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New Mexico's Early Elections: Statehood to New Deal, 1912-1932

ILA D. HODGSON AND ELLOYSE M. GARTHWAITE

New Mexico's first twenty years of statehood reflect the state's changing political milieu from domination by the Republican Old Guard of territorial days to the Democratic sweep of the New Deal. Early state elections were particularly bitter due to the dissension within the Republican party caused by such factors as the progressive element, the realignment of party loyalties, and the scramble for new sources of patronage.

Much of the Hispanic population, largely congregated in the central and northern counties, still lived under the domination of *patrones*. These "wealthy and influential Spanish families cooperated with a handful of Anglos to control the elections and handle government affairs." Many of them, members of the Republican Old Guard, told their people how to vote.¹ This situation created a large Hispanic block that could be relied upon to vote Republican until the economic crisis of the 1930s destroyed longtime loyalties.²

When New Mexico became a territory in 1850, the population was chiefly Hispanic, a condition that lasted until that majority dropped below 50 percent in the census of 1940. Hispanics were always a viable political force, a circumstance that distinguished New Mexico from other states. Originally a small group of colonists, these Spanish-Americans were joined over the years by a number of Mexican immigrants seeking economic advancement in the United States.

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In this study we examine eight counties—selected for economic, ethnic, and geographic diversity—along with their voting records for important officials during the first two decades of statehood. Between 1900 and 1910 New Mexico's population increased 67.6 percent while the nation's population increased only 21 percent (see Tables 1 and 2).³ During this same period of time, the number of counties increased from twenty-six to thirty-one, but the selected eight came from the original twenty-six. With few exceptions, each county maintained its original political orientation until the Great Depression exerted its force on both the economy and politics.

Bernalillo county, founded in 1852, contained the state's major urban area, Albuquerque. The county had a split population during this period of about 46 percent Anglo and 54 percent Hispanic. Chaves, founded in 1889, was 99 percent Anglo, populated chiefly with immigrants from neighboring Texas who sought a fertile area for ranching and farming. Colfax, dating from 1869, was also a major cattle ranching area. Its population was about 63 percent Anglo at the time of statehood. Eddy was 99 percent Anglo when it was created from Lincoln County, along with Chaves, in 1889. The southeastern section of the state was known as "little Texas."

Grant, in the heart of the mining country, was established in 1868 and its population was 80 percent Anglo at that time. Organized in 1852, Rio Arriba was always an important center of Hispanic interest. A farming and sheep-raising area, it was one of the poorest counties in the nation, almost totally rural, and 95 percent Hispanic. San Miguel was also a sheep-raising county, 85 percent Hispanic in 1852. Santa Fe has always been the seat of political power. Although politicians of both ethnic groups flocked to the area, the county was 78 percent Hispanic at the time of statehood.

Election tables show a fairly consistent voting pattern between 1912 and 1932. Voters in Bernalillo and Colfax usually divided their support between the two major parties; Chaves and Eddy voters were solidly Democratic; Grant voters tended to favor the Democratic party; and Rio Arriba, San Miguel, and Santa Fe voted a solid Republican majority. The state constitution put few restrictions on the right of adult males to vote except native Americans. Writing in 1940, Thomas Donnelly noted that New Mexicans took ample advantage of this right. He concluded: "It is doubtful if any state can boast of greater participation by voters in elections than can New Mexico."⁴ This interest is particularly evident in Rio Arriba, San Miguel, and Santa Fe counties where there was high voter turnout (see Table 5).⁵

A special election in 1911 provided officials for the new state, so that in 1912 the state representative to Congress and the presidential electors were the only candidates on the ballot. In both 1911 and 1912,

disgruntled Republicans aided the cause of the Democrats. These Republicans considered themselves "progressives" and sought to wrest supreme power from the Old Guard and to distribute patronage over a wider field. On 4 October 1911, the Republican Progressive League was organized in Santa Fe. Herbert J. Hagerman, a former territorial governor, and Richard H. Hanna, a Santa Fe lawyer, led this dissident group. League members joined with the Democrats in 1911 and formed a fusion ticket. William C. McDonald, the League's candidate for governor, defeated the Republican Holm Bursum for the first term. Prior to the special election, the *Albuquerque Journal* had warned the Republican party that running men of the Old Guard who had been ruling "with a high hand for some thirty years" would "be signing its own death warrant."⁶ Little heed was paid to this warning, and the Democrats benefited (see Table 3).

In 1912, "the New Mexican Progressives abjured, for the time being, all taint of Republicanism and became part of Roosevelt's Progressive party."⁷ Theodore Roosevelt had many local adherents, for a number of New Mexicans had been among the Rough Riders who followed him during the Spanish-American War. In opposing the Old Guard, dissidents wanted more "liberalism" in state politics. One specific complaint concerned the difficulty of amending the conservative state constitution, but this grievance was removed when the "blue ballot" passed in 1912.⁸

Historian Charles B. Judah wrote of the progressive faction: "Thus a new and disturbing element thrust itself into New Mexican politics. For twenty years it was to prove the decisive factor in the struggle for political power."⁹ Squabbles within both major parties added to the interest in these early statehood elections.

In 1912 Roosevelt's, candidacy hurt both the Democratic and Republican nominees for president with neither winning a majority of the state vote. This was also true in three of the eight selected counties.¹⁰ Chaves and Eddy gave a majority to Wilson, Rio Arriba and San Miguel to Taft, but the winning party's percentage was lower than it normally would have been. Grant gave a majority to Wilson, but both parties suffered losses to the third party.

In the final count, Harvey Fergusson repeated his 1911 success in his bid for the seat in Congress. The total state vote was Fergusson 22,139; Republican Nathan Jaffa 17,900; Progressive Marcos C. de Baca 5,883; and Socialist Andrew Eggum 2,644.¹¹ Fergusson had definitely profited from the Republican split. For the same reason Woodrow Wilson received the state's first three electoral votes by winning a plurality.

On 11 March 1912, the Republican legislature had convened to choose the state's first United States senators. It was a foregone conclusion that both chosen senators would be leading Republicans of territorial politics, as indeed, they were. Albert Bacon Fall and Thomas Benton Catron won office over a number of other prominent contenders. They were to be the only senators chosen before the seventeenth constitutional amendment provided for popular election.

With only the office of representative to be filled in 1914, the voter turnout was lower than it had been in 1912. Republican Benigno C. Hernandez, of Tierra Amarilla and the Old Guard, defeated incumbent Harvey Fergusson, while the Progressive and Socialist candidates received comparatively few votes that year.¹² In the eight selected counties, the Republican party received a higher percentage of the vote in 1914 than in 1912. The voting count suggests that voters tended to support their favorite party when there was no particular issue to distract them. Shortly before the election, Woodrow Wilson had written a letter supporting the candidacy of Fergusson, but lack of third-party votes enabled Hernandez to win.¹³ He was the first Hispanic to be elected to a regular seat in Congress.¹⁴

By 1916 the Democrats had stolen the thunder of the dwindling Progressive party in national politics. The Democratic platform included much of what the Progressive party had strived to attain earlier such as workmen's compensation for federal employees, a federal child-labor law, and federal assistance for state highways. Arthur Link asserted: "Regardless of the motivation behind Wilson's commitment to advanced doctrines, the fact was the Democratic Congressional majority had, by the fall of 1916, enacted almost every important plank in the Progressive platform of 1912."¹⁵

The Republicans never achieved a united front but remained split over local issues, and the Old Guard was divided during the nominating convention. In another bitter fight, two powerful politicians, Secundino Romero of San Miguel and Holm Bursum, struggled for the gubernatorial position on the Republican ticket. Bursum finally won, but many delegates left the convention early and went home disgruntled with the Republican slate.¹⁶ After all this infighting, Republicans saw their leading candidates lose in November. Lieutenant-Governor Ezequiel C. de Baca defeated Bursum for the office of governor, and William B. Walton, a Silver City lawyer, defeated Hernandez for the seat in Congress.¹⁷ Chaves county residents gave their support to Andrew Eggum of Roswell, who ran for Congress on the Socialist ticket, but hardly enough support to affect the high majorities that the Democratic candidates regularly enjoyed in Chaves. Once again, in spite of much bickering among themselves, the Democrats had managed to capture the chief offices.

Another influence in 1916, Bronson Cutting, owner of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, had made his newspaper the voice of progressivism in the young state. For most of the next two decades his newspaper supported whichever party and candidates appeared most amenable to his ideas. According to historian Judah, Bronson "could not win an election by himself, but it was equally true that it was impossible to win without him."¹⁸ Cutting staunchly believed that the Old Guard stood for fraud and dishonesty. He supported Charles Evans Hughes for president while opposing both Bursum and Hubbell. Cutting stated his basic philosophy "that it was possible and desirable to support men of any party to maintain a consistent demand for honest government."¹⁹ His biographer wrote that in 1916 the "problem for the Progressives was how to support effectively both the Republican national ticket and the Democratic state ticket."²⁰

The political maneuvers of the times saw a complete reversal in 1918. The Republican party managed to pull itself together and succeed. Due to the effects of World War I and the rampaging flu epidemic that followed, voter turnout was extremely low.²¹ Even counties with a generally high turnout, like San Miguel and Rio Arriba, could not muster much enthusiasm. In this election, Albert B. Fall retained his seat in the Senate by defeating Democrat William B. Walton. Benigno C. Hernandez regained his congressional seat, winning over Democrat G. A. Richardson. Octaviano A. Larrazolo, a Democrat-turned-Republican, defeated Felix Garcia in the gubernatorial contest.²²

The death of Teddy Roosevelt in January 1919 and the onset of President Wilson's disability the following September marked the end of a political era. Throughout the country, isolationism and conservatism marked much of the next decade. Donald R. McCoy wrote that the "reforming aspects of progressivism, which had been flagging by 1916, had been sidetracked during America's involvement in the First World War and were not revived as a great issue in the immediate postwar period."²³ New Mexico still divided its allegiance between both parties, but in the 1920 election the reunited Republicans won the major offices.

The 1920 general election was the first time New Mexican women voted, which caused a good deal of speculation about how the "ladies" would vote. Adelina Otero-Warren, who would soon become the first woman to run for national office in New Mexico, said she expected Hispanic women to vote Republican.²⁴ The *Silver City Enterprise* hoped that women would not clearly align themselves to either party but would consider the ability of the candidates.²⁵ Nevertheless, Republicans retained their control of the legislature and won fourteen of the seventeen state offices.²⁶ The *Enterprise* grumbled: "The enthusiasm of the Democratic politicians for woman suffrage was an awful example of misplaced confidence."²⁷ In every selected county except Bernalillo, the Republi-

can percentage for president increased over the 1916 vote. This was also true of the state totals (see Table 4). People who lived near the polls in Santa Fe sat on their porches and watched the "spectacle" of women flocking to the ballot boxes.²⁸

Historian Joan M. Jensen, researching the history of women in New Mexico, wrote of the early years of women suffrage: "Only a few women were able to gain political success in the context of this time. They carved out a new place in politics for women in the first half of the twentieth century, but that place remained a niche rather than a living space." She asserts that, in this regard, New Mexico was no different from the rest of the nation.²⁹ Even though women voted in 1920, New Mexico held a special election in 1921 that allowed women to run for office.

Democrats probably expected national defeat due to the economic recession that was a legacy of the war. In their convention, they finally chose James Cox on the forty-fourth ballot with Franklin Delano Roosevelt as his running mate. New Mexico voted overwhelmingly for Warren G. Harding, but the state's popular vote would be greater for Herbert Hoover in 1928 and still greater for Roosevelt in 1932. Voters also chose Republicans Nestor Montoya over Antonio Lucero for representative to Congress and Merritt C. Mechem over R.H. Hanna for governor.³⁰ Early in Harding's administration, the President selected Senator Fall as his secretary of the Interior, and Governor Mechem appointed Holm Bursum to replace him in the Senate. Republicans were on a roll.

In 1922 the economic situation in New Mexico was desperate, and voters went to the polls in large numbers to vote out the party they had elected two years earlier. Bernalillo, Colfax, and Grant added their majorities to the solid Democratic counties of Chaves and Eddy. Republican majorities dropped in Rio Arriba and Santa Fe. New Mexican voters were becoming disenchanted with the Republican promises of economic relief that remained unfulfilled. The *New Mexican* continued its support of the Republican party's slate with few exceptions. The paper claimed: "The *New Mexican* is a Republican newspaper in principle and has always supported Republicans when we believed they were fit."³¹

The *Albuquerque Herald* asserted that New Mexico needed Republican officials to solve such problems as continuing aid to the hard-pressed livestock industry and further developing the water resources of the Rio Grande, Pecos, and San Juan rivers. The paper claimed that Democrats were avoiding the issues and waging a campaign based on emotional appeal.³² The *Herald* headline three days later told the story: "Republican Strongholds Like Dona Ana, McKinley, Mora and Torraine Turn to Democrats While Republican Majorities Dwindle in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Other Fortresses."³³

The Democratic landslide in 1922 won the top state offices. The governor's race went to James F. Hinkle, a Roswell banker. Because of his earlier years on the range, Hinkle, who defeated Republican Dr. Charles L. Hill, became known as the "cowboy governor." A. A. Jones defeated S. B. Davis, Jr. to retain his seat in the Senate, and Democrat John Morrow defeated Adelina Otero-Warren for representative to Congress.³⁴ Persistent economic woes, with no relief in sight, probably instigated much of the changing political affiliation. Republican domination was coming to an end.

The supposed "boom" years of the 1920s were anything but for the nation's farmers. Summarizing the state's situation, historian Marc Simmons wrote: "A postwar depression, brought on by a combination of drought and a fall in agricultural and livestock prices after wartime expansion, plunged New Mexico into despair."³⁵

Nevertheless, Republicans were undaunted as the election of 1924 approached. In New Mexico the campaigning was vigorous and vicious. Robert Thompson and Charles Judah wrote: "In the New Mexico of the twenties, as in the preceding decade, politics was no game for the weakling or the squeamish. . . . No man who entered public life was safe from its [the press's] attack. If the *Albuquerque Herald* or *Tribune* did not abuse him the *Santa Fe New Mexican* did."³⁶

The Democratic convention in 1924 finally nominated Arthur T. Hannett, a former mayor of Gallup (1918-1922), for governor. Hinkle had chosen not to run again, but the "choice" was not entirely his. Many New Mexicans, including Bronson Cutting, felt that Hinkle had denied Hispanics their fair share of patronage during his term of office.³⁷ Hannett's candidacy did not please all of the Democrats because he had established himself as a lawyer of the laboring class in opposition to corporate interests. His enemies in both major political parties considered him "a wild-eyed radical only a few steps removed from Moscow." Warren A. Beck continued: "The campaign [for governor] of 1924 was bitterly contested, and personal abuse and wild accusations on both sides reached extremes, even by New Mexico's standards."³⁸ Although there was no animosity between Hinkle and Hannett, their supporters were outspoken in condemnation as they maneuvered in the nominating convention.³⁹

The Republicans still had their differences. A major fight occurred in San Miguel county between Secundino Romero and his cousin, Lorenzo Delgado, who subsequently defected to the Democrats. Democratic candidates received a higher percentage of the county's votes than ever before: 46.1 percent for president, 50.2 percent for senator, 49.8 percent for representative, and 48.3 percent for governor.

The first count showed that Hannett defeated Republican Manuel B. Otero by only 199 votes. Ballot boxes were called into court, and several recounts were ordered. The final decision upheld Hannett's victory, but the close contest emphasized the dire need for election reform. Anxious editors, awaiting confirmation of election statistics, complained about the election procedures that slowed returns after hampering voters with confusing information about how to register or where to vote.⁴⁰ The *Las Vegas Daily Optic* added that defects in the election laws invited "chicanery and fraud."⁴¹ Hannett had promised election reform during his campaign. The state's election machinery had many problems, starting from the point of registration and ending with the announcement of final returns. Voters sometimes could not find where or how they were supposed to register. People manning the polls were unsure of eligible voters. "It is all guess work," asserted a *Santa Fe New Mexican* editorial. The unwieldy process made counting inefficient and time-consuming. One commentator added that, when other states had forgotten the election, New Mexico was still plodding along.⁴²

When the election results were finally tallied, District Judge Sam G. Bratton of Clovis defeated Holm Bursum for the Senate. Among the eight counties only Santa Fe and Rio Arriba failed to give him a majority vote. John Morrow retained his seat in Congress by defeating Republican J. Felipe Hubbell, a Bernalillo rancher, businessman, and politician.

In spite of all this Democratic success, the state's electoral votes followed those of the nation's votes for Calvin Coolidge. He received only a plurality rather than a majority in New Mexico due to the number of votes given Robert La Follette, who ran for president as a Progressive Socialist.⁴³ This split is most easily seen in Grant, where La Follette received 13.5 percent of the vote and kept both Democrat and Republican candidates below 50 percent. La Follette's candidacy also held Republicans to a plurality in Bernalillo and Colfax counties. The *Colfax County Stockman* claimed: "The vote for President Coolidge was not a vote for the man so much as a vote for sound principles of government."⁴⁴

In the election of 1924 Cutting threw the power of his *Santa Fe New Mexican* to the Democrats. With this welcome support, Democrats received "the votes of the Spanish-Americans, the progressive Republicans who followed his [Cutting's] political changes, and the veterans."⁴⁵ He had organized American Legion posts throughout the state to enable veterans to consolidate their power. In return, their votes assisted the candidates of Cutting's choice.

Cutting did not remain long in the camp of the Democrats, for he and Governor Hannett soon found themselves at odds. Cutting feared that the proposed Hannett Election Code could be used to disenfran-

chise some of the Hispanic voters. Furthermore, Hannett had continued Hinkle's policy of ignoring qualified Hispanics for office.⁴⁶ The falling-out between Hannett and Cutting gave the Republicans new hope. In 1926 they decided to select a gubernatorial candidate whom Cutting would support and who would also satisfy the diverse interests of Republican and independent voters. Richard C. Dillon proved to be an appropriate choice. He was a successful businessman, who had made many friends among farmers, ranchers, and merchants before he entered the state senate race in 1924.

In a comparatively mild campaign, Dillon defeated Governor Hannett's attempt at a second term. On the other hand, Democrat John Morrow was elected for a third term as representative to Congress, defeating Republican Juan Sedillo.⁴⁷ Charles Judah said of the new governor: "Thus the American success story had once more proved itself—diligence, honesty, friendship had paid off. The boy who had shined shoes in a Springer saloon was governor of the state."⁴⁸

Bronson Cutting rejoined the Republicans in 1926, but his constantly shifting allegiance tended to make politicians of both parties nervous. His support of Dillon was a bonus for Cutting in the long run. On 20 December 1927 Senator Jones died, and Governor Dillon appointed Cutting to serve in Jones's place until the next election.⁴⁹ This led to an unusual situation in the election of 1928 when Cutting ran against Democrat J.S. Vaught of Deming for a full six-year term of office while four months still remained of Jones's term. For the second Senate seat, the Republicans nominated O. A. Larrazolo, and he defeated his Democratic opponent, Juan Vigil. During this short term, Larrazolo took an active part in government and served on the Public Lands Committee.⁵⁰ Cutting defeated Vaught giving the state two Republican U.S. senators. Republicans were back in the saddle again.

The sweeping success of New Mexico's Republican candidates in 1928 probably resulted from two factors. Popular nominees ran for the chief offices, and the presidential candidacy of Al Smith hurt Democrats across the board. Certainly, Republican successes must have exceeded their wildest expectations. In addition to the Senate vote, the state elected Albert G. Simms, an Albuquerque lawyer and politician, over incumbent Congressman John Morrow who had held office for three terms. Governor Dillon retained his position as chief executive, the first governor to succeed himself in office. He defeated his Democratic opponent from Eddy county, "New Mexico's cowpuncher attorney general, Robert C. Dow, who has slept many a night on the range with his saddle for a pillow."⁵¹

When Al Smith became the first Catholic to run for president, the state's newspapers seemed to campaign more against Smith than for Herbert Hoover. Of course, Smith's religion could hardly be held against

him in New Mexico, but his lower-east-side accent and "The Sidewalks of New York" theme song created an unfavorable image in much of the West. Even the *Carlsbad Current-Argus* and the *Roswell Daily Record* could not support a candidate who presumably knew little about western life and problems.⁵² Hoover managed to carry every county in the state. Of the selected counties, only in Grant was the presidential vote even close, 50.7 percent-49.1 percent. Otherwise, Republican percentages were higher than ever before.⁵³

Republican political success was doomed to end much sooner than anyone expected. Warren Beck wrote that ironically, "The first man to be elected to a second term, Governor Dillon in 1928 was to preside at the liquidation of the Republican party in New Mexico."⁵⁴ Although the party kept its control of the state senate for one more term, Republican domination of politics and patronage, which had wavered throughout two decades of statehood, would soon come to an end. In 1930 the *New Mexican* encouraged more voter registration in Santa Fe by reminding its readers that new election laws were in effect. A voter "must appear in person or send a signed certificate, properly witnessed."⁵⁵

The state constitution, while putting few restrictions on the right of adult males to vote, had empowered the legislature to decide how elections were to be conducted. Various laws were subsequently passed concerning individual problems. One example was the introduction of the Australian ballot in 1918 which was to give the voter the right to a secret ballot. All aspects of the election machinery were not clearly defined, however, until the Election Code of 1927. This code stipulated that voter registration must be done by personal oath and certification. Swearing to any false information was made a felony punishable by one year in the penitentiary. For the first time the entire voting process, from registration to submission of the final count, was made explicit.⁵⁶

The election of 1930 would see another reversal of political success. The *New Mexican* quoted from the *Silver City Independent*: "The trend is all in favor of the Democratic and independent voters combining for the winning of the fall election. . . . Depression has come upon us and is likely to remain for many months."⁵⁷ This mild assessment was hardly a prediction of the economic collapse ahead and the comparable collapse of Republican power across the entire country.

That year the Democrats nominated Arthur Seligman, a native Santa Fean, as gubernatorial candidate, and he defeated Clarence M. Botts, his opponent from Albuquerque. In the senatorial contest Democrat Sam Bratton held his office with an even higher percentage of the vote than Republican Cutting had received two years earlier. Bratton carried every county except nine and made substantial gains over Cutting's vote in those nine counties.⁵⁸ He defeated Herbert B. Holt, a former state senator from Las Cruces. In the congressional race Democrat Dennis

Chavez defeated the incumbent Albert G. Simms.⁵⁹ The rush toward the Democratic party had begun in earnest. Only the staunch Republican counties—Rio Arriba, San Miguel, and Santa Fe—clung to their old party loyalty, but even there the majorities dwindled.

The election of 1932 has been subjected to much analysis. As the Republican party liked to take credit for the “boom” of the twenties, so the public turned against it when that period of growth ended. As stated earlier, agricultural workers throughout the country had never participated in the economic success of the 1920s. New Mexico was still predominantly rural in the 1930s, and many changed party loyalty in the hope of some relief. The state’s voters gave Roosevelt 62.9 percent of their presidential votes, but he failed to carry the counties of San Miguel and Valencia.⁶⁰ Divisiveness still afflicted the Republican party, as the Old Guard tried desperately to cling to some vestige of waning power. The more “reform” segments of both parties looked to Bronson Cutting for leadership. Thus, Senator Cutting was in the peculiar position of leading many progressive Republicans into a fusion ticket with the Democrats. He also vigorously supported Roosevelt, an old friend from earlier and happier days.⁶¹ Still asserting his membership in the Republican party, Cutting supported the fusion ticket and helped to ensure Republican defeat in November.

Noting that the depression would be “reflected in the campaign this fall,” the *New Mexican* suggested that both parties should conduct a short campaign. Long and expensive campaigns “might not take too well at this time.”⁶² The seating of delegates at the Republican state convention caused a good deal of hassle as both feuding elements fought to be seated. “Because I refused to accept the principles of the Hannett election code I left the Democratic party,” Cutting told the convention.⁶³ Then because he refused to compromise in any way with the Old Guard, he led the progressives out of the convention. For a brief time they considered fielding their own ticket.⁶⁴

When Cutting, along with his many followers, gave his support to the Democratic candidates, the election results seemed a foregone conclusion. For governor the Democrats nominated Governor Seligman while the Republicans nominated their former vote-getter, Richard Dillon. Seligman was elected for a second term.

Although Rio Arriba’s Republican majorities had dwindled in the election of 1930, the 1932 election was the first time the county ever went Democratic. Accepting the fusion ticket, the county voted overwhelmingly for Democrats in the chief offices, thus joining the state and national trend. This was also the first time the state senate came under control of the Democrats. With twenty Democrats and four Re-

publicans, the majority was greater than the feuding Republicans had ever enjoyed.⁶⁵ Rio Arriba and the state senate was enough to give the Grand Old Party fatal palpitations.

Furthermore, a major shift had taken place in national party philosophy between the Civil War and the election of 1932. As illustrated in the first state elections of 1911 and 1912, elements of the Republican party had begun to champion the rights of the less fortunate just as it had claimed the right of slaves to be free. A conflict with powerful special interests led the party in a different direction. Special interests also controlled much of the Democratic party, but—though often reluctantly—it effectively welcomed the dissident reform groups into its ranks to swell the number of voters.

Under Woodrow Wilson the Democrats had begun to achieve a reputation for helping the powerless rank and file politically with measures like the initiative, referendum, recall, and primaries; furthermore, Wilson added welfare programs and other forms of government subsidy. With the widespread suffering that disrupted life during the 1930s, many voters were willing to give the Democrats a chance.

In summary, probably three elements combined to change the state's political orientation in the early 1930s: political philosophy, the depression economy, and the changing character of the population. Historian F. Chris Garcia mentions the early statehood years as the time of "a strong political party system and a high-to-average level of participation in elections."⁶⁶ This lively interest was often centered around personalities and local issues when the sparse population tended to make the individual feel that his vote really counted (see Table 5). Then the dismal economy undoubtedly lured many into the Democratic fold as they hoped to elect officials who would do something to ease their plight. Always a poor state, New Mexico's per capita income in 1932 was \$209, 52 percent of the national average.⁶⁷ Finally, immigration was changing the character of the state's population. Anglos diminished the Hispanic majority. Southeastern New Mexico, commonly referred to as "little Texas," and urban Albuquerque were growing rapidly, for example, chiefly with Democratic voters.

During territorial times and early statehood, the programs of the Republican party had seemed vital to New Mexico's interests. These included "tariff protection for wool and lead, the promotion of irrigation projects, an attempted solution to the land-grant question, and the maintenance of federal facilities, particularly military ones."⁶⁸ Changing times brought changing priorities.

Much of the political action in New Mexico has always been internecine struggle between liberals and conservatives. Therefore, the struggles for power and patronage continued, even though the Democratic majorities had replaced the Republican.

TABLE 1: POPULATION OF EIGHT NEW MEXICO COUNTIES 1900-1930

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>	<u>1930</u>
BERNALILLO	28630	-17.5	23606	26.5	29855	52.2	45430
CHAVEZ	4773	253	16850	-28.3	12075	61.9	19549
COLFAX	10150	62.2	16460	30.9	21550	-11.1	19157
EDDY	3229	284	12400	-26.5	9116	140.7	21939
GRANT	12883	15	14813	48.1	21939	-13.2	19050
RIO ARRIBA	13777	20.7	16624	17.6	19552	9.4	21381
SAN MIGUEL	22053	4	22930	-0.3	22867	3.4	23636
SANTA FE	14658	56.4	14770	1.8	15030	30.2	19567

**TABLE 2: NEW MEXICO POPULATION
1850-1930**

<u>CENSUS YEAR</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>
1850	61547	
1860	93546	51.9
1870	91874	-1.8*
1880	119565	30.1
1890	160282	34.1
1900	195310	21.9
1910	327301	67.6
1920	360350	10.1
1930	423317	17.5

* In 1860 the Arizona territory was still included in the New Mexico count. By the 1870 census Arizona had been split from New Mexico.

TABLE 3: CANDIDATES				
YEAR	PRESIDENT	SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE	GOVERNOR
1912	W. Wilson (D)*	Albert Fall (R)*	H. Fergusson (D)*	W.C. McDonald (D)*
	Wm H. Taft (R)	Thomas Catron (R)*	Nathan Jaffa (R)	Holm Bursum (R)
	T. Roosevelt (P)		M.C. De Baca (P)	T.C. Rivera (S)
			A. Eggum (S)	
1914			H. Fergusson (D)	
			B.C. Fernandez (R)*	
1916	W. Wilson (D)*	A.A. Jones (D)*	W.B. Walton (D)*	E.C. De Baca (D)*
	Chas. E. Hughes (R)	Frank Hubbell (R)	B.C. Hernandez (R)	Holm Bursum (R)
		W.P. Metcalf (S)	A. Eggum (S)	N.A. Wells (S)
1918		W.B. Walton (D)	G.A. Richardson (D)	Felix Garcia (D)
		Albert Fall (R)*	B.C. Hernandez (R)*	O.A. Larrazola (R)*
1920	James Cox (D)		Antonio Lucero (D)	R.H. Hanna (D)
	Warren Harding (R)*		Nestor Montoya (R)*	M.C. Mecham (R)*
			A.J. McDonald (S/F-L)	W.E. McGrath (S/F-L)
1922		A.A. Jones (D)*	John Morrow (D)*	James Hinkle (D)*
		S.B. Davis, Jr. (R)	A. Otero-Warren	C.L. Hill (R)
1924	John W. Davis (D)	Sam Bratton (D)*	John Morrow (D)*	A.T. Hannett (D)*
	Cal Coolidge (R)*	Holm Bursum (R)	J. Felipe Hubbell (R)	Manuel B. Otero (R)
	Robt. LaFollette (P)	A.C. Vorhees (P)	C.M. Armstrong (P)	G.B. Patterson (P)
1926			John Morrow (D)*	A.T. Hannett (D)
			Juan Sedillo (R)	R.C. Dillon (R)*
1928	Al Smith (D)	J.S. Vaught (D)	John Morrow (D)	R.C. Dow (D)
	Herbert Hoover (R)*	Bronson Cutting (R)*	A.G. Simms (R)*	R.C. Dillon (R)*
		Juan Vigil (D)		
		O.A. Larrazola (R)*		
1930		Sam Bratton (D)*	Dennis Chavez (D)*	Arthur Seligman (D)*
		Herbert Holt (R)	A.G. Simms (R)	Clarence Bots (R)
1932	Franklin Roosevelt (D)*		Dennis Chavez (D)*	Arthur Seligman (D)*
	Herbert Hoover (R)		Jose Armijo (R)	R.C. Dillon (R)
	Norman Thomas (S)			
* Denotes Winner				

TABLE 4: NEW MEXICO TOTALS 1912-1932									
YEAR		PRES.	%	SEN.	%	REP.	%	GOV.	%
1912	DEMOCRAT	20437	41.4			22139	45.6	30610	52.6
	REPUBLICAN	17733	35.9			17900	36.9	27610	47.4
	OTHER	11206	22.7			8527	17.6	0	0
	TOTAL	49376				48566		58220	
1914	DEMOCRAT					19805	42.7		
	REPUBLICAN					23812	51.3		
	OTHER					2805	6		
	TOTAL					46422			
1916	DEMOCRAT	33527	50.2	33981	51	32592	48.9	32732	49.3
	REPUBLICAN	31152	46.6	30609	45.9	32042	48.1	31524	47.5
	OTHER	2108	3.2	2028	3	2050	3.1	2117	3.2
	TOTAL	66787		66618		66684		66373	
1918	DEMOCRAT			22470	47.5	22627	48.1	22433	47.7
	REPUBLICAN			24322	51.4	23862	50.7	23752	50.5
	OTHER			531	1.1	564	1.2	847	1.8
	TOTAL			47323		47053		47032	
1920	DEMOCRAT	46684	44.3			49436	46.9	50755	47.8
	REPUBLICAN	57634	54.7			54672	51.9	54426	51.3
	OTHER	1104	1			1290	1.2	1004	0.9
	TOTAL	105422				105398		106185	
1922	DEMOCRAT			60969	55.2	59254	54	60317	54.6
	REPUBLICAN			48721	44.1	49698	45.3	49363	44.7
	OTHER			818	0.7	871	0.8	851	0.8
	TOTAL			110508		109823		110531	
1924	DEMOCRAT	48542	43	57355	49.9	57802	51.2	56183	48.8
	REPUBLICAN	54745	48.5	54558	47.4	53960	47.8	55984	48.6
	OTHER	9543	8.5	3128	2.7	1126	1	2926	2.5
	TOTAL	112830		115041		112888		115093	
1926	DEMOCRAT					55433	51.4	52523	48.1
	REPUBLICAN					52075	48.3	56294	51.6
	OTHER					287	0.3	274	0.3
	TOTAL					107795		109091	
1928	DEMOCRAT	48211	40.9	49913	42.3	56045	47.8	52550	44.3
	REPUBLICAN	69645	59	68070	57.7	61208	52.2	65967	55.6
	OTHER	161	0.1	4	0	0	0	99	0.1
	TOTAL	118017		117987		117253		118616	
1930	DEMOCRAT			69362	58.6	65228	57.5	62789	53.2
	REPUBLICAN			48699	41.2	47955	42.3	55026	46.6
	OTHER			256	0.2	296	0.3	274	0.2
	TOTAL			118317		113479		118089	
1932	DEMOCRAT	95089	62.9			94764	63.4	83612	54.8
	REPUBLICAN	54217	35.9			52905	35.4	67406	44.2
	OTHER	1911	1.3			1899	1.3	1518	1
	TOTAL	151217				149568		152536	
NEW MEXICO BLUE BOOKS, 1913-1933-34									

TABLE 5: NEW MEXICO ELECTIONS 1912-1932

		<u>1912</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1922</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1932</u>
New Mexico	Population	333911	340521	347130	353740	360350	372944	385537	398130	410724	423317	445017
	Estimated # of Voters	91825	93643	95461	97279	175310	181437	187564	193690	199817	216950	228071
	Actual Votes	49376	46422	66787	47323	105422	110508	112830	107795	118017	118317	151217
	Percent Voting	53.77%	49.57%	69.96%	48.65%	60.13%	60.91%	60.16%	55.65%	59.06%	54.54%	66.30%
Bernalillo	Population	24856	26106	27355	28605	29855	32970	36085	39200	42315	45430	50222
	Percent Voting	55.08%	59.12%	68.98%	48.02%	67.37%	70.45%	81.99%	69.55%	74.31%	61.30%	70.90%
Chaves Co.	Population	16850	16850	16850	12075*	12075	13570	15065	16559	18054	19549	20435
	Percent Voting	55.02%	36.46%	72.12%	45.47%	65.46%	52.33%	52.53%	41.66%	51.10%	45.38%	61.08%
Colfax Co.	Population	17478	18496	19514	20532	21550	21072	20593	20115	19636	19157	19069
	Percent Voting	59.49%	46.22%	72.40%	46.44%	57.80%	67.40%	72.94%	61.89%	72.50%	63.92%	77.26%
Eddy Co.	Population	12400	12400	12400	9116	9116	10461	11806	13152	14497	15842	17536
	Percent Voting	47.68%	31.47%	56.95%	35.94%	58.47%	44.72%	40.53%	38.82%	40.14%	31.19%	49.76%
Grant Co.	Population	16238	17664	19089	20514	21939*	21361	20783	20206	19628	19050	19250
	Percent Voting	47.96%	47.08%	82.47%	52.33%	38.50%	38.65%	43.99%	37.87%	42.43%	45.52%	48.61%
Rio Arriba Co.	Population	17210	17796	18381	18967	19552	19918	20284	20650	21015	21381	22175
	Percent Voting	56.39%	59.34%	69.65%	51.76%	63.55%	60.95%	68%	67.76%	64.41%	59.76%	72.42%
San Miguel Co.	Population	22917	22905	22892	22880	22867	23021	23175	23329	23482	23636	24491
	Percent Voting	70.66%	67.49%	82.88%	61.90%	85.66%	80.51%	68.61%	75.44%	77.35%	70.80%	83.34%
Santa Fe Co.	Population	14822	14874	14926	14978	15030	15938	16845	17753	18660	19567	21819
	Percent Voting	71.10%	68.39%	79.37%	57.71%	65.10%	76.88%	82.94%	78.86%	84.67%	75.75%	84.07%

NOTES

1. Warren A. Beck, *New Mexico: A History of Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 298.
2. Jack E. Holmes, *Politics in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 148.
3. Holmes, *Politics in New Mexico*, 9–10.
4. Thomas C. Donnelly, ed., *Rocky Mountain Politics* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 230.
5. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1913* (1913).
6. *Albuquerque Journal*, 2 September 1911.
7. George Curry, *George Curry, 1861–1947: An Autobiography*, ed. H.B. Hening (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1958), 270; Charles B. Judah, *Governor Richard C. Dillon: A Study in New Mexico Politics* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, Division of Research, Department of Government, 1948), 11; Robert W. Larson, "A Profile of a New Mexico Progressive," *New Mexico Historical Review* 65 (1970), 236–37.
8. The purpose of the "blue ballot" was to make it easier to amend the New Mexican constitution. For the background of dissidence, see Robert Larson, *New Mexico's Quest for Statehood, 1846–1912* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968). For biased but interesting accounts, see the autobiographies of two territorial governors, George Curry, *George Curry* and Miguel Antonio Otero, *My Nine Years as Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, 1897–1906* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940).
9. Judah, *Governor Richard G. Dillon*, 11.
10. Bernalillo county gave its highest vote of 41.5 percent to Roosevelt.
11. *Official Blue Book, 1913*.
12. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1915* (1915). W.P. Metcalf, Socialist, and F.C. Wilson, Progressive, received a small percentage of the votes in the eight counties, the highest being 15 percent in Chaves and 11.2 percent in Eddy.
13. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 27 October 1914.
14. Maurilio E. Vigil, *Hispanics in American Politics: The Search for Political Power* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1987), 47–48.
15. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910–1917* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), 229.
16. *Albuquerque Evening Herald*, 22, 24–25 August 1916.
17. *Official Blue Book, 1917* (1917).
18. Judah, *Governor Richard C. Dillon*, 12.
19. Patricia Cadigan Armstrong, *A Portrait of Bronson Cutting Through His Papers, 1910–1927* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, Division of Research, Department of Government, 1959), 23.
20. Richard Lowitt, *Bronson M. Cutting: Progressive Politician* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 60.
21. For more information see Richard Melzer, "A Dark and Terrible Moment: The Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 57 (1982), 213–32.
22. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1919* (1919).
23. Donald R. McCoy, "The Elections of 1920," in *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789–1968*, Arthur M. Schlesinger and Fred L. Israel, eds., 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 3: 2349.
24. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 18 September 1920.
25. *Silver City Enterprise*, 10 September 1920.
26. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1921–1922* (1922).
27. *Silver City Enterprise*, 19 November 1920.
28. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 3 November 1920.

29. Joan M. Jensen, "Pioneers in Politics," *El Palacio* 92 (1986), 16.
30. *Official Blue Book, 1921-1922*.
31. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 25 October 1922.
32. *Albuquerque Herald*, 5 November 1922.
33. *Albuquerque Herald*, 8 November 1922.
34. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1923-1924* (1924).
35. Marc Simmons, *Albuquerque: A Narrative History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 355.
36. Robert Thompson and Charles Judah, *Arthur T. Hannett: Governor of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, Division of Research, Department of Government, 1950), iii.
37. Holmes, *Politics in New Mexico*, 161-62; Thompson and Judah, *Arthur T. Hannett*, 5-6.
38. Beck, *New Mexico*, 306-07.
49. Arthur Thomas Hannett, *Sagebrush Lawyer* (New York: Pageant Press, 1964), 131-33. This is a biased but interesting autobiography.
40. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 11 November 1924.
41. *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 13 November 1924.
42. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 11 November 1924.
43. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1925-1926* (1926).
44. *Colfax County Stockman*, 15 November 1924.
45. Thompson and Judah, *Arthur T. Hannett*, 5-6; Armstrong, *A Portrait of Bronson Cutting*, 36.
46. Lowitt, *Bronson M. Cutting*, 124.
47. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1927-1928* (1928).
48. Judah, *Governor Richard Dillion*, 18; Thompson and Judah, *Arthur T. Hannett*, 29.
49. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 29 December 1927.
50. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 16 November and 4, 7 December 1928.
51. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 29 June 1928.
52. *Carlsbad Current-Argus*, 16 October 1928; *Las Vegas Daily Optic* quoting the *Daily Record*, 20 September 1928; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 11 September 1928.
53. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1929-1930* (1930).
54. Beck, *New Mexico*, 310.
55. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 18 August 1930.
56. *Laws of the State of New Mexico Passed by the Eighth Regular Session of the Legislature*, (c. 1927), 62-131.
57. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 22 September 1930.
58. Lincoln, Mora, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Taos, Torrance, and Valencia.
59. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1931-1932* (1932).
60. *Official Blue Book of the State of New Mexico, 1933-1934* (1934).
61. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 20-22 October 1932.
62. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 2 August 1932.
63. *Roswell Daily Record*, 24 September 1932.
64. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 23 and 24 September 1932.
65. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 11 October 1932; *Official Blue Book, 1931-1932; Official Blue Book, 1933-1934*.
66. F. Chris Garcia, "To Get Along or To Go Along? Pluralistic Accommodation Versus Progress in New Mexico Politics and Government." in *Contemporary New Mexico, 1940-1990*, Richard W. Etulain, ed., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 50-52.
67. Michael Welsh, "A Land of Extremes: The Economy of Modern New Mexico, 1940-1990," *Contemporary New Mexico*, 67.
68. Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico Populism: A Study of Radical Protest in a Western Territory* (Boulder: Colorado Associated Universities Press, 1974), 3.