

OZ, POPULISM, AND INTENT¹

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ABSTRACT

Following the lead of influential articles by Henry Littlefield (1964) and Hugh Rockoff (1990), teachers of economic history often relate the Populist movement of the 1890s to L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. This paper reexamines the inevitable question of whether Baum intended his story as a parable on Populism. From other, more overtly political writings of Baum's, and from biographical information about Baum himself, the evidence suggests that *Oz* was not a Populist parable. We can still profitably read it as one, but we need to separate that interpretation from Baum's intention.

"Oz is us," proclaims John Updike on the centennial of the publication of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. To be sure, Baum's first Oz book has had an indelible impact on American popular culture. Even before the stunning 1939 movie that made a star of Judy Garland, the book was one of the best-selling children's novels of all time, spawning more than a dozen sequels by Baum and dozens more by various imitators. More than a century after the book's original publication in 1900, Baum's Oz imagery is as ubiquitous as ever, popping up in countless political cartoons and magazine covers (a tradition that dates back at least as far as 1906, when *Harper's Weekly* lampooned newspaper magnate and gubernatorial candidate William Randolph Hearst as "The Wizard of Ooze"), popular songs (America's "The Tin Man"), and television shows (the harrowing prison drama "Oz," set in an experimental cell block called Emerald City). Oz has even become a cherished feature of many history and economics classes, thanks to an influential 1964 article by then-high school history teacher (and future Ph.D. historian) Henry Littlefield.

Littlefield, in his article "The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism," published in the American studies journal *The American Quarterly*, said Baum's story, on the surface just an imaginative fairy tale, had "a symbolic allegory implicit within its story line and characterizations.... Baum delineated a Midwesterner's vibrant and ironic portrait of this country as it entered the twentieth century."² At the center of Baum's parable, according to Littlefield, were the struggles of the western farmers of that time and the monetary remedy they sought from the government. Deflation had been the norm over the three decades after the Civil War, and the farmers believed that deflation was killing them economically, by raising the real interest rate and raising the real burden of their mortgages and other debts. Many farmers became political activists, urging the government to relieve their plight, and many of them thought a radical change in the U.S. monetary system offered the best hope of relief. The farmer-activists wanted the government to

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coin more silver, so as to expand the money supply, thereby enabling them to borrow more cheaply and pay off their debts more easily.³ “Prairie populism” generated a third-party political movement, under the banner of the People’s (or Populist) Party in 1892. By 1896, incumbent Grover Cleveland was out as the Democratic nominee for president, and William Jennings Bryan was in as the nominee of both the Democrats and the People’s Party. Bryan is best remembered for his passionate denunciations of the gold standard and advocacy of “free coinage” of silver at the traditional silver-to-gold exchange ratio of sixteen to one, most notably in his spellbinding “Cross of Gold” speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1896.

As reinterpreted by Littlefield, Baum’s book works beautifully as an allegory about monetary populism. The book teems with references to the colors gold, silver, and green — the colors of money. Consider: the Yellow (Gold?) Brick Road, Dorothy’s silver shoes (the 1939 movie version recast them as ruby slippers), the Emerald City. The story begins on a farm in Kansas, a state that was a hotbed of farm discontent and Populist politics. Dorothy lives on the farm with her aunt and uncle, whose lives seem bleak, because of the harshness of the weather and the hardscrabble nature of farming at the time. The cyclone that whisks Dorothy away recalls the free-silver movement, which at the time inspired comparisons to a cyclone. Once in Oz, Dorothy, wanting only to get back to Kansas, is told that she should seek out the Great Wizard, who lives in the Emerald City, the political center of Oz. To get there she must follow the Yellow Brick Road (gold standard), and her journey is made much easier by her new silver shoes (the Populist goal of replacing the gold standard with a “bimetallic” standard of gold and silver). Along the way she meets a scarecrow (farmer), an idle wood-chopper whose entire body has been replaced with tin (industrial workingman), and a cowardly lion (Bryan himself). Each of her new comrades badly wants something that, as we later learn, he had already had all along: brains (farmers were often derided as stupid and solely to blame for their economic woes), a heart (was industrialization alienating the worker from his own humanity?), and courage (Bryan’s opposition to America’s war against Spain in 1898 was criticized as cowardly and unpatriotic). Having already killed the Wicked Witch of the East (Wall Street and big business), Dorothy is told by the Wizard that he will return her to Kansas if she will slay the Wicked Witch of the West (drought and other malign forces of nature). When Dorothy and her friends return to the Wizard, they discover that he is in fact a humbug whose trickery has duped the citizens of Oz into believing that he is all-powerful. The Wizard offers to take Dorothy back to Kansas in his patchy hot-air balloon, but a rope snaps before Dorothy and her dog can get on board. The disappointed Dorothy ventures South, where Glinda the Good Witch (symbolizing the Populists’ natural allies in the Democratic-voting Solid South) informs her that she has had the power to return to Kansas all along. By clicking the silver shoes together three times and commanding them to carry her, they can take her to wherever she wants to go. So Dorothy is whirled back to Kansas, and along the way her silver shoes fall off her feet and are lost forever in the desert (just as the free-silver movement faded into oblivion after Bryan’s defeat in 1896 and the inflation and prosperity that began in 1897).

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Littlefield's article has had a lasting influence on many historians. Variations on Littlefield's interpretation of the *Wizard of Oz* as a political and monetary allegory have been offered by numerous historians and political scientists.⁴ The theory even came full circle in the 1990s, as historian Gene Clanton argued that the book was actually an *anti*-Populist parable and a pro-gold-standard tract, in which the Yellow Brick Road was the true ticket to prosperity and silver was mostly a tool of the Wicked Witches, as in the Eastern Witch's silver shoes and the Western Witch's silver whistle. Clanton said the Wicked Witch of the West's true counterpart was not "malign nature" but instead the Populists themselves — "agrarian radicalism, socialism, or those on the left wing of the political spectrum generally." Clanton suggested that the Western Witch was likely a hybrid of Democratic Senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, a demagogic free-silver supporter often lumped together with the Populists (and who, like the Wicked Witch herself, had only one good eye) and Kansas Populist Mary ("Raise less corn and more hell") Lease, who was often depicted as a witch in political cartoons.⁵

Among economists, the best-known variant of the Littlefield thesis is the one advanced by Hugh Rockoff (1990). In Rockoff's version, perhaps the most comprehensive and complex interpretation yet, the Wicked Witches of the East and West are Presidents Grover Cleveland (of New York) and William McKinley (of Ohio), both of whom supported the gold standard. The Wizard is Mark Hanna, the Republican Committee Chairman and businessman who was widely perceived as the man pulling the strings behind McKinley. Rockoff offers a symbolic interpretation of seemingly everything in Baum's book, including the harassing Kalidahs as newspaper reporters and the Deadly Poppy Field as the anti-imperialism movement of the late 1890s, which some free-silverites feared had captured Bryan's attention to such an extent that he would neglect the silver issue in the 1900 campaign. Rockoff's article has since become a staple of economic history courses and even rates a two-page sidebar in one of the leading introductory economics textbooks. Instructors in both history and economics have found the Oz imagery to be a boon in engendering student interest and understanding of the central economic issues of an era that might otherwise seem remote and irrelevant.

Just Because the Book Can Be Read as a Populist Allegory Does Not Mean That It Was Written As One

The profusion of Oz-as-Populist-parable interpretations raises an obvious question: Did L. Frank Baum intend any of this? After all, the book became a best-seller and remained so for decades without, as far as we know, ever being identified as a political parable until Littlefield's article in 1964. As the Littlefield thesis gained currency among historians, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it attracted a huge backlash among devotees of Baum's Oz books, who vehemently argued that *The Wizard of Oz* is in no way, shape, or form a monetary or political allegory. Baum's great-grandson Roger went so far as to call the Populist-parable interpretation "insane."⁶ Historians, on the other hand, have tended to stick with and extend the Littlefield thesis. Thanks to the research

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of Baum scholars Michael Patrick Hearn (currently writing a full-scale biography of Baum), Nancy Tystad Koupal, and others, a somewhat clearer view of Baum's intentions emerged in the 1990s. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* now appears to have been neither a piece of pure escapism written "solely to pleasure children of today," as Baum claimed in the book's preface⁷, nor the highly symbolic rendering of economic and political issues that Littlefield and others described. From the assembled evidence it is clear that if Baum had any intentions of writing a Populist allegory, he kept them to himself.

For decades it was widely believed that Baum was a Democrat whose political participation reached its zenith in the presidential campaigns of William Jennings Bryan in 1896 and 1900. The basis for those beliefs is the recollections of Baum's eldest son, Frank Joslyn. A much-cited paragraph from the younger Baum's 1961 biography of his father gave the following account:

"Not long after moving [to Chicago], Baum took a brief interest in politics. Stirred by William Jennings Bryan's 'Cross of Gold' speech at the 1896 Democratic convention, he marched in torchlight parades in behalf of Bryan's candidacy. Again in 1900 he took part in Bryan's second campaign. But aside from these two campaigns and from voting regularly in elections, usually for Democratic candidates, he ignored the problems and personalities of public life. Other matters always seemed more important."⁸

A similar paragraph, based on interviews with Frank Joslyn Baum, appeared in a biographical essay on Baum by Martin Gardner four years earlier. According to Gardner, Baum was generally inactive in politics but "consistently voted as a democrat" and marched "in a few torchlight parades" for Bryan.⁹ While the younger Baum's assessment of his father as basically apolitical seems to have been correct — Baum did not air his political views publicly (except in the early 1890s when he edited a newspaper in South Dakota), and his letters to family members and associates virtually never mention politics — the assertion that his father was a Democrat was likely mistaken. Baum scholars have turned up virtually nothing in the way of confirmation that Baum was ever a Democrat or a Bryan supporter, while finding numerous bits of evidence that suggest he was a Republican or at least leaned Republican. Moreover, Baum scholars have noticed numerous factual errors in Frank Joslyn Baum's biography and tend to regard that biography as unreliable. (Hearn said that Frank Joslyn Baum "made up" much of that biography, and that the "only trustworthy parts of it are his reminiscences of personal experiences with his father."¹⁰) Frank Joslyn Baum was only about 12 in 1896 and could easily have misremembered his father's comments about the political parties and candidates of the time. (Martin Gardner said recently that he thought that guess was "plausible."¹¹). In fact, in an early typescript of his biography of his father, Frank Joslyn Baum *did* get the Democratic and Republican parties mixed up, in a reference to "the Republican [*sic*] Administration of President Andrew Johnson."¹² Hearn relates that in his exhaustive research on Baum's life and times he has found some references to torchlight parades in Chicago for McKinley in 1896 but none to torchlight parades for Bryan; thus it is questionable whether Baum even *could* have marched in such parades while living in Chicago.¹³

The true nature of Baum's party affiliation, and even how he voted in 1896, remains

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unknown. We do know, however, that he wrote the following poem in support of William McKinley and the Republican economic platform in the summer of 1896:

When McKinley gets the chair, boys,
There'll be a jollification
Throughout our happy nation
And contentment everywhere!
Great will be our satisfaction
When the "honest money" faction
Seats McKinley in the chair

No more the ample crops of grain
That in our granaries have lain
Will seek a purchaser in vain
Or be at the mercy of the "bull" or "bear"
Our merchants won't be trembling
At the silverites' dissembling
When McKinley gets the chair!

When McKinley gets the chair, boys,
The magic word "protection"
Will banish all dejection
And free the workingman from every care;
We will gain the world's respect
When it knows our coin's "correct"
*And McKinley's in the chair!*⁴

At a minimum, Baum's authorship of that poem, which ran in the *Chicago Times-Herald*, indicates that Baum was something other than a Populist true believer. On the other hand, taking that poem at face value may be unwarranted. *Times-Herald* publisher Herman Kohlsaat was an ardent Republican (and was even lampooned in the pro-silver manifesto *Coin's Financial School* [1894]), and Baum may have written that poem for the money, knowing that Kohlsaat would happily pay him for it. The poem's teasing tone seems somewhat sardonic. "Jollification" is a particularly strange choice of words, since it could be taken to imply that a McKinley presidency would be a big joke. The quotation marks around "honest money" and "correct" seem to mock the rhetoric of gold-standard supporters. The poem's hyperbole on behalf of protective tariffs — "The magic word 'protection' / Will banish all dejection / And free the workingman from every care" — verges on parody. Likewise, the couplet "We will gain the world's respect / When it knows our coin's 'correct'" is also a bit odd. Not only does it go against the American unilateralist ethos, but it is oddly evocative of passages in *Coin's Financial School* and speeches by Bryan, deriding the position, held by McKinley, that the U.S. should wait

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for the approval of England and the rest of the world before returning to a bimetallic standard. Having won a war of independence against England more than a century ago, "Coin" and Bryan argued, why should we wait now for England's approval to go forward with a policy that we know to be the best? Such nationalistic appeals likely resonated with the American public, so it seems unlikely that a staunchly pro-gold versifier would call attention to them in his concluding lines. In sum, the poem can be read either as a straightforward salute to McKinley or as satire. Hearn, who unearthed the poem in 1992, also cautions against treating it as conclusive proof of where Baum stood.¹⁵

Most of the other available strands of evidence regarding Baum's politics are thinner but likewise indicate that Baum was no Populist. Baum discussed politics most directly in his editorials for the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, the struggling South Dakota newspaper that he edited and published in 1890-91. Editor Baum strongly supported the state's Republican Party. (Then again, considering that the paper was a Republican newspaper before he took it over and that he made no secret that he was seeking political patronage for his newspaper, we should perhaps take that support with a grain of salt. Moreover, Baum's editorial stances, including vigorous support for woman suffrage and a questioning attitude toward organized religion, hardly followed a party line.) Baum initially spoke kindly of South Dakota's early Populist Party (the Independents), but he later denounced them vigorously: "Judging from an unbiased standpoint, they are seeking to rectify some evils which have never existed, and to counterbalance others . . . with those no less to be condemned and avoided. They lack the experience and ability to reconstruct the debased politics of this country." Baum took a dim view of the Independents' candidate for governor, Henry L. Loucks, calling him well-intentioned but misguided. Of a Loucks speech in July 1890, Baum wrote that Loucks made "a fool of himself before all intelligent men — and a hero of himself to his firmest adherents."¹⁶ On the nascent silver issue, Baum proved adept at talking out of both sides of his mouth. Upon the passage of the 1890 Silver Purchase Act (which, in any event, was a halfway measure sponsored by "Mr. Republican" himself, Senator John Sherman, partly for the purpose of heading off free-silver agitation), Baum acknowledged the problems of scarce money and rural distress but predicted that the bill would be ineffectual. A few months later, however, just before the November 1890 elections, Baum urged his readers to vote Republican, asking, "Shall we again rob ourselves of the rewards which have so richly come from the restoration of silver?"¹⁷ Baum's political musings also made their way into the regular, dialect-heavy "Our Landlady" column, one of Baum's early forays into fiction. The naive but sympathetic landlady, Mrs. Bilkins, favors the Independents in the 1890 campaign, while others favor the Republicans, and all view the Democrats with disfavor. As one character puts it, "a feller as'll take a poor kid's dollar is mean enough to join the demicrats."¹⁸

Overt political references are relatively few and far between in Baum's output after the late 1890s, by which time he had established himself as a successful children's book author. Just the same, what few references we do find are consistent with the view of Baum as a progressive Republican with few Populist sympathies. In his dialogue and lyrics for the musical version of *The Wizard of Oz*, which opened in 1902 (and which,

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unlike the novel, was clearly aimed at adults), Baum poked fun at a wide range of political targets, including large-P Populists like Senator William Peffer of Kansas and the small-p populist rhetoric of President Theodore Roosevelt. In Baum's original script, when Dorothy's party meets the Guardian of the Gates of the Emerald City, the Scarecrow comments on his long whiskers, alluding to the famously long facial hair of Senator Peffer. "You don't see 'em as bad, even as this, in Kansas, do you?" he asks Dorothy. "If you could take Willie back there with you he'd be governor inside of a year." Later Dorothy sings a sarcastic song of longing for Kansas: "There we never get much rain/ But we're always raising Cain/ And our cranks are snubbed in vain/ In Kansas." In the final stage version the Wizard presents the Scarecrow with "a Teddy Roosevelt brain," and the newly equipped Scarecrow's first words are, "Oh, oh— How I love the poor working-man." He later says, "How's this for stampeding a convention? 'The time has come to cripple the money octopus— we'll pull his leg.'"19 Baum's most overtly political novel, *Aunt Jane's Nieces at Work*, published under the pseudonym Edith Van Dyne in 1909, took a generally progressive stance, while casting most of the villains as Democrats. Finally, Baum took a broad swipe at Bryan in his script for the 1915 musical *The Uplift of Lucifer, or Raising Hell*: when a character suggests Lucifer turn over his job as Satanic Majesty to William Jennings Bryan, Lucifer replies, "Are not my people tortured enough?"20

Arguably, the most telling statement about Baum's politics is the following anecdote, relayed by Hearn:

"During the 1896 campaign, Baum was on the road in Illinois, selling crockery, when a friend asked him to speak before a Republican Party rally. He agreed and that night delivered a tirade against the opposition. Then he was asked by the Democrats to speak at their rally and delivered the same speech, this time directed against the Republicans."

Hearn adds, "Baum had little faith in politicians, considering most of them to be, like the Wizard of Oz, humbugs." Baum was, at heart, a skeptic.²¹ In *Aunt Jane's Nieces at Work* (1909), which is about a political campaign in rural New York, even the good campaigners engage in vote-buying. The book's apparent voice of wisdom, a lawyer named Watson, says, "There is no difference of importance" between the two major parties, but, when pressed for his preference, says, "I've always been a Republican, whenever I dabbled in politics, which hasn't been often." One of the nieces says managing a winning campaign is "child's play," which seems an apt description of how Baum felt about politics in general.²² Rather than trying to pigeonhole Baum as a steadfast Republican or Populist, we are better advised to think of him as something of a court jester. A friendly acquaintance of Baum's once noted, "Everything he said had to be taken with at least a half-pound of salt." Baum's nephew stated, "Mr. Baum always liked to tell wild tales, with a perfectly straight face, and earnestly, as though he really believed them himself."²³ I think it is safe to conclude that Baum did not take politics or politicians very seriously and would have enjoyed the subsequent confusion about his true political leanings.

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By now it should be clear that Baum would not have been one to write a pro-Populist parable. What, then, of the notion of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as an anti-Populist parable, as Clanton claims, or as an anti-government parable? (Leslie J. Kelsay [1987] suggested that among the book's messages are that politicians are inherently untrustworthy and that the real solutions to our problems lie in ourselves, not in our elected leaders. A recent op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* [Schoenbrod 1998] echoed those themes.) Those interpretations are certainly more congruent with Baum's politics, but Baum simply does not appear to have been enough of a "political animal" to have written a full-blown political allegory.²⁴ The handful of political references in Baum's fiction have to be considered in the context of Baum's massive output of well over seventy books and more than forty plays. Moreover, when Baum did introduce political themes into his fiction, as in the stage musical of *The Wizard of Oz* or in the second Oz book (*The Marvelous Land of Oz*), which contains an extended and blatant satire on the woman-suffrage movement, he was decidedly unsubtle in doing so. Koupal has stated that even if Baum *had* set out to write a political allegory, he "would never have been that neat or compulsive about it."²⁵

Rockoff suggests that Baum may have subconsciously, rather than deliberately, incorporated political and monetary symbolism into his story. Like any other writer of fiction, Baum constructed his imaginary world with materials from his personal experience and knowledge, and Baum's time in the Dakota Territory and Chicago surely affected his world view somehow. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* does contain some likely references to current events, as even as eager a debunker as *Baum Bugle* editor Michael Gessel has acknowledged²⁶, and Baum "probably considered his references to current events to be a series of sly jokes, like the puns that dot the text, rather than something to be worried about by future generations."²⁷ Littlefield said in 1991 that he "almost [didn't] care" if the book was written as a Populist parable. His objective, he said, was just to "invest turn-of-the-century America with the imagery and wonder I have always found in [Baum's] stories."²⁸

My own research leads me to a similar middle ground. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is almost certainly not a conscious Populist allegory, and to say that it unambiguously is one is to traffic in misinformation. But the parallels between characters, incidents, and settings in the book and real-life issues in late-nineteenth-century America are striking, whether intended or not; the book *works* as a Populist allegory. As historian David B. Parker writes, "Recent scholarship might have taken away Baum's intent, but the images are still there, vivid as ever."²⁹ Once one is even vaguely aware of the concept of the book as a Populist parable, reading the book becomes a matter of "seek and ye shall find" and, as such, a delightful exercise for teachers and students both. Perhaps instead of viewing *The Wizard of Oz* as an allegory of 1890s political economy, we should view 1890s political economy as an allegory of *The Wizard of Oz* (in the spirit, perhaps, of the study by Sheehan and Grieves [1982] that tested the age-old proposition that sunspots cause business cycles and found instead that, econometrically speaking, business cycles cause sunspots). I say this only half-facetiously; good history is good storytelling.

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But we do need to be careful about the stories we tell. Simply put, knowing what we know now, the Oz-Populism story needs a disclaimer. Littlefield's and Rockoff's articles remain wonderful teaching tools (as do other variations on this theme, notably the recent articles by Geer and Rochon [1993] and Ritter [1997b]), especially when read in conjunction with Baum's original book; and yet, written as they were before the recent amassing of evidence indicating that Baum would not have authored a Populist parable, they paint a misleading picture of L. Frank Baum.³⁰ Whatever one thinks about Baum's place in American history and literature, there is no need to muddy our historical memory of him in order to illuminate the political and monetary history of the 1890s. By using Baum's book as a teaching tool while providing a more accurate account of where its author stood politically, we can simultaneously do justice to 1890s monetary populism and to L. Frank Baum.

Notes

1. A different version of this paper appears in Dighe (2002). I am grateful to participants at the Economic and Business Historical Society's 2001 conference in Albany, where this paper was first presented, and to Gene Clanton, Michael Patrick Hearn, Nancy Tystad Koupal, Anne Pagano, Sally Roesch Wagner, and two anonymous referees for helpful comments and insights.

2. Henry M. Littlefield, "The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism," *American Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1964), 50.

3. In addition, many farmers may have understood a more subtle economic relationship: restoring the "free coinage" of silver at the old ratio of sixteen-to-one (whereby an ounce of silver would officially be worth one-sixteenth an ounce of gold, instead of its then-current market value of about one-thirtieth the price of gold) would have caused the U.S. dollar to depreciate, thereby making U.S. crop exports cheaper in foreign markets and raising the demand for them. Jeffrey A. Frieden (1997) has presented compelling evidence that monetary populists understood that linkage and accordingly sought a devaluation of the dollar.

4. Notable examples include Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); John G. Geer and Thomas R. Rochon, "William Jennings Bryan on the Yellow Brick Road," *Journal of American Culture* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 59-63; and Gretchen Ritter, *Goldbugs and Greenbacks: The Antimonopoly Tradition and the Politics of Finance in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and "Silver Slippers and a Golden Cap: L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Historical Memory in American Politics," *Journal of American Studies* 31, no. 2 (August 1997): 171-202.

5. Gene Clanton, *Populism: The Humane Preference in America, 1890-1900* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 150; and *Congressional Populism and the Crisis of the 1890s* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 89.

6. Quoted in David Moyer, "Oz in the News," *The Baum Bugle* 42, no. 3 (Winter 1998), 46.

7. L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (New York: Dover, 1966), iii.

8. Frank Joslyn Baum and Russel P. MacFall, *To Please A Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee Company, 1961), 85.

9. Martin Gardner and Russel B. Nye, eds., *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 29.

10. Quoted in Nancy Tystad Koupal, "Add a Pinch of Biography and Mix Well: Seasoning the Populist Allegory Theory with History," *South Dakota History* 31, no. 2 (Summer 2001), 156n9.

11. Telephone conversation with author, October 5, 2000.

12. Second typescript of Frank J. Baum's biography, 90, L. Frank Baum papers, Box 6, Syracuse University, E.S. Bird Library, Special Collections. Mixing up the Democratic and Republican parties of the nineteenth century, as Frank J. Baum clearly did in the case of Andrew Johnson and possibly did in the case of his own father, would have been easy to do, since the two parties basically swapped ideologies around the turn

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of the twentieth century, as the Party of Lincoln became the more conservative party and the Democrats, once the party of Southern white supremacy, became the more liberal party.

13. Telephone conversation with author, August 29, 2000.
14. Reprinted in Hearn, "'Oz' Author Never Championed Populism," letter, *The New York Times*, January 10, 1992.
15. Telephone conversation with author, July 14, 2000.
16. *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, July 12, July 26, and November 8, 1890. Quoted in *Our Landlady*, ed. Nancy Tystad Koupal (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).
17. *Ibid.*, July 26 and November 1, 1890.
18. *Ibid.*, August 2, October 18 and 25, November 1 and 8, 1890.
19. Baum, *The Wizard of Oz* (typescript for stage version; New York: Witmark Music Library and Agency, 1930), 47, 49, 52-53, 366, 370. According to Hearn, Baum seems to have admired Theodore Roosevelt, even using TR's famous catchword "bully" repeatedly in his letters (telephone conversations with author, July 14 and August 29, 2000). Thus Baum's mocking of TR's reformist rhetoric appears to have been affectionate ribbing, not ridicule. In a later Baum novel, *The Sea Fairies* (1911), a talking octopus takes offense at being compared to the Standard Oil Company, TR's most famous antitrust target.
20. Fred Erisman, "L. Frank Baum and the Progressive Dilemma," *American Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1968), 616-17; Baum, *The Uplift of Lucifer* (Los Angeles: [publisher n/a], 1963), 39-40.
21. Hearn (1992). For evidence of Baum's basic cynicism about politics and politicians, see Baum's lyrics and script for the 1902 *Wizard of Oz* musical (notably the Wizard's song "When You Want to Fool the Public"). For evidence of Baum's skepticism in another arena, organized religion, see Hearn (1991).
22. Baum (as Edith Van Dyne), *Aunt Jane's Nieces at Work* (Chicago: Reilly and Britton, 1909), 50, 72.
23. Gardner, "The Royal Historian of Oz," in *The Wizard of Oz*, eds. Gardner and Nye, 28, 43.
24. Hearn, telephone conversation with author, July 14, 2000.
25. Michael Gessel, "Tale of a Parable," *The Baum Bugle* 36, no. 1 (Spring 1992), 22-23 (includes the quote by Koupal).
26. *Ibid.*, 23.
27. Hugh Rockoff, "The 'Wizard of Oz' as a Monetary Allegory," *Journal of Political Economy* 98, no. 4 (August 1990), 756.
28. Henry M. Littlefield, "'Oz' Author Kept Intentions to Himself," letter, *The New York Times*, February 7, 1992. The "almost [didn't] care" quote appears in Gessel, "Tale of a Parable," 23.
29. David B. Parker, "The Rise and Fall of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a 'Parable on Populism,'" Internet: <http://www.halcyon.com/piglet/Populism.htm> (October 1997), 4.
30. Concise counterweights to the now-traditional Littlefield-Rockoff account include Littlefield's own "The Wizard of Allegory," *The Baum Bugle* 36, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 24-25; the exchange of letters in *The New York Times* by Hearn and Littlefield in 1992; Bradley Hansen, "The Fable of the Allegory: The Wizard of Oz in Economics" (manuscript, 2001); and Koupal, "Add a Pinch of Biography."

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