

Arthur S. Link



Woodrow Wilson
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THOMAS WOODROW WILSON, twenty-eighth president of the United States, is the only chief executive who has given scholarly attention to the presidency before undertaking the duties of that office. Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia, on 28 December 1856, the son of Janet Woodrow Wilson and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, a founder of the southern Presbyterian Church. He was graduated from Princeton University (1879), studied law at the University of Virginia (1879–1880), practiced law in Atlanta (1882–1883), and thereafter did graduate work in political science, history, and economics at The Johns Hopkins University, where he received the Ph.D. in 1886.

From his youth onward, Wilson was intensely interested in the problems of modern democracy from a practical, not a theoretical, point of view. Presidential power was at a low ebb in the mid-1880s, and Wilson, in his first book, *Congressional Government* (1885), virtually ignored the presidency and focused on the obstacles that then existed to searching debate and discussion of great national issues. He singled out for particular criticism the committees of the House of Representatives, which, he said, effectively stifled free discussion. The surest way to guarantee that such debate would take place, Wilson said, would be to adopt the British cabinet system and make cabinet members ministers of state responsible to Congress.

Throughout his years as a professor of history, politics, and constitutional law at Bryn Mawr College (1885–1888), Wesleyan University (1888–1890), and Princeton University (1890–1910; president, 1902–1910), Wilson paid close attention to developments in American politics. He admired what he perceived as Cleveland's assertion of the moral leadership of the presidency and noted the impact on that office of the war with Spain and the entry of the United States on the world stage as a colonial and naval power.

It was Theodore Roosevelt's revivification of the presidential office that helped Wilson to come to his mature and definitive understanding of the potential powers of the chief executive. Those powers are described in Wilson's *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1908) in what is perhaps the classic view of the modern presidency. The president, Wilson wrote, is the one single spokesman of the nation:

Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him. His position takes the imagination of the country. He is the representative of no constituency, but of the whole people. When he speaks in his true character, he speaks for no special interest. If he rightly interpret the national thought and boldly insist upon it, he is irresistible; and the country never feels the zest of action so much as when he is of such insight and calibre.

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Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856 - 1924), a Democrat, was elected as the 28th President of the United States of America, and reelected in 1916, serving from 1913 to 1921. A Princeton president who became an intellectual leader of the Progressive Movement, Wilson demonstrated his mastery over Congress by creating the Federal Reserve System, lowering the tariff, and revising the antitrust laws in a way that ended most of the "trust-busting" and drew clear lines on what was allowed. In general these policies

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born of Scotch-Irish ancestry in Staunton, Virginia in 1856, as the third of four children to Rev. Dr. Joseph Ruggles Wilson and Janet Mary Woodrow. Wilson's grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from Strabane, County Tyrone, in modern-day Northern Ireland. Wilson spent the majority of his childhood, to age 14, in Augusta, Georgia, where his father was minister of the First Presbyterian Church. Woodrow Wilson, 28th president of the United States (1913â€“21), a scholar and statesman best remembered for his legislative accomplishments and his idealism. Wilson led the U.S. into World War I and became the creator of the League of Nations, for which he was awarded the 1919 Nobel Prize for Peace.Â Alternative Title: Thomas Woodrow Wilson. Wilson, WoodrowAn overview of Woodrow Wilson. EncyclopÃ|dia Britannica, Inc.