Young Radicals of the Nineties

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YOUNG RADICALS OF THE NINETIES

BY MARY LOUISE JEFFERY

WE meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot box, the legislatures, the Congress . . . The people are demoralized . . . the newspapers are subsidized or muzzled . . . business prostrated, our homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes, unprecedented in the history of the world. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed two great classes, paupers and millionaires . . . A vast conspiracy against mankind is taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forbodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

(From the preamble of the People's party platform, adopted at Omaha in 1892.)

Miss Mary Louise Jeffery grew up on a farm in Lancaster County and has lived most of her adult life in Lincoln. A member of Quill, she has had a continuing interest in writing for many years.

The Nineties were not "Gay" in our Middle West. Indeed, to those of us who recall the period, the term "Gray Nineties" would seem more apt. For those who lived on the land it was a time of strain, of endless anxiety, as year after year conditions worsened and brought them nearer to bankruptcy.

While the language of the platform of the new party was obviously extravagant, there was truth in the recital of the exigencies of the farmers. Indeed, an account of their economic troubles at that time could hardly have been exaggerated.

The Nineties were the days of the self-styled rainmaker and his balloon; of sects whose adherents on a date set by one of their prophets, were said to don white robes and climb on haystacks to be ready for the ascent when the trumpet should sound, heralding the end of the world. They were days when peddlers roamed the countryside, exchanging such objects as tinware and catarrh cure for bed, breakfast, and feed for the horse. And they were days when a farmer who had to drive fifteen or twenty miles to the city would sometimes carry his lunch in a shoe box and eat it in his wagon on Haymarket Square [1] because he could not spare the fifteen cents in cash required for a meal at a restaurant.

Had it not been for their load of debt the situation would not have been so critical, but most farms were mortgaged, often for more than they would have brought if sold. Chattel mortgages on livestock and farm machinery were also common. During the 1880's rainfall had been adequate and crops abundant, but the prices received by the farmers were so low as scarcely to pay the cost of production, and debts could not be reduced. For example, in 1889 there was an excellent crop, but in Nebraska corn brought seventeen cents a bushel and wheat fifty-two cents. [2] It

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[1] Haymarket Square in Lincoln was bounded by 9th and 10th and Q and R Streets.

[2] James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln, 1955), p. 216.

was claimed that the cost of raising a bushel of wheat was forty-two to forty-five cents.[3] One of the major causes of this situation was the excessive transportation costs for shipping grain to the market. The railroads, having no competition, were privileged to charge what they pleased.[4] It was this monopoly that caused so much bitterness among the farmers.

Another burden the farmers had to bear was the excessive interest rates they were obliged to pay on their mortgage indebtedness, and the farms that did not carry a mortgage loan were few indeed.[5] There was a legitimate reason for the prevalence of farm mortgages. It should be remembered that the country was new; that the farmers were, in the main, homesteaders who, like my father,[6] had staked their claims in the late 1860's or early 1870's, coming as young men to begin their careers with little more than enough money to pay their filing fees and fulfill the Government's few requirements of fencing and the like. A farmer in our neighborhood who in the course of time had become fairly prosperous, told at a meeting of old settlers that he had arrived in southeastern Nebraska, his assets consisting of a wife, three small children, a yoke of oxen, six cows, and $2.25 in cash. His wife had brought a length of pink calico, and when the wife of a neighbor died (from homesickness, it was believed) the cloth was hastily made into a dress in which to bury her, since the

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[3] *Ibid*, p. 221.

[4] When the price of corn was fifty cents a bushel on the Chicago market, the farmer in far-away Kansas or Nebraska was lucky to get as much as fifteen or twenty cents. The railroads and commission men got the rest. (J. D. Hicks, *The Populist* Revolt [Minneapolis, 1931], p. 154).

[5] In Kansas, from 1889 to 1893 over eleven thousand farm mortgages were foreclosed and in some counties as much as 90 percent of the farm lands passed into the control of the loan companies. (*Ibid*, p. 84.)

[6] My father, James Jeffery, filed on his homestead in Mill Precinct, in northeastern Lancaster County, in 1870. Upon receiving his patent in 1875 he sold the land and bought eighty acres in the same section. About ten years later he purchased an adjoining eighty. The land is still owned by his children and farmed by a grandson.

woman possessed only the one ragged garment she had been wearing.[7]

Such a beginning was followed by a succession of drouths and a ruinous grasshopper plague through the Seventies. During the Eighties though there was ample rainfall, the prices received for crops hardly paid the cost of production. Meanwhile it had been necessary for farmers to build houses and barns, acquire livestock and farm machinery, and support growing families. For this their only recourse was to borrow, securing their loans with mortgages on their farms and chattel mortgages on their other possessions.

As a child on one of those mortgaged farms (ours carried a debt of $2,000 at 10 per cent interest)[8] I recall vividly the feeling of dread we children had each year when the date for the payment of interest drew near, that *this* time we might not be able to meet the payment and would lose our home and face a future so bleak as to be unthinkable. The subject was seldom mentioned in our presence but we felt the tension and knew its cause. More than once we fled to the haymow to hide our tears when a fine team of horses we had loved from colthood, or perhaps a favorite cow and calf, would be led away by a stranger and our father would go to the house to give mother the too few bills to be stored in the bureau drawer against *the day*. On occasion hogs had to be sold before they were ready for market, and when an epidemic of hog cholera appeared in the neighborhood we were filled with dread until the danger was past and our herd had escaped — if it did escape.

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[7] This was William J. Laughlin, grandfather of Mr. John Laughlin of Ashland. The deceased woman was a Mrs. Burdick and her grave was the first in what later became the Sheffer Pioneer Cemetery.

[8] This amount was not regarded as excessive on real estate. Professor Hicks states, "On chattels, ten or twelve percent was considered very liberal, from eighteen to twenty-four percent was not uncommon, and forty percent or above was not unknown." (*Hicks, op. cit.*, p. 82.)

I do not mean to imply that the younger generation suffered unduly or had a sense of deprivation. We were no worse off than our neighbors; as one of them said many years later at a church reunion, "We was all pore together." We were as well dressed as our schoolmates, and we had the many joys of farm living—trees to climb, horses to ride, hills for coasting and creeks and ponds for wading and skating. The aristocrats among us were those who could run fastest, pitch or catch a ball most skillfully, or had the largest and most varied collection of birds' eggs or arrowheads. There were always gifts at Christmas and on birthdays, albeit useful or homemade. Those who really suffered were our parents because they were unable to provide such luxuries as store-bought toys, children's books, music lessons, the prospect of a college education, and, most important of all, security.

Farmers are, as a rule, conservative, and the very nature of their calling makes for patience; but as the years passed, each leaving them in a worse state, they found their plight unendurable. Repeated attempts to obtain relief through their representatives in state legislatures had failed, and in desperation they turned to an organization that had been slowly developing, an outgrowth of other farm groups. This was originally known as the Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, but was later known simply as the Farmers' Alliance. From this eventually grew the political movement known as the Populist or Peoples' party.

Both of my parents belonged to the local branch of the Farmers' Alliance. Indeed, practically every adult in our neighborhood was a member. The meetings were held in our schoolhouse, and the Alliance library was kept in a locked cabinet in the schoolroom. The locks were hardly necessary to protect the books from inquisitive small fingers, for the titles as seen through the glass doors were exceedingly dull: W. H. Harvey's *Coin's Financial School*, for example, and Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. Years later, when the organization was dissolved and the

books dispersed among the members, our share included the following, which I believe were fairly representative of the lot:

Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy — a prophecy based on the economic conditions of the time.

Caesar's Column, by Ignatius Donnelly — a most gruesome portrayal of a horrible disaster brought about by the insatiable greed of a paranoiac.

Driven from Sea to Sea or "Just a Campin," by Charles C. Post — a tale of a family done out of one job after another by the Industrial Revolution.

Due perhaps to the fact that my mother was librarian we also obtained a few books of another type, including Macaulay's *History of England.*

The regular meetings of the Alliance were secret, a fact which caused our opponents suspicion and concern, but once a month there was an open meeting to which we children eagerly looked forward. It was more or less a social occasion, and we participated in the program of recitations — gleaned largely from Alliance publications — and songs from the same sources but chiefly from a paperback book, published, I believe, in Kansas, since frequent mention was made of that state and its political bigwigs.[9] Kansas was at the time a hotbed of revolt, and it was a Kansan, Mary Ellen Lease, who issued the much quoted admonition to farmers to "raise less corn and more hell."[10]

Typical of our recitations was a poem that I find in my mother's scrapbook, compiled at about this period. It is entitled *Jay Gould's Wants* and begins:

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[9] The *Farmers' Alliance*, a weekly paper published in Lincoln, Nebraska, printed words sent in by contributors to be sung to familiar tunes.

[10] Perhaps it was such sentiments that caused an eastern editor of the period to declare, "We do not want any more states until we can civilize Kansas." (Fred E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements Since the Civil War* [Iowa City, 1916], p. 239).

Farmers met for business and pleasure at Haymarket Square, Lincoln.

The Burr Block, Lincoln's skyscraper in 1890

My wants are few, I scorn to be a querulous repiner,
I only want America and a mortgage deed of China
And if kind fate threw Europe in and Africa and Asia
And a few islands of the sea, I'd ask no other treasure.

In an expansive mood, Mr. Gould agrees to give " to other men all land beneath the ocean . . . so fertile and prolific . . . the bed of the Pacific."

A favorite song from the little book from which we children delighted to sing, and did so with volume, was adapted to the air of *Beulah Land*. The chorus ran:

O Kansas fools, poor Kansas fools,
The banker makes of you his tools.
I look away across the plain,
Big crops made so by gentle rain
But twelve cent corn gives me alarm
And makes me want to sell my farm.

There was no hesitancy whatever in naming names. I have often wondered how much truth there was in this accusation:

The fifteen thousand that Armour paid to buy a legislation
Was not a proper thing to do in the face of an honorable nation.

We were sometimes instructed to substitute names of Nebraskans for those in Kansas ditties. For example, instead of "We won't have any like George A. Peck in Washington to loiter" we sang "'We won't have any like Manderson," etc. [11]

Wall Street, bankers, brokers, monopolists — all of them our oppressors — were dealt with. We sang, hopefully:

When brokers are freed from all their harm
And lobbyists are dead
The banker'll bow unto the farm
And come to us for bread.

There was a plaintive song describing the richness of the land, fragrant blooms and "fleecy flocks" — all this and yet,

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[11] Charles F. Manderson was U. S. Senator from Nebraska from 1883 to 1895.

When thousands move with aching head
And sing that ceaseless song,
"We starve, we die, O give us bread."
There must be something wrong.

A similar mood was evoked by a song adapted to the air of the hymn "The Ninety and Nine":

There are ninety and nine that live and die
In want and hunger and cold
That one may revel in luxury
And be wrapped in its silken fold.
The ninety and nine in their hovels bare,
The one in his palace with riches rare. [12]

Songs of this type did not really apply to us. We were not starving and we did not live in bare hovels. To be sure, we had only rag carpets and, except for company, used only red and white checked tablecloths; but our houses were homes. However, the contrast between riches and poverty had its appeal.

One ditty was so unrealistic and mawkish that it gave my sister and me only glee as we raced through it with our schoolmates or shouted it over our dishwashing at home. It told of an orphan child who, on a snowy winter's night, stood on the "polished step" of a rich man's palace and recited her woes:

Her clothes were thin and her feet were bare
And the snow had covered her head.
"Oh, give me a home and something to wear,
A home and a piece of bread."

Her plea was unavailing.

The night was dark and the snow fell fast
And the rich man shut his door.
With a frown on his brow he scornfully said
"No home, no bread for the poor."

Obviously, to rhyme with "door" the last word of the above stanza must be pronounced "pore." This we thought

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[12] This verse, in a slightly different version, is quoted both by J. D. Hicks in *The Populist Revolt* and James C. Olson in History *of Nebraska*. As the version given above is the one both my sister and I remember, and the meter more nearly corresponds to that of the hymn, I believe it is as originally written. The difference, however, is so slight as to be inconsequential.

highly amusing. Rebuffed, the little girl lay down on the marble step and froze to death while "the rich man slept on his velvet couch and dreamed of his silver and gold."

The Eighties were an age of name-calling. Children chanted: "Harrison rides a white horse up the hill; Cleveland's in the pigpen licking up swill," and "Fried rats and stewed cats are good enough for democrats." [13] Being Independents and later, Populists, we were released from such party prejudice, but we did talk of bloated bondholders, money barons, and the greed of Wall Street. On the other hand, we were contemptuously called Pops, calamity howlers, socialists, anarchists, even communists. The Populist party platform was declared a "furious and hysterical arraignment of the present times." [14]

Can hatred be cultivated in children? Perhaps toward tangible things; toward intangible, I doubt that it can. I recall no emotional reaction whatever to the names given our supposed enemies; they were only objects to sing about. It was not until a matter became personal that I knew resentment, and that brings me to the day of the Great Parade.

An election was in prospect, and although the Populist party had not yet been organized, the Alliance had several independent candidates to promote, including one for Governor — J. H. "Honest John" Powers. It was decided that all of the Alliance organizations in the county (Lancaster) should join in a giant parade to show the strength of the movement and its potential influence in political matters. We were fortunate in having the state capital (Lincoln) near the center of the county, and of course it was there that the parade was to be staged.

Many weeks were spent in preparation. My sister recalls having been sent to a neighbor's home to pick cherries

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[13] The preceding songs and campaign slogans are as remembered by the author.

[14] Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

so that the housewife, an expert needlewoman, would have more time to embroider a silk banner with a design that included the name and number of our Alliance group — Rock Creek Number 958. A young man in the neighborhood with some artistic ability painted a large canvas showing a man following a plow from under which protruded only arms and legs. This was captioned WE WILL PLOW MONOPOLY UNDER.

The smaller girls of our school were to ride in a float composed of a hayrack, the frame of which was wound with white material. The bed of the rack was filled with straw, covered with quilts, so that we were not too uncomfortable on our twenty-mile trek. No doubt there were other decorations, such as cornstalks; I recall only the strip of canvas at each side with the inscription, THESE ARE WHAT WE'RE WORKING FOR.

My brother, aged fifteen, was one of a contingent of young men riding horseback. There were, he tells me, 176 horsemen in the parade including, of course, those from other localities. There was some question as to his eligibility to take part because of his youth, while we at home worried because the horse he was to ride was a spirited young animal, not yet completely broken, and we feared it might bolt — as it actually did — at the fearsome sight and sound of the trains that were sure to pass, since the road ran parallel and close beside the Burlington tracks for nine miles of the route.

My brother recalls that as the group swept along they met a train of heavily loaded wagons bound for the new Burlington shops at Havelock. Two of the young men riding ahead shouted, "Turn out when you meet gentlemen!" The cry was echoed down the line and the wagons were forced to yield the road. My brother insists that there was no social significance whatever in this proceeding; it was merely a demonstration of high spirits.

We rose before daylight, met at the schoolhouse, and were on our way by sunrise, for it was a three-to-four hour

ride to the city and the parade was scheduled to begin at ten thirty. There were groups in other parts of the county that had an even greater distance to travel, and it was claimed by the *Farmers' Alliance* that about half of the vehicles arrived too late to join the procession. As we rattled along, talking and singing, we were met at every intersection by other vehicles, all converging on the city. Obviously it was going to be a great parade.

How great it really was I have only recently learned from newspapers preserved in the files of the Nebraska State Historical Society. The *Farmers' Alliance*[15] proclaimed it " the largest procession ever seen in Nebraska's capital city," and *The Call*, a Lincoln daily evening paper, characterized the parade and the program following as "the grandest celebration ever held in Lancaster County" and a "monster parade."[16] Both papers described the procession as five miles long, the Alliance portion making more than four miles of the length. My brother recalls that the parade required two hours to pass a given point.

The date was September 1, 1890, and it was Labor Day. Said the *Farmers' Alliance*, "It was THE FIRST [sic] Labor Day ever celebrated in Nebraska." To the editor it seemed entirely proper that the laborer, "represented by two classes, the tradesman and the tiller of the soil" should meet "upon a common level and parade the streets for a purpose," that purpose being to air their common grievances. Continued the article, "For years they have been petitioning for rights and redress of grievances and the mottoes, songs, speeches etc. today speak in thunder tones just what the grievances are . . . Certain it is that the Giant, Monopoly, faced a formidable foe when he saw the parade of Lancaster County's first Labor Day celebration."[17]

The labor unions — seven are mentioned — were first in line preceded by "Marshall Melick and 18 policemen,

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[15] *Farmers' Alliance*, September 6, 1890.
[16] *Ibid.*, September 1, 1890.
[17] *Ibid.*, September 6, 1890.

mounted, nine of them on white horses and nine on black horses." Five bands were in the line, and at the end of this part of the parade rode four members of the city council and Governor Thayer and his staff.

Then came the farmers — thousands of them — in conveyances of every sort. The reporter from *The Call*[18] made a brave attempt to describe the banners and floats and to list the number of persons following each, but soon found them "too numerous to mention" and confined his comments to those displays that seemed to him most outstanding. Typical are the following:

> A wagon with broom stating on banner, "A Clean Sweep." A wagon beautifully decorated with sunflowers.
>
> A six horse team drawing eighteen boys and girls. It was beautifully and artistically decorated with corn, wheat, oats, etc.
>
> Cherry Alliance showed up well with decorated wagon with motto, "Usury to None."
>
> A large wagon decorated with corn, millet, oats and wheat. Mounted above it was the motto, "A Better Day is Coming."
>
> A large wagon drawn by four horses. Sixteen men stood up in the wagon and sang the song entitled "Good Bye, My Party, Good Bye." Nineteen teams followed with eighty-three occupants.
>
> Sprague Alliance had the motto, "Our Liberty We Prize and Our Rights We Will Maintain."

Our "monopoly" display was given special mention. It was reported as borne on a large corn float, "beautifully decorated with flowers, corn and bunting." A note of humor was supplied by a man on horseback, his suit padded so that "he appeared to weigh 1000 pounds," and wearing a belt labeled "Bloated Bondholder." The Goddess of Liberty

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[18] *The Lincoln Daily Call*, September 1, 1890.

appeared on her throne, "surrounded by 44 young ladies, dressed in white." But even more noteworthy was "a float got up by Oak Creek Alliance, drawn by six horses and loaded with twenty-four beautiful young ladies." This was even mentioned editorially by the *Farmers' Alliance.*

Our own equipage was not mentioned. Drawn by only two horses and containing only a dozen or so little pigtailed, freckle-nosed girls, it could hardly have received as much as a second glance for all our brave motto, "These Are What We're Working For." All this did not concern us. We could see nothing of the parade but the vehicles immediately in front of or behind us. What we were aware of was the crowds on the walks (the entire city had turned out to watch, according to one newspaper report), and the small boys along the curb shouting continually, "Look at the hayseeds!" The term "hayseed" was at that time the equivalent of our present-day "rube" or "hick," and we were not pleased. One small girl in our midst, stung by the epithet, rose up and screamed, "'Taint hayseeds, it's strawseeds!" which attempted witticism silenced our tormentors, at least for the moment. This was my first experience in class consciousness. That rude boys in the city should feel themselves superior to *us* was not a pleasant thing to know, especially when no retaliation was possible.

To the editors of *The Call,* a Democratic organ, and the *Farmers' Alliance,* the occasion was momentous. Said *The Call,* " . . . the magnificent parade this morning is a bright omen for the farmers and workingmen. It is all a profound expression of the demarkation of the common people from supine followers to aggressive leaders. It expressed stronger than words express to the most doubting, that the workingmen and farmers are in earnest as never before . . . Here in the capital city with its two thousand republican majority, the demonstration today will be a revelation to the dominant party in this city and it should be a revelation to the party in the state. These be stirring times in Nebraska politics, and the party that longer re-

fuses to recognize the true moment of the uprising may sit in the ashes of defeat in November." The *Farmers' Alliance* exulted: "If the day was an omen of the result on the 4th of November next, Lancaster County will surely be redeemed from monopoly."

The Lincoln *Journal*, strongly Republican, took a dim view of the whole affair. A morning paper, it evidently regarded the events of the preceding day as past history and certainly not worth the play-up they had been given by the *Journal's* somewhat sensational rival, *The Call*. Editorially, the *Journal* deplored the use of Labor Day for political purposes, such as the promotion of the "maverick candidates" on the "mongrel ticket the alliancers [sic] had been induced to champion."[19] This obviously referred to the numerous banners bearing names of independent candidates and the almost universal red hatbands worn by the farmers lettered, "For Governor J. H. Powers."

In a column without byline on the editorial page of the *Journal*, headed "Rambling Remarks," the columnist gleefully told of a display featured in the parade, labeled "Greed of Gold Done It."[20] The *Call* had described this banner as showing on one side a foundering vessel full of holes, labeled "Wall Street Ship - Help! Help! Pump! Pump!" In quoting the caption regarding greed the *Call* reporter had considerately corrected the English.

The celebration did not end with the parade. Newspaper accounts show that the marchers proceeded to the B. & M. depot,[21] to entrain for Cushman Park, and the farmers drove to the park for a basket lunch, followed

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[19] *Daily Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), September 2, 1890.

[20] "One of the banners carried in the parade yesterday recited the sad fact that 'Greed of gold done it.' The sentiment brought tears to the eyes of Col. Burrows in such profusion that the street sprinkler avoided the spot upon which he stood for the remainder of the day. Ex-Governor Butler was also visibly affected." *Ibid.*

[21] The Burlington Railroad was at that time usually referred to as the B. & M., the initials standing for an abbreviated version of Burlington & Missouri River Railway — the authentic name of the railroad.

by a program of music and speeches and later, sports and dancing. "Twenty acres of people," proclaimed the *Farmers' Alliance*, and estimated that the crowd numbered twenty thousand. The speakers were mainly prominent labor leaders, but the farmers had their innings when "Honest John" Powers addressed them. Because of the great number of people, two speeches were delivered at a time, one at the east and the other at the west end of the grandstand.

By no means all of the farmers went to Cushman Park — a fact which the papers did not report. The park was several miles southwest of the city, and we who lived in the opposite direction had no desire for a longer drive than the one we had before us. By pre-arrangement we gathered at the State Fairgrounds for our lunch. The horseback riders took advantage of the race track to test the speed of their animals. My brother was highly gratified that his Selim came in third, although neither he nor the horse had ever raced before.

It is my impression that there was a program of speechmaking here also, but this I am unable to confirm. However, we of the float had a much greater treat. Our driver, who was the father of two of the girls in our group, had business in the city, and he took the lot of us with him, via horsecar, back to town, where we had our first elevator ride, all the way to the sixth and top-most floor of the city's one skyscraper, the Burr Block.[22] All in all, it was an unforgettable day.

When I recall that parade and think of the farmers as I knew them — patient, conservative, disliking and always avoiding the limelight, I realize that they must have been stirred to the depths before they engaged in such a demonstration. I have lived in Lincoln most of my adult life, and I have never seen anything that could remotely

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[22] Located on the corner of 12th and O Streets, now a ten-story structure occupied by the Veterans' Administration and customarily referred to as the Veterans' Administration building.

compare with it, even including the Armistice Day parade of 1918 and the wild jubilation of V-J Day in 1945.

Was it worth the effort? Who can say? Powers was not elected Governor, nor was Lancaster County "redeemed from monopoly" that November. Yet it must have served to assure the farmers that they were supported by a vast army of fellow-sufferers and encouraged them to go on to the formation of the Populist party.

There were leaders, to be sure — agitators, if you will — to help define their troubles and plot a remedy. Among these were such men as Ignatius Donnelly of Minnesota, Hamlin Garland, the novelist, "Sockless Jerry" Simpson and Mary Ellen Lease of Kansas, Jay Burrows, J. H. Powers and W. V. "Windy" Allen of Nebraska, to name a very few. Two whom I remember because we were their hosts when they visited our Alliance were J. V. Wolfe, State Treasurer, and Jerome Shamp, a member of a pioneer family and a state senator, both of Lincoln. There were dozens of others, some of them truly great leaders, all of them sincere.

In time partial success came — control of the Nebraska legislature for a period, two Populist governors, and we, with our fellow Populists over the country, sent a considerable number of Congressmen and several Senators to Washington.

The early Nineties brought a series of drouths and a nationwide depression. Several of our neighbors — our very good friends — gave up the struggle and went elsewhere to find cheaper land and begin again. We were able to stay on, though the last payment on our mortgage — incurred before I was born — was not made until after I was grown and making my own way in the world.

In the end, the Populists and Democrats joined forces and "fusion" became the order of the day. We of the younger generation felt that if William Jennings Bryan were not elected President we would not care to live.

Were the tenets of the Populist party "social lunacy" as they were described by one editor?[23] Our monetary theories were perhaps unsound, but here are some of the measures called for in that first Peoples' party platform:

Woman suffrage

The Australian ballot

Free textbooks

A graduated income tax

Popular election of United States senators

On the whole, I am rather proud to have been even a little "Pop."

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[23] Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 263.