

## **RACIST PROGRESSIVE: Woodrow Wilson - Forgotten History**

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Intro

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foreign

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"This man is a minister's son a former professor an ivory tower intellectual thrown into the arena

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of world politics. He is the president of the United States. Within his lifetime he

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will be acclaimed and idolized but from his deathbed he will see his dreams his plans for

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world peace crumble into dust. His name is Woodrow Wilson and this is his biography."

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Every world leader has their controversies and are judged by history as to their

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successes and failures. President Woodrow Wilson is no exception. Progressives today

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often look at Wilson as the first truly modern reformer and benchmark Democrat.

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More objective observers look to his record of selective persecution and

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segregation and his handling of the United States entering World War One.

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Regardless of where one may fall in their opinions Woodrow Wilson was a very complex man.

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Who was the real Woodrow Wilson? Why is he such a controversial figure?

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What were his greatest failures? What were his greatest successes

1:28

Hello I'm Colin Heaton a veteran of the United States Army and Marine

1:32

Corps former history professor book author and welcome to this episode of Forgotten History

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[Music]

1:47

[Music] Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born around midnight on December 28th or 29th 1856 depending

Early Life

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upon the sources in Staunton, Virginia. His mother was from England and she was

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the daughter of a minister. His father Joseph Ruggles Wilson was a Presbyterian minister and

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during the American Civil War he served as a chaplain in the Confederate Army and used his

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church as a hospital for wounded soldiers. Growing up he was known as Tommy Wilson spending much of

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his youth in Augusta, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina he was considered a rather

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slow student due to having dyslexia and he did not learn to read until he was 10 years old.

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Wilson later did well in school and graduated from the College of New Jersey later renamed

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Princeton University in 1879 and then attended law school at the University of Virginia.

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In 1885 Wilson married Ellen Axson a minister's daughter from Georgia and they

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had three daughters. Ellen died of kidney disease in 1914 during Woodrow's first term as president.

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He practiced law in Atlanta, Georgia and received

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a PhD in political science from Johns Hopkins University in 1886.

Politics

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In fact he is the only president to have ever earned a doctorate. He taught at Bryn Mawr

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College and Wesleyan College before being hired by Princeton in 1890 as a professor of jurisprudence

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and politics. Wilson published a very revisionist five volume textbook series in 1902 titled the

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"History of the American People". In his books he romanticized the Confederacy during the Civil War

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and described the Ku Klux Klan as "roving knights errant, an invisible Empire of the

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South bound together in a loose organization to protect the southern country of some of the

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ugliest hazards of a time of revolution." From 1902 to 1910 Wilson was president of

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Princeton where he developed a reputation for his educational reform policies. However during

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his tenure as president of that university he also prevented the enrollment of black students.

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It was at this time that he entered politics and became the governor of New Jersey in 1910

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ensuring that segregation was maintained. In 1912 the Democrats nominated Wilson for

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president selecting the governor of Indiana Thomas Marshall as his vice presidential running mate.

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Revisionist historians have labeled Wilson a progressive Democrat who believed in the power

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of the federal government to expose corruption regulate the economy eliminate unethical

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business practices and improve the general condition of society and much of that is true.

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But he is also well known as a staunch segregationist and did not want blacks

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intermingling with whites nor did he believe that blacks needed an education as they were basically

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an agrarian and hard labor workforce. Conservative Republicans renominated President William Howard

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Taft while the progressive wing of the GOP broke off to form the progressive or Bull Moose

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Party and nominated Theodore Roosevelt who had previously served as president from 1901 to 1909.

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With the Republicans divided Wilson who campaigned on a platform of liberal reform won 435 electoral

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votes compared to 88 for Roosevelt and eight for Taft. He garnered nearly 42 percent of the

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popular vote. Roosevelt came in second place with more than 27 percent of the popular vote.

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Following the death of his first wife Wilson married Edith Bolling Galt a widow whose

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husband had owned a Washington DC jewelry business making her the new first lady.

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Shortly after becoming president Wilson re-segregated many branches of the federal

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workforce excluding blacks from employment. This flies in the face of current revisionist

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liberals claiming that he "pursued an ambitious agenda of progressive reform."

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One major feat was when he established the Federal Reserve and Federal Trade Commission. The Federal

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Reserve situation was an effort to manage national banks and local banks whose cash reserves could be

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depleted and they could replace the cash reserves by selling stocks and bonds or by borrowing from

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other sources such as borrowing from China in recent history or by calling in existing loans.

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Since there was no depositors insurance if it was believed that a bank was having cash

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flow problems it was feared that people might make a run on the banks and remove their money.

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Over time the chairman of the reserve known as "The Fed" has become one of the most powerful

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forces in American government able to raise and lower interest rates to adjust for economic

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changes such as inflation and recession. But they do not mention the fact that he was a strong

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supporter of the Ku Klux Klan which assisted in his getting many Southern Democrat conservative

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votes in both of his elections. He also appointed many Southern Democrats to Cabinet positions.

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In fact Wilson was so enamored with the 1915 D.W. Griffith silent film "Birth of a Nation"

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that heralded the KKK as "modern Knights salvaging the honor of the Old South as well as preserving

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the virtue of white women" that he held a private showing in the white house for friends family and

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cabinet members. African-Americans in the film were played mostly by white actors in blackface

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and they were portrayed as brutes. After the private screening in the White House with cabinet

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members and their families Wilson is reported to have said "...it is like writing history

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with lightning and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true." Later he reportedly called

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the film an unfortunate production and hoped the film would not be shown in black communities.

8:01

In 1913 Wilson managed to pass the 16th Amendment which created the Internal Revenue Service,

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the Underwood Simmons Act which reduced tariffs, which was looked upon as a violation of the 10th

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Amendment where states rights mandated that the individual states would levy taxes upon

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their citizens and establish tariffs and then submit those collective revenues to

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the U.S Department of the Treasury. Wilson also had the 17th Amendment passed which

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altered the way senators from states were appointed to Washington D.C. No longer

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were senators appointed by state legislatures; they were now elected by the voters directly.

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The following year 1914 Europe was at war a conflict that soon

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engulfed most of the nations in the world divided into two camps:

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the Allies to include France Great Britain and its Empire to include the Commonwealth

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nations of Australia New Zealand Canada South Africa Imperial Russia Italy Romania and Japan

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against the Central Powers representing the empires of Austria-Hungary Germany and the

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Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. It is also claimed that Wilson tried to keep the United States

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neutral during World War One until he called upon Congress to declare war in Germany in 1917.

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This is a fallacy and here's why. Historians friendly to Wilson cite the events that propelled

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his opinion to enter into World War One such as the sinking of the Lusitania on May 7, 1915

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and 761 people survived out of the 1,266 passengers and 696 crew on board and 128 of the

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casualties were American citizens. If this were in fact the case then why would Wilson wait two

Zimmerman Telegram

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years to ask Congress for a declaration of war? Another event that is touted as his justification

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to enter the war was the notorious Zimmerman Telegram. To quote Encyclopedia Britannica,

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"The telegram was sent January 16 1917 by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmerman to the German

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minister in Mexico. The note revealed a plan to renew unrestricted submarine warfare and

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to form an alliance with Mexico and Japan if the United States declared war on Germany.

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The message was intercepted by the British and passed on to the United States.

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Publication caused outrage and contributed to the U.S entry into World War One." Even Wilson and

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his closest confidants did not take the telegram seriously. For one reason it was believed by a few

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people that the telegram was a British invention to lure the United States into the war due to the



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incredible cost in Allied lives and the stagnant condition on the Western Front which may be true.

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But no one in the U.S government saw Mexico as a threat to the United States despite their previous

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raids by the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa. It was well known that the U.S. Army was vastly superior

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in numbers and quality more than adequate to stop a Mexican invasion should it occur.

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The other factor was Germany's decision to publicly announce unrestricted submarine

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warfare in order to prevent war material and supplies from reaching England.

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The Lusitania a privately owned civilian luxury liner was also proven to have been carrying war

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material to Britain in violation of the Neutrality Act and international

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law according to the Hague Convention of 1907. So why did we enter World War One?

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Wilson had campaigned on an isolationist policy regarding the world war as he ran for a second

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term which was well received nationwide. Yet behind closed doors the wealthy businessmen

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who had him elected and then funded his re-election wanted to cash in on that support.

Financial Support

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Wilson ran for his second term on a public program of maintaining segregation isolationism

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regarding not getting involved in the war in Europe and he had the financial support of

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the greatest industrialist of his day, such as oil Baron John Davidson Rockefeller SR.,

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steel magnet Andrew Carnegie, global investment banker John Pierpoint Morgan Sr.,

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automobile manufacturer and anti-Semite Henry Ford, automobile manufacturer Williams C. Durant,

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New York Tammany Hall boss Charles Murphy, mining millionaire Daniel Guggenheim, railroad

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fortune heir Reginald Claypool Vanderbilt and a rubber manufacturer Harvey Samuel Firestone Sr.

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But why were the richest men in the United States if not the world support a president

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who had not publicly support their interests overseas? These wealthy men had invested much

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of their wealth in European business ventures and banks. All of these men had much of their fortunes

War with Germany

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tied up in European Asian and African business deals. In fact Firestone Durant and Ford were

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desperate for their businesses survival due to the Belgian Congo the world's largest supplier

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of rubber was in danger of being taken over by Germany as the war was raging on that continent.

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It was quite clear to them that if Germany won the war most of them would risk going bankrupt.

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Only an American intervention to secure final victory would save their fortunes.

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The wealth of his friends meant more to Wilson than American lives. The answer was simple-

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Wilson lied in his bid for a second term he had every intention of getting involved in the war

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due to the pressure being applied by the men who got him elected twice. Wilson just needed

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a good reason to break his public promise. Again according to Encyclopedia Britannica,

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"Wilson was reluctant to break diplomatic relations with Germany but yielding to

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public clamor and senatorial advice he severed those ties on February 3rd 1917.

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While announcing the break in a speech to Congress he voiced the fervent hope that the

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Germans would not by sinking American ships compel the United States to adopt belligerent measures."

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Wilson knew quite well that American ships were not to enter the declared war zone around the

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British Isles and coastal France. Germany had made it quite clear that all ships would be in danger

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if they did so. In fact Germany specifically stated that American ships should avoid the

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war zone as to not create a diplomatic situation by making that public statement even before the

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Lusitania sailed for Britain. Germany was in total compliance with international and maritime law.

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They had set up the conditions and locations allowing neutral nations to avoid direct contact.

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Wilson then decided to pay his political benefactors back and go to war.

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But soon afterward Wilson had another major issue to deal with. Again citing the Miller Center,

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"...the war was also triggered by a massive movement called The Great Migration of 500

The Great Migration

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000 African Americans out of the rural South to Northern and Midwestern cities. For example the

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black population in Cleveland Ohio soared by more than 300 percent, Detroit's grew by 600 percent,

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Chicago's by 150 percent and it was not only the opportunity for war industry jobs that

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attracted Southern blacks to Northern cities. Many young black males left enraged at the

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brutality of Southern racism especially the lynchings that regularly occurred.

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Political disenfranchisement debt peonage prison chain gangs and the boll weevil-insects

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that destroy cotton plants left Southern blacks with little hope for a decent life after 1916."

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Under Wilson Jim Crow policies were implemented instituting segregated

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toilets cafeterias public transportation schools hospitals and other "whites only" buildings.

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Perhaps the most telling account regarding Wilson's racist attitude came from his own

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lips. Quoting Wilson; "Segregation is not a humiliation but a benefit and

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ought to be so regarded by you gentlemen," he said during a meeting with civil rights leader

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William Monroe Trotter in November 1914. He then threw Trotter out of the White House.

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But Wilson did have a few accomplishments which included child labor laws an eight-hour a day of

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work for railroad workers and government loans to farmers. Additionally Wilson nominated the

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first Jewish person to the U.S Supreme Court Louis Brandeis who was confirmed by the senate in 1916.

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After the war he helped to negotiate a peace treaty that included a plan

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for the League of Nations. Although the U.S. Senate rejected U.S. membership in

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the league Wilson received the Nobel Prize for his peacemaking efforts.

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Wilson to his credit saw the Treaty of Versailles as a very bad decision

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by the victorious European Allies hence his creating his 14 Points.

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He understood that making Germany sign the "war guilt clause" for starting the war

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which was itself a lie as the war started between Austria-Hungary and Russia over the assassination

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of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip,

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the Senate voted on the Treaty of Versailles first in November 1919 and again in March

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1920. Both times it failed to gain the two-thirds vote required for ratification. The United States

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never joined. Wilson also had major problems with labor unions. Again quoting the Miller Center;

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"The war years witnessed dramatic changes in the American workplace as the nation achieved

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nearly full employment. Thousands of workers joined unions bolstered by Wilson's support

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for collective bargaining. At the end of the war in 1919 3,300 strikes involving 4 million workers

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rocked the nation. Racial tensions were growing as many Northern whites resented the 'Negro

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invasion.'"They claimed that poor blacks from the South were taking away their jobs for lower wages

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which still far exceeded what they earned down south. Wilson to his credit denounced lynching but

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he did nothing to protect blacks with enforcing existing federal laws or introducing new ones.

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He oversaw the introduction and enforcement of segregation into the federal civil service

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and the result was a deep decline in the number of federal jobs held by African Americans.

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At the end of his second term in 1920 enough states ratified the 19th Amendment

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to give women the right to vote and thus enabled millions of new women voters to

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cast ballots in the presidential election. The majority voted for Republican Warren Harding.

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Wilson although originally opposed to female suffrage accepted a plank in the 1916 Democratic

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platform endorsing it and became a strong supporter by 1918. He reluctantly supported

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the 18th Amendment which prohibited the manufacture and consumption of alcohol

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but he vetoed on technical grounds the Volstead Act passed by Congress. To enforce it

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Congress later overrode his veto. On the night of September 25th 1919 on a train bound for Wichita,

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Kansas Wilson collapsed from mental and physical stress and the rest of his tour was canceled.

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On October 2nd 1919 he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed.

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Wilson's condition was kept largely hidden from the public and his wife

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worked behind the scenes to fulfill a number of his administrative duties

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after leaving office in March 1921. Woodward Wilson resided in Washington D.C. He and a partner

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established a law firm but poor health prevented the president from ever doing any serious work.

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Wilson died at his home on February 3rd 1924 at age 67. He was buried in the Washington

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National Cathedral, the only president to be interred in the nation's capital.

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and show ideas and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Until next time



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