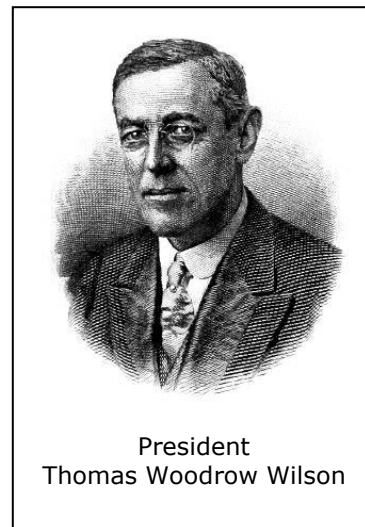


Sixty-Sixth Congress

May 19, 1919 - March 3, 1921

Second Administration of Thomas Woodrow Wilson

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Historical Background

In June 1919, Congress approved the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which would prohibit states from denying or abridging the right to vote on the basis of sex, and duly submitted it to the states for ratification. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified by the requisite three-fourths of states and was thereby enacted in August 1920, theoretically guaranteeing universal suffrage in the United States. In other constitutional developments, the National Prohibition Act—popularly known as the Volstead Act—implemented and provided for the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, banning the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors in the United States, thus inaugurating the era of Prohibition.

In Europe, the armistice of November 11, 1918 signaled the end of hostilities in World War I. Delegations from nearly 30 states and nationalities convened in Paris in January 1919 to settle, among other things, the terms of the Central Powers' surrender. The Paris Peace Conference produced the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended the war and dictated the terms of Germany and her allies' surrender. The Conference also produced the Covenant establishing the League of Nations, an international diplomatic and deliberative body aimed at preventing future disastrous global conflicts like World War I. Though the United States was a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles and President Wilson was an ardent advocate for the establishment of the League of Nations, both treaties required a two-thirds majority in the Senate for ratification, which Wilson was unable to deliver in either case.

Seeking to revive the self-sufficiency of the U.S. railroad and shipping industries, both of which had operated under Federal supervision during

House	Senate
Majority Party: Republican (240 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (50 seats)
Minority Party: Democrat (192 seats)	Minority Party: Democrat (46 seats)
Other Parties: Prohibition (1 seat), Farm-Labor (1 seat)	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: Frederick H. Gillett	Majority Leader: Henry Cabot Lodge

World War I, Congress passed the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act of February 1920, and the Jones Merchant Marine Act of June 1920.

Also in 1920, Congress created a Federal Power Commission to regulate water power reserves on public lands and navigable streams, and provide that oil and gas deposits would henceforth be leased, with royalties being paid to the Federal government.

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

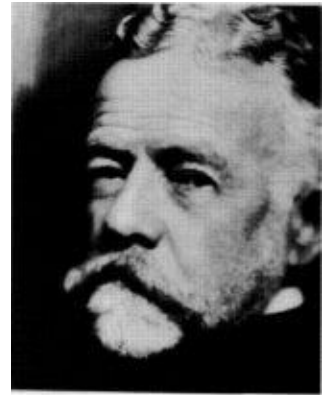
War or Peace?

End of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles

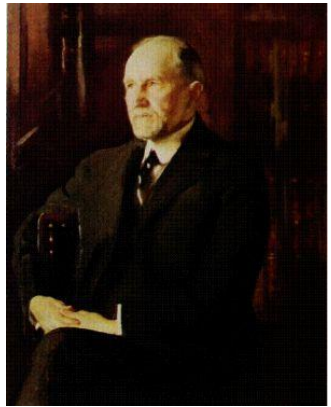
The final years of the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson witnessed the inauspicious failure of perhaps his greatest policy priority: ratifying the Treaty of Versailles, formalizing the end of World War I and establishing the terms of Germany's surrender, and midwifing the United States' entry to the League of Nations. Though hostilities ended with the armistice of November 11, 1918, the formal terms of the cessation of the conflict were still to be hammered out at the Paris Peace Conference, which was convened on January 18, 1919.

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied powers, was signed on June 28, 1919. Among numerous other provisions, the Treaty of Versailles assigned responsibility for all the destruction that resulted from the war to Germany and her allies and established a crushing regime of reparations payments that crippled Germany's economy for decades after the war. President Wilson delivered the treaty to the Senate and argued passionately for its ratification, but opposition in the chamber, led by Majority Leader Henry Cabot Lodge, resulted in a failure to secure the two-thirds majority required for ratification. Moreover, the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations included the formation of a military force with the legal power to compel member states to participate in military action. Opponents in the Senate argued that this was incompatible with the United States Constitution, which grants sole power to declare war to the Congress and thus, advocates of U.S. accession to the international body failed to garner the requisite two-thirds majority. As such, the nascent League of Nations failed to be effective as an international diplomatic body.

Meanwhile, Britain and France continued their scheme to divvy up control of the former Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire first envisioned in the secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Due to the anti-imperialist mood that dominated the postwar environment, the European powers styled their domination of Arab territories as "mandates." Colonial possessions in all but name, the French mandate included the territories of today's Syria and Lebanon, whereas the British mandate included Palestine, including today's



Majority Leader Henry Cabot Lodge



Speaker of the House Frederick H. Gillett

Israel, Palestinian Territories, and Jordan, and Iraq.

Source:

Knox, Philander Chase. [*Proposed Reservations to Treaty of Peace with Germany*](#). Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, Oct. 21, 1919. 66th Congress, 1st Session, S.doc.139. ProQuest Congressional, 7608 S.doc.139

Economic Trends and Conditions

In President Wilson's December 1919 State of the Union Address, he called for increased fiscal responsibility, including increasing government spending oversight. He mentioned expanded audits on appropriations spending, saying, "No one is authorized or equipped to ascertain whether the money has been spent wisely, economically and effectively." He also stressed the simplification of income taxes for people and that war revenue was essential to support continued combat efforts abroad. He noted that even before the war the U.S. was a heavy debtor nation to Europe, but since World War I Europe's economy had been crippled. As a result, the U.S. faced heavier burdens causing increased domestic trade, greater purchases of American securities previously held abroad, and more loans issuances to foreign governments.

Towards the end of the second session of the 66th Congress, President Wilson again addressed the nation highlighting several economic aspects that had differed from the year before. He noted that there was a decreased net in ordinary expenditures from 418.5 billion to 6.4 billion, and a decrease in gross public debt from \$26.6 billion to \$24.2 billion. He also reiterated that as a result of the debt the government took on from the war and its maturation in the coming years, government must spend very efficiently. He called for decreasing overall government expenditures and asked Congress to stop taking funds from the Treasury through indefinite or revolving fund appropriations.

An Emboldened Labor Movement

Following the end of the war and the nascent triumph of Lenin's Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution, the labor movement in the United States entered a period of intense growth and increasing radicalism. In Washington State, a pair of incidents contributed to a growing sense of militancy in the labor movement in the United States and an increasingly determined reaction against it. In Seattle, frustration with two years of war-related wage controls came to a head and workers from several unions, including the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) staged a walkout in February 1919, in demand of higher wages. As many as 65,000 workers joined the work stoppage, which was non-violent and orderly. Despite this, there was a strong reaction against the stoppage and the Mayor ordered increases in police, ostensibly to maintain order, but also with the implicit threat of replacing striking workers. Union organizers, perhaps seeing that continuing the strike might do more harm to their cause, ordered an end to a stoppage after less than a week.

In November of that year, a long-simmering enmity between local members of the IWW and the American Legion in Centralia, Washington spilled over into violence during celebrations of the first anniversary of Armistice Day. Accounts of how the event started are disputed, but as American Legion members participating in the parade passed by the IWW union hall, shots rang out and four Legion members and a Sheriff's deputy were killed. Several members of the IWW were arrested and a mob formed that evening, which took IWW member Wesley Everest from the prison and lynched him. These events, and the heated rhetoric around the Russian Revolution and suspicions that labor unions were secretly plotting a similar action in the U.S. contributed to an environment of suspicion and agitation known as the First Red Scare.

Sources:

Wilson, Woodrow. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Sixty-Sixth Congress.*](#) House, Dec. 2, 1919. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.399 (Pr28.1.919). ProQuest Congressional, 7768 H.doc.399

Wilson, Woodrow. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Third Session of the Sixty-Sixth Congress.*](#) House, Dec. 7, 1920. 66th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.903 (Pr28.1.920). ProQuest Congressional, 7913 H.doc.903

Constitutional Amendments

Nineteenth Amendment. Amended the Constitution by extending the right of suffrage to women. Approved June 5, 1919. Ratified by the requisite number of States Aug. 26, 1920. ([41 Stat. 362](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980.*](#) Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

Schenck v. United States, concluded that defendants who distributed leaflets to draft-age men, urging resistance to induction, could be convicted of an attempt to obstruct the draft, a criminal offense. The First Amendment did not alter the law in cases where the attempt was made through expressions that would be protected in other circumstances. Justice Oliver Wendall Holmes said that expressions, which in the circumstances were intended to result in a crime, and posed a "clear and present danger" of succeeding, could be punished, 249 U.S. 47 (1919)

Debs v. United States, concluded that a speech that Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs gave that denounced American participation in World War I, obstructed the draft as defined under the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917, and not protected under the First Amendment. Justice Holmes said that the

Debs case was essentially the same as the Schenck v. United States so a similar decision was made, 249 U.S. 211 (1919)

United States v. Wheeler, concluded that the Constitution alone did not grant the federal government the power to prosecute kidnappers, and only the states could punish a private citizen's unlawful violation of another's freedom of movement, 254 U.S. 281 (1920)

Source:

Killian, Johnny H. and George A. Costello. [*Constitution of the United States of America, Analysis and Interpretation*](#). Senate, Jan. 1, 1996. 103rd Congress, 1st Session, S.Doc. 103-6 (Y1.1/3:103-6). ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

1919 Events

- **Jan. 6:** [Former President Theodore Roosevelt dies in his sleep at age 60](#)
- **Jan. 28:** [Delegates from some 30 nations convened the Paris Peace Conference to deliberate, among other matters, the terms of Germany and her allies' surrender in World War I, as well as the formation of the League of Nations as a diplomatic body aimed at preventing future global conflicts](#)
- **Feb. 6-11:** [Seattle General Strike occurs in Washington State, affecting over 65,000 workers and ends when federal troops are called in by the state's Attorney General](#)
- **Mar. 3:** [Supreme Court upholds the conviction of Charles Schenck in *Schenck v. United States*](#)
- **Apr. 13:** [Eugene V. Debs enters a Federal prison in for speaking out against the draft during World War I](#)
- **May 3:** The first American passenger flight goes from New York City to Atlantic City, New Jersey
- **June 4:** [Congress passes the 19th Amendment of the Constitution, which granting women the right to vote, and sends it to the states for ratification](#)
- **June 28:** [World War I - Delegates at the Paris Peace Conference signed the Treaty of Versailles, officially ending World War I and dictating the draconian terms of Germany's surrender. Though the United States was a signatory to the treaty, President Woodrow Wilson was unable to secure the requisite two-thirds majority of Senators for ratification](#)
- **July 7:** [A convoy of U.S. Army members is sent out to assess the possibility of crossing North America by road, starting in Washington, D.C.](#)
- **Aug. 19-26:** Poles in Upper Silesia, Poland rise up against German occupiers in the First Silesian Uprising
- **Sept. 6:** [U.S. Army convoy crosses the continental United States after two months of traveling, ending their journey in San Francisco, California](#)
- **Oct. 1:** [Elaine, Arkansas riot occurs](#)

- **Oct. 28:** [Congress passed the Volstead Act, enforcing Prohibition under the 18th Amendment](#)
- **Nov. 11:** [Centralia Massacre occurs in Centralia, WA, resulting in the deaths of four American Legion members and the lynching of a local leader of the Industrial Workers of the World](#)
- **Dec. 21:** [The U.S. deports 249 non-citizens accused of having anarchist, syndicalist, and communist ties to Russia abroad the USAT Buford](#)

1920 Events

- **Jan. 16:** [Prohibition begins being enforced throughout the U.S.](#)
- **Feb. 14:** [The League of Women Voters is established in Chicago, Illinois](#)
- **Mar. 28:** A series of 37 tornadoes across the U.S., mostly in the Great Lakes region and Deep South, that left over 380 dead and at least 1,215 injured
- **Apr. 4:** Violence erupts in Jerusalem, Israel between Arab and Jewish residents that kills 9 people and injures 216
- **May 2:** [The first Negro League Baseball game is played in Indianapolis, Indian](#)
- **June 13:** The U.S. Post Office declares that children may not be sent by parcel post
- **July 26:** Pancho Villa takes over the city of Sabina, Nuevo León, Mexico and contacts Mexican President Adolfo de la Huerta to negotiate conditions for his surrender
- **Aug. 26:** [The 19th Amendment of the Constitution is ratified, guaranteeing women the right to vote](#)
- **Sept. 16:** A bomb explodes outside of the JP Morgan building on Wall Street in New York City, killing 38 and injuring 400 people
- **Oct. 26:** [Álvaro Obregón is announced the elected president of Mexico](#)
- **Nov. 2:** [Republican Warren G. Harding defeats Democrat James M. Cox and Socialist Eugene V. Debs, in the first national U.S. election in which women have the right to vote](#)
- **Dec. 23:** United Kingdom and France ratify the border between French held Syria and British-held Palestine

Source:

Committee on Education and Labor, Senate. [Violations of Free Speech and Assembly and Interference with Rights of Labor](#). GPO, Apr. 10-11, 14-17, 21, 23, 1936. 74th Congress, 2nd Session, 74 S519-4. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1936-EDS-0004

Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate. [Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations \[...\]](#). GPO, May 24, 1920. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, S.doc.285. ProQuest Congressional, 7666 S.doc.285

Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate. [Treaty of Peace with Germany](#). GPO, July 31-Aug. 2, 4-6, 11-12, 18-22, 25, 28-30, Sept. 2-5, 12, 1919. 66th Congress, 1st Session, S159-0. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1919-FOR-0008

Committee on Rules, House. [Consideration of H. Res. 331, on liquor bill](#). Oct. 9, 1919. 66th Congress, 1st Session, H.rp.368. ProQuest Congressional, 7595 H.rp.368

Committee on the Judiciary, House. [Sedition, Syndicalism, Sabotage, and Anarchy](#). GPO, Dec. 11, 1919. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, H234-Pt.1-10. ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1919-HJH-0015

Committee on the Library, House. [Monument to mark the starting point of the motor convoy from Washington to San Francisco](#). Feb. 5, 1920. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, H.rp.599. ProQuest Congressional, 7652 H.rp.599

Harding, Warren G. [Commutation of sentence for violation of Espionage Act: Eugene V. Debs](#). Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration, Dec. 23, 1921. ProQuest Congressional, 1921-44-385

Harding, Warren G. [Inaugural addresses of President Warren G. Harding and Vice President Calvin Coolidge \[...\]](#). Senate, Mar. 7, 1921. 67th Congress, Special Session, S.doc.1. ProQuest Congressional, 7932 S.doc.1

["Mayor Hanson's Statement."](#) Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 3rd Session (Feb. 18, 1919) Vol. 57, p. 3637. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1919-0218

Nixon, Richard Milhous. [Fiftieth Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of the U.S.](#) Numbered Presidential Proclamations, Apr. 17, 1969. ProQuest Congressional, 1969-PR-3909

Palmer, Alexander Mitchell. [Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for the year 1919](#). Department of Justice, House, Dec. 8, 1919. 66th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.412. ProQuest Congressional, 7700 H.doc.412

[Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference, 1919](#). Department of State, House, Jan. 1, 1942. 77th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.872. ProQuest Congressional, 10699 H.doc.872

["Public Law 66-66: National Prohibition Act \(Volstead Act\)."](#) (41 Stat. 305; Oct. 28, 1919). ProQuest Congressional

Senate. 112th Congress, 2nd Session. ["112 S. Res. 508 Agreed to Senate."](#) (June 26, 2012). ProQuest Congressional

Mann, James Robert. [Amendment to Constitution extending right of suffrage to women, with minority report](#). Committee on Woman Suffrage. House, May 20, 1919, 66th Congress, 1st Session. H.rp.1. ProQuest Congressional, 7592 H.rp.1

Wilson, Woodrow. [Announcing the death of ex-President Theodore Roosevelt](#). Numbered Presidential Proclamations, Jan. 7, 1919. ProQuest Congressional, 1919-PR-1506-B

Major Acts

National Prohibition Act (Volstead Act). Placed responsibility for enforcement of the 18th amendment with the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. Defined intoxicating beverages as those contain more than 1/2 of 1 percent of alcohol, and regulated its manufacturing and sale for industrial, medicinal, and sacramental purposes. Approved Oct. 28, 1919. ([41 Stat. 305, Chap. 85; PL66-66](#))

Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. Provided that deposits of coal, phosphate, oil, oil shale, and sodium could be acquired through a leasing system, rather than by securing a patent with royalty being paid to the United States as

landowner. Approved Feb. 25, 1920. ([41 Stat. 437, Chap. 85; PL66-146](#))

Transportation Act, 1920 (Esch-Cummins Act). Created a Railroad Labor Board for the adjustment of labor disputes. Returned the railroads from Federal to private control, widened the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission as they applied to the railroad industry, and exempted railroads from antitrust laws. Approved Feb. 28, 1920. ([41 Stat. 456; PL66-152](#))

Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (Jones Act). Repealed emergency war legislation relating to U. S. shipping, reorganized the U.S. Shipping Board and extended its life, and authorized the sale of government-built ships to private operators, the proceeds up to \$25 million to be used for loans to private owners for the construction of new craft. Approved June 5, 1920. ([41 Stat. 988; PL66-261](#))

Federal Water Power Act. Created a Federal Power Commission authorized to regulate waterways on public lands and navigable streams, and to license the use of dam sites for generation of electric power. Also empowered the Commission with authority to issue licenses, limited to fifty years, for the construction and operation of facilities for Improving navigation and developing and utilizing power. Approved June 10, 1920. ([41 Stat. 1063, Chap. 285; PL66-280](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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