

***The Wizard of Oz* as a Populist Allegory**

What can *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum teach us about the Populists?



Who/what do you think each character represents?

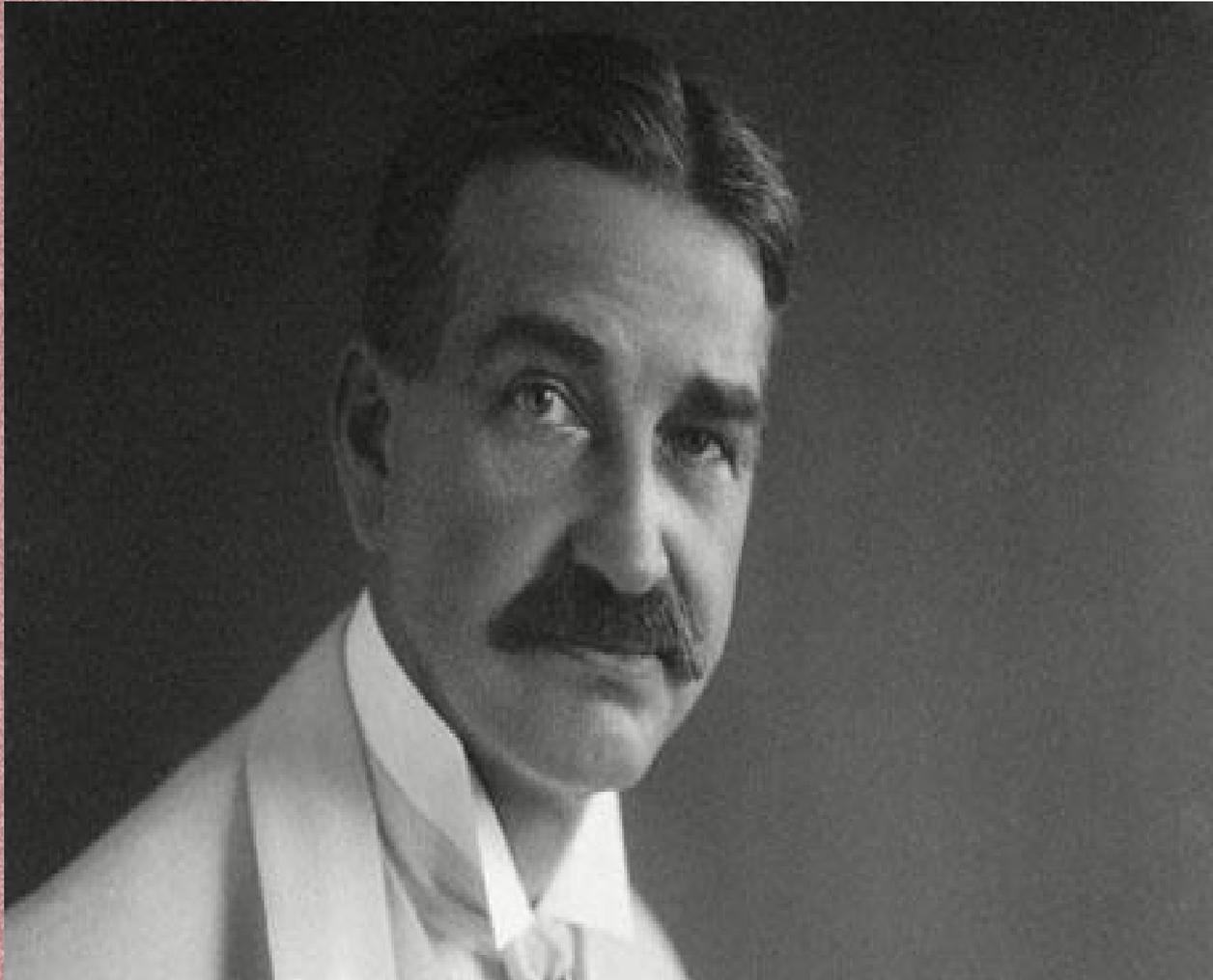




Who/what would she represent?
Hint: How was she killed?

See if you can discover other connections. (Maybe even a Western Stark County connection?)

***The Oz Series* would finally put Baum's family on stable financial ground.**



L Frank Baum failed as an actor, failed as a salesman, failed as a chicken breeder; good thing, then, that he wrote *'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz'*...

According to (former history teacher) Henry Littlefield, the events from Baum's book all relate to events from the 1890's.

For instance...Why Oz as a choice of words?

Link to the latest Interpretation of Oz as an allegory.

Did you know...

Baum himself never acknowledged any allegorical ties between his book and the events of the 1890's. The preface claims that the book was "written solely to pleasure children of today."

But you can decide for yourself...

<http://www.usagold.com/gildedopinion/oz.html>

Tough Times for Farmers

- What were some problems farmers faced during this period?
 - Economics-Deflation, inability to set or influence crop prices, overproduction
 - Social-loss of status (Cities are where the action is!)
 - Political-no longer enough farmers to influence national elections. Would need the help of factory workers.
 - Environmental-drought (Starting in the late 1880's)

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How did farmers address these problems?

- **Granges** organized shortly after the Civil War
 - Had successes at local and state levels in regulating RR's, but not the national level
 - (*Wabash* case in 1886 overturns Granger Laws-ICA established in '87)
- **Farm Alliances**-develop separately in late 1870's would provide some help in establishing co operatives, little to no national influence, so they would converge into
- **Populists**-Elected 6 governors, 3 seats in US Senate, close to 50 in the House, and gained majorities in 12 state legislatures in 1890. Would attempt to run a candidate in 1892 Presidential Elections, but only won 8.5% of popular vote.

Populist Platforms

(From the Omaha Platforms in 1892)

- Government Sub Treasuries-Plan where farmers could store their crops locally and borrow against their value (Wouldn't have to sell crops at harvest time.)
- Abolition of all National Banks
- Direct Election of Senators
- Government Regulation (then Ownership) of all Railroads, Telegraph, and Telephone Companies.
- Government Operated Savings Banks
- Graduated Income Tax
- Inflation of Currency
- 8 Hour Workday
- Ban on all Immigration

Almost all of these would eventually be established.

Election of 1896

William McKinley stayed out of the public eye in 1896, leaving the campaigning to party hacks and fancy posters like this one.



If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. 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.



1896 Presidential Election: Bryan loses but carries most of the South and West

