

Geography Application

Election of 1912

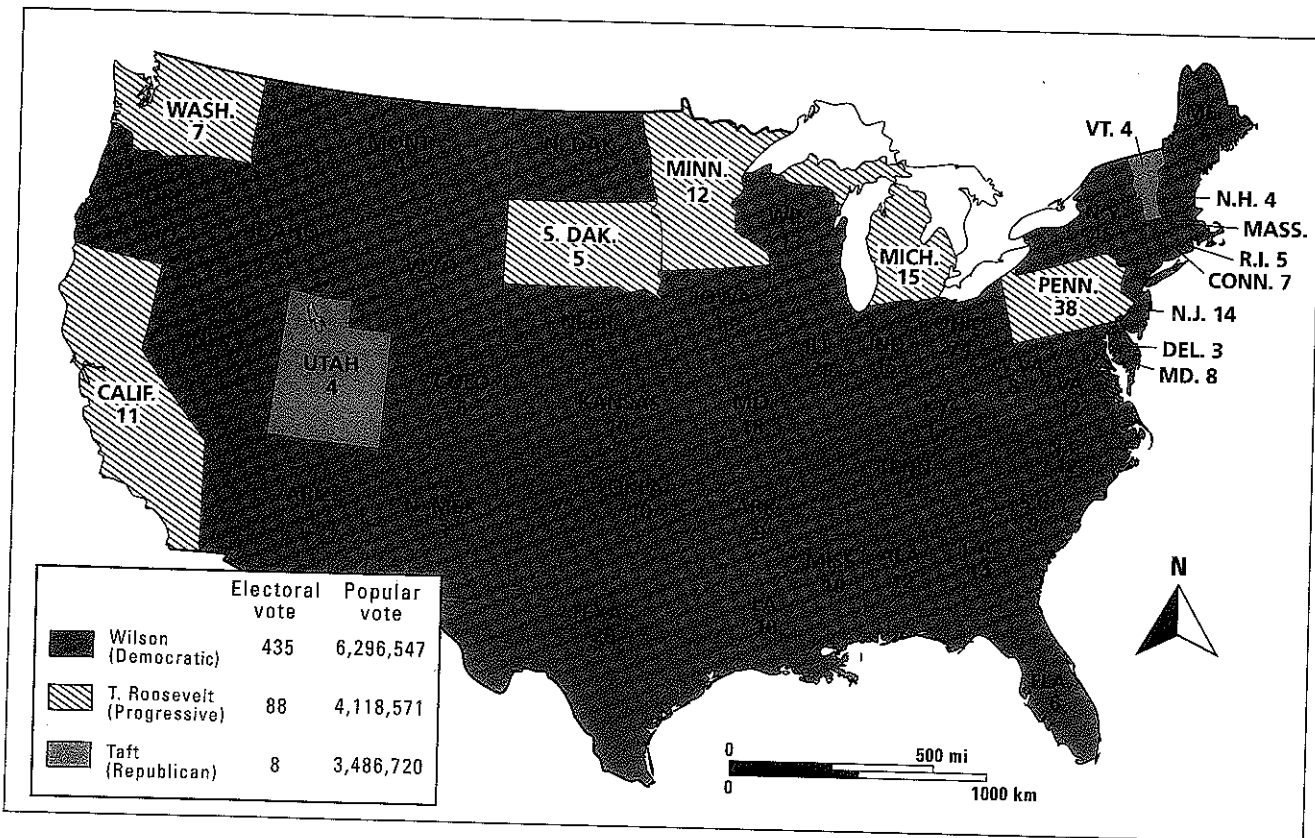
The election of 1912 is notable for Theodore Roosevelt's failed comeback attempt. There had been no political figure larger than Roosevelt in the first decade of the 1900s. But in the second decade, he found it impossible to recapture his popularity.

Roosevelt was the vice-president in 1901 when President McKinley was assassinated. He completed McKinley's term. Then, in 1904, Roosevelt won the presidency in his own right. The "square-deal" Republican president busted trusts and crusaded for conservation until 1908. Though he remained popular, Roosevelt did not run for a second elective term that year. However, to preserve his progressive policies, he hand-picked William Howard Taft as his Republican successor. Taft won the 1908 election.

By 1912, a split in the Republican Party developed. Taft was becoming pro-business. This angered

Roosevelt, and he wanted back into Republican politics. But Taft supporters controlled the party's nominating convention in June of 1912. Roosevelt delegates were kept out of the decision-making. In response, they asked Roosevelt to run for president on his own. Roosevelt agreed to this. Many of his supporters left the Republican Party to follow him.

Roosevelt formed a new party—the Progressive "Bull Moose" Party—to run for president. This action split Republican votes in November. Roosevelt's popular vote total was impressive for a third-party candidate. However, he lost badly in electoral votes. Taft received only 8 electoral votes. Eugene Debs of the Socialist Party received no electoral votes. Woodrow Wilson became president with the largest electoral margin in history up to that point. The map below details the electoral vote by state.



Interpreting Maps and Text

1. Why didn't former Republican president Theodore Roosevelt run for president again in 1912 as a Republican?

2. Among candidates receiving electoral votes, where did Roosevelt finish in the 1912 election?

3. Describe the areas of the United States that voted solidly for Wilson.

4. Nearly half of Roosevelt's electoral votes came from what state?

5. Which two states gave Taft their electoral votes?

6. Wilson's popular vote total was about how many times greater than that of Roosevelt's?

7. Wilson's electoral vote total was about how many times greater than that of Roosevelt's?

8. State whether you agree or disagree with the following claim and explain why: Taft was probably denied the presidency in 1912 because Roosevelt ran as a third-party candidate.