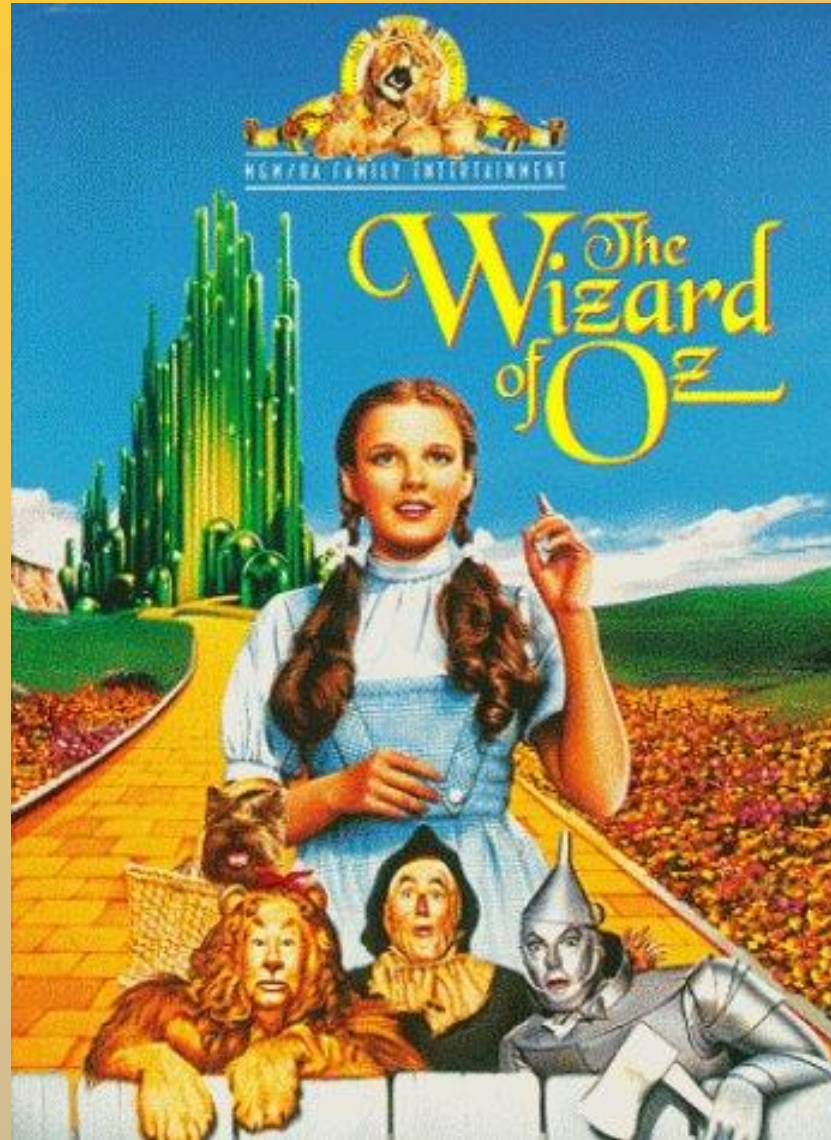
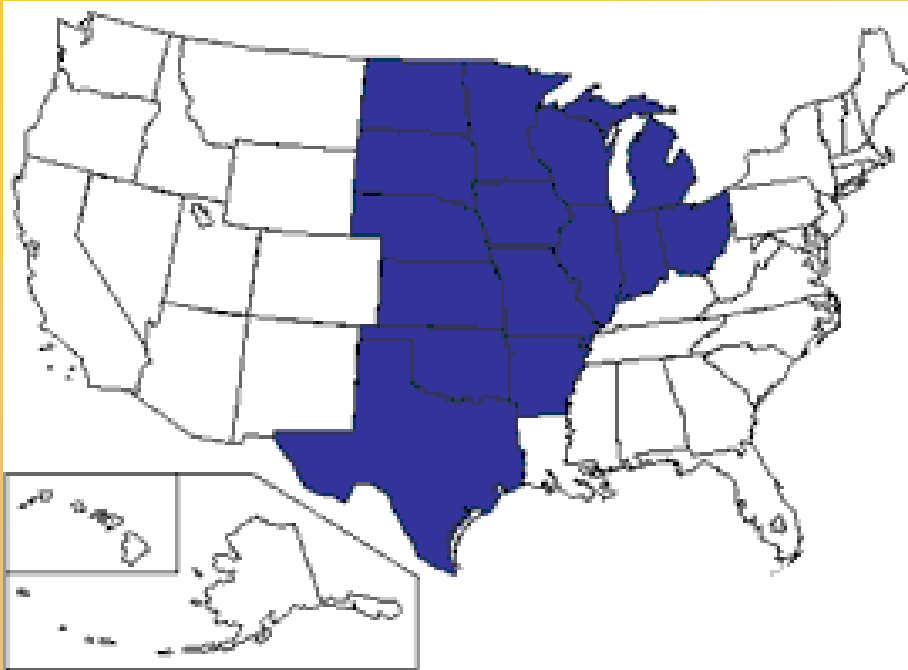


The Wizard of Oz



“A Populist Parable”

Late 1800's



The Mid West

- **period of rapid growth in westward expansion**
- **industrialization and the growth of big business**
- **immigration and the growth of urban centers**

The Setting

- **The Great Plains**
- **rapid growth**
- **good rainfall**
- **railroads move crops**
- **land was cheap**



The Great Plains

Trouble begins

- severe drought
- overproduction
- farmers in debt
- blame the railroads (monopolies)
 - natural disaster occurred



Farmers do not receive help

- party leaders at state level do not want to get involved



A Political Organization is formed

- **Farmers Alliance (rose from the Grange)**
 - began as a pressure group
 - attacked the monopolies
 - had surprising success at local polls
- **Farmers' Alliance + the Knights of Labor**
 - = **The Populist Party (originally the People's Party)**



The Populist Party

- **members were people in rural areas**
- **strong support in the South and the West**
- **some support in the North**



What they wanted

- **Reforms in the area of**
- **Land**
- **Cheaper transportation**
- **Finances**

Their demands

- **Land**
 - **Believed is for the people/not be monopolies**
 - **All land for settler use only**
- **Transportation**
 - **a means of exchange and a public necessity**
 - **Owned and operated by the government**
- **Finances**
 - **called for the increase in circulation of money**
 - **“free silver” bimetallism**
 - **graduated income tax**
- **And for the working man**
 - **eight hour work day**

Their Power



Historical cartoon of Populist Party as a snake with William Jennings Bryan's head swallowing donkey of the Democratic Party
(Library of Congress)

- Ran James Weaver (IA) for president in the 1892 election
- join with the Democratic party in election of 1896
- supported William Jennings Bryan for president nomination
- party dies out after election of 1896

“Cross of Gold” speech

- *"You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."*



July 9, 1896, at the Democratic National Convention, Chicago

Legacy

- **goals of reform did not die out**
- **reappears during the Progressive Era**

A Populist Parable “the Wizard of Oz”

- **What is the symbolism?**



DOROTHY GALE

Kansas – heart of Populist movement, hardest hit

Tornado – the Populist movement that swept through Kansas... Mary Lease (pictured above) was “Cyclone Mary” (fire-breathing orator spreading Populist agenda)

Dorothy – represents the people, everyman

Toto – play on teetotaler (prohibitionists most faithful populists allies) Toto “soberly” follows Dorothy as temperance follows populists



Wicked Witches of the East & West Munchkinland & Good Witch of the South



East = wicked eastern U.S. filled with corruption, financial district and gold standard allies, enslaving the little people

Silver slippers = silver



West = evil nature that plagues the west, her animals seek and destroy... she wants the silver shoes because together with her gold hat (bimetallism) she will have complete power... her death solves all problems



South = the south voted for Bryan in 96, strongest silverites were from the South

Yellow Brick Road, Emerald City Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion

Yellow brick road = gold



Emerald city/Oz = microcosm of USA, government included/wizard, Oz represents the forgetables... no real difference, no one can tell what they stand for, never grants favors unless he gets something in return (corruption), wizard is a manipulative politician from Omaha, site of the 1892 populist convention/Bryan also from there

Tin man = dehumanized worker who no longer feels (nation's workers), unemployed, rusted... able to move after being pumped with oil (populists advocated pump-priming (government spending, lower interest rates, to stimulate economy))

Scarecrow = western farmers, brainless, self-doubt, don't know what to do... but also has common sense, resilience... not so dumb after all

Cowardly lion = William Jennings Bryan, Bryan rhymes with lion, known for roaring rhetoric, portrayed in press as lion. Critics saw him as cowardly for opposing war with Spain and giving up on silver after 96

Farmers (scarecrow), tin man (workers), and Bryan join the party (Dorothy) and together they work

Flying Monkeys, Water, clicking heels three times, balloon



Monkeys = plains Indians made evil by evil... caged/reservations... forced to serve the witch



Water = kills evil mother nature (drought)

Balloon = populist party

Clicking three times = adding silver to money stock = answer all along (bimetallism)

