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24 November 2008  
Kansas History

TOPIC: The Response to Populism in Manhattan during the 1892 Election

ARGUMENT:

During the 1892 general election, the Republican Party in Manhattan, Kansas viewed the Populists as a dangerous, radical political party. While many Republican leaders in the city espoused this belief, they also missed the humanitarian reform agenda of the Populists.

First Point:

The editor of the *Manhattan Mercury* severely criticized Mary Elizabeth Lease, who had given a speech in the city. Give details of Lease's speech; the public reaction beyond that of the editor; and summarize the editor's argument.

'A Stormy Lecture: Mary Elizabeth Lease Rattles the Town,' *Manhattan Mercury*, 23 March 1892, 1

"Many People Attend Mary Elizabeth Lease's Speech at the Wareham Opera House," *Manhattan Mercury*, 24 March 1892, 3.

Second Point:

In 1892, the Populist Party presented a humanitarian platform that did not call for the overthrow of the establish political order, but rather a reform of it. Describe the Populist platform, and the local understanding of the platform in Manhattan. Give, and explain, Lease's calls for reform.

"'Sockless' Jerry Simpson Actually Wears Socks!" *Manhattan Industrialist*, 1 April 1892, 3.

O. Gene Clanton, *A Common Humanity: Kansas Populism and the Battle for Justice and Equity, 1854-1903* (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 2004), 98-112.

Rebecca Edwards, "Mary Elizabeth Lease: Advocate for Political Reform," in *John Brown to Bob Dole*, ed. by Virgil W. Dean (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 127-9.

Third Point:

The Populist Party won many state races in 1892, and they passed some reform legislation during the legislative session of 1893. Their reforms, however, little reflected the fears expressed by the Republican leadership in Manhattan. Describe the election results, describe the legislation passed, and analyze the legislation in light of the Republican fears about the Populist control of the statehouse.

Brainless Jones, "William Peffer Must Cut His Beard," *New York Times*, 1 September 1892, 1(A).

"The End of the World: Pops Win the Statehouse," *Manhattan Mercury*, 10 November 1892, 1.

Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 182.

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