

The Artios Home Companion Series

Unit 14: President Wilson and the World at War

Teacher Overview

While the U.S. was battling national issues and conflicts, trouble was brewing in Europe and with the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand one by one European nations and finally the U.S. were forced to become involved in the war in order to stop Germany's aggression.



Official White House portrait of Woodrow Wilson

Key People

President Woodrow Wilson

Reading and Assignments

In this unit, students will:

- Complete two lessons in which they will learn about **President Wilson** and **World War I**, journaling and answering discussion questions as they read.
- Read selected chapters from *Peter Pan*, journaling as they read.
- Complete literature assignments including completing their model of *Neverland*.
- Learn about **Creative Writing**.
- Complete **First Semester Review**.
- Visit [www. ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

Leading Ideas

Honesty is a character quality to be desired.

The Lord detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please Him.

— Proverbs 20:23

The Bible provides the ethics upon which to judge people and nations.

— Exodus 20:1-17

God is sovereign over the affairs of men.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

— Acts 17:26

Literature, Composition, and Grammar

Creative Writing

Topic for Units 10 - 14

Peter Pan

by J.M. Barrie

Literature for Units 10 14

Unit 14 – Assignments

Literature

- At the end of this unit you should have:
 - Finished reading *Peter Pan*.
 - Completed your model of *Neverland*.

Composition

- Comp1
- Comp2

Grammar

- Complete the [First Semester Review](#) on the [Artios Home Companion](#) website.

Lesson One

History Overview and Assignments President Wilson and Issues at Home

“The welfare, the happiness, the energy, and the spirit of the men and women who do the daily work in our mines and factories, on our railroads, in our offices and ports of trade, on our farms, and on the sea are the underlying necessity of all prosperity.”

– President Woodrow Wilson



Woodrow Wilson sworn in as the
28th President of the United States March 4, 1913

Key People

President Woodrow Wilson

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *President Wilson and Issues at Home*, pages 4-10.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Be sure to visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Discussion Questions

1. Enumerate the chief financial measures of the Wilson administration. Review the history of banks and currency and give the details of the Federal Reserve law.
2. What was the Wilson policy toward trusts? Toward labor?
3. Review again the theory of states' rights. How has it fared in recent years?
4. What steps were taken in colonial policies? In the Caribbean?
5. Outline American-Mexican relations under Wilson

Adapted from the book:

History of the United States

by Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard

President Wilson and Issues at Home

“The welfare, the happiness, the energy, and the spirit of the men and women who do the daily work in our mines and factories, on our railroads, in our offices and ports of trade, on our farms, and on the sea are the underlying necessity of all prosperity.” Thus spoke Woodrow Wilson during his campaign for election. In this spirit, as president, he gave the signal for work by summoning Congress in a special session on April 7, 1913. He invited the cooperation of all “forward-looking men”

and indicated that he would assume the role of leadership. As an evidence of his resolve, he appeared before Congress in person to read his first message, reviving the old custom of Washington and Adams. Then he let it be known that he would not give his party any rest until it fulfilled its pledges to the country. When Democratic senators balked at tariff reductions, they were sharply informed that the party had plighted its word and that no excuses or delays would be tolerated.

Domestic Legislation

Financial measures

Under this spirited leadership Congress went to work, passing first the Underwood Tariff Act of 1913, which made a downward revision in the rates of duty, fixing them on the average about 26% lower than the figures of 1907. The protective principle was retained, but an effort was made to permit a moderate element of foreign competition. As a part of this revenue act, Congress levied a tax on incomes as authorized by the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The tax which roused such party passions twenty years before was now accepted as a matter of course.

Having disposed of the tariff, Congress took up the old and vexatious currency question and offered a new solution in the form of the Federal Reserve Act of December, 1913. This measure, one of the most interesting in the history of federal finance, embraced four leading features. In

the first place, it continued the prohibition on the issuance of notes by state banks and provided for a national currency. In the second place, it put the new banking system under the control of a Federal Reserve Board composed entirely of government officials. To prevent the growth of a “central money power,” it provided, in the third place, for the creation of twelve Federal Reserve banks, one in each of twelve great districts into which the country is divided. All local national banks were required and certain other banks permitted to become members of the new system and share in its control. Finally, with a view to expanding the currency, a step which the Democrats had long urged upon the country, the issuance of paper money, under definite safeguards, was authorized.

Mindful of the agricultural interest, ever dear to the heart of Jefferson’s

followers, the Democrats supplemented the reserve law by the Farm Loan Act of 1916, creating federal agencies to lend money on farm mortgages at moderate rates of interest. Within a year \$20,000,000 had been lent to farmers, the heaviest borrowing being in nine western and southern states, with Texas in the lead.



Wilson uses tariff, currency and anti-trust laws to prime the pump and get the economy working in a 1913 political cartoon

Antitrust legislation

The tariff and currency laws were followed by three significant measures relative to trusts. Rejecting utterly the Progressive doctrine of government regulation, President Wilson announced that it was the purpose of the Democrats “to destroy monopoly and maintain competition as the only effective instrument of business liberty.” The first step in this direction, the Clayton Antitrust Act, carried into great detail the Sherman law of 1890 forbidding and penalizing combinations in restraint of interstate and foreign trade. In every line it revealed a

determined effort to tear apart the great trusts and to put all business on a competitive basis. Its terms were reinforced in the same year by a law creating a Federal Trade Commission empowered to inquire into the methods of corporations and lodge complaints against concerns “using any unfair method of competition.” In only one respect was the severity of the Democratic policy relaxed. An act of 1918 provided that the Sherman law should not apply to companies engaged in export trade, the purpose being to encourage large corporations to engage in foreign commerce with trade essential to the war effort.

The effect of this whole body of antitrust legislation, in spite of much labor on it, remained problematical. Very few combinations were dissolved as a result of it. Startling investigations were made into alleged abuses on the part of trusts; but it could hardly be said that huge business concerns had lost any of their predominance in American industry.

Labor legislation

By no mere coincidence, the Clayton Antitrust law of 1914 made many concessions to organized labor. It declared that “the labor of a human being is not a commodity or an article of commerce,” and it exempted unions from prosecution as “combinations in restraint of trade.” It likewise defined and limited the uses which the federal courts might make of injunctions in labor disputes and guaranteed trial by jury to those guilty of disobedience.

The Clayton law was followed the next year by the Seamen’s Act giving greater

liberty of contract to American sailors and requiring an improvement of living conditions on shipboard. This was such a drastic law that ship owners declared themselves unable to meet foreign competition under its terms, owing to the low labor standards of other countries.

Still more extraordinary than the Seamen's Act was the Adamson Act of 1916 fixing a standard eight-hour workday for trainmen on railroads—a measure wrung from Congress under a threat of a great strike by the four Railway Brotherhoods. This act, viewed by union leaders as a triumph, called forth a bitter denunciation of “trade union domination,” but it was easier to criticize than to find another solution of the problem.

Three other laws enacted during President Wilson's administration were popular in the labor world. One of them provided compensation for federal employees injured in the discharge of their duties. Another prohibited the labor of children under a certain age in the industries of the nation. A third prescribed for coal miners in Alaska an eight-hour day and modern safeguards for life and health. There were positive proofs that organized labor had obtained a large share of power in the councils of the country.

Federal and State relations

If the interference of the federal government with business and labor represented a departure from the old idea of “the less government the better,” what can be said of a large body of laws affecting the rights of states? The prohibition of child labor everywhere was one indication of the new tendency. Mr. Wilson had once

declared such legislation unconstitutional; the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional; but Congress, undaunted, carried it into effect under the guise of a tax on goods made by children below the age limit. There were other indications of the shift toward greater federal control. Large sums of money were appropriated by Congress in 1916 to assist the states in building and maintaining highways. The same year the Farm Loan Act projected the federal government into the sphere of local money lending. In 1917 millions of dollars were granted to states in aid of vocational education, incidentally imposing uniform standards throughout the country. Evidently the government was no longer limited to the duties of the policeman.

The Prohibition Amendment

A still more significant form of intervention in state affairs was the passage, in December, 1917, of the Eighteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution, establishing national prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as beverages. This was the climax of a historical movement extending over half a century. In 1872, the Prohibition Party, launched three years before, nominated its first presidential candidate and inaugurated a campaign of agitation. Though its vote was never large, the cause for which it stood found increasing favor among the people. State after state by popular referendum abolished the liquor traffic within its borders. By 1917 at least thirty-two of the forty-eight were “dry.” When the federal amendment was submitted for approval,

the ratification was surprisingly swift. In a little more than a year, namely, on January

16, 1919, it was proclaimed. Twelve months later the amendment went into effect.

Colonial and Foreign Policies

The Philippines and Puerto Rico

Independence for the Philippines and larger self-government for Puerto Rico had been among the policies of the Democratic Party since the campaign of 1900. President Wilson in his annual messages urged upon Congress more autonomy for the Filipinos and a definite promise of final independence. The result was the Jones Law, an organic act for the Philippines which passed in 1916 and replaced the previous Philippine Organic Act. This measure provided that the upper as well as the lower house of the Philippine

legislature should be elected by popular vote, and declared it to be the intention of the United States to grant independence “as soon as a stable government can be established.” This, said President Wilson on signing the bill, is “a very satisfactory advance in our policy of extending to them self-government and control of their own affairs.” The following year Congress, yielding to President Wilson’s insistence, passed a new act for Puerto Rico, making both houses of the legislature elective and conferring American citizenship upon the inhabitants of the island.



The Caribbean Region

American power in the Caribbean

While extending more self-government to its dominions, the United States

enlarged its sphere of influence in the Caribbean. The supervision of finances in Santo Domingo, inaugurated in Roosevelt’s

administration, was transformed into a protectorate under Wilson. In 1914 dissensions in the republic led to the landing of American marines to “supervise” the elections. Two years later, an officer in the American navy, with authority from Washington, placed the entire republic “in a state of military occupation.” He proceeded to suspend the government and laws of the country, exile the president, suppress the congress, and substitute American military authority. In 1919 a consulting board of four prominent Dominicans was appointed to aid the American military governor; but it resigned the next year after making a plea for the restoration of independence to the republic. For all practical purposes, it seemed, the sovereignty of Santo Domingo had been transferred to the United States.

In the neighboring republic of Haiti, a similar state of affairs existed. In the summer of 1915, a revolution broke out there—one of a long series beginning in 1804—and our marines were landed to restore order. Elections were held under the supervision of American officers, and a treaty was drawn up placing the management of Haitian finances and the local constabulary under American authority. In taking this action, our secretary of state was careful to announce: “The United States government has no purpose of aggression and is entirely disinterested in promoting this protectorate.” Still it must be said that there were vigorous protests on the part of natives and American citizens against the conduct of our agents in the island. In 1921 President Wilson considered withdrawal, but US marines would remain stationed in

the country until 1934.

In line with American policy in the West Indian waters was the purchase in 1917 of the Danish islands just off the coast of Puerto Rico. The strategic position of the islands, especially in relation to Haiti and Puerto Rico, made them an object of American concern as early as 1867, when a treaty of purchase was negotiated only to be rejected by the Senate of the United States. In 1902 a second arrangement was made, but this time it was defeated by the upper house of the Danish parliament. The third treaty brought an end to fifty years of bargaining and the Stars and Stripes were raised over St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and numerous minor islands scattered about in the neighborhood. *“It would be suicidal,”* commented a New York newspaper, *“for America, on the threshold of a great commercial expansion in South America, to suffer a Heligoland, or a Gibraltar, or an Aden to be erected by her rivals at the mouth of her Suez.”* On the mainland, American power was strengthened by the establishment of a protectorate over Nicaragua in 1916.

Mexican relations

The extension of American enterprise southward into Latin America, of which the operations in the Caribbean regions were merely one phase, naturally carried Americans into Mexico to develop the natural resources of that country. Under the iron rule of General Porfirio Díaz, established in 1876 and maintained with only a short break until 1911, Mexico had become increasingly attractive to our businessmen. On the invitation of President Díaz, they had invested huge

sums in Mexican lands, oil fields, and mines, and had laid the foundations of a new industrial order. The severe régime instituted by Díaz, however, stirred popular discontent. The peons, or serfs, demanded the breakup of the great estates, some of which had come down from the days of Cortez. Their clamor for “the restoration of the land to the people could not be silenced.” In 1911 Díaz was forced to resign and left the country.



Porfirio Díaz

Mexico now slid down the path to disorder, resulting in the Mexican Revolution. A liberal president, Francisco Madero, installed as the successor to Díaz, was deposed in 1913 and brutally murdered. Victoriano Huerta, a military adventurer, hailed for a time as another “strong man,” succeeded Madero whose murder he was accused of instigating. Although Great Britain and nearly all the powers of Europe accepted the new government as lawful, the United States steadily withheld recognition. In the meantime Mexico was torn by insurrections under the leadership of

Venustiano Carranza, a friend of Madero, Pancho Villa, a bandit of generous pretensions, and Emilio Zapata, a radical leader of the peons. Without the support of the United States, Huerta was doomed.

In the summer of 1914, the dictator resigned and fled from the capital, leaving the field to Carranza. For six years the new president, recognized by the United States, held a precarious position which he vigorously strove to strengthen against various revolutionary movements. At length in 1920, he too was deposed and murdered, and another military chieftain, Álvaro Obregón, installed in power.

These events right at our door could not fail to involve the government of the United States. In the disorders many American citizens lost their lives. American property was destroyed and land owned by Americans was confiscated. A new Mexican constitution, in effect nationalizing the natural resources of the country, struck at the rights of foreign investors. Moreover the Mexican border was in constant turmoil. Even in the last days of his administration, Mr. Taft felt compelled to issue a solemn warning to the Mexican government protesting against the violation of American rights.

President Wilson, soon after his inauguration, sent a commissioner to Mexico to inquire into the situation. Although he declared a general policy of “watchful waiting,” he twice came to blows with Mexican forces. In 1914 some American sailors at Tampico were arrested by a Mexican officer; the Mexican government, although it immediately released the men, refused to make the required apology for the incident. As a

result President Wilson ordered the landing of American forces at Veracruz and the occupation of the city. A clash of arms followed in which several Americans were killed. War seemed inevitable, but at this juncture the governments of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile tendered their good offices as mediators. After a few weeks of negotiation, during which Huerta was forced out of power, American forces were withdrawn from Veracruz and the incident closed.

In 1916 a second break in amicable relations occurred. In the spring of that year a band of Villa's men raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico, killing several citizens and committing robberies. A punitive expedition under the command of General Pershing was quickly sent out to capture the offenders. Against the protests of President Carranza, American forces penetrated deeply into Mexico without

success. This operation lasted until January, 1917, when the imminence of war with Germany led to the withdrawal of the American soldiers. Friendly relations were resumed with the Mexican government and the policy of "watchful waiting" was continued.



Gen. Victoriano Huerta

Lesson Two

History Overview and Assignments The United States and World War I

On June 28, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, an Austrian province occupied mainly by Serbs. This led to the start of World War I as one by one European nations and finally the United States were forced to become involved in order to stop Germany's aggression.



President Wilson delivering his war message before Congress. April 2, 1917

Key People

President Woodrow Wilson

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *The United States and World War I*, pages 12-17.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Be sure to visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the World War break out in Europe?
2. Account for the divided state of opinion in America.
3. State the leading principles of international law involved and show how they were violated.
4. What American rights were assailed in the submarine campaign?
5. Give Wilson's position on the Lusitania affair.
6. How did the World War affect the presidential campaign of 1916?
7. How did Germany finally drive the United States into war?
8. State the American war aims given by the President.

Adapted from the book:

History of the United States

by Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard

The United States and World War I

The outbreak of the war

In the opening days of August, 1914, the age-long jealousies of European nations, sharpened by new imperial ambitions, broke out in another general conflict such as had shaken the world in the days of Napoleon. On June 28, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, an Austrian province occupied mainly by Serbs. With a view to stopping Serbian agitation for independence, Austria-Hungary laid the blame for this incident on the government of Serbia and made humiliating demands on that country. Germany, linked with Austria-Hungary in an alliance called the Central Powers, proposed that the issue should be regarded as “an affair which should be settled solely between Austria-Hungary and Serbia,” meaning that the small nation of Serbia should be left to the tender mercies of a great power. Russia, united with the United Kingdom and France in an alliance called the Triple Entente, refused to take this view. Great Britain proposed a settlement by mediation, while Germany backed up Austria to the limit. To use the language of the German authorities: *“We were perfectly aware that a possible warlike attitude of Austria-Hungary against Serbia might bring Russia upon the field and that it might therefore involve us in a war, in accordance with our duties as allies. We could not, however, in these*

vital interests of Austria-Hungary which were at stake, advise our ally to take a yielding attitude not compatible with his dignity nor deny him our assistance.” That made the war inevitable.

On the 28th of July, the Austro-Hungarians fired the first shots, preparing to invade Serbia. After that, every day in the fateful August of 1914 was crowded with momentous events. On the 1st, Germany declared war on Russia. On the 2nd, the Germans invaded the little duchy of Luxembourg and notified the King of Belgium that they were preparing to violate the neutrality of his realm on their way to Paris. On the same day, Great Britain, anxiously besought by the French government, promised the aid of the British navy if German warships made hostile demonstrations in the English Channel. August 3d, the German government declared war on France. The following day, Great Britain demanded of Germany respect for Belgian neutrality and, failing to receive the guarantee, broke off diplomatic relations. On the 5th, the British prime minister announced that war had opened between England and Germany. The storm now broke in all its pitiless fury.

The state of American opinion

Although President Wilson promptly proclaimed the neutrality of the United States, the sympathies of a large majority of the American people were without doubt

on the side of Great Britain and France. To them the invasion of the little kingdom of Belgium and the horrors that accompanied German occupation were odious in the extreme. Moreover, they regarded the German imperial government as an autocratic power wielded in the interest of an ambitious military party. The kaiser, William II, and the crown prince were the symbols of royal arrogance. On the other hand, many Americans of German descent, in memory of their ties with the Fatherland, openly sympathized with the Central Powers; and many Americans of Irish descent, recalling their long and bitter struggle for home rule in Ireland, would have regarded British defeat as a merited redress of ancient grievances.



Bernhard Dernburg (July 1931)

Extremely sensitive to American opinion but ill-informed about it, the German government soon began systematic efforts to present its cause to the people of the United States in the most favorable light possible. Dr. Bernhard

Dernburg, the former colonial secretary of the German empire, was sent to America as a special agent. For months he filled the newspapers, magazines, and periodicals with interviews, articles, and notes on the justice of the Teutonic (German) cause. From a press bureau in New York flowed a stream of pamphlets, leaflets, and cartoons. A magazine, “The Fatherland,” was founded to secure “fair play for Germany and Austria.” Several professors in American universities, who had received their training in Germany, took up the pen in defense of the Central Empires. The German language press, without exception it seems, the National German Alliance, minor German societies, and Lutheran churches came to the support of the German cause. Even the English language papers, though generally favorable to the Entente Allies, opened their columns in the interest of equal justice to the spokesmen for all the contending powers of Europe.

Before two weeks had elapsed the controversy had become so intense that President Wilson (August 18, 1914) was moved to caution his countrymen against falling into angry disputes. “Every man,” he said, “who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned....We must be impartial in thought as well as in action, must put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.”

The clash over American trade

As in the time of the Napoleonic wars, the conflict in Europe raised fundamental

questions respecting rights of Americans trading with countries at peace as well as those at war. On this point there existed on August 1, 1914, a fairly definite body of principles by which nations were bound. Among them the following were of vital significance. In the first place, it was recognized that an enemy merchant ship caught on the high seas was a legitimate prize of war which might be seized and confiscated. In the second place, it was agreed that “contraband of war” found on an enemy or neutral ship was a lawful prize; any ship suspected of carrying it was liable to search and if caught with forbidden goods was subject to seizure. In the third place, international law prescribed that a peaceful merchant ship, whether belonging to an enemy or to a neutral country, should not be destroyed or sunk without provision for the safety of crew and passengers. In the fourth place, it was understood that a belligerent had the right, if it could, to blockade the ports of an enemy and prevent the ingress and egress of all ships; but such a blockade, to be lawful, had to be effective.

These general principles left undetermined two important matters: “What is an effective blockade?” and “What is contraband of war?” The task of answering these questions fell to Great Britain as mistress of the seas. Although the German submarines made it impossible for her battleships to maintain a continuous patrol of the waters in front of blockaded ports, she declared the blockade to be nonetheless “effective” because her navy was supreme. As to contraband of war Great Britain put such a broad interpretation upon the term as to include

nearly every important article of commerce. Early in 1915 she declared even cargoes of grain and flour to be contraband, defending the action on the ground that the German government had recently taken possession of all domestic stocks of corn, wheat, and flour.

A new question arose in connection with American trade with the neutral countries surrounding Germany. Great Britain early began to intercept ships carrying oil, gasoline, and copper—all war materials of prime importance—on the ground that they either were destined ultimately to Germany or would release goods for sale to Germans. On November 2, 1914, the English government announced that the Germans were sowing mines in open waters and that therefore the whole of the North Sea was a military zone. Ships bound for Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were ordered to come by the English Channel for inspection and sailing directions. In effect, Americans were now licensed by Great Britain to trade in certain commodities and in certain amounts with neutral countries.

Against these extraordinary measures, the State Department at Washington lodged pointed objections, saying: “This government is reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the present policy of His Majesty’s government toward neutral ships and cargoes exceeds the manifest necessity of a belligerent and constitutes restrictions upon the rights of American citizens on the high seas, which are not justified by the rules of international law or required under the principle of self-preservation.”

Germany begins a submarine campaign

Germany now announced that, on and after February 18, 1915, the whole of the English Channel and the waters around Great Britain would be deemed a war zone and that every enemy ship found therein would be destroyed. The German decree added that, since the British admiralty had ordered the use of neutral flags by English ships in time of distress, neutral vessels would be in danger of destruction if found in the forbidden area. It was clear that Germany intended to employ submarines to destroy shipping. A new factor was thus introduced into naval warfare, one not provided for in the accepted laws of war. A warship overhauling a merchant vessel could easily take its crew and passengers on board for safekeeping as prescribed by international law; but a submarine ordinarily could do nothing of the sort. Of necessity the lives and the ships of neutrals, as well as of belligerents, were put in mortal peril. This amazing conduct Germany justified on the ground that it was mere retaliation against Great Britain for her violations of international law.

The response of the United States to the ominous German order was swift and direct. On February 10, 1915, it warned Germany that if her commanders destroyed American lives and ships in obedience to that decree, the action would “be very hard indeed to reconcile with the friendly relations happily subsisting between the two governments.” The American note added that the German imperial government would be held to “strict accountability” and all necessary steps would be taken to safeguard

American lives and American rights. This was firm and clear language, but the only response which it evoked from Germany was a suggestion that, if Great Britain would allow food supplies to pass through the blockade, the submarine campaign would be dropped.

Violations of American rights

Meanwhile Germany continued to ravage shipping on the high seas. On January 28, a German raider sank the American ship, *William P. Frye*, in the South Atlantic; on March 28, a British ship, the *Falaba*, was sunk by a submarine and many on board, including an American citizen, were killed; and on April 28, a German airplane dropped bombs on the American steamer *Cushing*. On the morning of May 1, 1915, Americans were astounded to see in the newspapers an advertisement, signed by the German Imperial Embassy, warning travelers of the dangers in the war zone and notifying them that any who ventured on British ships into that area did so at their own risk. On that day, the *Lusitania*, a British steamer, sailed from New York for Liverpool. On May 7, without warning, the ship was struck by two torpedoes and in a few minutes went down by the bow, carrying to death 1153 persons including 114 American men, women, and children. A cry of horror ran through the country. The German papers in America and a few American people argued that American citizens had been duly warned of the danger and had deliberately taken their lives into their own hands; but the terrible deed was almost universally condemned by public opinion.



First class dining room in the *Lusitania*

The *Lusitania* notes

On May 14, the State Department at Washington made public the first of three famous notes on the *Lusitania* case. It solemnly informed the German government that “no warning that an unlawful and inhumane act will be committed can possibly be accepted as an excuse or palliation for that act or as an abatement of the responsibility for its commission.” It called upon the German government to disavow the act, make reparation as far as possible, and take steps to prevent “the recurrence of anything so obviously subversive of the principles of

warfare.” The note closed with a clear caution to Germany that the government of the United States would not “omit any word or any act necessary to the performance of its sacred duty of maintaining the rights of the United States and its citizens and of safeguarding their free exercise and enjoyment.” The die was cast; but Germany in reply merely temporized.

In a second note, made public on June 11, the position of the United States was again affirmed. William Jennings Bryan, the secretary of state, had resigned because the drift of President Wilson’s policy was not toward mediation but the strict maintenance of American rights, if need be, by force of arms. The German reply was still evasive, and German naval commanders continued their course of sinking merchant ships. In a third and final note of July 21, 1915, President Wilson made it clear to Germany that he meant what he said when he wrote that he would maintain the rights of American citizens. Finally after much discussion and shifting about, the German ambassador on September 1, 1915 sent a brief note to the secretary of state: “Liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and without safety of the lives of non-combatants, provided the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance.” Editorially, the *New York Times* declared: “It is a triumph not only of diplomacy but of reason, of humanity, of justice, and of truth.” The secretary of state saw in it “a recognition of the fundamental principles for which we have contended.”



Image of Wilson created by 21,000 soldiers at Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio, 1918

The Presidential Election of 1916

In the midst of this crisis came the presidential campaign. On the Republican side everything seemed to depend upon the action of the Progressives. If the breach created in 1912 could be closed, victory was possible; if not, defeat was certain. A promise of unity lay in the fact that the conventions of the Republicans and Progressives were held simultaneously in Chicago. The friends of Roosevelt hoped that both parties would select him as their candidate, but this hope was not realized. The Republicans chose, and the Progressives accepted, Charles E. Hughes, an associate justice of the federal Supreme

Court who, as governor of New York, had won a national reputation by waging war on “machine politicians.”

In the face of the clamor for expressions of sympathy with one or the other of the contending powers of Europe, the Republicans chose a middle course, declaring that they would uphold all American rights “at home and abroad, by land and by sea.” This sentiment Mr. Hughes echoed in his acceptance speech. By some it was interpreted to mean a firmer policy in dealing with Great Britain; by others, a more vigorous handling of the submarine menace. The Democrats, on their side, renominated President Wilson by acclamation, reviewed with pride the legislative achievements of the party, and commended “the splendid diplomatic victories of our great president who has preserved the vital interests of our government and its citizens and kept us out of war.”

In the election which ensued President Wilson’s popular vote exceeded that cast for Mr. Hughes by more than half a million, while his electoral vote stood 277 to 254. The result was regarded, and not without warrant, as a great personal triumph for the president. He had received the largest vote yet cast for a presidential candidate. The Progressive party practically disappeared, and the Socialists suffered a severe setback, falling far behind the vote of 1912.