

LORENZO D. LEWELLING AND KANSAS POPULISM

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Public History.

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DEDICATION

To my wonderful wife, Brittani, and my parents, Brian and Tammy.

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I would like to send a special note of thanks to my advisor, Dr. Jay Price, for his constant encouragement and insight, his countless reading of drafts, and for his friendship and guidance.

ABSTRACT

This research explores the Populist era in Kansas and the life of the state's twelfth governor, Lorenzo D. Lewelling. Lewelling is an important figure in the Populist movement in Kansas and his rise to power, and subsequent fall, mimics that of the movement as a whole.

Through close examination of primary and secondary sources, this research paints the picture of Lewelling's life before and during his political career to give a better understanding of the state's past. This research gives context to the broader Populist movement by examining the intricacies of one of the state's leading figures.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the masses gathered in the halls of the state capitol in Topeka on January 9, 1893, a buzz filled the air. Those in attendance were witnessing history and they knew it. Kansas had elected its first third party candidate for governor less than three months ago. It was the new governor's inauguration ceremony, and hundreds of Kansans braved the bitter Kansas wind and cold to witness it. After a short speech by the ousted Republican governor, Lyman U. Humphrey, in which he warned his successor that the office "is one which subjects to the incumbent the sharpest criticism," it was time for the citizens of Kansas to hear the message of their new chief executive. Little did the governor-elect know exactly how true Humphrey's words would prove, but Kansas had a new governor and was looking toward a brighter future.¹

The man elected to the position was one of the better known Populists, but not the iconic figures such as Mary Elizabeth Lease or William Jennings Bryan, who, get much more mention by historians today. When he is mentioned, he is often viewed as one of the worst governors in the state's history, and a symbol of the Populists' failures. At best, he is remembered primarily for his fiery inaugural speech in 1893. Indeed, many of the new governor's contemporaries felt the same way and for years the man was vilified for his part in one of the most notorious episodes in Kansas political history. The story of Kansas's twelfth governor, Lorenzo D. Lewelling, was one of rapid rise to power and all its prominence, only to be struck down by the reality of politics in the Sunflower State. The events that took place during Lewelling's first

¹ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, January 10, 1893.

three months of public office changed the public opinion of him forever and loomed over him until his passing in 1900.

In effect, Lewelling's election victory in 1892 made him the face of the Populist Party in Kansas, but he was never the real voice of the party, even during his term as governor he never dictated Populist Party policy or action in Kansas. Lewelling was elected because of he was probably the only Populist who could win in a general election, but winning an election and governing proved to be two separate issues. Lewelling's pragmatic strengths helped him win the election but alienated many Populists after he was in office. Lewelling was a strong supporter of what became called "Fusion," or the Populist Party working closely with the Democratic Party to ensure that the Republicans of the state were defeated, and it was his affiliation with this policy that alienated him from the hard-line Populists of the state. His pragmatic stance on issues like fusion made him an easy target for blame by other Populists in the aftermath of the standoff at the capitol and ensured that he would be judged as an ineffective governor for decades.

This study, an examination of the life of the state's first Populist governor and how his single term influenced party politics in Kansas for twenty years following his defeat, is important because it helps to shed light on contemporary understanding of reform oriented politics.

As a whole, historians have written about the Populist movement quite extensively. Historians like O. Gene Clanton, Richard Hofstadter, Peter Argersigner, Rebecca Edwards, Lawrence Goodwyn, Norman Pollack, John Hicks, and Scott McNall have all devoted numerous studies on the Populist movement, in Kansas and in other parts of the country. Generally, studies on the Populist movement tend to focus on the broad themes and platforms of the party. There are a handful of personal stories also that tend to focus on the "stars" of the Populist movement, like Jerry Simpson, Mary Lease, and later, William Jennings Bryan. While not touching in-depth

on Lewelling, these studies are extremely important because they form the foundation for further understanding on the lesser known, and therefore lesser understood, Populist figures.

Lewelling's legacy has appeared in some other secondary works, most notably William Parrish's study on the "Legislative War of 1893." Parrish's article brings Lewelling to life throughout the events in mid-February of 1893 but does little to discuss the man and his politics before and after the "Legislative Imbrolio." Parrish gives an outstanding secondary summation of the events during Lewelling's second month in office and is recommended for any student of political history in Kansas.

Historian William Parrish gives the best secondary account of the events that took place during the first two months of Lewelling's term in office. In his account, Parrish recounts the events chronologically, with special attention to the preceding episodes between the Populists and Republicans to set the stage for what he called "The Great Legislative Imbrolio of 1893." Surprisingly, for all of the attention the "Legislative War" receives in some circles, Parrish's account is the only secondary source of value on the topic. Considering this discussion is more about Lewelling's role in the events that took place during the "Legislative War," the author refrains from reiterating the events of the legislature, as described amply by Parrish, and instead focus on the governor's interjections on the situation.²

Aside from William Connelly's first-hand account of Lewelling's life and administration, only historian Dawn Daniels has attempted an in-depth study of the state's twelfth governor. Completed in 1932, her work was an invaluable starting jumping off point but it is lacking in its scope and depth. The work provided a road map while stoking the fire of scholarly research to

² William E. Parrish, "The Great Kansas Legislative Imbrolio of 1893," *Journal of the West* 7 (October 1968), 471-490.

dive into the questions that were left unanswered by the brevity of her work. The Populist movement, as a whole, has been studied much more since the time of Daniels' study, which gives the topic much more context, but she should be commended for being one of the first to recognize Lorenzo Lewelling's contributions to Kansas politics.

CHAPTER II

LORENZO D. LEWELLING

Lorenzo Dow Lewelling's path to prominence was one of hardship and trial, but one that made him into a compassionate candidate who went on to win the governorship of the state of Kansas. Many of the events left profound marks on the man who became the face of the Populist Party in Kansas and those scars resurfaced in his years in the public sphere.

The events of his life prior to coming to Kansas are important because it sets the stage for the policies he developed during his political career. Lorenzo Dow Lewelling was born on December 21, 1846, in the town of Salem, Iowa, the youngest child of William and Cyrene Lewelling. The town, founded by the members of the Society of Friends in 1835, was a beacon of Quaker activity in Iowa and Lewelling's parents counted themselves as part of the first group to settle in the area. His family, including his father and uncles Henderson and John, were staunch abolitionists, even going so far as to start their own Quaker meeting known as the "Anti-Slavery Friends."

It was in this small hamlet near the Missouri border that the young Lewelling faced the first hardships that came to define his life. When Lorenzo was only two years old, William Lewelling died suddenly of illness while preaching in Indiana at only thirty years old. Only seven years later, his mother, by then remarried to Erich Knudson, was burned to death at the age of thirty-eight, leaving "a large and helpless family" to fend for themselves. Lorenzo, the youngest of William and Cyrene's six children, was left orphaned at the age of nine, and went to live with the oldest of his siblings, Rebecca Hampton, before hardship found him once again. As

historian Edith Connelly Ross pointed out, his sister's dire economic situation of having to care not only for her own two small boys but for the well-being of her younger sibling caused the family to struggle financially and "compelled" the young Lewelling to set out on his own where he "did any labor that was honest." Lewelling's formative years were best described by historian Ross when she continued that "his early life was one continuous terrible struggle."³

Lewelling's childhood soon took another turn when the hostilities between the states began in 1861. Lewelling, a fresh-faced fourteen year old when Fort Sumter was attacked in April of that year, enlisted with an Iowa regiment after the conflict began but his relatives were able to secure his discharge because of their pacifist Quaker beliefs. Unwilling to simply stand on the sidelines in such a monumental conflict as the Civil War, Lewelling signed up to serve his country first by supplying troops with beef and then by enlisting in a Union bridge building corps in Tennessee.⁴

At the end of the war, Lewelling migrated north and enrolled at Eastman's Business School in Poughkeepsie, New York. Upon graduation, the homesick Lewelling was left penniless. He turned to any form of work he could to get back to his home state. He worked as a tow-boy on the Erie Canal before earning enough money to make his way to Toledo, Ohio, where he worked as carpenter. He stayed in Toledo until he had enough to move further west to Chicago, working as a section hand before finally earning his way back to Iowa. According to several sources, upon his return to Iowa Lewelling worked several odd jobs, including building

³ Peter H. Curtis, "Lorenzo D. Lewelling: A Quaker Populist," *Quaker History* (1972): 113-114; Louis Thomas Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa*, (Iowa City, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1914), 38-43; O.A. Garretson, "The Lewelling Family – Pioneers," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, (1929), 406-427; Edith Connelley Ross, "The Administration of Lorenzo D. Lewelling," in William E. Connelly, *History of Kansas, State and People*, (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1928), 723; 1856 Iowa State Census, Jackson Township, Henry County, Iowa; 1860 United States Census, Marion Township, Lee County, Iowa.

⁴ O. Gene Clanton, *Kansas Populism: Ideas and Men* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1969), 278n; Daniels 3; W. J. Costigan, "Lorenzo D. Lewelling," *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society* (1902): 12.

bridges and teaching at a black school ran by the Freedman's Bureau, before saving enough money to enroll at the Quaker run Whittier College in Salem, Iowa. It was at Whittier that the hardships of his life began to lessen for the first time.⁵

Lewelling was a "large, but well rounded" man with "prominent dark eyes" that expressed "a calm, sympathetic temperament" by the time he reached his mid-twenties. It is easy to see from the description above why it did not take long for the strapping young Lewelling to find a wife after returning to his home state of Iowa. Lewelling married Angie Cook, whom he met while attending Whittier College, in 1872 and settled on a farm near his hometown of Salem, Iowa. Just three years later, the young couple was named the first Superintendent and Matron of the Iowa Girl's Reform School. Lewelling and his bride, both college educated teachers by trade, were a perfect match for the new job and the couple flourished in their differing roles.

Although Lewelling involved himself in other matters away from the Girls School, namely the maintenance of two Iowa newspapers he had started, he and Angie were able to fashion a reform program that oversaw some three hundred twenty girls during their tenure. In the words of historian Douglass Wertsch, the couple was "a team within which the attributes of religion, education, and personalities blended to provide the essential element of good leadership." The Lewellings provided the troubled youths with the "structure and continuity" based on his Quaker religious beliefs and a "family-like structure" that they believed created the proper environment to turn "bad girls" into "good girls." The Lewellings were widely regarded for the work they did with the delinquent girls and made the welfare of the girls "a matter of

⁵ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, May 14, 1890; Curtis 113-114; Costigan 121; Daniels 3; Clanton 278n; Western Historical Co., *The History of Henry County, Iowa*, (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879), 571-572.

personal interest.” Indeed, it seems that Lewelling was giving the troubled youth of Iowa the loving and nurturing home he never had as a child.⁶

It was during their tenure as Superintendent and Matron of the Iowa Girls Reform School that the Lewelling couple became the Lewelling family. Lorenzo and Angie were blessed with three girls, Jessie, Pauline, and Louise, during their time at the helm of the school. The Lewellings raised their girls alongside the girls that were in their care at the Reform School, which by 1880 numbered about sixty-five.⁷

Lewelling’s lifelong commitment to education also played dividends for him in public sphere. Perhaps due to the hardships he faced in getting his own education, Lewelling worked throughout his life to further the academic achievements of all people. His work in the field of education did not go unnoticed either. Even while he served as the Superintendent of the Girls Reform School, Lewelling was elected a trustee of the Iowa State Normal School in Cedar Falls, today known as the University of Northern Iowa, by the Iowa state legislature in 1878. Just one year later, he was listed as a member of the Board of Directors for his alma mater of Whittier College.

He also took an active role in the state’s professional organizations, including giving a key note speech on “The Physiology of Crime” at the Iowa Teacher’s Association meeting in December of 1881. Lewelling’s activities show that he took a proactive stance in contemporary issues. Lewelling was not sitting idly by and watching the happenings go on around him; he was

⁶ Daniels 4-5; Douglass Wertsch, “Iowa’s Daughters: The First Thirty Years of the Girls Reform School of Iowa, 1869-1899,” *Annals of Iowa*, (Summer/Fall 1987), 81-84, 93-94. For some a personal account of Lewelling’s dealings at the Girl’s Reform School, see: Western Historical Co., *The History of Henry County, Iowa*, (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879), 442-447. Although Lewelling and his wife did not personally oversee all of the girls who went through the school in the first thirty years of its existence, the program they fashioned was kept in place well after the two departed.

⁷ 1880 United States Census, Mitchellville, Polk County, Iowa.

actively working around the state to promote education. Through his proactive stance he not only promoted education in Iowa but he promoted himself, which is evident by his election to the Normal School's Board of Trustees. He made a name for himself through the promotion of education in Iowa, but that was far from the only outlet from which Lewelling built his considerable reputation.⁸

Another way Lewelling made a name for himself in his early life was through his connections with the Masons. Lewelling joined the Masons in his hometown of Salem, Iowa, in April of 1868 and became a Master Mason in June 1869. It seems that he did not take his responsibilities with the Masons seriously until 1875 when he was named the Senior Warden of Salem Lodge.⁹ Upon that appointment, Lewelling moved quickly through the ranks of the Masons, becoming the Salem Lodge Master in 1876. His position at the head of his hometown lodge was short-lived however because in 1878, Lewelling was promoted to the position of Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. Lewelling's appointment as the Grand Orator is some of the first evidence that shows his public speaking abilities which would serve him well in his later life and political career.

Lewelling also learned valuable leadership skills with the Masons. Aside from being the Master of the Salem Lodge, Lewelling served as the Master of the Crystal Lodge in Mitchellville, Iowa, from 1882 to 1883 before once again getting a high ranking office at the Grand Lodge of Iowa as the Deputy Grand Master from 1883 to 1884. He was even present during the laying of the cornerstone for the Iowa Normal School's library in 1882. Lewelling's

⁸ *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), March 27, 1878; Western Historical Co., *The History of Henry County, Iowa*, (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879), 541; *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), December 21, 1881.

⁹ After becoming a Master Mason in June 1869, Lewelling was demitted from the Lodge in November for an unknown cause. He was readmitted to the Lodge in February of 1871.

career in the Masons shows some clues as to the politician he would become: an eloquent speaker with ambition to reach the highest offices of the local and state organization.¹⁰

Since the arrival of the first clan of Lewelling's in Iowa, the family had been involved in political issues of one kind or another. For Lorenzo's father's generation of old guard Republicans, it was the abolition of slavery. For Lorenzo, it was reforming the corrupt ways of his father's party. Lorenzo's first foray into politics came in 1870 when he established a Republican newspaper in his hometown of Salem. He served as the editor of the weekly edition for two years prior to becoming the Superintendent of the Girl's Reform School. Although he quit the newspaper after taking his new job, politics were engrained in his bloodline and it did not take long for Lewelling to get involved once again. In 1880, Lewelling founded and edited what became known as an "anti-ring" newspaper called the *Iowa Capital*. Again, Lewelling only edited the newspaper for two years before returning to run the reform school with his wife. Lewelling's interest in Iowa politics was not only limited to that of a Republican newspaper editor. Lewelling's purported lack of involvement in politics prior to coming to Kansas has remained one of the most persistent misconceptions about the man. In reality, he was active in political issues in the state and attended Republican conventions up until the time he left for Kansas. Lewelling was elected to be one of the delegates to the state convention in 1876. He was even one of the men nominated as a candidate for Iowa's Secretary of State at the 1884

¹⁰ "Lodge Secretary's Annual Returns to the Grand Lodge of Iowa, A.F. & A. M.," 1868-1890. Personal correspondence from author to Bill Krueger from the Iowa Masonic Library; William F. Cleveland, *History of the Grand Lodge of Iowa*, Vol. II, part I, (Iowa: Grand Lodge of Iowa, 1913), 22.

Republican convention but was soundly defeated by Frank D. Jackson, who went on to win the election.¹¹

Although not at the top of anyone's ballot, he had made a name for himself in certain circles and achieved some measure of popularity, as evident by his nomination for Secretary of State and his election to the State Normal School's Board of Trustees. Indeed, after examining the early life of Lorenzo Lewelling, it is easy to see why he could make the jump to politics so seamlessly in his later life. His background of hardship and compassion for others, combined with an intense drive to further education, helped him hone the skills he developed as a young adult in Iowa. It was his beginnings in Iowa, both through his connections in education and in politics, which set the stage for him becoming the first Populist governor in the nation.

By 1885, it certainly seemed like Lewelling's life was in order despite the rough start of his youth. For Lewelling, his new life as a family-man, administrator, teacher, newspaper editor, Mason, business man, and political activist must have seemed a world away from the pain of his early life. Pain and anguish soon reared its ugly head once again however, this time sparking some monumental changes in the man that bear some resemblance to what we know today as a "mid-life crisis." In early 1886, Lewelling's beloved wife, Angie, died after a battle with illness. It seems the loss of his wife sent Lewelling, who was left to care for their three girls, into a tailspin. Lewelling married again, this time to Ida Bishop in September of 1886. In 1887, the newly married couple packed up and left Iowa for the greener pastures of Kansas. The sudden departure of Lewelling from everything he had achieved in Iowa hints that the death of his first

¹¹ Costigan 121-122; Clanton 278n; Rossiter Johnson, ed., *Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, (Boston: Biographical Society, 1904), vol. VI; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 22, 1876; August 21, 1884.

wife must have scarred him deeply. However, the change of scenery from the corn fields of Iowa to the plains of Kansas was not the only transformation Lewelling experienced.¹²

Lewelling not only left his home state behind with the relocation of his family to Wichita, Kansas; he left his entire previous life. Upon his arrival in the city, Lewelling turned away from his Quaker upbringing and joined Fourth Congregational Church in the Fairmount Hill neighborhood where his daughters Jessie and Pauline participated in such activities as the “gypsy encampment” and the “Demorest Prize Contest.” He also left his life-long profession of teaching behind and established his own “wholesale butter business,” complete with what was advertised in August of 1890 as “the largest refrigerator in the state.” By 1890, Lewelling’s business ventures were so successful that he was even listed as a “capitalist” in the Wichita City Directories. It seemed like the move to Kansas following the death of his first wife turned Lewelling into an entirely different person.¹³

Lewelling’s early life laid the foundations of the action and political stances he advocated for once he arrived in Kansas. He had been poor and therefore knew the struggles of the destitute. He cared deeply about education. He even had some intricate knowledge of Gilded Age politics. Although he underwent somewhat of a transformation in coming to Kansas, his early life experiences shaped the politician and leader he became.

¹² Although Angie Cook’s gravestone in the Mitchellville, Iowa, cemetery is undated, it does list her age as being thirty six. Approximating the year of her birth from Census data as being 1850, she died sometime in 1886. "Iowa, Marriages, 1809-1992," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XJVM-W1V> : accessed 22 May 2012), L. D. Lewelling, 1886.

¹³ Wichita City Directories, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University, 1887-1891; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, July 17, 1889; June 20, 1890; August 3, 1890. For more on Lewelling’s girls Forth Congregational Church activities, see: *Wichita Eagle*, April 21, 1888; *Wichita Eagle*, March 17, 1889; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, April 26, 1892.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE POPULISM IN KANSAS

On January 16th, 1885, the *Wichita Eagle* reported that it was worried about little in the coming spring. Kansas was in a boom and everyone was optimistic because “business really seems to be improving.” That day, as it had through much of the 1890s, the newspaper reported on various business dealings, including the establishment of an \$80,000 stock wholesale furniture business, and a play to get the Sunflower railroad and Santa Fe railroad shops and headquarters. It was a time of “Traffic, Trade and Speculation” and business was booming. The editors “confidently” counted on “a boom of large proportions for Wichita and the southwest generally for the summer of 1885.” The days of “Bleeding Kansas” and the Texas cattle drives were behind her and Kansas seemed poised to be the Victorian jewel of the West. Just a few years later, this optimism had turned to frustration, with figures like Lorenzo Dow Lewelling embodying the change in attitude.¹⁴

Westward expansion brought railroads to the prairie and developed the high plains counties of western Kansas. The changing landscape did not come without consequences however. The consequences brought on by the massive expansion of population and debt put enormous strain on the citizens of Kansas. It was out of the strain and toil of the 1880s that one of the nation’s most successful third party movements was born on the windy plains of Kansas.

¹⁴ *Wichita Eagle*, January 16, 1885.

The boom years of the 1880s set the stage for what has been called the “Populist Decade” of the 1890s.¹⁵

The roots of Populism in Kansas date to the early to mid 1880s. At that time, Kansas experienced one its largest population booms in the state’s brief history. It was a time when many western Kansas towns promoted themselves as the “Next Chicago;” a period where boosterism was prevalent. Towns and counties across the western half of the state sprang up overnight as “sheep psychology” took hold in settlers and led them to pick up and move in groups and investors sought to become rich in land development, agriculture, or industrial ventures. Often time, no sooner had settlers of new western Kansas communities arrived than they organized to solicit funds for railroads. Kansas towns, encouraged by the prospect of becoming the next metropolis, took on enormous amounts of debt to build their new communities on the prairie. Railroads, settlers’ main attraction, were given bonds and subsidies to divert them from neighboring communities in the hope that power and prestige would follow.¹⁶

Settlers in the new towns had several reasons for promoting growth. Many of the new towns, especially in western Kansas, were very similar. These communities were often enthralled in bitter county seat battles and securing a stop on a major railroad line was one way

¹⁵ Jeffrey C. Williams, “Economics and Politics: Voting Behavior in Kansas during the Populist Decade,” *Explorations in Economic History* 18 (July 1981), 233.

¹⁶ Dawn Daniels, “Lorenzo D. Lewelling: Leader of Kansas Populists” (master’s thesis, Northwestern University, 1931), 9-13; Raymond C. Miller, “The Background of Populism in Kansas,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (March 1925): 475-476. One of the best examples of railroad how important railroad subsidies were to the survival of a community in Kansas comes from James R. Shortridge’s *Cities on the Plains: The Evolution of Urban Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas Press, 2004), 170. Shortridge outlines the “competition” between Iuka and Pratt Center (now known simply as Pratt) for location of division point of the Rock Island Railroad from Hutchinson in 1886. Pratt Center prevailed, allegedly because “Pratt Center interests” supplied illegal alcohol to the Iuka representatives, who subsequently missed the county meeting, and the town grew to more than 1,000 residents by 1890.

to ensure one town's success over another. Additionally, subsidizing the railroads increased land values. Settlers who plotted towns and lots were heavily invested in the outcome of particular cities and needed a railroad to come through to increase the land values of the community so they could line their pockets with cash. Kansans routinely put themselves at risk by borrowing on the value of their property to attract these railroads, surmising that all debts could be paid as long as the boom continued. It also helped that Kansas settlers were very good at attracting railroads. Kansas ranked second nationally in railroad mileage and second in the total mileage increase by 1890. That track cost settlers dearly and by the same year, Kansas had the largest increase of public debt in the nation and almost four times the national average of private debt. During the boom, the state's public debt increased nearly three-fold from \$15 million to \$41 million. Although easy to recognize today, settlers at the time could not see the "bubble" they were creating by increased debt spending on the hope that the boom would continue. And why should the settlers have cared? They were getting "rich by borrowing and by inflating values" in their speculative real estate adventures. Kansas was booming the late 1880s, spurred on by immigration (and emigration), railroads, and, most importantly, deficit spending.¹⁷

The boom of the 1880s did not last, however and by 1889-1890, Kansas was in the midst of a widespread economic depression brought on by severe winters, droughts and made worse by the speculative dealings earlier in the decade. The depression reached every corner of the state, including the bustling metropolis of Wichita, which once touted herself as the "Peerless Princess of the Plains." Indeed the boom had turned to bust and the state was plunged back what must have seemed like the dark ages. Kansas, and Kansans, simply could not keep up with boom time

¹⁷ Daniels, 7-13; Peter H. Argersinger, *Populism and Politics: William Alfred Peffer and the People's Party* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 11; Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Seventh Biennial Report, 1889-1890* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1891), vi.

economics. Historian Luke Chennell pointed out that the boom made a hierarchal structure, with agricultural income supporting the larger urban boom built on top of it. Cities in central and eastern Kansas, the more “urbanized” portion of the state, relied heavily on the “unstable foundations of rural prosperity and industrial bonds,” while rural communities were built on the unusually high crop prices and fair weather that brought in huge bounties of crops. Once the agricultural base was eroded by the changing environmental and economic climates, the urban boom was bound to collapse under its own weight like a house of cards. The population of the state reached its height in 1888 and quickly began to fall when the bubble burst and the speculators began to leave the state later that same year. By 1890, a total of six percent of the population, about 90,000 people, had left the plains of Kansas for greener pastures. The effects of the population decline were statewide but the state still had a chance to thrive as long as farmers in a heavily agrarian economy continued to produce.¹⁸

The farmers did produce, but to sustain such an outrageous deficit spending economy they needed a miracle. They did not get one. Although known now as the Wheat State, during the boom, Kansas seemed preoccupied with a different cash crop, corn. The shift occurred because corn produced much higher yields per acre than wheat. The trend showed itself in the *Biennial Reports* produced by the Kansas State Board of Agriculture. Corn routinely produced twice as many bushels per acre than winter wheat during the boom years despite the fact that corn actually made less per bushel.¹⁹ Although wheat actually had a higher price per bushel,

¹⁸ Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Seventh Biennial Report*, vi-viii; Luke Chennell, “Who Can Predict the Future?: Central Kansas and the Boom of 1887,” (master’s thesis, Wichita State University, 2003), 93.

¹⁹ The author chose his home county, Barber, as the control to examine the prices of corn and winter wheat per bushel for the years 1885-1890. Corn produced average bushels per acre: 40 in 1885, 25 in 1886, 20 in 1887, 25 in 1888. Wheat produced average bushels per acre: 15 in 1885, 12 in 1886, 10 in 1887, 16 in 1888. Price of corn per bushel: \$.30 in 1885, \$.30 in 1886, \$.40 in 1887, \$.34 in 1888. Price of wheat per bushel: \$.70 in 1885, \$.60 in 1886, \$.60 in 1887, \$.90 in 1888. See Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix for Barber County totals during this period.

Kansas farmers were raising corn because of the sheer volume of bushels it produced. As long as the prices stayed relatively close to that of wheat prices the farmers could make a good living. However, corn prices plummeted during the bust and Kansas farmers were slow to react to the market trend. As historian Raymond C. Miller surmised just thirty years after this depression, once the corn prices dropped to all-time lows, the state was doomed. By 1889 the price of the state's leading cash crop had dropped so low, some ten cents per bushel in some locations around the state, and many farmers began to burn the produce to heat their homes during the cold winter months because they could not afford coal at such low crop prices. Historian Lawrence Goodwyn's summation of the farmers situation shows just how desperate the times were, saying that "a person who borrowed \$1,000 to buy a farm in 1868 would not only have to grow twice as much wheat in 1889 to earn the same mortgage payment," but "he would be repaying his loan in dollars that had twice as much purchasing power as the depreciated currency he had originally borrowed." He noted that the situation "was a blessing to the banker-creditors," but it "placed a cruel and exploitive burden on the nation's producer-debtors." Although the farmers of the state were able to hang on for about a year after the speculators left the state, they could not outrun the damage and debts of the boom years.²⁰

To make a bad situation worse, western Kansas in the late 1880s fell into one of its most serious droughts in the nineteenth century. Although Miller claims that the effect of the drought was "overestimated," it did considerable damage to western Kansas farmers. The early and mid 1880s were unusually wet in the western portion of the Sunflower State and made many farmers

Totals calculated by author. Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Fifth Biennial Report*, 80; Kansas State Board of Agriculture, *Sixth Biennial Report*, 26.

²⁰ Miller 476; Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 12.

believe the old myth that the rain followed the plow. Unfortunately, they could not have been more wrong. Starting around 1886, the average rainfall dropped off in the western half of the state and drought lasted for about the next eight years. The drought, combined with the enormous debt burden brought on by “civilizing” the plains and a devastating blizzard in the winter of 1886 and 1887 which wiped out thousands of cattle across the state, made a perfect storm for a statewide economic depression.²¹

A prime example of the booming economy in Kansas comes from the Burton Car Works located in Wichita. In 1892 alone, the *Wichita Daily Eagle* reported the ebbs and flows of economics in Kansas when describing the situation at the Burton Car Works, which made locomotive railcars. On February 2, 1892, the *Eagle* reported that the company was gradually increasing their workforce. By March, it was reported that nearly 60 men were employed by the company. Yet, by May 15, 1892, it was reported that “about twenty employees of the Burton car works were laid off on Friday evening.” It was reported that “some of the best men in the employ of the works were among those laid off.” The Burton example illustrates how quickly the employment situation could change even for the best work and shows that a bust could hit every industry, including the railroad industry.²²

Gone were the good times; depression had hit the Sunflower State with devastating results. Farmers could not pay the taxes on the inflated land they owned let alone the mortgage payments to the bank. By 1892, Kansas lost almost twelve percent of its 1888 population because of the bust and depression. Crop prices were at record lows across the state and farmers were growing fewer crops due to the unfavorable Kansas weather conditions and loss of cropland

²¹ Miller 476-477; Craig Miner, *Kansas: A History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 148-149.

²² *Wichita Daily Eagle*, February 2, 1892; *Ibid.*, March 4, 1892; *Ibid.*, May 15, 1892.

through foreclosure. The bursting bubble hurt thousands across the state and caused extreme tumult amongst Kansas settlers, especially those in central and western Kansas. Farmers who could not pay their mortgages or taxes quickly turned to their elected officials for aid, just as they did during the Grasshopper Plague of 1874.²³

Since its inception, Kansas had been a solidly Republican state. But after the economic crash of 1887-1888, many of the most desperate citizens began to look elsewhere for new solutions to their problems. It was during the first years of the depression that true populism took shape in Kansas.²⁴

This economic catastrophe offered an arena for the Farmers Alliance, a loose organization and predecessor to what would become the Populist Party that had been on the fringes of the political spectrum for almost a decade. Southern cotton farmers first introduced the Farmers Alliance in response to falling cotton prices in the early 1880s. Kansans, hit hard by the falling corn prices in 1888-1889, adapted the Farmers Alliance platform to fit its needs and quickly became attached to the growing farmer's movement of the South. It should not be surprising that once the ideas were planted and cultivated in the minds of hard-hit and struggling Kansas farmers, they flocked to the organization "with great speed and intensity."²⁵

Although the Alliance movement stemmed from real economic and social issues of the day, it was not exactly a political party; in the early years of its existence, the Alliance stayed out of the political realm almost completely. Instead, the Alliance tended to focus on their demands.

²³ Vicki Richardson, "The Philosophy of Lorenzo D. Lewelling: First Populist Governor of Kansas," *Kansas State Historical Society*, (1968), 3; Daniels 7-13.

²⁴ Craig Miner, *West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865-1890*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 52-66.

²⁵ Robert C. McMath, Jr., *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 83-105.

The farmers were relatively “nonpartisan,” in the words of historian Jeffery Ostler, as long as they received the reforms they desired.²⁶

By the late 1880s, the Alliance’s leaders realized a real need to unite under one banner. The first attempt to organize the grassroots movement nationally occurred at a convention in December of 1889 in St. Louis, Missouri. The convention was primarily noted for the clashes of viewpoints and directions of the delegations, which included delegations from the Southern Farmers Alliance, Northern Farmers Alliance, Knights of Labor, Farmers’ Mutual Benefit Association, and the Agricultural Wheel. The *Iola Register* reported that the leaders of the Knights of Labor “did not come to ask the farmers to indorse any thing in the Knights of Labor platform that they deemed inconsistent with their views.” Likewise, the farmers should not ask the Knights of Labor to “indorse anything contrary to their principles.” There were differences to be sure, but both the farmers movement and organized labor recognized their combined power to “bring about legislation that both classes desire.” The convention was never about forming a new political party but about a coming together of the minds to find middle ground that the differing delegations could agree on. In fact, historian John D. Hicks noted that the convention’s demands in St. Louis were not even “consciously designed to be the platform of a new political party.” Although the delegations could not agree on a solid national platform that would unite the differing groups, the ideas brought up at the convention would become the basis of a larger, more agrarian/organized labor movement in the following years. It was on June 12, 1890, just

²⁶ Jeffrey Ostler, “Why the Populist Party Was Strong in Kansas and Nebraska but Weak in Iowa,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, (November 1992), 473. See Document 1 in Appendix for example of Farmer Alliance platform. Although the Alliance did develop the platform, there was no political organization to push for the reforms the Alliance called for.

six months after the St. Louis convention, that a group Kansans met in Topeka and founded the “People’s Party.”²⁷

The party appealed to others who were fed up with what they saw as greedy Eastern capitalists, the sleazy speculators, and the price-gouging railroads as well. In Kansas, the party grew rapidly. As historian William Connelley noted, “The dragon’s teeth were sprouting in every nook and corner of the State,” and by election time in November of 1890, Kansas candidates had sufficient support to be some of the first Populists elected to political office in the nation. Historian William Jeffrey noted that the election of 1890 saw one of the largest shifts in the way Kansans voted, as both farmers and laborers alike flocked to the newly formed party after a long flirtation that began with the St. Louis Convention in 1889. By 1890, the Kansas Populists stunned the nation and elected five of their candidates, including “Sockless Jerry” Simpson, to the fifty-second United States Congress. The party also made huge strides in the state government as well. Of the one-hundred twenty-five seats up for election in the state House of Representatives in the election of 1890, the Populists won ninety-six. The huge majority won in the lower house meant that the state elections would have national ramifications. Prior to the advent of direct election of United States senators in 1913, elections for United States Senators were voted on by the members in both houses of state government, the state House of Representatives and the state Senate. The Populist majority meant that for the first time in the state’s history the well-established Republican political machine was in trouble and so was their candidate for the United States Senate, Republican incumbent John J. Ingalls. Ingalls could be called the first casualty of the Populists in Kansas and his defeat announced to

²⁷ McMath 135; *Iola Register*, December 20, 1889; John D. Hicks, *A History of the Farmers’ Alliance and the People’s Party*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1931), 125.

the nation that there was a real force to be reckoned with on the plains of Kansas. The Kansas Populist majority elected William Peffer, editor of the *Kansas Farmer* newspaper that catered to Populist sympathizers, as the first Populist Senator in the country. As historian O. Gene Clanton noted, “The Populists were jubilant,” at the outcome of the election.²⁸

Not everyone was so elated at the outcome of the elections. A good majority of the state’s newspapers, including the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, backed the Republican ticket. After Peffer’s election, Republican editors from across the state let loose with a barrage of editorials denouncing the Populist victory. In fact, the *Eagle* did not even recognize that the Populists had won a victory for it their mind it was “not regarded as an Alliance (as a separate party) victory, but as a Republican protest.” The *Iola Register*, another Republican newspaper, added that Peffer’s election “satisfied nobody in the Alliance headquarters except a very few of the Judge’s personal friends,” an obvious attempt to downplay the changing political climate in the state and despite the *Iola Register’s* editor’s best efforts, five Populist Representatives and one Senator carried the Kansas flag to the halls of Washington, D.C. for the first time. The people of Kansas had spoken. The economic decisions of the 1870s and 1880s had cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars and had driven many farmers to the Populist cause. The resulting grassroots movement picked up steam and culminated in the election of 1890. Although the election was monumental, it would not be the last time that Kansas Populists caused such a stir on the national political stage.²⁹

²⁸ William Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, vol. II, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 1148; McMath 135-136; Clanton, 87-90; Williams 247; Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints: B.T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eardmans Publishing, 2006), 779.

²⁹ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, January 29, 1891; *Iola Register*, January 30, 1891.

Just how and why the Populists were able to win in the election of 1890 and throughout the “Populist Decade” has been the subject of scholarly debate. Jeffrey C. Williams, in an article published in 1981, argues that Populist political victory depended on how successful, or unsuccessful, the party was at what we would call today “getting out the vote.” Williams examined the abstention rates for the election years in what he termed the “Populist Decade” and his findings are worth noting. Williams’ model states that when rates of abstention were at their highest during the decade (23.31% of eligible voters abstained in 1890, 18.94% in 1894, and 27.83% in 1898), the Republicans won elections. When the rates were at their lowest (13.55% of eligible voters abstained in 1892 and 11.84% in 1896), the Populists were victorious.

Although he presents a fascinating examination of the campaigns and a unique way to see how and why the Populists were able to succeed, Williams’ model only looks at abstention rates according to the outcomes of the gubernatorial races and does not examine the differing party’s successes as a whole. A prime example of this oversight is that, according to Williams’ model, the Populists “lost” the elections of 1890 because of the high abstention rate (23.31% of eligible voters). The Populists did lose the gubernatorial election that year, but the newly formed party all but swept every other office in the state, including electing the first Populist United States Senator, in spite of the high rate of abstention.³⁰

Formed months prior to the election, the Populists could all but sweep the state because the Populist Party in 1890 was much different than any party that had preceded or would succeed it. It was a new movement that was free of the chains of party infrastructure and the “old boy” system that seemed to be wrapped around the wrists of the older, established Republican and Democratic parties, which restricted those parties’ reform voices almost to a standstill. The

³⁰ Williams 233-256.

freedom from nationwide party platforms meant that the Populist Party had the unique opportunity to tailor their message to the individual citizens of Kansas, and judging from the outcome of 1890 election, it was a message that the citizens of Kansas heard and supported.

One prime example of the Populist Party's freedom from platform politics in 1890 is an issue that would come to define the Party in the middle years of the 1890s, the free coinage of silver. The idea, made famous by William Jennings Bryan in his 1896 "Cross of Gold" speech, had been kicked around in party circles in Kansas but was not adopted, even by the most ardent of Populists. At first, the Populists believed that monetary situation needed to be reformed but instead chose to attack the national banking system, an action that surely appealed to the central and western Kansas farmers struggling to keep up with their mortgages. Indeed, the free coinage of silver idea was actually first supported by the Republicans of Kansas, like Senator Preston Plumb and the ousted Senator Ingalls. The Populists of Kansas in 1890 felt that free coinage of silver would not secure the proper relief for the state's suffering and they largely wrote off the idea. Instead, the party of 1890 tended to focus on social and economic relief for the destitute and that message found approval from a largely destitute population. Therefore, when the Populist Party was formed, there was some measure of flexibility on certain issues, like the free coinage of silver. It was the fact that the Populists were playing the political game differently than any party had ever done before which made them so successful in 1890 and it was this same fact, which makes it so hard for historians today to quantify.³¹

Historians have often debated exactly "who" the Populists were. Republican newspapers of the time, like the *Iola Register* and the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, claimed members of the Populist Party were "calamity howlers." Historians, like Craig Miner in his book *Next Year Country*,

³¹ Clanton 104-110.

called the Populists “conspiracy theorists who blamed the problems of Kansas on outside influences.”³² Journalist Thomas Frank has called the Populist movement, “the most famous freak-out of them all.”³³ While these descriptions could be true at certain times, it seems unfair to paint the entire group with such a broad brush because the group was markedly different. The Populists advocated for reforms they believed would fix serious problems and but could also be pragmatic in their approach to politics, like joining with other groups like the Democrats to ensure election victories.

The Populists were as different as the counties of Kansas and many campaigned for what would benefit them the most. Indeed, the Populists were individuals with individual goals that united with other groups to further their own end. Take a look at the group. Of the rank and file, some members were farmers, some were union laborers, and still some were miners. All these groups managed to work their reforms into the Populist platforms which show the competing interests at play during Populist Party conventions.

Likewise, the Populist leadership could not be generalized either. Some were newspaper men, like William Peffer; some were bankers, like John Breidenthal, some were ex-farmers, like Jerry Simpson; and still others were businessmen, or “capitalists” in Lewelling’s case. It is not easy to define this group of diverse people whose agendas did not always fit together perfectly like the pieces of a puzzle. The party was a “catch-all” group that welcomed former Republicans and Democrats, and members of other third parties from the 1880s, into the fold and attempted to make peace between groups of new recruits who had been diametrically opposed, possibly, for

³² *Iola Register*, September 5, 1890; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, November 2, 1890; Craig Miner, *Next Year Country: Dust to Dust in Western Kansas, 1890-1940*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 32.

³³ Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter With Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), 32.

decades. While there was a central party platform, the issues in the platform could be very divisive, especially when it came to women's suffrage and fusion, which nearly tore the group apart prior at multiple times throughout the party's existence. Populists used tools to advance themselves and their own interests, sometimes at the expense of the party platform. A prime example of this would be the issue of fusion with the Democratic Party. Although a joint Populist-Democrat ticket would give them a better chance at winning the election, often time the Populists had to sacrifice their goals at women's suffrage because it was not going to be supported by their partners on the Democratic side. Generalizations about the Populists, at least in Kansas, do not show the complexity of the Populist Party as it truly was: a group of individuals, with their own interests, who united as a means to their own ends.

Populism appealed to those who felt marginalized by the existing power structure, a fact that contributed to Populism's popularity in Kansas that mirrored some of the state's western neighbors, but not the states neighboring Kansas to the east. Historian Jeffery Ostler wrote that Populism "was as if a prairie fire originating in the Great Plains had somehow burned out, or had been extinguished, at the border between" the Plains states and "those to the east." Ostler's study compares his two pro-Populist states, Kansas and Nebraska, with a pro-Republican state neighbor, Iowa, and hypothesized that it was not just economic hardship that drove farmers to Populism but that political factors played a role as well, saying that "a competitive party system in Iowa encouraged the farmers' movement to seek reform from within the two-party system," while Kansas and Nebraska formed an "independent political party" in the absence of a competitive party system. Ostler uses several economic measures to show that there was more than simple economics at work in Kansas and Nebraska to influence the development of the Populist Party including a "debt-to-property-value" ratio that shows that farmers in the eastern

third of those states were actually in less debt than their counterparts in state of Iowa. Ostler concludes that economic differences alone do not constitute enough evidence as to why Kansas, and other states like Nebraska, could differ so greatly from their neighboring states.³⁴

In the second portion of his article, Ostler examines the political factors at play in the Populist states he studied, Kansas and Nebraska, in comparison to Iowa, which leaned Republican during the “Populist Decade.” While Ostler notes that all three states were dominated by the Republican Party for nearly two decades after the Civil War, he outlines a shift in Iowa politics in 1884 when the state’s Democratic Party fused with Iowa’s Greenback Party and elected four “Democrats” to Congress. To Ostler, Iowa Republicans took a series of losses at the polls to heart and reformed to meet the demands of a growing anti-railroad interests, noting that, “during the summer and fall of 1887, suballiances demanded that legislative candidates of both parties support railroad reform and threatened to vote against any candidate who did not comply.” Given such an ultimatum, Ostler notes that Iowa Republicans “responded by embracing the anti-monopoly cause.” The shift brought conservative Iowa Republicans to the realization that reform was in order. In Ostler’s summation, “Iowa farmers experienced economic hardship and organized to protest their perceived injustices... but the modest success of nonpartisanship” meant that the state “never experienced the political alienation necessary to turn them towards a new party.”³⁵

In comparison, Ostler notes that Kansas and Nebraska “faced a different political situation,” with a Democratic Party in those states had remained “weak and irrelevant.” Although noting there were modest reforms in Republican policy during the economic

³⁴ Ostler, 451-461.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 461-470.

depression of the late 1880s in both states, it was a failure to “honor these promises that proved to be a crucial determinant of third-party formation in Kansas and Nebraska.” Although promising reforms, Republicans in Kansas, and other states like Nebraska, did not feel the need (or were not perceived to have felt the need) to actually deliver because of the “absence of a political threat by the Democrats to steal reform issues,” therefore, “Republicans antimonomopolists were unable to expand their base,” unlike in Iowa and other Midwestern states. To Ostler, “a sufficient number of politicians perceived little risk in ignoring demands for reform and ultimately accepted the arguments of powerful bankers and railroad magnates.” In his assessment, Ostler theorizes that “had the political system in Iowa failed to respond” to reforms, “farmers would have been more likely to form a third party,” as what happened in Kansas and Nebraska.³⁶

A weak Democratic party in Kansas contributed to the Populists’ strength, but it was also its main weakness. By the time of local elections in 1891, the base had eroded from beneath Populists and the causes they supported. Part of the reason why the Populists could not sustain their monumental victory of 1890 into the years that followed is that they relied heavily on support from outside of their own party. Kansas Democrats, the ever-present foe of Republicanism since the days of “Bleeding Kansas” in the state, were mindful that they did not have the votes to secure their own candidates in 1890 and therefore chose to throw their full support behind the Populist Party. The support of the Democrats essentially broke the deadlock between the old guard Republicans and the start-up Populists. By election time in 1891, however, the Democrats began to change their mind about supporting the Populist agenda. Meanwhile, some within the Populist Party began to openly campaign against the “unholy

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 470-471.

union” with the Democrats because of the Democrats national stance on women’s suffrage and prohibition, points of contention that would continue to rock the party’s core throughout its existence. Historian Michael Goldberg touched on fusion as a point of contention when he noted that the “arrangement generated resentment among the rank-and-filers, especially ex-Republicans, whose new loyalty to Populism had not lessened their hatred of Democrats.” The pressure exuded by a small minority within the party, led by the “Kansas Pythoness” Mary Elizabeth Lease, did turn some Democrats away. Moreover, some in the Democratic were just not in favor of the People’s Party reforms. Whether Democrats switched their support because of perceived or real threats to their agenda, many did not support the Populist ticket in 1891 and the Republicans won back a vast majority of the local elections that year. The election of 1891 exposed a real weakness for the Populist Party. Although they did have support from areas across the state, they could not yet stand up to the Republicans on their own and would need the aid of the Democratic Party.³⁷

The People’s Party had accomplished much in its short lifespan but the setbacks of the 1891 local elections had left a bitter taste in the mouths of Populists who were pushing for further reform. In 1892, the hopes and dreams of the fledgling party fell to the man who had been there from its inception, Lorenzo Dow Lewelling of Wichita.

³⁷ Michael Goldberg, “Non-Partisan and All-Partisan: Rethinking Woman Suffrage and Party Politics in Gilded Age Kansas,” *Kansas and the West*, ed. Rita Napier, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 208.

CHAPTER IV

“THE REVOLUTION OF 1892”

Initially, Lorenzo D. Lewelling had been relatively quiet on the political scene. Disillusionment with Republican politics explains why someone like Lewelling, an educator and businessman with few connections to farming, found a home in a Populist party that emerged out of the grievances of farmers. The first evidence of Lewelling’s involvement in politics outside of the Republican Party occurred in May of 1890 when he was elected as the permanent Secretary at one of the first joint meetings between the Farmer’s Alliance and the Industrial Union. The two groups, advocates for farmer’s and worker’s rights, held in Wichita, helped to form the nucleus of what became the Populist Party in the years to come and Lewelling was the young organization’s first permanent secretary. Although a relative newcomer to local politics, Lewelling found a niche at the meeting between the Farmer’s Alliance and the Industrial Union and with the official formation of the nation’s first Populist Party just a month later, Lewelling was poised to have real influence on the political scene.³⁸

Although a well-known Wichita businessman and Populist Party member, he was not very well known outside of Sedgwick County. He had served as such party roles as county secretary, county chairman, and Wichita township representative; he had attended Populist party meetings throughout the state, but in 1892 he would not have been recognized as one of the party’s statewide leaders. That distinction fell to the likes of Jerry Simpson, Mary E. Lease, and William Peffer. However, in June of 1892, with the election rapidly approaching, it was

³⁸ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, May 14, 1890.

Lewelling who burst onto the scene like a bullet from a gun. The Populists were gearing up for the national and state elections and it seemed fitting that the state's fastest growing political party held its convention in its fastest growing urban center.

The Populists met in Lewelling's Wichita in mid June of 1892. As chairman of the host chapter, it was Lewelling's honor to welcome the delegates to the Populist Convention of 1892 after a short welcome by Mayor John B. Carey. He did not disappoint. Speaking in the morning on the first day, June 14th, of the convention, Lewelling delivered a masterpiece that left the crowd buzzing about the man broad-shouldered Wichitan. Lewelling had a special knack for the spoken word, no doubt relying on the skills he learned early in life as a teacher and orator, and his speech at the convention was one of the first instances where he was able to showcase that skill to his Populist Party brethren. He opened his remarks with sharp tone and militarist rhetoric saying that the Populist "army" would lead in the "battle not for supremacy, but for equality" during "the great revolution of 1892." Lewelling continued that the Populists should "demand no paternalism at the hands of the government, but we do demand protection from corporate vultures and legalized beasts of prey."

Lewelling's speech was generalized as far as policy; instead, he focused on his frustration for the working class of the state. Lewelling had seen firsthand the destruction caused by the bust shortly after arriving and felt it was the government's role to relieve the struggling who were "abandoned to become victims of superior cunning and insatiate greed." In his mind, it was the plutocracy, the rule or power of the wealthy, that had caused the most heartache in Kansas. He called on his fellow party members to join him in the fight against the wealthy ruling class. He added that the fight would not be easy but that it would demand "unswerving fidelity,"

enormous courage, and “the most sublime devotion of the citizens of our commonwealth.”

Lewelling’s words were a call to action and those in attendance were ready to answer his call.³⁹

Near the close of his speech, Lewelling also promoted an alliance with the Democrats of Kansas. In Lewelling’s mind, the election of 1890 had proven that Populists could defeat incumbent Republican opponents. The Populist defeat in the local elections of 1891 proved for him that a victory could only be had with the support of the Democratic Party. Lewelling cautioned that “while we are brave let us also be wise. Let us welcome honorable allies and we shall go forth to victory.” In this sentence, Lewelling tempered his idealism with the Populist cause with a realism in electoral politics. Unlike some in his party who were not in favor of the fusion (a combination ticket of Populists and Democrats), Lewelling argued that for the Populists to enact their social reform and relief programs, they first needed to be elected. That election would only come through cooperation with other groups against the ruling Republican plutocracy. His speech had ignited a fire inside those in attendance and the crowd roared as he exited the stage. Almost immediately following his speech, Lewelling returned to his business and left the convention in the hands of the capable Populist delegates.⁴⁰

On the final day of the convention, six candidates were nominated for the governorship. It seemed like a long shot that Lewelling, a man who was not seriously considered for any statewide office prior to the convention and a man who had not even attended the second day of the convention, would even be nominated. Indeed, prior to the convention, Lewelling did not even get consideration from his home town paper, the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, which covered the Populist convention despite being an opposition newspaper. Lewelling’s speech had turned

³⁹ Clanton 117; *Topeka Advocate*, June 17, 1892.

⁴⁰ Clanton 118.

heads at the convention but many were convinced it would not be enough. Although absent from the events that took place at the convention after his speech, he had garnered some support. In reality, his absence probably only helped to increase his support at the convention because of the stigma against men actively seeking public office. The *Eagle* predicted that the Lewelling campaign would be greatly surprised “in the convention at how little support it will receive.” Yet, when the nominations were made, Lewelling had made the cut along with five others, including the People’s Party choices for governor and lieutenant governor in 1890, John F. Willits of Jefferson County and A. C. Shinn of Franklin County. Also in the running was the Party’s 1890 Kansas Speaker of the House, P. P. Elder of Franklin County, and another member of the Kansas House of Representatives, John S. Doolittle from Chase County. Despite the political pedigrees and capabilities of those listed above, the real favorite for securing the nomination was William D. Vincent from Clay County. Many of the men nominated for governor, including Elder, Willits, and Vincent, were some of the leading names in the party. All the nominees had shown political capabilities and many of those nominated had held political office at one point in their lives, either under the Populist Party or otherwise.

After Lewelling’s nomination was put forth, the delegation applauded for approximately five minutes before the nomination was seconded by the Populist hero of Southern Kansas, Jerry Simpson. Simpson credited Lewelling’s leadership as one of the main reasons why he was able to secure the 1890 election in the Wichita area and greatly supported Lewelling’s nomination. It only took the delegates one vote to narrow the field down to two candidates, the favorite William D. Vincent and the underdog Lorenzo D. Lewelling. In the ensuing runoff, Lewelling defeated Vincent by over one hundred votes, an astounding total considering there were only some five hundred ballots cast. Lewelling then nominated Vincent for lieutenant-governor. Vincent

respectfully declined the nomination and Percy Daniels received the nomination. The Populist ticket was set. Some of the familiar names were re-nominated, like Jerry Simpson for United States Congressman from Kansas's Seventh District, but the real talk of the convention was the nomination of a newcomer. Lewelling had stolen the show and could now settle in as the People's Party candidate for the governorship of Kansas.⁴¹

The common perception amongst historians who have studied Populism in Kansas, is that Lewelling's nomination was a fluke and seemed like it came out of "left field." Although his nomination was a surprise, at least to the Republican newspaper editors who covered the event, Lewelling was far from being an obscure candidate as many historians suggest. The misconception of Lewelling's obscurity was first perpetrated by his close friend W. J. Costigan in a speech at the Kansas State Historical Society in 1901. In his speech, Costigan addressed Lewelling's nomination at the 1892 Wichita convention by saying that "scarcely a delegate in that convention had ever seen or heard of him." Dawn Daniels picked up on this notion in her 1931 master's thesis on the Lewelling as well. The notion of his obscurity was probably picked up from Republican newspaper reports about the convention. Following his nomination, newspaper men printed reports about the small role Lewelling had played in party politics up to that point. One example of this type of editorial work is listed below, a poem entitled "Never Heard of Him," and appeared in the *Wichita Daily Eagle* the week following Lewelling's nomination:

Never Heard of Him
Tell me, ye winged winds,
That „round my pathways roar,
Do you not know Lewelling?

⁴¹ Clanton 118; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, June 12, 1892; *Ibid.*, June 15, 1892; *Western Kansas World*, June 25, 1892; *Iola Register*, June 24, 1892; Daniels 25-26; Connelley, *Standard History*, 1147, 1156.

Who keeps a store
At Wichita?
The loud winds lulled to a whisper low
And sighed for pity as they answered „No!“
In all the wide world o’er
We never heard before
Of the man who keeps the store
At Wichita.⁴²

Another factor contributing to Lewelling’s perceived obscurity was that the papers routinely misspelled his name. The misspellings perhaps helped to downplay Lewelling’s newly won candidacy and mislead the public into thinking that the People’s Party candidate was a relative nobody. Papers routinely misspelled both his first, spelled “Loren” and “Lorraine,” and last name, spelled “Lewellyn.” Even when the newspapers had appeared correctly spelled his name before somehow conveniently forgot the correct spelling of his name after his nomination. For example, *Wichita Daily Eagle* had numerous articles about Lewelling prior to the convention, including on the day of his nomination on June 15th, yet on the following day his name was not only misspelled once, “Lewellen,” but twice, “Lewellyn.” At least one newspaper, *The Atchison Blade*, admitted to not knowing what the correct spelling of his name was when it posted an editorial that asked, “Is it Llewellyn, Lewellyn, or Lewelling?” It may be a stretch to surmise that misspelled names could have thrown historians off of the trail of to what extent Lewelling was known statewide prior to his nomination, but there seems to be ample evidence that the tactic was used by the Republican newspapers of the state to discredit Lewelling’s candidacy, or at least to dismiss what they saw as an insignificant opponent, in the upcoming election.⁴³

⁴²Costigan 124; Daniels 24-25; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, June 24, 1892.

⁴³*Iola Register* June 17, 1892; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, June 16, 1892; *Atchison Blade*, October 22, 1892.

Although historians have often believed that Lewelling was an obscure candidate for governor in 1892, one historian correctly disregarded that theory. In discussing the reasons behind Lewelling's nomination in his book *Kansas Populism: Ideas and Men*, historian O. Gene Clanton noted that the prevailing theory on Lewelling was only true "in a relative sense." In his research, Clanton pointed to several instances where Lewelling had appeared with the stars of the Kansas Populist Party, a fact that seemed to have been overlooked by earlier historians. To add to Clanton's point, those stars were quick to acknowledge Lewelling's contributions to the party. A prime example would be the fact that Jerry Simpson was one of the first to second Lewelling's nomination at the convention. Simpson praised Lewelling and said that he had greatly influenced Simpson's 1890 congressional campaign in Sedgwick and the surrounding counties. Clanton's conclusion can be further proved with the aide of modern technology and the digitization of past newspapers in searchable databases. Lewelling routinely appeared in the newspapers of Wichita and was no doubt known by the citizens of southern Kansas. Lewelling was not the most popular of the Populists by far, but the notion that he was a nonentity prior to his nomination as governor is incorrect and has tainted his legacy ever since.⁴⁴

After securing the nomination for governor, Lewelling's campaign had an uphill battle to win office in the Republican dominated state. However, Lewelling had one advantage in his bid for governorship, time. His nomination had taken place in the middle of June to accommodate for another attempt at national Populist Party organization in Omaha, Nebraska, which opened on July 2, 1892. Coincidentally, the state's Republicans were not scheduled to convene to elect their ticket until the end of June. This meant that Lewelling had over two full weeks where he was the state's only bona-fide candidate for governor. The Populists wasted little time in

⁴⁴ Clanton 275; *Wichita Daily Beacon*, June 16, 1892.

organizing a speaking tour, under the direction of the party's chairman John Breidenthal. The tour allowed the Populist candidates to travel as a unit across the state to get their message out and it was well received.⁴⁵

John William Breidenthal was one of the murkiest characters of the Populist era in Kansas. Little is known about Breidenthal before coming to Kansas but starting in 1880s, he starts to make a name for himself in southeastern part of the state. A banker and financier by trade, Breidenthal joined up with the J.B. Cook & Co. investment group in Chetopa, Kansas. It appears, however, that his real passion was politics and he started to rise through the ranks of the major third parties in Kansas. In 1881, Breidenthal was elected as the secretary for the Greenback Party in Labette County and just two years later claimed the title of Labette County chairman. His career progressed through the Union Labor Party, where he was elected to as chairman of the party in Labette County in 1888, and was even nominated for governor at the Union Labor Party's state convention in 1888. Breidenthal's experience in third party politics definitely gave him a boost when the Populist Party was formed in Kansas and he was named chairman of the party in 1892 due to his "peculiar ability and sagacity requisite to conduct a successful campaign." Breidenthal was a king-maker in an age of king-makers and it was his job to unify the Populist Party message into something that would make "the people everywhere yield a ready compliance to his every wish."⁴⁶

Lewelling launched his campaign from the state's capital of Topeka in late June and then hurried to lead the Kansas delegation to Omaha, where the national party platform was adopted on July 4th. The convention adopted some ground-breaking reforms in its platform, which

⁴⁵ *Topeka Advocate*, August 3, 1892.

⁴⁶ Nelson Case, *History of Labette County, Kansas: From the First Settlement to the Close of 1892*, (Topeka: Crane & Company, 1893), 151, 244-246; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, August 30, 1888; *The Advocate*, June 22, 1892.

signified a transition from political movement to political party, including the free coinage of silver at a rate of sixteen to one and the nationalization of railroads. The convention also nominated its first national candidate for president, Union veteran General James B. Weaver. The platform that the Populists adopted was largely unchanged from that of the 1889 St. Louis convention, and almost identical to the Kansas one, included reforms like the nationalization of railroads, the direct election of U.S. Senators, and the Australian ballot, but the convention did succeed in uniting the party under one national banner.⁴⁷

There is little doubt that by the time Lewelling returned from the Omaha convention that he knew his competitor in the upcoming election. The state's Republicans met in Topeka while Lewelling and his companions were on their way to Nebraska and nominated A. W. Smith, a farmer from McPherson County, to represent them on their ticket. Although many have argued that Lewelling was a nonentity prior to his nomination, the same could also be said of Smith, who is often referred to in the newspapers simply as the "farmer."⁴⁸

The two candidates wasted no time getting their respective campaigns underway. Lewelling joined many of his Populist brethren on the statewide speaking tour that featured many of the state's leading reformers like Simpson, Lease, and Anne Diggs. According to the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, the two gubernatorial candidates did not meet until late July where it was reported that Smith told Lewelling he would send his adversary an invitation to Smith's inaugural ball. The political climate in the state was fiery during the campaign from the start.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Dodge City Globe-Republican*, June 27, 1892; Clanton, 123-125.

⁴⁸ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, July 2, 1892;

⁴⁹ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, July 29, 1892; *Topeka Advocate*, July 29, 1892, paints a much more cordial viewpoint on the first meeting between Lewelling and Smith saying that the two "chatted pleasantly" in their first acquaintance.

The two met again on July 30, this time on Smith's home turf in McPherson County. The meeting was a prime example of how the whole campaign proceeded throughout the early fall of 1892. The messages delivered by the candidates typified each candidate's approach to the election and the reaction of the newspaper men was typical of how the election played out in the press. It all started when Lewelling made a speaking stop not only in Smith's home county but in Smith's home town of Windom to attend a picnic; a picnic to which Smith was also invited. As would be expected from such a move, a political debate broke out despite the fact that the picnic was supposed to be a "nonpartisan affair." Both candidates made speeches, along with speeches by Populist S. H. Snider of Kingman and Republican Chester I. Long of Medicine Lodge. The messages delivered that day were fierce and depending on the slant of the newspaper reporters present, both parties claimed their side had won. Lewelling, positioning himself as the "realist" of the two candidates, spoke first and painted Kansas a land that was struggling to wade through the mire of debt and farm mortgages caused by the "public policy of the Republican Party." He continued on to point out that the Republican policies created an environment of "inevitable ruin that is daily entailed thereby upon the country." Lewelling's speech typified his approach to the election; he wanted Kansans to see that their state was in need of serious reforms.⁵⁰

On the other hand, Smith took the optimistic route and proclaimed Kansas as a land that had been "transformed from a desert into a blooming garden." Smith continued that Lewelling belittled what the state had accomplished by painting such a dismal picture and added that Lewelling was contributing to the growing "calamity howl," as Republicans so often referred to Populist leaders and supporters. Smith "urged" the audience to "bless the party that has secured

⁵⁰ *Topeka Advocate*, August 10, 1892; *ibid.*, August 17, 1892; Clanton 125.

unto the people so grand and glorious and prosperous era” as there had been since the Civil War. Both candidates continued to use much the same message throughout the campaign, with Lewelling calling attention to what was wrong with the state and what needed to be reformed; while Smith noted what was going well and accused Lewelling of howling disaster around every turn.⁵¹

Although a competent speaker, Lewelling chose to let the situation of the state do most of the talking. For those on the verge of destitution, Lewelling really did not have to campaign, he simply pointed out what was going on and let those voters come to him. Smith, and his Republican newspaper allies, had a much tougher job defending the Republican policies that had put the state in such a fragile situation. Both candidates continued on their campaign tours across the state and patiently awaited the arrival of Election Day in early November 1892.

The election of 1892 went exactly the way the Kansas Populists wanted. The campaign trail had treated them well and their supporters came out in full force for the Populist cause. Although many of the Populists were successful in their bids for election in 1892, the numbers show that that victory was almost solely due to the support thrown their way by the Democratic Party. For example, Kansas and her ten electoral votes went to the Populist presidential candidate, James B. Weaver. However, a closer examination of the voting statistics shows that Weaver margin of victory was very low. Weaver only beat the incumbent President Benjamin Harrison by less than 2% of the total of the total votes cast, or less than 5,000 total votes. Scholars assert that the difference came because the Democrats, who went completely against their national brethren and did not support their candidate, former President Grover Cleveland, who received very little votes in Kansas compared to Weaver and Harrison. The mention of the

⁵¹ *Topeka Advocate*, August 10, 1892; *ibid.*, August 17, 1892; Clanton 125.

Presidential race is important for the election of Lewelling because voters acted in much the same way at the state level. The fusion ticket, a strategy advocated for by Lewelling in his nomination speech, was the main reason why Weaver won Kansas, one of only four states he won that year.⁵²

Fusion played a huge role in state politics as well. The Populists dominated at the polls in Kansas like they had in 1890, making almost a clean sweep despite newspaper reports in the days after the election to the contrary. Kansas once again sent five Populists to Congress, a noteworthy stat considering that Kansas had lost one of her congressional districts prior to the election due to a loss of population during the last census and had dropped from eight to seven seats. Looking at a county map of the election returns, it is not hard to figure out the areas where Kansas Populists succeeded. They laid claim to the third district (T.J. Hudson) made up of the southeastern corner of the state, the fifth district (John Davis) consisting of the upper central counties, the sixth district (William Baker) of the northwestern corner of the state, the Congressman at large (W.A. Harris) which factored in the entire state, and once again elected Jerry Simpson as the representative of the big seventh district of lower central and southwest Kansas. Again, many of the elections were very close with some margins of victory by less than one hundred votes. It was a bitter election, but the Populists succeeded in their campaigns for national office.⁵³

Lewelling's fate was very much tied to that of his Populist counterparts. There were areas of the state where his message clearly resonated with people and others where he was beaten soundly. Lewelling won the majority of the counties, fifty-seven to A.W. Smith's forty-

⁵² Joseph Kennedy Hudson, *Letters to Governor Lewelling* (Topeka: Topeka Capital Co., 1893), 161-162.

⁵³ Hudson 173. For a breakdown on the election returns by county, see Figure 4 in the Appendix.

nine, but still barely won the popular vote. Lewelling, like Weaver, only won the state by a five thousand vote majority. Of Smith's forty-nine counties that he won, twenty-five were west of Wichita, an area that were still being developed at that time. These areas were primarily agricultural, challenging the notion that all of the farmers of the state voted in support of the Populist Party. However, those counties had very few people and Smith's margin of victory was very small. Smith won Wichita County by only thirty-seven votes and Grant County by fourteen. The election was really decided in the central and eastern portions of the state where Lewelling fared very well at the polls. He claimed almost all of the counties in central Kansas and managed a good showing in the ones he lost. It was in the central portion of the state that Lewelling's message of relief and reform garnered him the most support.⁵⁴

Lewelling also did well in southeast Kansas. One of the major points at the 1892 Omaha convention was the free coinage of silver which established a bind between the agrarian dominated Populist Party and interests of miners throughout the west. Kansas was no different. The southeast corner of the state was actually one of the most heavily mined areas in the Midwest at the time that produced coal, lead, and most importantly, zinc. Kansas geographer James R. Shortridge noted that the development of zinc mining in the area really boosted the area's population by bringing in thousands of eastern Europeans to the area. The result of the development of southeast Kansas mining was that mining camps sprang up seemingly overnight, developed into towns, and were heavily dominated by miner's interests, and almost as importantly, immigrants who had no real party affiliation prior to coming to Kansas thus making them more likely to join up with the upstart Populists. Lewelling had embraced the free coinage

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 173; Historian Craig Miner pointed out that the region's (meaning west of Wichita) population had dropped by 25% following the depression of the late 1880s and early 1890s. Craig Miner, *Next Year Country: Dust to Dust in Western Kansas, 1890-1940*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 13.

of silver, knowing that Kansas was devoid of the precious metal and because he could adapt that position to fit with the interests of Kansas miners. He actually won his largest margin of victory in two of the counties in that region, Cherokee in the extreme southeast corner of Kansas and Crawford, directly north of Cherokee, with a large population of miners around the town of Pittsburg.⁵⁵ Lewelling's election victory in this portion of the state could also have been an indirect result of fusionism. Cherokee and Crawford counties are located on the Missouri border and Lewelling's victories in those counties might have sprang from Democratic sentiments carried over from the neighboring state.⁵⁶

There was one region that Lewelling did not fare well, northeast Kansas. Northeast Kansas was the first portion of the state settled following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. A large portion of the new settlers during that period were Republicans from the upper Midwest and Northeast regions of the country who came to Kansas specifically to stop slavery. Republicans established most of the cities in that portion of the state like Lawrence, Topeka, and Manhattan. Those areas remained Republican dominated almost forty years and

⁵⁵ It should be noted that Cherokee County had been openly contested by Democrats and third party candidates before dating back to the Presidential election of 1888. Although the Benjamin Harrison won the county in 1888 with total of 2,935, it was closely contested by Democrat Grover Cleveland, who totaled 2,038, and Union Labor Party candidate A.J. Streeter, who had 1,269. With a fusionist stance in 1892, the Populists and Democrats were able to overtake the Republican majority that had won the county four years earlier. It should also be noted that the mining interests, and immigration to the area because of the mining interests, were just getting off the ground in 1888 and the production in Cherokee County grew throughout the 1890s, holding about hovering around a quarter of the total production of the entire state. Nathaniel Thomas Allison, ed., *History of Cherokee County Kansas and its Representative Citizens*, (1904), available online, <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/chokeee/1904/chokeee-ch5p2.html>.

⁵⁶ Hudson 164-165; Shortridge 174-180. One county in southeast Kansas that Lewelling did not win was Montgomery County, mostly due to an event that took place in October of 1892. The infamous Dalton Gang attempted to rob Coffeyville's C.M. Condon and Company Bank on October 5th. Four of the members of the gang were killed as they tried to escape the bank by Coffeyville citizens. Jerry Simpson, the state's most well known Populist, was quoted by the *Wichita Daily Eagle* on October 18, 1892, as saying that the Dalton Gang "were no worse than the national bankers and thousands of others in Kansas who are engaged in pretended lawful pursuits, while they are really robbing the people. They are no more condemned, or their acts, than the bankers they robbed." Needless to say, siding with the Dalton Gang probably did little for the Populist Party in Montgomery County where the citizens had just defended their town and savings from a band of marauders.

almost all of those counties voted for A.W. Smith. The one county that broke from the Republican mold and actually voted for Lewelling was Leavenworth, which *could* be attributed to the large military population centered there. Yet despite his almost complete lack of support in the most populous region of the state and despite being a relative “unknown” as some historians believe, Lewelling won the election and prepared to take office in January 1893 proving that he not only was a popular candidate in and around Wichita but had also made himself into a popular candidate of the state as well.

CHAPTER V

THE LEGISLATIVE WAR

As the inauguration approached, Kansas Populists seemed to come out of the proverbial woodwork in support of Lewelling and his companions. Populist leaders, like Chairman Breidenthal, encouraged those from around the state to gather at the capitol in early January of 1893 to help bring in their new leadership. An unusually large crowd was on hand and packed Representative Hall in the capitol building. The great hall was decorated for the occasion with “festoons of evergreen and red ribbons,” and the crowd patiently awaited the arrival of the guest of honor. Flanked on either side by portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Lewelling took his place at the podium after a short speech by outgoing Republican governor Lyman U. Humphrey. With his opening words, Lewelling ushered in a new era of politics in Kansas. The speech laid out on his inauguration set the tone for what the Populists had in mind after gaining a majority in state. Indeed, the “great revolution of 1892” Lewelling spoke of during the speech at the Populist convention in Wichita nearly six months prior to his inauguration had finally come to a head.⁵⁷

Lewelling’s inaugural address has been cited as a prime example of Populist rhetoric by historians for decades. Lewelling opened his speech by blasting what he viewed as a “government of brutes and reptiles” and the “power of money,” a direct attack on the “survival of the fittest” philosophy of social Darwinism. He felt that the “South and West” had become “the servants of wealth” and that the “sectional hatred” between the regions had been “kept alive

⁵⁷ Daniels 30-31.

by the old powers” to enable them “to control the products and make the producer contribute to the millionaire.” Lewelling did not hide his disdain for the rich, declaring “that rich have no right to the property of the poor” no more than the poor had the right to the property of the wealthy. He advocated a government that would “protect and advance the moral and material interests of all its citizens,” not just the wealthy who “usurps” the earnings of the producers and “rides in gilded carriages with liveried servants.”

Lewelling believed that the Populist victory in the election of 1892 stemmed from the “instincts of patriotism” that “rebelled against these unwanted encroachments of the power of money.” In his view, a just government would recognize “human brotherhood” and “protect the weak.” He appealed to the producers; calling on the “laborers in the field, the shop, and the factory” and even the “business man, early grown gray, broken in health and spirit by successive failures” to enter the “contest for the protection of home, humanity, and the dignity of labor.” He noted that “this is the generation that has come to the rescue” and that the cries “from the darkness shall not be heard in vain.”

Near the closing of his remarks, Lewelling’s tone turned toward optimism. He spoke that he believed it was the dawning of a “new era in which the people shall reign.” The best example of Lewelling’s optimism for his term as governor rests in his closing remarks however, when he stated:

“I have a dream of the future. I have an enduring faith in the evolution of human government. And in the beautiful visions of a coming time I behold the abolition of poverty. A time is coming when the withered hand of want shall not be outstretched for charity, when liberty, equality and justice shall have permanent abiding places in this republic.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Lorenzo Dow Lewelling, “Inauguration Address, 1893,” *People’s Party Paper* (Atlanta), January 20, 1893, Library of Congress, *American History Online*, Facts on File, Inc., <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?>

Although Lewelling gave a stirring inauguration address stressing the Populist principles and the “new era” politics in Kansas, the elation was short-lived because of the situation brewing the state House of Representatives and how Lewelling handled the conflict. Like many of the newly elected Populist leaders, Lewelling was as green as the garlands that hung from the ceiling of Representative Hall. Lewelling’s actions in the first three months of his gubernatorial term forever marked him as one of the most unsuccessful governors in Kansas history.

Lewelling arrived with a number of liabilities. He only won the election by a total of five thousand votes, a total of two percent of the population. The close election, one of the closest in the state’s history, shows that the state was divided almost down the middle on the issues of the day. One party did not have a clear majority over the other and the shaky political alliances were always shifting as the parties tried to maneuver for more leverage, as witnessed by the election of 1891 where the Democratic Party supported the Republicans and helped them to win back a portion of the offices they lost in the election of 1890. The moderate Lewelling faced an increasingly polarized electorate in 1892 which only contributed to pushing the two main parties, the Republicans and Populists, further apart. His election meant that for just the second time in the state’s history, the Republican Party had lost the state’s highest office and were willing to do almost anything to make sure they got it back in the next election.

Also, Lewelling was not necessarily the party’s first choice as candidate for governor. Although well known throughout south-central Kansas and within Populist Party circles, he was not the captivating Populist candidate like that of Simpson or Peffer. He was much more of a middle of the road member of the party who supported ideas like fusion and spoke of it often.

Jerry Simpson was, and remained, the state's leading Populist figure but he would have not won in a statewide election because of his hard-line Populists stances which would have alienated Republicans and Democrats who could have united to defeat him, whereas Lewelling, who operated in the much murkier middle ground between quasi-Republicans and quasi-Democrats, could appeal just enough to Populists to be a Populist and just enough to the other parties as to not be too Populist. Some in Lewelling's own party were openly hostile to his policies. The Populists had found a perfect recipe to win a statewide election but the plan backfired once Lewelling took office as we shall see.

Underneath the perceived Populist victory in the election of 1892 should be viewed with some skepticism because the party was already beginning to fracture underneath its own weight. Despite the adoption of a national Populist platform and despite the fact that many of the famous Populist orators traveled and campaigned together, there was little unity amongst them. Scott G. McNall noted that, despite touring and campaigning together, "there was often vacillation over how problems were to be solved, or which ones were most important." McNall blamed this issue on the party's lack of what he termed a "center of learning," meaning that the party leaders had no real agreement on "common themes or strategies." The issues Populist leaders could agree on were for the short-term, and consequently, those short-term solutions led to long-term mistakes in policy implementation. In retrospect, it is easy to see that the "Great Revolution of 1892" made Lewelling the face of a Party with no central voice, which would prove disastrous during his term as Governor.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Scott G. McNall, *The Road to Rebellion: Class Formation and Kansas Populism, 1865-1900*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 218.

For Lewelling on January 9th, 1893, however, there was no better place in the world than to be in Topeka. He had overcome all odds and risen to the state's highest office. With that office came prestige, power, and responsibility and Lewelling surely felt he was up to the task of guiding Kansas out of the dark days of depression that preceded his governorship. His jubilation of his election and hope for the future would only last one day however as on January 10th, the eighth biennial session of the Kansas Legislature ushered in one of the most infamous terms in United States history.

The crowd that gathered in Representative Hall that cold January day in 1893 was electric and ready for action. However, that electricity did not stem entirely from Lewelling's monumental election victory, or even his eloquent speech. Instead, much of the excitement centered on what would happen the following day when the state Legislature was convened. Although the Populists had won the governorship and wrestled control of the state Senate from the Republicans, controversy surrounded the elections of some of the state's House of Representatives members. The election returns showed that Republicans might be able to hold on to gain a majority in the House of Representatives, which would effectively block any of the reform legislation brought forth by the Populist Senate or Governor Lewelling himself. The Populists were not going down without a fight and contested a handful of the Republican seats prior to the convention of the state Legislature. The battle lines had been drawn and both sides maneuvered to secure themselves the best possible outcome.

The election of 1892 was particularly bitter in Kansas and both Republicans and Populists knew what was at stake in the coming legislative session. After the Republicans were soundly defeated in the election of 1890, where they lost five of the state's United States House of Representatives seats and one of the all important United States Senate seats, the Republicans

were determined to not let it happen again. The party brought out the big guns for the local elections of 1891 and convinced Republican Preston B. Plumb, one of the founders of Emporia and a United States Senator since 1877, to skip his European vacation and come back to Kansas over the summer and fall of 1891 to help promote the Republican Party ticket. His tour had stops almost every day and thousands of Kansans heard speeches that were “thoroughly Republican” in every way. Although Plumb was well known as a particularly hard worker, during the summer of 1891 historian William Connelley noted that Plumb worked harder than he ever had, even to the point of unconsciousness. Amazingly, Plumb’s tour of Kansas worked and the Republicans won most of the local elections of 1891.

The victory celebration was short-lived. Plumb’s health rapidly deteriorated on the tour and he died of a stroke in December, barely one month after the 1891 elections. Plumb’s vacant Senate seat was temporarily filled by Republican Bishop Walden Perkins until a special election could be held by a joint session of the 1893 Kansas Legislature. Add the election of a United States Senator to the mix of the already complicated issue of a new political regime in power during a time when depression gripped the state and it seems to make sense why the events in the first few days January 1893 happened the way they did.⁶⁰

The Legislature officially convened the day following Lewelling’s inauguration, January 10, 1893. According to the election certificates, from the canvassing board of ousted Republican Governor Humphrey, the Populists had a majority in the Senate but the Republicans had a majority in the House of Representatives (sixty-four Republicans, fifty-eight Populists, two

⁶⁰ *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, “Plumb, Preston B.,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=P000389>; William Connelley, *The Life of Preston B. Plumb*, (Chicago: Brown & Howell Co., 1913), 427-431; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, “Perkins, Bishop Walden,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=P000228>.

Democrats, one Independent).⁶¹ With so much at stake during the Legislative session of 1893, the Populists cried foul and contested thirteen of the seats held by Republicans. Both sides encouraged their members to show up on the day that the House was formed and Representative Hall became a tinderbox waiting for spark that would set the Capitol ablaze.⁶²

The House was officially called to order in the afternoon of January 10th, 1893, by the newly elected Secretary of State, Populist Russell Scott Osborn. Born in 1833 in Margaretville, New York, Osborn was a veteran of the Civil War and came to Kansas in 1872, where he settled in Osborne County, in north central Kansas.⁶³ His profession has remained a little obscure to modern scholars; he has been listed as a stonemason, a lawyer, and a farmer at various times during his life and very well could have done all of these jobs at some point. From what is known, Osborn was a staunch Congregationalist minister, which probably contributed the most to his political career. Osborn counted himself among the first to join up with the Populist Party after it was formed in 1890 and was even the Party's nomination for Secretary of State in the 1890 election, losing to Republican William Higgins. Osborn did not quit in defeat however and devoted himself to party politics. He was named to the Populist Party's National Committee in 1891, one of three Kansans to make the committee, and was once again in the discussion for nomination during the 1892 Wichita convention. In fact, the *Wichita Eagle* tabbed Osborn as a possible candidate for every position on the Populist ticket that year. Osborn's true political intentions are unclear although it seems that his devotion to the party would have meant that he would not have acted on his own accord when entering the House chamber once taking office.

⁶¹ See Figure 3 in Appendix for breakdown of the state House of Representatives by party.

⁶² Parrish 472. *Kansas House of Representatives Journal* (Republican) 1893, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893), iii-iv. See Chart 3 in Appendix for breakdown of seats in the 1893 Kansas State House of Representatives.

⁶³ Although he moved to the county of the same name, Osborne County was not named for Russell Osborn. It is also interesting to note that Osborn married Sabrina Letitia McKinley, who was a cousin of William McKinley, who ran on the Republican ticket for President in 1896 and defeated the Populist candidate William Jennings Bryan.

His history indicates that he would have followed Party policy; however, his deeds put Lewelling, and the state of Kansas, in a very precarious situation.⁶⁴

As per the law, Secretary of State Osborn was supposed to present a list of the recognized members of the House of Representatives. However, since there were seats being contested by the Populists, it became difficult to know who exactly was supposed to be recognized. In an effort to make sure the House was formed, Secretary Osborn added that he would preside over the House as temporary speaker upon unanimous approval from both sides of the aisle so that the business of the House could commence. That idea was quickly struck down when Republican George L. Douglass from Sedgwick County rose to object to the Populist Secretary of State presiding over the House saying he was against the “secretary of state assuming any duties not authorized by the constitution or laws of the state.” Douglass was right in his knowledge of state law that the Secretary of State had no authority to name himself Speaker of the House, but his remarks should be also counted as the first of many salvos in what became known as the “Legislative War of 1893.”⁶⁵

It only took a few seconds for the Populists to fire back and the one who stood up to challenge the Republican Douglass was Populist J. M. Dunsmore of Neosho County. Dunsmore argued that the House must have a temporary speaker to conduct its business and offered a solution: let all uncontested seats vote for a temporary speaker. In effect, Dunsmore wanted to disallow the votes of the contested Republican seats, insuring that the Populists would have a majority and therefore be able to elect a member of their party as the Speaker. Again, the idea

⁶⁴ *Dodge City Globe-Republican*, August 20, 1890; *Topeka Advocate*, May 27, 1891; *Wichita Eagle*, June 12, 1892; Volunteer Committees of the Osborne County Hall of Fame, *The Osborne County (Kansas) Hall of Fame*, (Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 1998), 134-135.

⁶⁵ *Kansas House of Representatives Journal (Republican) 1893*, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893), 1.

was quickly shot down from the Republican side of the aisle. Republican J. K. Cubbison of Wyandotte County objected to Dunsmore's proposal saying that "the law has already made the list," of bona fide Representatives and that not even Secretary Osborn had the authority "to decide any point that would deprive the House of its constitutional privilege of deciding upon its own membership." Secretary Osborn, no doubt confused by the whole situation, spoke that he had already presented the list of membership to the Senate's presiding officer and since the House could not agree on who should be the temporary speaker, he picked up the list of membership and exited Representative Hall stating, "Whenever this House has a presiding officer to whom I can deliver the list," he would show up "again and deliver the official list to such officer." In the ensuing moments following the Secretary's departure, anarchy followed.⁶⁶

Secretary Osborn's absence left the Speaker's chair vacant and Populist R. H. Semple from Franklin County raced up to the stand to occupy the gavel. According to historian William E. Parrish, Semple's move seemed to stun everyone in the room, both Populists and Republicans. Neither side really knew what to do for a few moments until Republican George Douglass nominated J. K. Cubbison as temporary speaker, which was accepted unanimously by his Republican companions. According to Parrish, Cubbison rushed to the Speaker's stand beside his Populist counterpart, Semple, and even produced his own gavel that he had brought with him to call the House to order. Although the Populists had raced to the front to grab the gavel, they were not quick enough to capitalize on their early lead and quickly found themselves behind. The Republicans, apparently prepared for such an occurrence, produced a list of certified members signed by Osborn's Republican predecessor and the sixty-four Republicans on the list took the oath with the temporary clerk. The Republicans recognized all their members who held

⁶⁶ *Kansas House of Representatives Journal* (Populist), 1893, (Topeka, KS: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893), 1-2.

a certificate of election and voted unanimously on all nominations and motions. The Republicans, under their permanent Speaker of the House George Douglass, were off and running but the Populists would soon awaken from their slumber to challenge them for dominance of the Kansas House of Representatives.⁶⁷

Lewelling held no qualms about which side he was on from the beginning of the stalemate. Two days after the official opening of the legislative session, Lewelling sent a message to the Populist House via his personal secretary. His message was simple, that Lewelling would “communicate with you later in writing.” It was a short message but its meaning was powerful because Lewelling was officially giving his seal of approval to the Populist House. The Republican House received no such message, despite holding certificates of election. Historian William E. Parrish suggests that Lewelling’s recognition of the Populist House was a measure to counteract the coup scored by the Republican House at securing the votes of the three Democratic and Independent Representatives. Parrish’s suggestion may give Lewelling and his administration a little too much credit for objectivity than may have been there. After all, the entire Populist ticket, including Lewelling and Secretary of State R. S. Osborn whom Parrish points to as having little, if any impartiality, had campaigned together throughout the summer and fall and had been working together to form policy since the November elections. There is no evidence to suggest that the Populist actions were pre-planned but it does seem likely that the Populist leadership had some inkling about what was going to happen once the House was convened. Lewelling’s message to the Populist House set the precedent that the Party was united; that the Populist administration backed the Populist House.

⁶⁷ Parrish 473.

It was not a spur of the moment reaction; it was a well-planned message that carried as much symbolic meaning as it did substance.

Five days later, on January 17, Lewelling sent another message that was read in to the Populist House, only this one was much more in depth. His message that day was given to “chosen representatives of the people” and dealt with the “condition of the state.” He continued that:

“Your selection as the constituent members of the lawmaking department of the state, and your due organization having been accomplished, the whole machinery of state government is moving onward in its accustomed manner; and, with a sincere desire on your part to give the people the laws which they demand, and which efforts and purposes will be cordially sported by the other departments of the government, it is believed that an era of general prosperity will be realized.”⁶⁸

Today, we recognize this message as the governor’s state-of-the-state address and Lewelling updated the Populist representatives on all the issues of the state. Remarkably, Lewelling even addressed the growing stalemate in the Capitol building. Lewelling noted the “interest which attended” the previous election had been “kept alive” by the questions arising from the election results and the “future policy of the state.” Indeed, it seems that the precedent set by Lewelling with his first message to the Populist House continued on through January when he submitted a report on the state only to the representatives from his own party.⁶⁹

Although there were some important insights into Lewelling’s personal politics, his message was equally as important. There was no stone left unturned in his address to the Populist House, from the state’s finances to education to prohibition. Lewelling even made a

⁶⁸ *Journal of the Kansas State House of Representatives* (Populist), 1893, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893), 21; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, January 18, 1893.

⁶⁹ *Journal of the Kansas State House of Representatives* (Populist), 1893, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893), 21.

point to stress the importance of the state's historical society, saying that the institution's existence has been "essential to the full examination of any subject pertaining to the affairs of the state." Going further, Lewelling appealed on behalf of the historical society saying that "the state can make no better provision for the education of its people than that of collecting and preserving the materials of its own history." On the issue of prohibition, the governor noted that "it is not a question whether this administration is for or against prohibition, but whether it is in favor of respect for and obedience to all the laws on the statute books." Continuing on prohibition, he does give a little insight to his personal opinions on the prohibition law saying the law "is not so well supported by public sentiment in the centers of population." Lewelling bashed the "liberal bestowal of free passes upon certain classes of our citizens" by railroad companies as "pernicious and corrupting in its tendency, and should be prohibited."⁷⁰

Lewelling's plans for the state, as laid out in his address, were many. He suggested several amendments to the state constitution, including an amendment that would strengthen the executive branch by allowing the governor to veto portions of appropriations bills without vetoing the bill entirely, which seemed to be more of a personal goal than a party controlled policy because there is little evidence to suggest this reform came from the top-down. Lewelling also suggested that the legislature expand the judicial branch by creating "an intermediate court of appeals" to alleviate pressure on the state Supreme Court, which was so behind on its work that "persons seeking a determination there may not hope for it inside of three years." He also advocated for the Australian ballot, the secret ballot where voters made their selections in private – similar to how Americans vote today, all while reiterating that any change in the election laws should continue to jealously "guard the purity of the ballot box." His suggestions at election

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

reform were part of the Populist platform which called for the Australian ballot, but his concerns were no doubt seeded in the election controversy then surrounding the House of Representatives.⁷¹

Near the close of his speech, Lewelling addressed the widening economic gap in Kansas. Drawing on the sentiment of his inaugural address that neither the rich or the poor had the right to the other's property, Lewelling stated that mortgage debt in Kansas was not being handled in the correct manner and suggested that:

“No property should be sold at forced sale except for a price commensurate with its value, as shown by appraisal, and thereafter the debtor should be given a reasonable time to redeem from such sale, the proper safeguards being provident for the protection of the creditors from any loss by reason of delay.”

On taxation, Lewelling advocated for the “best” system of taxation “that shall distribute most equally the necessary burdens upon persons according to their ability to bear them, and the measure of protection they receive.” He also stated that “real estate encumbered with mortgages should be taxed less than its value in proportion to the amount of debt.”⁷²

Lewelling's message to the House of Representatives was a charge of what he hoped to accomplish during his time in office. Yet, with the complications in the House growing, he surely had uneasy feelings about accomplishing all his goals. His concerns with the rising tensions were only confirmed in the coming weeks as the situation in the state House took a turn for the worse.

Lewelling's recognition of the Populist Dunsmore House was a major point where the governor interjected himself on the situation but it was by no means the only instance of him doing so. In fact, some historians, including Parrish, tend to point at Lewelling as one of the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 34-36.

⁷² *Wichita Daily Eagle*, January 18, 1893.

main instigators of confrontation on the Capitol grounds during the second week of February 1893. Up to that point, business in both Houses had proceeded relatively normal, at least as normal as it could have been for a state with two competing Houses. Each side was allowed access to the House chamber for half of the day and each side conducted their business as usual; passing bills, debating legislation, and committee work. Despite the separation of the two Houses, things had remained peaceful and both sides seemed content with the status quo, for the time being. However, during the second week of February the stalemate was finally broken between the Populist Dunsmore House and the Republican Douglass House and Lewelling's role became one of partisan peacekeeper. The now infamous standoff on the Capitol grounds was a direct result of Lewelling's actions during those fateful hours in early February.

Republican and Populist animosity festered since the House was called to order on January 10, 1893, but the real fireworks began on February 14, Valentine's Day, over the passage of an appropriation bill by the Populist Dunsmore house earlier in the week. That bill, which subsequently passed the Populist controlled state Senate, went before Lewelling, who signed it on February 14. For the Republicans, it was the move they were waiting for because it opened the door to challenge the legality of the Dunsmore House in front of the state Supreme Court, which was dominated by the Republicans, on the grounds that some of the Populist members were not legally elected and therefore could not pass any bill that appropriated tax money for any purpose.

The Republicans made their move shortly after Lewelling signed the bill into law on the 14th by attempting to arrest the clerk of the Populist House, Ben C. Rich, and hold him in contempt. However, their coup failed and Rich slipped away after an altercation outside of Copeland Hotel shortly after lunch time. Rich, with the help of his "swelling" crowd of friends,

fought through the Republican arrest attempt and made it to the Capitol, where they were greeted “with uproarious applause” by the Dunsmore House.

The Populists, now regrouped and inside Representative Hall, had taken the state House, but now came the challenge of holding it. That is where the state’s chief executive stepped in to exercise his authority. With night closing on February 14th, Governor Lewelling, sent a message to Shawnee County Sherriff Wilkerson to protect the Populists holed up in the Capitol and help keep the peace between the two factions. However, Lewelling’s message went unanswered by the Republican Sherriff Wilkerson, who shrugged off a similar request from Speaker Dunsmore. Lewelling was in a tough spot. Connelly notes that the Republicans were amassing a “force of deputy Sargents-at-arms” of “more than fifty” which could easily overwhelm the Populists then in the state house. With no local police presence to keep the two sides from erupting in all out combat on the Capitol grounds, the governor called upon the newly appointed state Adjutant General, H. H. Artz, to take charge of a rag-tag band of Populists guards then forming to keep the peace on the Capitol grounds. Lewelling’s orders were quite specific, Artz was to keep everyone out of the “except members of the House.”⁷³

The Republican attack feared by Lewelling did not come as darkness slipped over Topeka. The first day of the “Legislative War” ended with the Populists having the upper hand. Not only had several members of the Dunsmore House escaped arrest at the hands of the Republicans, but they controlled the state Capitol building with at least some measure of protection of a small band of supporters. The Populists remained the state House through the

⁷³ Parrish, 482-484; Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1180-1182. There are actually differing accounts about whether Sherriff Wilkerson ignored or did not receive Lewelling’s note. According to historian William Connelley, Wilkerson “refused” Lewelling’s order because he wanted “nothing to do with the matter.” Parrish notes that Wilkerson did not reply to Lewelling because he “was not at home to receive his letter and did not return until the next morning.”

remainder of the night undisturbed and but as dawn broke on February 15th, the tables were turned. Shortly before nine in the morning on the 15th, a band of Republicans met at the Copeland Hotel and marched to the Capitol. Upon reaching the Capitol steps, they were confronted by Artz's Populist guards but forced their way past them on the steps of the Capitol building "after a struggle lasting some minutes." Historian Connelly noted that the altercation on the steps was of the "knock down and drag out variety" with the Populist guards "mainly endeavoring to keep back those who had no business to be there at all." The Republicans, now in the Capitol and on the attack, proceeded in column to the doors of the House chamber where, finding the door was locked, they battered down the doors with a sledgehammer. Connelly described the blows of the sledgehammer, the first of which was delivered by the hands of Republican Speaker Douglass himself, as a "violent" and shattered the door panels. The commotion created by not only the fight to get in the building, but the "shouts and tumult" created by the Republicans bashing down the door "could be heard for blocks." In all the confusion caused by Douglass' hammering down of the door and the onrush of Republicans into the Hall, the Populists escaped out of any doors in the Hall they could find. It was now the Republicans turn to hold the House and they wasted little time. They barricaded themselves in the room by moving desks and chairs against the now-battered doors.⁷⁴

The situation was spiraling out of order quickly and Lewelling was forced to try and stabilize the tedious situation. He once again ordered Artz into action, this time authorizing him to call the state militia into action to maintain peace by the afternoon of February 15th. Lewelling was pulling out all of the stops. Artz sent messages to eight companies of militia from across the state and the responses he received via telegram are still preserved in the collections at

⁷⁴ Parrish, 482-484; Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1183.

the Kansas State Historical Society. Comparing the location of the companies called up by Artz and the returns from the 1892 gubernatorial election show that a good portion of the companies that were called in defense of the state were from Populist-leaning areas. Clyde, in Cloud County where Lewelling won the 1892 vote by 300, sent forty two “anxious” men with “six hundred rounds” who were ready to perform their duty. El Dorado, located in Butler County, and Howard, located in Elk County, both counties carried by Lewelling and the Populists, also sent a company of troops to Topeka to answer the call. Eureka, in Greenwood County, sent thirty one men. Yet, for all the rounds and men answering the call from around the state, there was but one company from Wichita, commanded by Willis Metcalf, which surely caught the eyes of everyone on the Capitol grounds. Metcalf’s response to Artz was simple enough, “Leave tonight arrange transportation by Santa Fe,” but it was Metcalf’s sign-off in the telegram that had to catch the attention of those then gathering for a fight at the Capitol. He signed, “Willis Metcalf, Capt., Lt. Battery.” Through Artz, Lewelling had literally called in the “big guns” to handle the issue. It was not long before the Wichitans and their batteries were on the Capitol grounds with their guns pointed at their own citizens.⁷⁵

To command the troops on the ground, Artz appointed a young, thirty three year old Colonel by the name of J. W. F. Hughes from Topeka. Hughes was born in Tennessee in 1860 and was educated at the University of Tennessee where he was a drum major and took compulsory military training. After moving to Topeka in 1881, Hughes signed up with the Kansas National Guard, where he was made a Colonel in 1884. Although “green,” Hughes

⁷⁵ Kansas, Adjutant General Records, Miscellaneous Correspondence (1893), State Archives & Library, Kansas State Historical Society; Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1184-1186. There is also discrepancy between Parrish and Connelly’s accounts about how many companies were summoned by Artz. Parrish lists the total companies called in at eight, while Connelly’s record accounts for nine companies. The author used Parrish’s account based on the remaining records found in the telegraph responses from the Adjutant General Records.

seemed the perfect blend of intelligence and toughness to handle such a precarious assignment. Artz's orders to Hughes were simple: clear Representative Hall of all members not recognized by the Populist Dunsmore House. Effectively, this order would have expelled all the seats the Populists were challenging in the courts on account of election fraud, which by mid-February had ballooned to eleven seats. However, Hughes refused to comply with the order and instead ordered his men to simply stand pat, not allowing anyone in or out of the Capitol. Parrish notes that Hughes refused the order "partly out of partisan consideration and partly out of his concern for the bloodshed which would inevitably follow." Parrish's idea that Hughes may have viewed the situation through partisan glasses makes sense because Hughes was actively involved in the Republican Party since coming to Kansas in the 1880s. In fact, he was listed as one of the officers of the Topeka Republican Flambeau Club, a partisan civic organization in Shawnee County that took part in such events as President Grant's reception in Kansas City in 1880 and President Harrison's nomination in Chicago in 1888. The organization was also said to be the leaders of "the largest political demonstrations in the country." Being so well connected to the Republican party in the state's capital city probably meant that Hughes had personal relationships, or at least acquaintances, with at least a few of the members of the Douglass House as well. That Hughes was so connected to the Republican Party in Topeka was probably at the top of the list of reasons for him to refuse the governor's order to clear Representative Hall.⁷⁶

With darkness closing on the capitol and Hughes' refusal to oust the members of the Douglass House from Representative Hall on February 15, Lewelling had little choice but to

⁷⁶ Parrish, 484; Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1184; *Journal of the State of Kansas House of Representatives* (Populist); William MacFarran, Jr., "James White Frierson Hughes," *The Bulletin Shawnee County Historical Society*, (December 1952), accessed May 8, 2013, <http://www.kansasguardmuseum.org/disptag.php?id=16>; Mary E. Jackson, *Topeka Pen and Camera Sketches*, (Topeka: George W. Crane and Co., 1890), 112-113.

open up a dialogue with a Republican committee to try and defuse the situation. The committee, which included former Kansas Governor Thomas A. Osborn, P. G. Noel, J. R. Mulvane, Erastus Bennett, and Peter McVicar, urged the governor to restrain from calling in more militia to the city. The committee also invited the Governor to accompany them to the Capitol building to speak before the besieged Republicans. Lewelling took the opportunity and took the stand at the Speaker's desk at 7:30 pm. In his speech, Lewelling lamented the position in place while also including some veiled threats if the Republicans refused to do what he asked. He noted that, "no man among you can deprecate the present situation that exists here today more than I do," and that he had "no desire" to "institute any forcible proceedings." However, as he continued, it would be "impossible" for Lewelling to recede on the position he had already made by calling out the militia. He noted that he hoped that the Republicans would "not make it necessary for me to call upon the military arm of the government to enter and take possession" of the Hall. In closing, Lewelling reiterated that he "would deprecate exceedingly to have the military enter this hall" and urged the Republicans to "surrender this hall to the legal authorities of the state."⁷⁷

Lewelling's remarks were short and to the point. He held fast to his party convictions that the Douglass House was not the legally elected House of Representatives and did not back down from his earlier threat of using military force to expel the Republicans from Representative Hall. However, it also seems that Lewelling was attempting to shift a portion of the blame for the situation back on the Republican Party. From the beginning of the legislative session, the Republican press had torn into the Populist leadership, among which Lewelling was a favorite target for scorn. Chief among those directing their fury at the governor was Joseph Kennedy

⁷⁷ Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1184; *Journal of the State of Kansas House of Representatives* (Republican), 239-240.

Hudson who published a series of letters both before and during the “Legislative War” in the *Topeka Daily Capital* addressed to the governor. Each letter vilifies the state’s executive, blaming him for the troubles taking place in the legislature. Indeed, Hudson was so proud of his letters to the governor that he compiled them together and published them, along with several documents supporting his particular political leanings, in a book later in 1893. Hudson was far from the only Republican journalist tearing into Lewelling in the press. Just days before the beginning of the “Legislative War,” the *Wichita Eagle* even opined that Lewelling’s nomination resulted in the “rape of Democracy” in Kansas. Obviously, some of the attention thrust on Lewelling by Hudson and other Republican editors was unfounded but nonetheless, it was out there. Lewelling’s remarks to the Douglass House on February 14 seem like he was trying to put some of the pressure he was getting from the press back onto the Republican Party.⁷⁸

Regardless of his aims, Lewelling’s remarks fell on deaf ears in the state capitol building. The Republicans were firm that they would “surrender only to the militia and then only after they were conquered by bloodshed.” As Lewelling left the Hall, Colonel Hughes appeared before the Douglass House to “deafening cheers.” Hughes’ speech had a much better effect on the partisan crowd. He told the Republicans that “there need be no bloodshed” and that his troops would not fire. If Hughes was relieved of his command, he also told the Republican House that his troops would leave with him. Hearing the reassuring news from the Colonel quieted the Republicans enough to allow them to get some measure of sleep inside the besieged Capitol building, despite having the heat in the building shut off by the Populist janitor.

The tide of the “Legislative War” turned on the second day of the conflict. The Republicans, riding a wave of emotion, stormed Representative Hall and took possession of the

⁷⁸ Hudson, ; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, February 11, 1893..

building from the Populists. A friendly Colonel had disregarded direct orders from his commanding officer - and the governor - to evict the insurgents from the Capitol and had vowed not to escalate the issue further. To be sure, the situation was still tenuous for both sides, but the Republicans had taken the momentum in the “Legislative War” and had put the ball back in the governor’s court.⁷⁹

No one in Topeka got much sleep on the night of February 15th. The Republicans, besieged inside the Capitol, passed a resolution just before midnight that meant the roll was called every hour to make sure they would be ready for any possible attack by the Populists. Provisions for the besieged were raised through the windows of Representative Hall. Lewelling retreated to his office, located at the other end of the building, where he was consulted by “his friends on the proper course to take the next morning.” Meanwhile, Shawnee County Sheriff Wilkerson was also plotting his next move. He sent a message to Lewelling which stated that “he was the legally constituted peace officer and the only one who had any right to act.” In essence, he was informing the governor that he was going to do everything in his power to not be overshadowed on his own turf. He was raising an “army of deputies” and was firmly on the side of the Republicans.⁸⁰

Wilkerson had some definite advantages over the militia that was called in by Lewelling and Adjutant General Artz. First of all, Topeka was an “Old Guard” Republican stronghold dating back the days of “Bleeding Kansas.” The Populists may have had support in the rural central and western portions of the state, but Topeka was Republican territory and many in the city held contempt for the upstart “calamity howlers.” Secondly, the railroads, the primary

⁷⁹ Daniels 48; Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1184-1185; Parrish 484.

⁸⁰ Connelley, *Standard History of Kansas*, 1185.

transportation from across the state to the capital, were also in the Republican corner. As Connelley pointed out, the Populists “were not in the good graces of the railroads” due to certain campaign promises from the previous election, which formed the core of their reform politics, and therefore their supporters could not obtain passes to get to Topeka. Thirdly, Wilkerson had several groups of individuals at his disposal that he could call on if he needed bodies to fill in his lines, mainly several universities in the area like Washburn University and the University of Kansas. Using these advantages, Wilkerson was able to amass a force of deputies reported to be totaling one thousand by noon on February 16th.⁸¹

The calling out of the militia by the governor had awakened a sleeping giant in his own back yard. The militia, totaling nearly 250 men, also had a slight problem with the “big guns” brought up from Wichita under Captain Metcalf. A historic picture of the Gatling gun brought by the Wichitans can be found in the archives of the State Historical Society, however, the picture does not tell the whole story because the gun would have been impossible to function even if a fight did break out. In what was called “one of the best jokes of the entire proceedings,” the gun had been shipped to Topeka minus its all-important firing pin. Apparently, some old guard soldiers from Wichita were afraid that the trigger happy younger soldiers might actually shoot the piece that they removed the pin, without anyone knowing, before it was shipped. Not only were the militia out-manned and out-gunned with the loss of their Gatling gun, but by nine in the morning on the February 16th they were out of a commanding officer as Colonel Hughes was finally relieved of his command for refusing the order to clear the House. Lieutenant Colonel George Parker of Holton was called on to replace Hughes and surely must have felt he was fighting a losing battle. Parker did succeed in shutting

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1185-1186.

down the provisions that were traveling through the windows of the House but there was little else he could do. His job was to hold the siege but, in looking around at the amassing force of deputies, he was the one who must have felt surrounded.⁸²

As the crowds surrounding the capitol gathered just after noon on February 16th, Lewelling must have been feeling uneasy. The Republicans had countered every move he seemed to make; they had an answer for every countermeasure he proposed. Right before a reported one o'clock attack by Wilkerson's deputies, reportedly armed with clubs so as to "stage a hand to hand fight with the militia," the crisis was averted because a council of Republicans knocked on the governor's door. Neither side wanted to be the aggressor at this point because a "peace treaty" could come from the conference at any moment and an uneasy truce fell into place while the governor and the Republican committee attempted to hammer out the details of an armistice. Once in the meeting, Lewelling met his political matches with the committee selected by the Republicans. The committee consisted of the state's first governor Charles Robinson, the state's sixth governor Thomas Osborne, and Colonel Lynde of Miami. Needless to say, the two ex-governors had enough political savvy to understand the power they held in the talks. Still, Lewelling and his advisors worked to secure the best possible peace deal. The conference and truce lasted through the night of the 16th, all while the militia and the county deputies were holding their positions in the middle of a blizzard that had settled over Topeka. Almost a foot of snow fell on the soldiers keeping their posts outside of the Capitol building which meant that the "fighting spirit was somewhat subdued by the elements" the next morning.⁸³

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1186.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1186.

Finally, at noon on the next day, February 17th, Lewelling announced that an agreement had been reached between the administration and the Republican Douglass House. The compromise disbanded both the militia and the deputies of Sheriff Wilkerson and ordered both groups to return to their homes. It also returned the situation of the dual Houses to the status quo which had been in place prior to the hostilities that week. However, the compromise also called for both houses to stay out of each other's way giving Representative Hall to the Republicans while the Populists had to find their own meeting space other than that Hall. The Populists, who were evicted by the blows of Douglass's sledgehammer, had been meeting in the basement of the Capitol building and therefore decided to make that their meeting place until the court case was settled.⁸⁴

Effectively, the compromise was leaving the legality of both houses in the hands of the Republican Supreme Court which was then debating the case the L.C. Gunn *habeas corpus* case. It is unclear what role L.C. Gunn played in the election disputes but on February 13th, Speaker Douglass issued an arrest order to the Republican Sargent-at-Arms C.C. Clevenger for Gunn's refusal to appear to testify before the Republican House in one of the many election disputes. Although reportedly a Democrat, Gunn was from the heart of Populist country in Labette County and held that he had been illegally arrested by Clevenger because the Republican House had no legal authority to do so. The wording of his petition before the Supreme Court famously accused that the Republicans "pretended" to be the legally elected House and therefore had no authority to make him testify or to arrest him for his refusal to testify. The case opened right in the Supreme Court just as the "Legislative War" was beginning on the Capitol grounds but seemed to get little notice until the peace accord was reached by Lewelling and the Republican

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1187.

committee. After the peace agreement was made, the matter of the legality of both houses was left in the hands of the three-member Supreme Court.⁸⁵

Again, both Republicans and Populists brought out their “big guns,” this time they were concentrated on swaying the court in their favor. Arguing for the Populists were noted party men like Gaspar Christopher Clemens, Assistant Attorney General Noah Allen, District Court Judge Frank Doster, and Judge W.C. Webb. On the Republican side were Chester I. Long from Medicine Lodge, the man who unseat “Sockless” Jerry Simpson, T.F. Garver, W.H. Rossington, and David Overmyer, the Democratic Party’s candidate for governor in 1894. The stars of the law were out in full force for the Gunn case although the result was hardly ever in doubt. Of the three judges on the court, two were Republicans, Chief Justice Albert H. Horton and Associate Justice William A. Johnston, therefore giving their side a serious advantage. The other justice, Stephen H. Allen, was new to the bench having just been elected the previous November, and was on the Populist side.⁸⁶

The case was never really in doubt and in fact was settled shortly after the peace deal was made. The case was not officially filed until March 11, but the decision was handed down on February 25. Giving the majority opinion, Chief Justice Horton laid into Lewelling, saying that “the constitution is paramount to the action by any governor.” Taking the matter further, Horton opined that Lewelling’s judgment was clouded because he was “overwhelmed with business” and “perplexed with the duties surrounding him” and that he did not have “the time to investigate” which house was the legally elected body. Horton noted that the governor could not

⁸⁵ *Journal of the State of Kansas House of Representatives* (Republican), 309-311; For Gunn’s original Supreme Court petition, see: *Ibid.*, 764; *The Ohio Democrat*, February 25, 1893, reported Gunn a Democrat.

⁸⁶ *Reports of the Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Kansas*, Vol. L, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1893); Hudson 93; Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, 1252, 1372.

“lawfully recognize as a house a body which has no quorum,” could not “create a house out of an unorganized or unconstitutional body, at his own will,” and that he could not “abolish or destroy by his order any legal or constitutional house of representatives.” Horton sided with the Republicans saying, “the house known as the „Douglass House“ is the legal and constitutional house of representatives of the state of Kansas” and the Republicans had “the power to protect itself from disorder, disturbance, or violence.” Horton’s opinion not only gave the Republicans legal right to Representative Hall but also seemed to justify Sheriff Wilkerson’s move to deputize an army of Republican supporters to protect the Douglass House. Needless to say, Justice Johnston concurred with his Republican cohort Horton.⁸⁷

Populist Justice Allen saw the matter differently. Offering up his dissent of the majority decision, Allen felt that the state Supreme Court had no business even settling the case, because it was unconstitutional. As he pointed out, the state constitution says that “each house shall establish its own rules” and he felt that the court had no right or authority to “say what rules shall govern the house of representatives in its organization.” If the court attempted to do so, he noted that the decision would “overturn our system of government.” Allen also said that it was not the court’s prerogative “to decide every question.” Instead, the court should focus on the matters over which it has jurisdiction, and in his opinion, the case of legality in the state house was not one of those cases. However, Allen’s dissent seems to contradict itself toward his closing. In the final pages of his closing, Allen says that he believes “that George L. Douglass was neither in fact nor in law speaker of the house of representatives” and laid out eight points which he thought supported his case. Although a valiant effort by Allen, in the end his dissent was just the

⁸⁷*Reports of the Cases Argued*, 197-198, 205, 211.

last hurrah of the Kansas Populists. Being outnumbered on the bench, Allen noted his dissent and the matter of the “Legislative War” was settled.⁸⁸

After some debate amongst themselves, the Populists decided to abide by the court’s decision. On February 28th at nine in the morning, the Dunsmore delegation entered the chamber of Representative Hall and was administered the oath of office. Indeed, the “Legislative War” had come to an end rather anti-climatically. However, the rift between the houses meant that most of the legislative session had come and gone. Now that the two houses were one, it was more important than ever to hunker down and get some serious work done for those across the state struggling with a mounting debt crisis.⁸⁹

Perhaps it is best to compare Lewelling’s term in office with another Populist governor of the time period, Davis H. Waite of Colorado. Interestingly, Waite had spent a time in the early 1870s in Kansas and was even elected as a Republican to the Kansas Legislature before removing to Colorado in the late 1870s, where he became involved in third party politics with the Knights of Labor. Waite was instrumental in the organization of Colorado’s Populist Party in the early 1890s and was elected as the state’s governor on the same day as Lewelling, although he did not take office until January 10, 1893, one day after Lewelling.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 222, 273-275. Allen’s reasons seem hypocritical because, as he pointed out in the opening paragraphs of his dissent, he believed the court had no jurisdiction to decide which house was legal. If the court had no jurisdiction, there should have been no reasons for the justice to weigh in on whether or not Douglass was the legal speaker or not.

⁸⁹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas* (Republican), 315-316.

⁹⁰ Waite actually chaired the first People’s Party convention in Colorado in 1891. Waite was also present at the Omaha convention in 1892 before being nominated for governor of Colorado later that year. According to historian Robert W. Larson, Waite’s nomination for governor signified a “clear triumph for those agrarian leaders most responsible for Populism.” Larson continues that Waite’s nomination meant that Colorado was not “simply silverism” and that there were other issues at play in that state. Larson even outlines a similar breakdown of counties carried by Waite in Colorado, saying that “Waite carried almost the entire mining portion of the state” along with “two nonirrigation counties on the northeastern plains” and two counties in the Arkansas Valley that were “probably due more to the discontent caused by a grasshopper plague than to any appeal the Populist platform

Waite's experience and legacy in Colorado shows the differences, and similarities, between Populist leadership and in the party across state lines. To be sure, there were differences between Lewelling and his Populist counterpart Waite. Historian David B. Griffiths called Waite a "fire-brand middle-of-the-road antifusionist," while Lewelling openly supported fusion with the Democratic Party. Although both men appealed to both labor and farmers for votes, Waite seems to have been much more of an advocate for labor, owing partly to his days with the Knights of Labor. Waite also seems much more hostile on the issue of women's suffrage than Lewelling, especially after his defeat at reelection in 1894. As Griffiths notes, Waite "questioned the political independence and intelligence of women" while never doubting "the capacity of the white male electorate to govern itself." There is no such evidence that suggests Lewelling agreed with that sentiment.⁹¹

There were also similarities between the two governors. Waite, like Lewelling, believed that poverty was a major source of social evil in America and that the only way to reform society was through a government elected by the people. Like Lewelling, Waite had the support in the State Senate but the State House was controlled by the Republican Party and many of his reform measures were not enacted. Both men were also elected on narrow margins of victory, Lewelling winning Kansas by 5,000 votes and Waite taking Colorado by 6,000 votes.⁹²

The similarities continued through their time in office as both men used the power of their office to call out the state militia. As noted, Lewelling used his power to try and force the

had. Robert W. Larson, *Populism in the Mountain West*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 33-37.

⁹¹ David B. Griffiths, "Far Western Populist Thought: A Comparative Study John R. Rogers and Davis H. Waite," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (October 1969), 183, 192. It should also be noted that despite his feelings against the enfranchisement of women, during Waite's term as governor a constitutional amendment was adopted by the state of Colorado giving women the vote.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 189. William C. Ferril, ed., *Sketches of Colorado*, (Denver: Western Press Bureau Co., 1911), 46-48, 81.

Republicans into giving up the capitol during the “Legislative War.” Waite used Colorado’s militia numerous times during his administration, most notably during his two “wars,” the “City Hall War” and the “Cripple Creek War,” both of which took place in 1894, nearly an entire year after Lewelling attempted a similar move. In the case of the “Cripple Creek War,” Waite called on the troops largely as a peace-keeping force between the striking union miners, the non-striking miners, and the mining interests.⁹³

Waite’s legacy in Colorado relates to Lewelling’s story in Kansas, despite marked differences between the two in personal politics. Their actions in office, especially through the calling out of the militia in both states, illustrates that both men were willing to use their power to uphold the laws and keep the peace in their state. The two men were different and dealt with different situations in their states, but the similarities of their actions in office shows that Lewelling’s calling out of the militia was not unheard of for the time period.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

CHAPTER VI

THE “EGALITARIAN” GOVERNOR

The “Legislative War” was a critical tipping point in the balance of power between the Populists and Republicans in the early years of the 1890s. However, that time period only took up the first two months of his administration; nearly two years remained in the career of the state’s twelfth governor. From his words leading up to his election, it would be hard to classify Lewelling as a real “party man.” He advocated for fusion and welcomed Democratic support with open arms. Yet, once elected, it seems that his actions did not reflect his words because he filled his cabinet with capable Populist Party men, and women. One of the most notable appointments was that of Populist Party Chairman John W. Breidenthal to the position of state bank commissioner, a new position that had only been created two years earlier. Breidenthal had been a banker and financier in Labette County since the mid-1880s and it seemed like an easy appointment for Lewelling.⁹⁴

Other appointments made by the governor include J. F. Todd of El Dorado to the position of Labor Commissioner and John F. Willits of Jefferson County to the Board of Pardons. Todd was reported to be a “middle of the road Populist,” although this description may be a little lenient for a man who was also described as a “prominent member of the Knights of Labor” and who was “endorsed by a large portion of the coal miners in the southeastern portion of the state” who voted heavily for the Populists in the 1892 elections. Willits, a leading member of the Populist Party who held political office, was nominated for governor during the Wichita

⁹⁴ *Topeka Advocate*, February 15, 1893.

convention but was defeated by Lewelling. His appointment could be viewed as a consolation prize simply for being on the winning “team.” These appointments were typical for Lewelling’s administration and show that for all his talk about moving beyond the old party system, Lewelling gave the appointments to those who were Populist Party through and through.⁹⁵

Also on his list of appointments was that of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease. Lease, a fiery speaker who was immensely passionate about “her” issues, was appointed to the state board of charities shortly after Lewelling took office. Unlike Lewelling, Lease never wanted fusion with the Democrats and the Lease/Lewelling battle that ensued following her appointment was almost as intense as the events surrounding the “Legislative War.”

Kansas historian Peter Argersinger touched on the volatility of the Populist Party noting that, “disagreements over the proper course to pursue and contests for control of the party” created an atmosphere that troubled the party during the mid-1890s. Lewelling’s role in the “disagreements” earned him many enemies, both inside and outside of the party ranks. Most notably, Lewelling had a public and bitter fallout with his own superintendent of charities, Mary Elizabeth Lease, over the issue of “fusion” with the Democratic Party of the state which played out in extensive detail in the newspapers of the time.

Lewelling had advocated the mixing of the Populist and Democratic parties in order to gain seats and power from the Republicans. Additionally, it was his stance on “fusion” that actually won him the party’s nomination for governor in 1892. His position did not sit well with many Populists, who expected to reap the benefits of their political victories.

Lease, among others, was not shy in her disdain for all things Democrat and when the issue was brought up again prior to the election of 1894, the relationship between Lewelling and

⁹⁵ *Western Kansas World*, February 18, 1893; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, February 24, 1893.

Lease went into a tailspin. According to Lease historian Rebecca Edwards, it was Lewelling and his “managers” fault for the Populist Party infighting, saying that he was “systematically dispatching anti-fusion opponents.” According to historian William Connelley, it was Lease who was the culprit of the public war of words because she was “so bitterly disappointed” at not being nominated for United States Senator and she reportedly rested the blame for the oversight directly on Lewelling and his supporters.⁹⁶

After the legislative imbroglio of 1893, Lewelling needed to repair his tarnished reputation and chose to align the Populist Party closer to that of the Democratic Party as he had in 1892 to win the governorship. He attempted this by remaining moderate on certain issues where Democrats and Populists typically disagreed, most notably prohibition and women’s suffrage. Lease was the champion of women’s suffrage in the Populist Party and was outspoken with her displeasure in the Populists taking such a moderate stance on the progressive issue. At least one newspaper of the time picked up on the issue as being the cause of strife between Lewelling and Lease, saying that “Mrs. Lease and her friends” agreed that the “arch-traitor” Lewelling was “preparing for fusion with democrats” and that “Democracy is anti-woman suffrage.” To Lease, the issue of fusion and the issue of women’s suffrage were one in the same and put these two leaders at a crossroads. The politics of the time pulled these two one-time allies apart and ended with a very bitter court proceeding over whether Lewelling had the right to

⁹⁶ William A. Pepper, *Populism, Its Rise and Fall*, ed. Peter H. Argersinger, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 9; William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, 1189; Rebecca Edwards, “Mary E. Lease and the Populists: A Reconsideration,” *Kansas History* 35 (Spring 2012), 37.

remove Lease from his own cabinet post based primarily on the differing stances of the two on the issue of women's suffrage.⁹⁷

In the end, the conflict seems to have been settled by a mutual agreement between the two Populists just prior to the election of 1894. Lease never could support fusion with the Democratic Party, but she was brought back into the fold after Lewelling and the rest of the Populists adopted a women's suffrage amendment to their 1894 party platform, upon the urging of none other than Susan B. Anthony. The conflict between the "Kansas Pythoness" Lease and Governor Lewelling was by far the most public of the all the internal criticism within the Populist party and is a great example to show that, even within Lewelling's own party, finding a consensus usually easier said than done.⁹⁸

One of the less political matters during Lewelling's term was funding for the Columbian Exposition which opened in October of 1893. Lewelling outlined his plan for the state in the great expo and that meant that the legislature needed to act quickly to fund his grand schemes. The state had already put some plans into place prior to Lewelling's election in November of 1892, but those plans were drastically underfunded and were not near the scale that Lewelling envisioned in his inaugural address. Finally, on March 2, 1893, the House moved to appropriate funding for the Kansas exhibit and passed House Bill Number 83 which provided funding for "the collection, arrangement and display of the products of the state of Kansas at the world's Columbian exposition of 1893." The bill made an "appropriation" and also paid backdated bills due by agreeing to "pay certain expenses already incurred in preparing" the exhibit.

⁹⁷ *Washington Evening Star*, March 16, 1894; O. Gene Clanton, "Intolerant Populist? The Disaffection of Mary Elizabeth Lease," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, (Summer 1968), <http://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-the-disaffection-of-mary-elizabeth-lease/17865>, accessed October 18, 2012.

⁹⁸ Clanton, "Intolerant Populist?"; *Los Angeles Herald*, June 13, 1894, reported that Anthony was going to "take up the stump and urge all friends of woman suffrage to vote the Populist ticket."

Remarkably, House Bill 83 was one that both Populists and Republicans could agree upon and the bill passed by a vote of 103 to 7 with thirteen absent or not voting. The late start of the legislature in getting funding for the Kansas exhibit meant that the Exhibition Board had less time to collect and display the artifacts of the state. But, the Board was definitely up to the challenge.⁹⁹

Lewelling appointed the Board responsible for putting together the Kansas exhibit on March 6, 1893, replacing the board that had been in place during the planning stages. Lewelling made choices from each of the seven United States congressional districts in the state and included some of the leading men, and one woman, from both political parties. Among those who answered the call, were former Adjutant General of the state T.J. Anderson, state representative M.W. Cobun, a future President Pro-Tem of the state Senate L.P. King, and Mrs. A.M. Clark who was elected as the secretary of the Board. In the words of historian Frank Blackmar, writing less than ten years after the Columbian Exposition in 1912, the Board was responsible for getting “the exhibit in place before the opening of the exposition.” As Blackmar’s *Kansas Cyclopedia* mentioned, their task was a large one as the Board planned to exhibit “agricultural products, salt, silk from the station at Peabody, live stock, minerals, timber, etc.” There were also exhibits that featured the state’s largest railroad companies, the state’s packing houses in Kansas City, pictures and displays of prominent public buildings, and university displays of class work. Probably the most widely visited display of all was the exhibit by Professor L.L. Dyche from the University of Kansas. The exhibit featured 121 North

⁹⁹ *Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas* (Republican) 377-378.

American mammals, including a family of bison, coyotes, wolves, deer, and even cougars. The state was at its finest at the Columbian Exposition and had the building and exhibit to prove it.¹⁰⁰

The Kansas Building was located at the far north end of the fairgrounds and was flanked by the North Dakota Building and the Texas Building. The building was a design of Seymour Davis of Topeka and was officially dedicated, prior to even being erected, in October of 1892. The building opened along with the rest of the Exposition in May 1893 and the Kansas Building's exhibits took their place at the fair. While patrons were taking turns riding the world's first Ferris Wheel, or visiting the largest building in the world elsewhere in the park, the Kansas building stood proudly among her peers, especially during the second week of September during Kansas Week at the Columbian Exposition.¹⁰¹

Many important Kansans made an appearance at the fair during Kansas Week, including Governor Lewelling and his oldest daughter Jesse. The event was marked with recitals, music performances, and speeches by notable Kansans like both Senators William Peffer and John Martin, all of the state's U.S. Congressmen, Mary Lease, Chief Justice Horton, and the governor. According to the Populist newspaper *The Advocate*, "Kansas made a better showing during her special week at the World's Fair than any other state has made."¹⁰²

Actually, Lewelling was one of the few speakers to speak twice during his week at the fair. On September 12, the second day of Kansas Week, Lewelling gave a response speech following the welcome by J.R. Burton of the World's Columbian Commission. His second speech came the following day on September 13 and was every bit as optimistic and boasting as

¹⁰⁰ Frank Wilson Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Embracing Events, Institutions, Industries, Counties, Cities, Towns, Prominent People, etc.*, (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 614-615.

¹⁰¹ *The Report of the Kansas Board of World's Fair Managers*, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., 1894), 19-20.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 111-112; *Topeka Advocate*, September 20, 1893.

his inaugural speech. He noted that Kansas had experienced “some bitter” times in her earlier days but also said that the “moral and political combats of Kansas have preceded the bloom and fragrance of a more exalted civilization.” He “modestly” boasted that the people of Kansas were “the natural leaders in moral and political reforms” and that the state had a “lower rate of illiteracy than any other state in the union.” Lewelling was just warming up. He bragged about the enormous riches of the state: in agriculture, in minerals, in school houses, and building materials. He exclaimed that Kansas was “the offspring of Liberty” that was “born out of the throes of revolution” to “mountain heights of civilization.” To Lewelling, Kansas had “few superiors” and he made that evidently clear through his glowing remarks about the state. However, Lewelling could not avoid playing the political game near the end of his speech. Nudging the crowd toward his Populist free silver ideology, he stated that it was “time for the silver chain of destiny to draw into closer relations the whole people of earth!” To conclude his speech, he called for the “diverse interests of the nations to be blended” and called for “eternal peace and fellowship.”¹⁰³

Lewelling’s speech was dramatic. Probably the best evidence of the quality of Lewelling’s words that day was the person chosen to respond to his remarks: Governor William McKinley of Ohio, who went on to win the Presidency in 1896. Lewelling built up the state of Kansas in his speech and pointed out the positives of the current situation in the state. To be sure, there was trouble in Kansas, and Lewelling downplayed any notion that there were struggling Kansans, despite having first-hand knowledge to the contrary.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ *The Report of the Kansas Board of World’s Fair Managers*, 111-115.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

Despite all the pomp and circumstance surrounding the grandeur of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, there were real troubles at home. Lewelling had championed the cause for the poor, the lost, and the farmers. And while the State House was in shambles, no meaningful relief measures were passed and the situation around the state was worsening for the poorest of the poor. Farmers in western Kansas, hit hard by bank foreclosures, and equally as troublesome, bank failures, now had to deal with the natural obstacles placed before them. Many wrote to their state executive to relay their dire situation, like Susan Orcutt from Mendota in Trego County near the Colorado boarder. Although her letter to the governor was dated June of 1894, it is a great example of similar letters Lewelling began receiving during the “Legislative War.” In her letter to Lewelling, Orcutt outlined the problems she and her husband were facing in “this God for saken (*sic*) country.” Orcutt told the governor that she was “starving to death” and explained how their crops were ruined by hail. She also told the governor that her husband had given up hope of finding any work in the area after visiting “ten countys (*sic*) and did not get no work.” Lewelling’s correspondence is filled with letters similar to Orcutt’s which outline the utter devastation the poorest in Kansas were dealing with. These first-hand accounts stoked the fire of compassion which compelled Lewelling to champion measures to get relief to the farmers of Kansas during his tenure of office.¹⁰⁵

Lewelling sympathized with the farmers. In an article published in the *North American Review* in January of 1895, likely written during his term in office, Lewelling championed the Populists’ cause to the masses. Titled, “Problems Before the Western Farmer,” Lewelling outlined the plight on the open prairies. Noting the increasing debt, Lewelling stated that “every

¹⁰⁵ Susan Orcutt to Lorenzo Lewelling, June 29, 1894, Lewelling Administration (1893-1895), records of the Kansas Governor’s office, Kansas State Historical Society.

man, woman, and child” in the state were in debt to the tune of \$500 per person. He continued, saying that “ten thousand persons of this class are annually dispossessed of their homes in consequence of the foreclosure of mortgages.” He outlined the decrease in value of farm goods like cotton, wheat, and livestock, and Lewelling stated that the decline of the farm value directly led to the “political revolt” which sparked the Populist Party’s rise in Kansas. In his report, Lewelling outlined the correlation between economics and politics in the state of Kansas. He saw the downtrodden among the state’s farmers as a core constituency and he was working to show the rest of the world the situation.¹⁰⁶

Lewelling did not shy away from the hardships going on, even throughout his term as governor. He spoke on the issue of depression and hardship in Kansas multiple times. One of the best examples of his understanding came just months after his speech during the Columbian Exposition in which he built up the state. However, his issuance of what became known as the “Tramp Circular” had a decidedly different tone. Lewelling issued this “circular” to metropolitan police commissions across the state to combat the practice of jailing citizens “guilty of no crime but poverty.” The issue involved the treatment of vagrants who may have been thrown out of work or suffered economic stresses during the depression. These were the individuals who, back east, formed the ranks of Coxey’s Army. Lewelling lamented that the vagrants of Kansas were being wrongfully persecuted and were often too poor to “litigate their oppressors.” It was the government’s responsibility “regard the cause of the oppressed and helpless poor,” of which was an “unvoluntary condition of some millions at the moment.” Lewelling not only disagreed whole-heartedly with the treatment of migrants, not only in Kansas but across that nation, but even thought that it was unconstitutional and believed that their

¹⁰⁶ Lorenzo D. Lewelling, “Problems Before the Western Farmer,” *North American Review*, January 1895, 16-20.

“personal liberty” was under direct fire from the police commissioners of the state. He also noted that even the Greek philosopher Diogenes preferred poverty and Columbus chose “hunger and the discovery of a new race, rather than seek personal comfort by engaging in „some legitimate business”” and that there was no power, governmental or otherwise, which could Diogenes, Columbus, or the poor of Kansas, “the right to seek happiness in his own way, so long as he harms no other.” Lewelling knew the jailing of the poor was happening across the state, including in his own city of Wichita, and he called such city ordinances a “flagrant violation of constitutional prohibition” and called for the “crime of being homeless and poor” to be obsolete by Christmas. He “confidently” believed police commissioners across the state would heed to their own “regard for constitutional liberty and human impulses” to end the practice of jailing the poor. In reality, if police commissioners were going to actually end the practice, it would have to be through their own “human impulses” because his letter, which affectionately became known as the “Tramp Circular,” was only a mere suggestion and in actuality carried no real weight to end the practice. He had said, or wrote, all of the impassioned words but not making it a direct order to police commissioners, or to the legislature for that matter, meant that those words were probably ignored by many who did not feel like abiding by the governor’s plea.¹⁰⁷

Lewelling continued to advocate for what he believed in, namely the poor of Kansas. His feelings for the destitute were so strong that it was probably the main issue that he formed the politics of his future. Looking closely at the wording of some of his speeches on the topic lend some important clues as to the direction of his political beliefs, especially when examining his speech at the Populist convention in July of 1894. Commonly known as his “Speech at Huron Place” in Kansas City, Lewelling spoke on the topic of poor in Kansas yet again. This speech

¹⁰⁷ *Topeka Advocate*, December 6, 1893.

stands out because of some particular word choices the governor made. Lewelling said that “individual rights have been lost sight of in property rights” and that “men ought to rise above the old law of the survival of the strongest.” He said that if there were poor in Kansas, it was because “some one else has more than their share.” His statements were a direct attack on the idea of free-market capitalism and it seems that his compassion for the poor and destitute morphed into an entirely different political ideology. As if those statements were not enough, he continued that he wanted to “organize a great anti-poverty society” and that he would rather live in “anarchy” than “be the subject of a government that could not guarantee to its citizens equal rights to all and special privileges to none.” Showing his fighting spirit, he added that if there were any who did not like his new philosophy, that they could “put it in your pipe and smoke it.”¹⁰⁸

In addition to major speeches and events, the business of Kansas continued. For example in March of 1893, an act was passed through the Kansas legislature that disbanded Garfield County in western Kansas. The county had made the news prior to its dissolution over a county seat battle between the towns of Ravanna and Eminence. Once the matter was taken before the state in late 1892, it was decided that the county did not have the necessary acreage to constitute a county in Kansas. The act dissolving Garfield County was passed, and subsequently signed by Lewelling, and the county was absorbed into neighboring Finney County. With one swipe of Lewelling’s pen, the state of Kansas went from 106 counties to the 105 that are still organized today.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, July 28, 1894.

¹⁰⁹ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 8, 1893.

Additionally, the state served as the staging area for the opening of the Cherokee Outlet land run that took place on September 16, 1893. An estimated 100,000 settlers gathered at the southern border of Kansas in towns like Kiowa, Caldwell, and Arkansas City, to await the opening of the Cherokee Outlet. Kansans were the leaders of the opening of the Cherokee Outlet, especially those in the south central portion of the state. Men like Captain David L. Payne from Wichita, who went on to become known as the “Father of Oklahoma,” led the charge in the years leading up to 1893. The opening of the Cherokee Outlet had a dramatic impact on Kansas, and Lewelling, because many of the settlers who rushed into the newly opened land came from areas that supported Lewelling during the election of 1892. Although the exact numbers of Kansans who participated in the Cherokee Outlet land rush of 1893 remains elusive, at least one farmer in western Kansas seemed to be pleased with the de-population caused by the rush because he felt that “as soon as the people go down there and see that but little of that country is valuable,” they will understand that “better lands can be purchased in western Kansas for less money than the government price in the strip” and “western Kansas will have immigration.”¹¹⁰

Lewelling’s term as governor ended in January 1895 after a particularly bitter and partisan battle to hold on to his office. Lewelling, along with most of his Populist brethren, had seemingly swept the state in the previous two elections of 1890 and 1892, but the election of 1894 was much different. The changes propagated by Lewelling and the Populists were slow and ineffective. Lewelling had high hopes for his term as governor, yet he was unable to get many of his reforms passed through a Republican dominated state House of Representatives. His social reforms, like the famous “Tramp Circular” which went out to police commissioners

¹¹⁰ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, September 13, 1893; *Ibid.*, September 17, 1893.

around the state urging them to stop enforcing vagrancy laws on jobless men, have been viewed as remarkably “humanitarian” for the time but actually did little to relieve the ever growing depression in the state.¹¹¹

The question of whether Lewelling was going to be re-nominated for governor was still in the air as the Populists convened in Topeka to select their state ticket in mid-June of 1894. Some within the party, including Populists like Lease who were in his administration, openly criticized what they called the “weakness and wickedness of the administration.” At the Populist convention, the opponents of the re-nomination came out in force in an attempt to make sure Lewelling did not secure the nomination. According to Republican newspapers of the time, who no doubt overestimated the size and strength of this “anti-Lewelling” faction, the members of the opposition to re-nomination ranged from Populist Congressman “Sockless” Jerry Simpson, the famous Populist orator who nominated Lewelling for governor two years earlier, to John Breidenthal, the state chairman of the Populist Party and who had been appointed by Lewelling as the state’s first bank commissioner in 1893. Those who opposed Lewelling’s nomination made their voices heard and were quick to point the finger of blame at the governor for the broken promises he made two years earlier. In actuality, the broken promises were more of a result of the lack of reform legislation passed by a Republican dominated state House of Representatives following the “Legislative War” of 1893 than on Lewelling’s actual policies. Yet, Lewelling caught most of the blame. According to Populist state Senator Edwin Taylor from Wyandotte County, the problems of the state and the party were directly linked to the actions Lewelling took during his first term. He backed up his claims against Lewelling by saying that in every local election “ever since the fatal day when Mr. Lewelling’s ample anatomy

¹¹¹ Daniels, 58. .

first pressed the velvet of the gubernatorial chair,” the Populists in his county had lost strength and votes, and he suspected the same was true for other areas around the state as well. In Taylor’s view, there was a direct correlation between Lewelling’s policies and the party’s losses across the state. Needless to say, the Populist Party was beginning to show some growing pains and Lewelling found himself in the middle of a political coup to bring him, and his administration, down.¹¹²

Despite all of the press coverage about Lewelling’s role in the Populist Party going forward, at the convention, cooler heads prevailed once the convention opened. The proceedings went as planned at the 1894 Topeka convention and there were only a few changes to the platform and personnel offered up by the Populist Party from two years earlier. A women’s suffrage plank was added to the state platform, but aside from that, the Populists acted conservatively in their platform adaptations and nominations. Lewelling was able to appease his detractors and did earn the party’s nomination for governor “by acclamation.” From the outside, the party seemed to be unified once again and prepared for another fight with Kansas Republicans at the November elections.¹¹³

It took very little time for the Republican opponents of Lewelling to join forces and the 1894 gubernatorial campaign turned ugly after Lewelling was re-nominated. Writing about the Populist Party in September of 1894, the Republican newspaper the *Wichita Daily Eagle* noted “that no party on this earth can live with a set of boodling imbeciles, and filth begrimed thieves, and foul-mouthed rascals at the head of that party, leading it into the quagmire of disgrace and dishonor.” The paper made no qualms about which side of the political debate it was on as it

¹¹² *Iola Register*, June 8, 1894; *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), June 12, 1894; *Western Kansas World*, June 16, 1894.

¹¹³ *Dodge City Globe-Republican*, June 22, 1894.

lambasted the governor, saying Lewelling was one of the “imbeciles” and that “the conspirators with whom he has surrounded himself are such men.” The paper scathed Lewelling and his party for:

“blaspheming high heaven by comparing themselves to Jesus Christ, befouling womanhood by saying that a majority of the pure girls of Kansas are going to a life of shame, are bleeding every artery of the great state; sucking at every vein like so many vampires, clutching at every appropriation, grasping and grinding and squeezing the public purse of every dollar it holds.”¹¹⁴

Indeed, Lewelling was in trouble during the election of 1894. He had notable critics both inside his party, like Lease, and outside his party, like those of the Republican press corps. The fight Lewelling had advocated for two years earlier during his nomination speech was coming to a crescendo and his enemies seemed to be closing in on all sides.

Lewelling’s Republican opponents used an “any means necessary” approach in their attacks during the fall of 1894. Republican newspapers were relentless. Lewelling was charged with “openly and shamelessly” violating the state’s prohibition laws, was accused of “boodling” and taking bribes from gamblers and saloon keepers, was admonished for being in bed with the railroads he so openly condemned on the campaign trail, and was even accused of being to “sentimental” to the state’s poor and needy, referring to the Governor’s famous 1893 “Tramp Circular” which denounced the vagrancy laws of the state. The Republican message painted Lewelling in a questionable moral light and chose to appeal to Kansan’s moral sensibilities by asking if “sober, Christian men” were going to support Lewelling and his band of “degraded and vicious elements that are bending every nerve for re-election.”

¹¹⁴ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, September 4, 1894.

The Republican candidate, Edmund Morrill, seemed to stay above the fray and let his Republican press tear Lewelling to shreds in the public's eye. In fact, there is little mention of Morrill during the campaign, even by the Republican press, who instead devoted their time to bringing down Lewelling rather than building up their candidate. A prime example of the Republican Party's tactics can be seen in an examination of the Republican run *Iola Register's* front page from October 12, 1894, just a month before the election. Lewelling's name is listed in attacks on his character no less than nine times, while Morrill is mentioned in passing only twice. Lewelling was going against a juggernaut and it appears that the Republicans could have sent any one of their lot against him in the campaign because their strategy was not promote their own candidate, but to bring down Lewelling and his administration.¹¹⁵

In actuality, the Republican attacks were most likely unnecessary because Lewelling probably stood little chance to be re-elected after the press recounted many of the events of his administration, namely the "Legislative War," and the public rift between he and Mary Lease. The Republicans were triumphant at the polls by an overwhelming margin. The Populists, led by Governor Lewelling, were smashed almost statewide. The party lost four of the U.S. House of Representative seats they won in 1892 to the Republicans and Lewelling was soundly defeated by Morrill. Historians of the Populist Party have debated why the Republicans dominated in the 1894 election. The smear campaign of the Republicans, along with the desertion of the Democratic Party supporters for "fusion" with the Populists over the issue of woman's suffrage,

¹¹⁵ *Iola Register*, October 12, 1894; *Ibid.*, June 29, 1894; *Dodge City Globe-Republican*, July 13, 1894; *Iola Register*, August 3, 1894.

clearly tipped the scales toward the Republican Party. Indeed, the election of 1894 was a clear “wave” election of backlash against the Populist regime.¹¹⁶

A closer examination of the election results lends some clues as to why Lewelling and the Populists lost so handily in the elections of 1894. Using Lewelling’s home county of Sedgwick as a case study reveals just how big the “wave” election was for the Republicans. During the 1892 election that Lewelling won by just over five thousand votes statewide, he carried his home county by nearly one thousand votes. Just two years later, Lewelling lost his home county of Sedgwick by just over one thousand votes. A two thousand vote swing in any particular county in Kansas would be hard to overcome and given that Lewelling’s statewide victory in 1892 was rather slim, he could not afford to lose any of the votes he controlled if he hoped to have any chance at reelection at all. In the end, the Republican attacks on Lewelling’s character and his record while in office were too much for the governor to overcome and he resigned to fact that he was defeated by his Republican rival.¹¹⁷

Lewelling’s defeat in his reelection bid also mirrors his counterpart in Colorado, Populist governor Davis H. Waite. Both men were elected by comparatively narrow margins in 1892 but by 1894, it seems both had worn out their welcome with the electorate. Waite lost his bid in 1894 by nearly 20,000 votes in Colorado. The defeat of both Populists by such a wide margin

¹¹⁶ The Lease/Lewelling split could be blamed for the Democrat desertion of the Populist cause in 1894. Historian Michael Goldberg pointed out women, whether Republican or Populist, would support a women’s suffrage plank, regardless of party affiliation. Goldberg noted that “anti-fusionists” were taking control of local Populist Party conventions in the hope of adopting a women’s suffrage plank which put them directly at odds with Lewelling and his administration. Once the Populists adopted the plank at the 1894 Abilene convention, their fate was sealed as an “anti-fusionist” party for that election and the Democrats voted for their own candidate.

¹¹⁷ See Figure 5 and Figure 6 in the Appendix for maps depicting Sedgwick County’s township voting records during the 1892 and 1894 gubernatorial elections. Lewelling did not win the city of Wichita in either election; however, he managed to dominate the rural townships in 1892 to give him his victory. In 1894, his margin of victory in the rural townships was much smaller, and he even lost some areas he held two years earlier outside of Wichita, and therefore he lost the county as a whole.

might elude to a broader problem with the Populist party at the time. Both men had rode the “wave” election of 1892, but were swept out by another “wave” election just two years later. There were different issues at play in Kansas and Colorado but the result of the 1894 elections could illustrate that voter frustration over real and perceived Populist reform shortfalls did not stop at the state line.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ferril, 47.

CHAPTER VII

SENATOR LEWELLING

As the sleet fell on the morning of January 15th, 1895, it was Lewelling who hoped to bury the hatchet between the opposing parties so that the citizens of the state of Kansas would be better served. Dressed in his Sunday best with a large rose pinned to his lapel, Lewelling stood to make his opening remarks at the inauguration of his successor Morrill to thunderous applause, just as he had nearly two years earlier at his own inauguration. However, there can be no doubt that Lewelling's feelings about the event were much different than that of his previous experience.

In introducing the Republican governor-elect, Lewelling acknowledged that the two candidates stood "in some sense as the representatives of contending forces in the great conflict of ideas." But, as he continued, Lewelling reminded all those in attendance that "we meet as citizens and patriots of a common country, and the bitterness of partisan strife is to be forgotten." As always, Lewelling attempted to unite the citizens of the state and it should be noted just how gracious and respectful Lewelling was in such an awkward situation. Following his remarks, Lewelling was whisked away from the Capitol and began another new chapter in his life, that of an ex-governor.¹¹⁹

The outcome of the 1894 election sent Lewelling back to Wichita and his life as a private citizen. He returned to his grocery business and was once again active in the city's Masonic community and the Fairmount College Board of Directors. Lewelling's political life did not end

¹¹⁹ *Guthrie (OK) Daily Leader*, January 16, 1895.

with his unsuccessful reelection attempt in 1894, however. As pointed out by the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, “when one man gets the taste for office it remains with him,” and Lewelling was hardly a man to stay still. The paper continued that Lewelling was like the rest of humanity in that his taste of power was not enough to satisfy his hunger. That power called to him, and as the newspaper noted, a certain “bee” had “commenced to buzz in his bonnet.” Part of his desire to stay in the service of the public was no doubt due to his flop at the polls at the hands of Morrill. Almost immediately after Governor Morrill was inaugurated, Lewelling began to position himself at another run of office and it is obvious that he desired the power and prestige that the position brought. It was this urge, or the “bee” in his bonnet, that drove Lewelling toward another run at the governor’s office in 1896.¹²⁰

Like Lewelling, the Populists were not going down without a fight. The state elections of 1894 had been a disappointment, at least as far as Populist candidates were concerned, but 1896 was a Presidential election year and the Populists were hopeful that the increased publicity would pay dividends at the national and local level. Unlike the previous Presidential election in 1892, the Populists were more than a regional party and had a broader base of support. Additionally, they had a concrete national platform, which included both a free coinage plank and a women’s suffrage plank, which only served to bring the amorphous party together. The Populists also had a legitimate Presidential candidate in William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, who commanded respect from the Southern Democratic votes that it would take to get a Populist to the White House. Entering the election of 1896, the Populists were optimistic that their fortunes would rebound.

¹²⁰ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 21, 1896.

Lewelling had many challenges to overcome to regain his coveted office, starting with the need to repair his reputation with the voters of Kansas. He knew he could only get the chance to regain the public's trust if he first settled his inter-party disputes with those calling the shots, most notably Populist Party chairman Breidenthal. The true origin of the rift between the two Populist figure heads remains unclear from primary documents but dated back to Lewelling's term as governor when he appointed Breidenthal as the bank commissioner. Breidenthal, the chairman of the Populist Party from the party's beginnings, had campaigned heavily for Lewelling during the election of 1892 but had shifted his allegiance away from him during his reelection bid in 1894.¹²¹

Breidenthal called the shots of the Populist Party in Kansas; if a candidate had Breidenthal's support, that candidate was almost assured of winning political office. Populist candidates, including Lewelling, knew the power Breidenthal commanded and his support was sought by any candidate who wanted to win. Breidenthal was called a "political Napoleon" and was notorious for accomplishing "whatever he undertakes in the management of party affairs." He was a party boss in every sense of the word and Populists knew that it was Breidenthal's "finger that beckons or repels; it is his whim and his ambitions around which others' ambitions must cluster in subordinate positions or cease to shine at all; it is Breidenthal's force with his crowd of satellites in every county" that guided the Populist Party in Kansas. Although he did not hold an especially high-ranking public office, Breidenthal was one of the most powerful men

¹²¹ The *Wichita Daily Eagle* attempted to answer the question why Lewelling and Breidenthal were at odds saying it could have been a certain rebellious streak in Lewelling who "would not conform or agree to certain methods they wanted to pursue in the campaign." It also opined that the rift might have been caused Breidenthal's own "schemes and ambitions" at gaining political clout and office. *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 20, 1896.

in the state in an era where party bosses still ruled party politics and he was the one man standing in the way of Lewelling's ambitions of winning back his governorship.¹²²

It appears that Breidenthal was motivated by more than just the promotion of the Populist Party. Lewelling was trying to regain the state's top political office but Breidenthal had his eye on an even higher prize, a Senate seat in the United States Congress. William A. Peffer of Topeka had been the first Populist elected to the United States Senate in 1891 and was nominated again in 1897. The same political turmoil within the Populist Party that cost Lewelling his governorship in 1894 was at work once again against the reelection bid of Peffer. Breidenthal, one of the most visible Populist figures in Kansas, was working to take that seat from his Populist brother. For Breidenthal to accomplish his goal, he needed to make sure that all powerful party members were clear of his path, including Peffer and Lorenzo D. Lewelling.

This kind of inter-party cannibalism was a staple of the Populist Party and is a challenge that every egalitarian and reform movement faces. As noted by political scientists Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, egalitarian leaders who "push themselves forward, attempting to lead rather than merely convene or facilitate discussion will be attacked for attempting to lord it over others."¹²³ Historians for decades have noted how volatile a place leadership positions were within the Populist Party. In the words of Kansas historian James C. Malin, "no one outside of the Populist party said any harsher things about Populist leadership than Populists themselves."¹²⁴ The same sentiment was echoed decades later by H. Edward Flentje and Joseph A. Aistrup in their book *Kansas Politics and Government*. Flentje and Aistrup examine Kansas

¹²² *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 21, 1896; *Ibid.*, August 5, 1896.

¹²³ Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, *Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership from Washington through Lincoln*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 2.

¹²⁴ James C. Malin, *Concern About Humanity: Notes on Reform, 1872-1912, at the National and Kansas Levels of Thought*, (Lawrence: James Malin, 1964), 191-193

politics through three distinct political cultures and place the Populist movement squarely in the egalitarian sector of political culture. The authors continue on to say that, Populists inherently “distrusted anyone in authority, including one of their own.”¹²⁵ The rocky relationships Lewelling had with the rest of the Populist leadership seems to agree with the sentiments of these historians. Lewelling was never able to be the effective leader he needed to be because of culture of his own party; a party which prized equality for all and set out to make sure that none of their lot became too powerful.

Prior to the state Populist convention of 1896, Breidenthal and Lewelling were already positioning themselves for the power struggle to come. Both men accused the other of having a “crowd” of support which would discourage any attempt at either gaining the upper hand in state politics. Lewelling did not sulk from the confrontation and instead confronted Breidenthal’s accusations in a letter to the *Kansas City Star* in April of 1896. In his letter, Lewelling stated that Breidenthal’s reappointment as Chairman of the Populist Party would be disastrous because Lewelling was opposed the selection of any man who holds “personal animosity” toward a candidate because it “might lead him to connive at the defeat of any man whom the convention had honored.” Obviously, Lewelling’s remarks were a direct attack on Breidenthal, whom he blamed for his defeat in 1894.¹²⁶

The feud between the two continued throughout the spring and summer of 1896 as Lewelling positioned himself at another run at the governor’s office and Breidenthal moved to block him. The situation finally came to a head at the state Populist convention in Abilene in August of that year. Breidenthal called the convention to order and then proceeded to support a

¹²⁵H. Edward Flentje and Joseph A. Aistrup, *Kansas Politics and Government: The Clash of Political Cultures*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 23, 121.

¹²⁶ *Kansas City Star*, April 10, 1896.

whole litany of candidates, all in opposition to a Lewelling ticket. Breidenthal campaigned hard for the nomination of state senator W.A. Harris, an ex-Confederate officer, for governor and on the first ballot Harris held a considerable lead on Lewelling. It looked as if Breidenthal's finger had once again picked the party's nominee. However, Lewelling had one trick left up his sleeve and showed some political prowess of his own. Convinced he did not have the support to overcome Breidenthal's candidate by himself, the pragmatic Lewelling came up with a plan to rob the victory from his rival's grasp. On the third ballot, Lewelling dropped his name from contention and convinced his supporters to shift their allegiance to one of the other candidates in the running, state senator John Leedy, who had finished a solid third in the previous two ballots. The move was an astute one from the ex-governor and the new coalition of Leedy/Lewelling supporters was enough to overcome the nomination of Breidenthal's candidate W.A. Harris. After Leedy's nomination, Lewelling seemed to gloat the fact that he had pulled one over on Breidenthal and his puppet Harris, saying that his supporters had turned his defeat at nomination into a victory and that he was "altogether the happiest man in the convention." The defection of the Lewelling supporters to Leedy can be viewed as yet another battle in the Lewelling/Breidenthal feud and the nomination of Leedy dealt a decisive blow to the political ambitions of John Breidenthal.¹²⁷

Lewelling may have been the "happiest man at the convention" but that did nothing to stop the "buzz in his bonnet" to rejoin the political sphere. Just one week after the state convention in Abilene, the Populists of Sedgwick County met to decide who they would nominate for state offices and Lewelling's name was at the top of the list. Lewelling was by far the best known Populist name in Sedgwick County and he was a virtual lock for the party's

¹²⁷ *Emporia Gazette*, August 6, 1896; *Kansas City Star*, August 9, 1896.

nomination for state senator. Lewelling was nominated by a “rising vote” and word was sent to the Sedgwick County Democrats, who were holding their convention as well, to inform them of his nomination. He was nominated by that party “by acclamation” as well.¹²⁸

During his two years away from public office, Lewelling seems to have done a bit of damage control on his reputation, at least within Sedgwick County. An examination of the 1896 election results reveals that his message of reform was again heard by the people of his home county. Running against Republican Harry L. Gordon, Lewelling once again lost the city of Wichita but dominated in the rural townships for a victory by nearly one thousand votes over his opponent. He regained many of the areas he had lost in the election of 1894 and claimed the county once again as a Populist Party stronghold.¹²⁹

Since 1896 was a presidential election year, Lewelling was able to ride the higher energy of the national campaign and use that publicity to his advantage. Other Populists were also to able to ride the presidential election year into office and the party achieved another high water mark by electing governors in seven states, including Kansas (John Leedy), Nebraska (Silas A. Holcomb), North Carolina (Daniel Lindsay Russell), Oregon (Sylvester Pennoyer), Washington (John Rogers), South Dakota (Andrew E. Lee), and Idaho (Frank Steunenberg). It should also be noted that during the two elections he won the voter turnout in Sedgwick County was considerably higher than during the interim election of 1894. The findings from Lewelling’s elections results in Sedgwick County seem to support the notion that abstention rates played a large role in determining who won or lost elections during the era of Populism in Kansas. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that, as mentioned above, the two elections won by the Populists

¹²⁸ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, August 14, 1896.

¹²⁹ See Figure 7 in the Appendix for map depicting Sedgwick County Townships during the 1896 Kansas State Senate race between Lewelling and Republican Harry Gordon.

were also Presidential election years and therefore received more wide-spread public attention. The examination of Lewelling's election record in Sedgwick County seems to support the idea that abstention rates of voters played just as important of a role in determining the outcome of elections as the social and economic factors at time as well.

The idea that abstention rates could have played a major role in campaigns is nothing new. Economist Jeffrey C. Williams in his examination of the voting behavior of Kansans in the Populist decade, used statistical analysis to conclude that several factors, both economically and socially, led to the rise of Populism in Kansas. A table suggests that during the two elections won by Lewelling, as well as many of the other Populist politicians, the abstention rate of Kansas voters was much lower, with just over thirteen percent abstaining in 1892 and nearly twelve percent abstaining in 1896, than in the other elections of the era. In the elections that the Populists were beaten, the abstention rate hovered around the twenty percent mark. There is a considerable difference in the percentage of abstentions in the Populist decade and leads one to believe that when the public voted in large numbers, the Populists had a higher rate of success at the polls.¹³⁰

Fresh off his election win in fall of 1896, Lewelling once again headed for Topeka to represent the Populist Party, albeit in a different role than he probably imagined at the beginning of the year. Having won the twenty-ninth senate district, Lewelling was present the day the legislative session began on January 12, 1897, with the swearing in of the senators by Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Judge Doster. Lewelling wasted little time in asserting his presence and was actually the third person to sponsor a nomination during the session when he nominated

¹³⁰ Williams, 235, 254; *Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas*, vol. 8, 9, 10, (Topeka: Hamilton Printing Co., Kansas State Printing Co., 1892, 1894, 1896).

Senator Householder as president pro tem of the Senate, which passed with the Populist majority. He served on several committees during the 1897 session, including the committees on Railroads, State Affairs, and Public Health, along with being named the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Most of his time seemed to be devoted to his duties as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, including filing over twenty official reports of the committee to the senate as a whole, but he was able to offer up nearly twenty bills of his own during this time. Most of the bills that Lewelling supported involved appropriation of money for various state institutions he felt were being underfunded, including securing funding for the publication of the geological survey, the Osawatomie Insane Asylum, and the Agricultural College in Manhattan.¹³¹

Of all the bills introduced by Lewelling, the one he fought for the most was Senate Bill No. 15, originally introduced on the second day of the legislative session. Lewelling had heard the report from the State Board of Regents on the status of the educational institutions of the state the previous day and saw an opportunity in their pleas. A lifelong champion of higher education, as evidenced by his role as the Superintendent of the Iowa Girl's Reform School as well as his service to the Fairmount College Board of Trustees, Lewelling listened when the Regents reported on the state normal school in Emporia and asked that "improvements and additional room be furnished." The Regents recommended that the "interests" of the people would be better served by establishing an "auxiliary normal school in some other portion of the state rather than erect more extensive buildings at Emporia." Lewelling's bill called for the new normal school to be created in his hometown of Wichita. The report from the Board of Regents

¹³¹ *Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Kansas, Tenth Biennial Session*, (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Co., 1897), 2, 38, 1230-1231; *Topeka Advocate*, February 17, 1897.

seemed to open the door for every senator to nominate a town for a new normal school but Lewelling's bill appeared to have one serious advantage: a vacant campus in the heart of Wichita which was already had existing accommodations.¹³² Garfield University, originally established during the late 1880s boom times, fell on hard times by 1893 and had to shut its doors to students. The main building, now the iconic administration building of Friends University, and the surrounding campus attracted vagrants and it was Lewelling's plan to turn the campus into the new state normal school. Aside from a readymade campus, Lewelling also pointed to the "overcrowded" campus in Emporia as a reason why the Senate should approve his bill to give more access "to the people of other sections of the state."¹³³

Lewelling's bill appeared on the calendar several times and on February 2, 1897, a committee of three was authorized by the Senate to take a trip to Wichita to examine the campus and make an official report on their findings back to the Senate. The committee made their report the following week and Lewelling's bill proceeded through the constitutional hurdles toward passage until it came before the Senate for a third reading on February 17. The bill narrowly passed the Senate by a vote of twenty-two yeas to seventeen nays, with one senator absent or abstaining. Lewelling had succeeded and no doubt rejoiced at the thought of bringing such a prestigious institution to his city. However, much like the rest of his political career, this step forward was followed by two immediate steps backwards at the hands of his own party. Just one day after the passage of his bill, Populist Senator Dan Hart from Norton County moved that the bill be reconsidered before the Senate. Although Lewelling was able to block Norton's

¹³² During the 1897 session alone, there were bills before the senate to establish new normal schools at Fort Scott, Concordia, Norton, Stockton, Effingham, Pittsburg, and Wichita. *Proceedings of the Senate* (1897), 1226-1227.

¹³³ *Proceedings of the Senate* (1897), 20, 41, 294-295; Juliet Reeve, *Friends University: The Growth of an Idea*, (Wichita: Wichita Eagle Press, 1948), 21-23; Topeka *Advocate*, February 3, 1897.

attempt at re-examining his bill, he could not get the bill through the state House of Representatives for its adoption and in the end, his bill to establish a new state normal school in Wichita in 1897 failed when the session adjourned on March 19.¹³⁴

Lewelling did not give up hope on his goal of improving his city with the apparent defeat of Senate Bill No. 15 however and he continued to fight for his constituents of Sedgwick County. When the Senate convened on December 21, 1898, Lewelling once again took a stand and worked hard for those who had elected him. Once more, he was active in the politics of the senate chamber and served on several high ranking committees, including the Ways and Means Committee, the Railroad Committee, the Cities of First Class Committee, the State Affairs Committee, as well as being the Chairman of the Municipal Indebtedness Committee. He continued to push for his proposal for a state normal school in Wichita, which once again was defeated, but was able to get some other relief in the form of tax breaks for his constituents back home. In total, it was a quieter session for Lewelling and he only proposed fourteen bills, nearly a third less than he had proposed two years earlier.¹³⁵

Although he had a quieter legislative session in 1899 than he had two years previously, hind sight may give the explanation. Lewelling was absent numerous times while he was a senator and his absences seemed to pile up during the end of his term in office. There is some question as to why he was absent from the proceedings of the senate so frequently but the events that led to his death on September 3, 1900, give some evidence that Lewelling may have been experiencing some serious health problems which took him away from his official duties.

¹³⁴ *Proceedings of the Senate*, (1897), 294-295, 531, 553-554.

¹³⁵ *Proceedings of the Senate*, (Topeka: J.S. Parks, 1900), 8, 1233. Bills sponsored by Lewelling included two tax levies for Sedgwick County to fund bridges and a bill to prevent the diversion of Arkansas River water upstream of Wichita. *Ibid.* 1189.

Politics may have been adverse for his health, but it also may have been the one thing keeping him alive because as soon as he decided to get out of politics at the end of the 1900 session, his health deteriorated quickly. Lewelling left the session and returned to Wichita where his health did not improve over the summer. Not yet fifty-five years of age, Lewelling was deteriorating and his personal physician advised Lewelling to take a vacation in the hopes of improved health. Lewelling followed the advice from his doctor and visited Gueda Springs, a small resort community southeast of Wichita. On his way back from vacation, Lewelling stopped by his brother in law's house, G.A. Miller of Arkansas City, where his health took a turn for the worse. Lewelling fell ill while in Arkansas City and died at ten o'clock at night on September 3, with his wife by his side. The *Wichita Eagle* reported that heart failure was the cause of death for the large, broad-shouldered politician with a booming voice. The health problems, and eventual heart failure, could be pinned to his insatiable appetite for tobacco and it was probably his love of cigars that contributed the most to his failing health over the final years of his life. Lewelling left behind a wife and three daughters, as well as scores of supporters to remember his legacy. His body was brought to Wichita the day after his death and was laid to rest at the Maple Grove Cemetery, near where he lived, with a rather modest tombstone to mark the final resting place of the state's twelfth governor.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, September 4, 1900. The also newspaper noted his pension for smoking, saying, "He was a inveterate smoker, but temperate in every other habit of life save for work."

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

At passing glance, it is easy to see the man's importance based on the size of his great headstone. Standing nearly four feet tall and three feet wide, made of thick, rough cut marble, it is an impressive stone compared to others laid nearby. Not out of the ordinary for those with wealth or stature near the turn of the twentieth century, the headstone bears his name, birth and death years, a Masonic symbol, and a message from his family and friends. Yet, in the middle of giant rock stands a phrase, chiseled into the stone, which has come to define Lorenzo Dow Lewelling and seems to be out of place amongst all the other lettering: "Governor of Kansas."¹³⁷

The final years of Lewelling's life were filled with ups and downs. He failed to win his gubernatorial reelection campaign and continually squabbled with the other leaders of his own party over his role in party politics and the direction he thought the party should be taking. But out of those battles came a man who had clearly defined ideals about what he thought society should look like and how he was going to change it for the betterment of Kansans. He became weathered by a vicious cycle of seemingly endless cigar smoking, campaigning, and politicking; which eventually led to his death. Yet, he never forgot the people he was working for and used all his might to fight for the people of Wichita and Sedgwick County during his terms as a state senator.

Although gone, Lewelling's legacy was far from complete. Those who knew and supported him during his political career were not content to see their champion laid to rest so

¹³⁷ See Figure 8 in Appendix for picture of Lewelling's headstone.

simply. Nearly three months after his burial, businessmen and Lewelling supporters began a petition and money drive to purchase a monument befitting an ex-governor of Kansas. The *Wichita Eagle*, one of Lewelling's harshest critics during his lifetime, even got behind the campaign and published an advertisement article for the campaign in December of 1900. Backed by money from some of the wealthiest Wichitans, like bank president L.S. Naftzger, the supporters raised enough funds to purchase stone made out of Barre marble standing three feet wide, by two feet thick, and over five feet tall, to place on Lewelling's resting place. According to the *Wichita Daily Eagle*, the support of the project was "indicative of the esteem the man held." The stone was officially erected in November of 1901 to celebrate what would have been Lewelling's fifty-fifty birthday and still stands in Maple Grove Cemetery today.¹³⁸

Lewelling's legacy seemed to be turned over to the historian and, with a few exceptions, the historical profession has overlooked him. It is easy to see why Lewelling, a man who was so hard to pin down by his own contemporaries, has proved to be elusive for the historian as well. However, of the limited coverage given to Lewelling, there remain some serious questions about Lewelling's legacy. Many of these questions center on his true political leanings, mainly whether Lewelling was a Socialist in his later life. In her examination of Lewelling's life in 1932, historian Dawn Daniels noted that Lewelling seemed to follow "the logical sequence to the Populist reform platform" and had become somewhat socialistic in his views toward politics. Lewelling himself even said, in an apparent interview that was published alongside his obituary in the *Wichita Eagle*, that he had "always had socialistic tendencies." His past seems to agree with his statement. During his reelection campaign in 1894, the *Topeka Advocate* reported that Lewelling gave a speech in Scott City entitled "Christian Socialism," where he presented "many

¹³⁸ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, December 19, 1900; *Ibid.*, November 2, 1901.

interesting phrases” which gave the topic “new life and interest” amongst the audience. Based on his own statements, it would not be farfetched to lump the pragmatic Lewelling in with the growing Socialist crowd of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Kansas. Add in the fact that Lewelling also had friends and associates in his administration that later ran on the Socialist ticket in Kansas, namely Gaspar Christopher Clemens who was Lewelling’s legal counselor during the “Legislative War” and who also ran for governor in 1900 as a Socialist.¹³⁹

Being labeled a Socialist it did not seem to matter to Lewelling. Political labels never mattered to Lewelling; in actuality, Lewelling was more a “Popocrat” than a true Populist.¹⁴⁰ What Lewelling cared about was people. He “trusted human nature” and firmly believed in lending a helping hand toward any down-trodden soul. He “was susceptible to any kind of a plea for help from any one at any time.” His personal beliefs toward his fellow Kansans differentiated him from many politicians during his time, and after, and have earned him the moniker of the most “egalitarian” governor the state has ever had. He was clearly fond of the public spotlight, as evidenced by his continual strive to regain his governorship after his defeat in 1894, but upon his death Lewelling was not remembered as a politician, but he was remembered for his utter compassion toward his fellow Kansans, which in the end, helped differentiate Lewelling’s legacy from other politicians of his day.¹⁴¹

One of the greatest lessons learned from Lewelling’s legacy is that Populism was not more than a set of ideals. Lewelling is a prime example that Populism was not merely a “farmers” movement, but in fact, had roots in the state’s largest city of Wichita. His election to

¹³⁹ Daniels 66; *Wichita Eagle*, September 5, 1900; *Topeka Advocate*, August 29, 1894.

¹⁴⁰ “Popocrat” was an identifier developed during the Populist Era as a way to differentiate true Populists from those in the party that favored a “fusion” with the Democratic Party. Lewelling favored “fusion” throughout his political career.

¹⁴¹ *Wichita Daily Eagle*, September 5, 1900; Flentje, 121.

the governorship shows that Populism was a much a “miners” and even business and reform movement as an “agrarian” movement, especially during the early years of the 1890s. Lewelling reminds us that Populists were not all the strict ideologues like Mary Lease. His story shows that there were pragmatic Populists who were willing to compromise with others, especially with the state’s Democratic Party, perhaps to their political peril.

While Lewelling did have relative success as a politician, his legacy of compassion is one that is kept alive today. Compared to his fellow Populists like governor Waite of Colorado, Lewelling did maintain a respectable political career, having been elected governor and state senator. While tragic in a sense, because of his untimely death while still in office, his story is crucial to understanding the Populist movement in Kansas during the 1890s. Aside from remembering him as the first Populist governor, he should be remembered for his contributions to a changing political world.

To many, like political journalist Thomas Frank, the Populist movement in Kansas is viewed with a sense of idealism, saying their “demands don’t look that crazy today.” Yet, Lewelling’s legacy shows another side of Populism; a party was never completely united and was as susceptible to the same “sham battles” that plagued the other major political parties. Lewelling’s story shows a substantial contrast between his background and politics from that of the “quintessential” Populist leaders like Simpson, Lease, and Peffer. That Lewelling seldom captures the attention of historians, or the general public, the way Simpson and the other leaders do, ignores Lewelling’s legacy that looks behind the Populist rhetoric, to illustrate the complex and frustrating attempts from a compassionate citizen to put these ideals into practice.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Frank, 32-33.

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APPENDIX

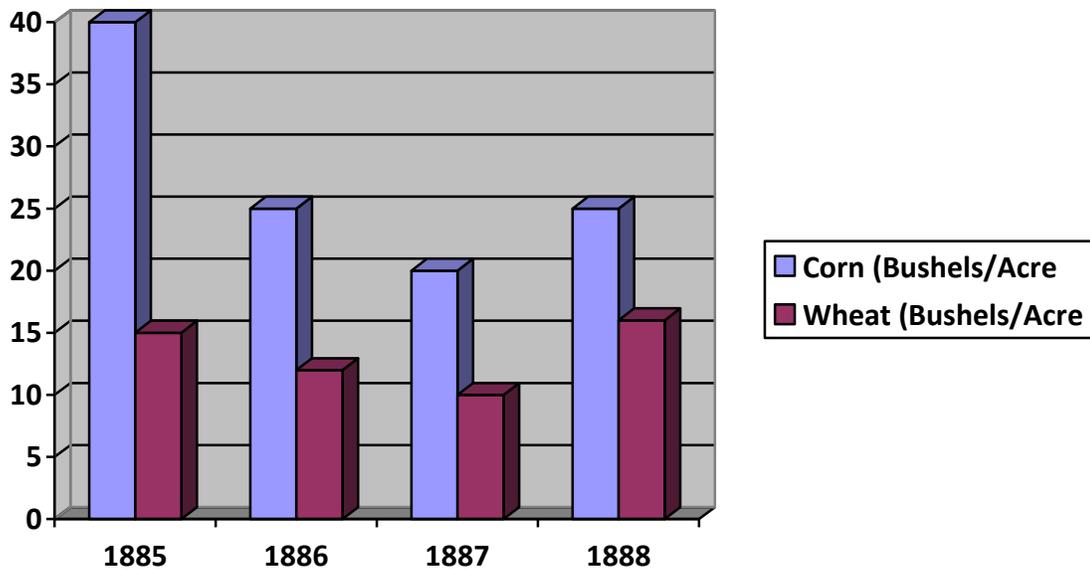
APPENDIX

Document 1 – Farmers Alliance 1889 St. Louis Convention Platforms and Demands

“We demand the abolition of national banks and the substitution of legal tender treasury notes in lieu of national bank notes, issued in sufficient volume to do the business of the country on a cash system; regulating the amount needed on a per capita basis as the business interest of the country expand: and that all money issued by the Government shall be legal tender in payment of all debts, both public and private.”

Source: Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 108-109.

Figure 1 – Corn and wheat per acre in Barber County, Kansas, 1885-1888



APPENDIX (continued)

Figure 2 – Price of corn and wheat per Acre in Barber County, Kansas, 1885-1888

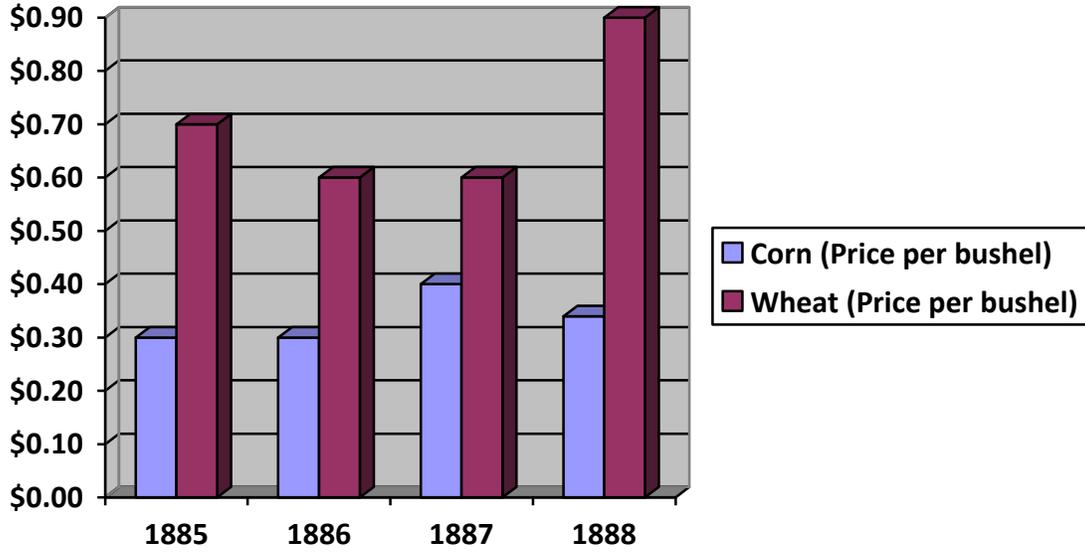
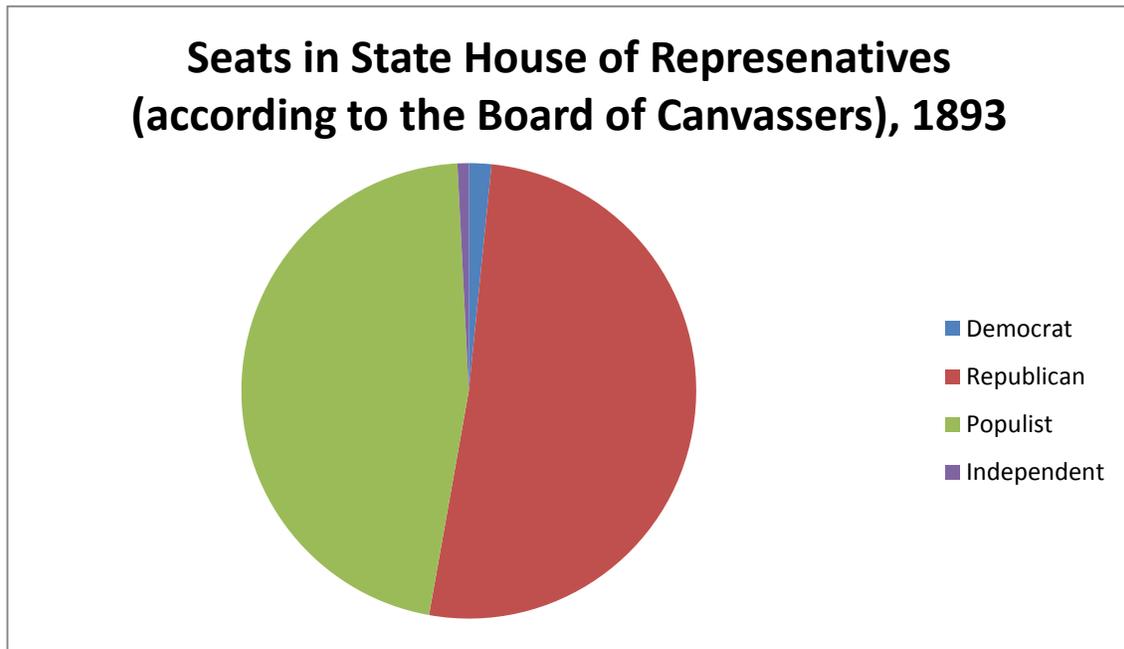
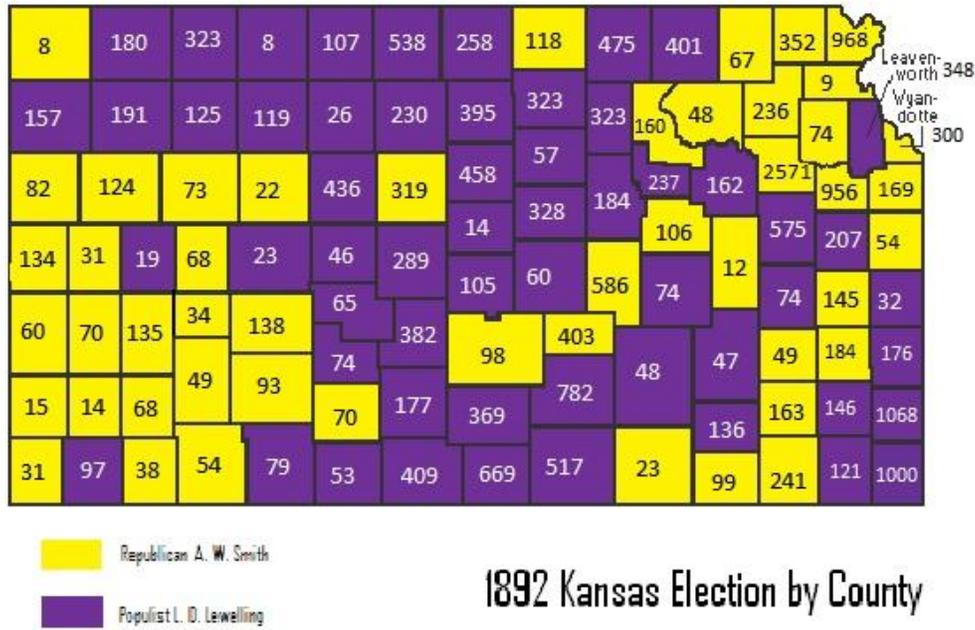


Figure 3 – Seats in State House of Representatives, 1893



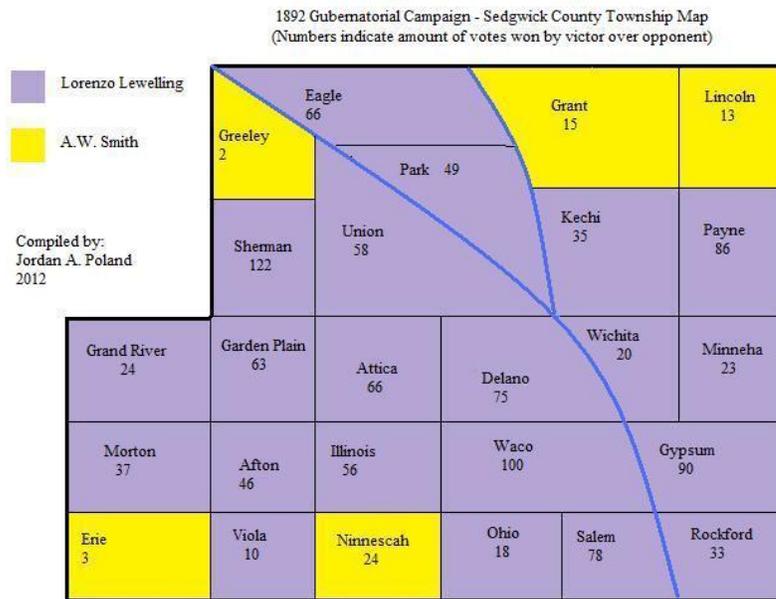
APPENDIX (continued)

Figure 4 – 1892 Kansas Gubernatorial Election by County (numbers indicate margin of victory)



SOURCE: Joseph K. Hudson, *Letters to Governor Leawellling*, (Topeka, KS: Topeka Publishing Co., 1893), 164-165.

Figure 5 – 1892 Gubernatorial Campaign, Sedgwick County Township Map



APPENDIX (continued)

Figure 6 – 1894 Gubernatorial Campaign, Sedgwick County Township Map

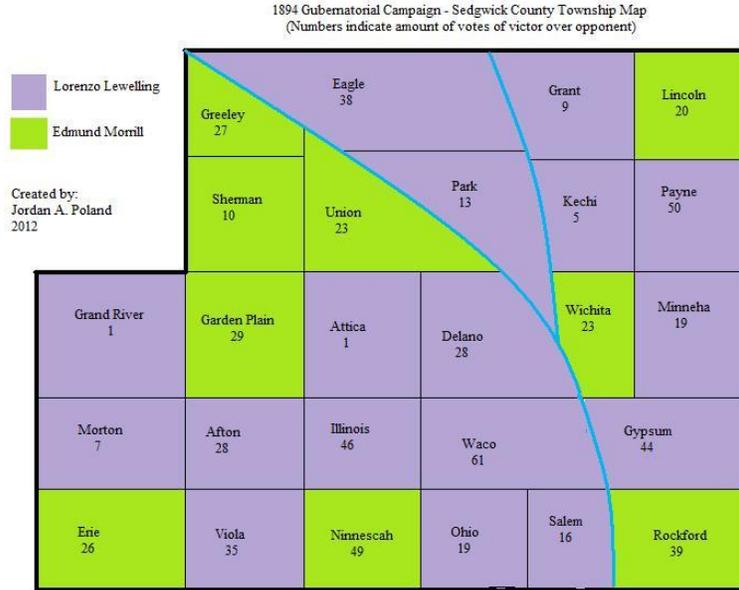
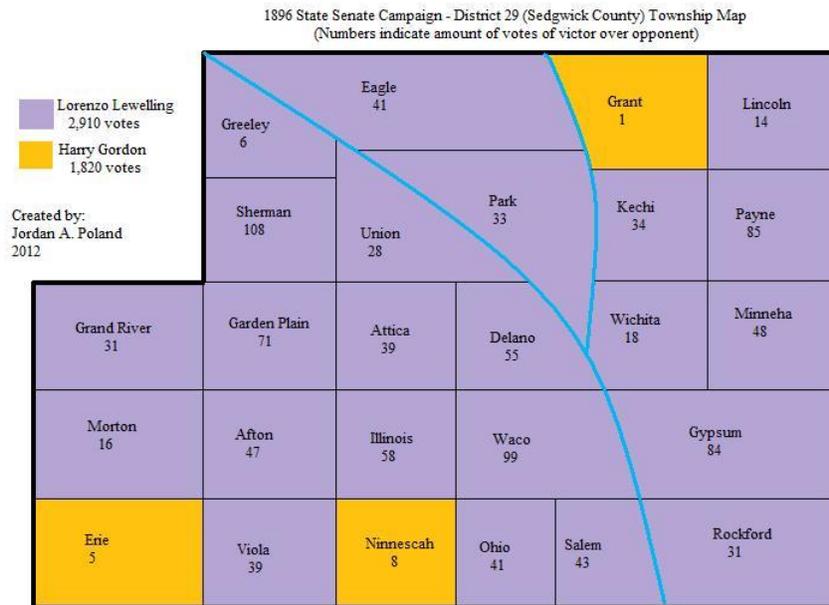


Figure 7 – 1896 Kansas State Senate Campaign, Sedgwick County Township Map



APPENDIX (continued)

Figure 8 – Lorenzo D. Lewelling’s gravestone at Maple Grove Cemetery, Wichita, KS. Visible at left of Lewelling’s stone is the stone of his daughter Ruth. Photo courtesy of author.

