise open tax loopholes cavernous enough to fly a rocket through.

As quoted above, Wilson railed against “hyphenated Americans,” apparently choosing to

forget that all but Indians (Native Americans) are such, he himself being a European-American.

When Wilson was President of Princeton University, it was the only major northern University that refused to admit African-Americans as students.

During Wilson's second term, anti-black race riots took place throughout the country, even in Abraham Lincoln's (#16) adopted hometown of Springfield, Illinois. Lynchings, usually an atrocity restricted in geography to the deep South, took place as far north as Duluth, Minnesota.

One of Wilson's daughters, Margaret--after trying her hand with various degrees of success in music, writing, and speculating in the stock market--relocated to India and became a "mystic," changing her name to Dishta and becoming a virtual recluse in a religious community.

The British luxury liner Lusitania, sunk by Germany in 1915 (while World War I raged in Europe, but before the United States got directly involved), was carrying a large load of munitions from the United States to Britain. That is, in fact, why it was sunk, but this was denied at the time by both Britain and the U.S. The German government, knowing in advance of the cargo, had even placed an ad in the New York papers, warning Americans not to sail on the ship. Postcards of the ship were printed up bearing the gallows humor caption "Last Voyage of the Lusitania."

Wilson's 1916 Presidential reelection campaign slogan was "He Kept Us Out of War!" That didn't last long, though. He began his second term early in 1917; the U.S. entered the war a scant five months later.

According to highly-decorated retired Marine Corps General Smedley Butler in his book "War Is a Racket," the reason for Wilson's 'about face' on the U.S. entering the war was that an "Allied Commission" made a call on Wilson at the White House, during which they let him know that without the help of the U.S. the war was lost--and if they were to lose the war, they would be unable to repay the five to six billion dollars they had borrowed from the United States.

The "Good Neighbor Policy" that would be practiced by Coolidge (#30), Hoover (#31), and FDR (#32) were in contrast to Wilson's way, which might be termed a "Bad Neighbor Policy" by contrast. Wilson intervened in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua, leading to notorious dictators in those places, names that live in infamy, such as Batista, Trujillo, Duvalier, and Somoza.

Wilson was so unpopular by the end of his term that the eventual next President, Warren Harding, didn't even feel it necessary to campaign much against James Cox, Wilson's would-be successor. All Harding did was promise a "return to normalcy." The ill-fated Harding won the 1920 election in the biggest landslide in American Presidential history.