

Document A: Mary Elizabeth Lease, 1890 (ORIGINAL)

The mightiest movement the world has known in two thousand years. . . is sending out the gladdest message to oppressed humanity that the world has heard since John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness that the world's Redeemer was coming to relieve the world's misery....

I overheard yesterday morning at the hotel breakfast table a conversation between two gentlemen in regard to Ingalls. "I consider his defeat," said the first speaker, "to be a national calamity." "Your reasons," said the second. "Why, he is such a brilliantly smart man," he replied. "True," said the other; "but he must needs be a smart man to be the consummate rascal he has proven himself to be." And I thought as I heard the remarks, "Our opinion is also shared by men." You wonder, perhaps, at the zeal and enthusiasm of the Western women in this reform movement. Let me tell you why they are interested. Turn to your old school-maps and books of a quarter of a century ago, and you will find that what is now the teeming and fruitful West was then known as the Treeless Plain, the Great American Desert. To this sterile and remote region, infested by savage beasts and still more savage men, the women of the New England States, the women of the cultured East, came with husbands, sons and brothers to help them build up a home upon the broad and vernal prairies of the West. We came with the roses of health on our cheek, the light of hope in our eyes, the fires of youth and hope burning in our hearts. We left the old familiar paths, the associations of home and the friends of childhood. We left schools and churches—all that made life dear—and turned our faces toward the setting sun. We endured hardships, dangers and privations; hours of loneliness, fear and sorrow; our little babes were born upon these wide, unsheltered prairies; and there, upon the sweeping prairies beneath the cedar trees our hands have planted to mark the sacred place, our little ones lie buried. We toiled in the cabin and in the field; we planted trees and orchards; we helped our loved ones to make the prairie blossom as the rose. The neat cottage took the place of the sod shanty, the log-cabin and the humble dug-out.

Yet, after all our years of toil and privation, dangers and hardships upon the Western frontier, monopoly is taking our homes from us by an infamous system of mortgage foreclosure, the most infamous that has ever disgraced the statutes of a civilized nation. It, takes from us at the rate of five hundred a month the homes that represent the best years of our life, our toil, our hopes, our happiness. How did it happen? The government, at the bid of Wall Street, repudiated its contracts with the people; the circulating medium was contracted in the interest of Shylock from \$54 per capita to less than \$8 per capita; or, as Senator [Preston] Plumb [of Kansas] tells us, "Our debts were increased, while the means to pay them was decreased;" or as grand Senator [William Morris] Stewart [of Nevada] puts it, "For twenty years the market value of the dollar has gone up and the market value of labor has gone down, till to-day the American

laborer, in bitterness and wrath, asks which is the worst—the black slavery that has gone or the white slavery that has come?”....

No more millionaires, and no more paupers; no more gold kings, silver kings and oil kings, and no more little waifs of humanity starving for a crust of bread. No more gaunt faced, hollow-eyed girls in the factories, and no more little boys reared in poverty and crime for the penitentiaries and the gallows. But we shall have the golden age of which Isaiah sang and the prophets have so long foretold; when the farmers shall be prosperous and happy, dwelling under their own vine and fig tree; when the laborer shall have that for which he toils; when occupancy and use shall be the only title to land, and every one shall obey the divine injunction, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” When men shall be just and generous, little less than gods, and women shall be just and charitable toward each other, little less than angels; when we shall have not a government of the people by capitalists, but a government of the people, by the people.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

Source: Mary Elizabeth Lease became politically involved as a speaker for the rights of workers and farmers. She had a powerful voice and charismatic speaking style. In this speech, Lease gave a speech to the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1890, a women's movement against alcohol.

Document B: William Jennings Bryan, 1896 (ORIGINAL)

The merchant at the crossroads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, begins in the spring and toils all summer, and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain....

We come to speak for this broader class of businessmen....

It is for these that we speak. We do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest. We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned. We have entreated, and our entreaties have been disregarded. We have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came.

We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them!....

You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard. I tell you that the great cities rest upon these broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country....

Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

Source: The speech above was delivered by William Jennings Bryan at the Democratic National Convention in July 1896. It is considered one of the most famous speeches in American history. The passage is an excerpt.

Document A: Mary Elizabeth Lease, 1890

1. **Sourcing:** Who wrote this? When?
2. **Contextualization:** What was going on for farmers at the time? Lease is a woman who is speaking to a group of women. What does this say about women's involvement in politics in the 1890s?
3. **Close reading:** Explain: Now I'm going to read carefully and ask 'how is this document supposed to make me feel?'
4. **First paragraph:** How is this supposed to make the audience feel? Why might she use religious references?
5. **Second and third paragraphs together:** How was this supposed to make the audience feel? Who are the good guys? Who are the bad guys? What emotions does she appeal to?
6. **Final paragraph:** How was this supposed to make the audience feel?

Document B: William Jennings Bryan, 1896

1. **Sourcing:** Where is Bryan speaking? What is his purpose?
2. **Context:** Based on the speech, how do you think farmers and workers were feeling about business and industry? Find a quote to support your answer.
3. **Close reading:** What is the main point of his speech?
4. **Close reading:** What makes the speech so powerful? Pick the line that you think is most powerful and explain your choice.
5. **Corroboration:** What are two similarities between this speech and the speech by Mary Elizabeth Lease?

Now go back to my website and answer the wrap up Google Form.