

## The Treaty of Versailles in the Senate

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*Greg Ayd is a junior in history and wrote an analysis of a passage from a standard history textbook as an assignment for Historical Sources and Techniques (His 2500) under Professor Christopher Waldrep. A version of this essay won the university-wide Social Science Writing Award for 1996-1997.*

The United States Senate has debated many important topics, but one of the most legendary battles was the fight over the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. Associated with this debate was not only the treaty, but also Woodrow Wilson's dream of a League of Nations. In a discussion about the debate's lasting fame, author Herbert Margulies wrote that "the story of the League's rejection has entered folklore and become almost mythological, with President Woodrow Wilson and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge the larger-than-life protagonists."<sup>1</sup> The ramifications of the Senate's defeat of the treaty were both immediate and far-reaching. Instead of becoming heavily involved in European affairs, the United States shied away from a prominent position in European politics.

At the time of the debate, prominent voices of public opinion held Lodge responsible for the treaty's defeat. After the Senate rejected the treaty for the second time in the spring of 1920, a *New York Times* editorial stated that "Mr. Lodge might at any time have secured ratification with reservations sufficient for every reasonable purpose..., and upon him, as the leader of the Republican majority, the actual responsibility [for the treaty's rejection] falls and will rest."<sup>2</sup> Since that time, however, historians have reevaluated the roles played by both Lodge and Wilson. Current history textbooks reflect this change. In the standard textbook *Nation of Nations*, the authors charge both

<sup>1</sup>Herbert F. Margulies, *The Mild Reservationists and the League of Nations Controversy in the Senate* (Columbia, 1989), ix.

<sup>2</sup>*New York Times*, 20 March 1920.

Lodge and Wilson with some responsibility for the defeat of the treaty." Lodge loved the Republican party more than world peace and certainly did not want the Democrats to win votes by taking credit for the treaty.<sup>3</sup> The authors consider this to be one of the main reasons for Lodge's opposition to the treaty. As for Wilson, they write that "temperamentally the president could not abide compromise."<sup>4</sup> This failure to reach a compromise with Lodge and the Republicans, despite several opportunities to do so, eventually led to the defeat of the treaty. Ultimately, *Nation of Nations* credits the Democrats in the Senate with killing the treaty, stating that "loyal Democrats had been forced to deliver the killing blow."<sup>5</sup>

At first glance, it appears that the Treaty of Versailles, and with it the League of Nations, should have been easily ratified. While the argument in the Senate might appear to have been between pro-treaty, pro-League internationalists led by President Wilson and anti-treaty, anti-League isolationists under the leadership of Lodge, this was not the case at all. Although they had very different ideas as to the role which the United States should assume in what Wilson called the "new world order," both Lodge and Wilson subscribed to internationalist doctrines. Lodge believed Wilson had gone too far towards complete internationalism by allowing the League of Nations to assume powers which should only be claimed by the Congress, but he was not opposed to the concept of a league of nations. As Professor David Fromkin writes, it misleads to suggest that the issue was isolationism versus internationalism. For most senators, the issue was whether they shared President Wilson's particular brand of internationalist vision or held one of several rival internationalist visions.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, two-thirds of the Senate was required to approve the treaty in order for it to take force. While this number is more than a simple majority, it was certainly within the reach of Wilson

<sup>3</sup>James West Davidson and others, *Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic, Volume II: Since 1865*, 2d ed. (New York, 1994), 502.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 503.

<sup>6</sup>David Fromkin, "Rival Internationalism: Lodge, Wilson, and the Two Roosevelts," *World Policy Journal* 13 (Summer 1996): 78.

and his supporters. Within the Senate, between 75 and 80 percent of the senators favored joining the League. The American public was just as favorable in joining of the League, with perhaps as many as 80 percent of the people in agreement. Yet Americans chose to make the ratification vote a referendum on whether the United States should pursue Wilson's League, or a milder league proposed by Lodge and the Republicans. This milder league would delegate less authority to the League of Nations and leave more control over foreign affairs in the hands of Congress. Lodge's decision shaped the debate from the beginning.

Other factors also affected the tone of the debate. Even before the treaty had been completely finalized, Senate Republicans felt that Wilson had ignored their opinions and views on how the League of Nations should be constituted. When choosing a Republican to be a member of the peace delegation which went to Paris to write the treaty, Wilson chose not to pick a member of the Senate. Instead he chose Henry White, who was not a strong Republican, and did not even live in the United States.<sup>7</sup> This displeased the Senate Republicans, and it was only the first of several political blunders which Wilson would make to irritate them. These very same senators would cast the crucial votes which decided the fate of the treaty, a treaty which they had very little input in writing. Since the Republicans had gained control of the Senate in the Congressional elections of 1918, they would be a very important factor in the treaty fight. Although holding only a slim forty-nine to forty-seven majority, Republican votes would be necessary to ratify the treaty.

After returning to the United States from his initial negotiating trip to Europe, several members of the Senate informed Wilson that some changes would be necessary in order for the treaty to be approved by the Senate. Several senators suggested, in fact, that the proposal for the League of Nations should be separated from the rest of the treaty and dealt with as a separate entity. By doing this, the treaty would be assured of easy ratification, and any changes to the Covenant of the League which the Senate deemed necessary could be made without scuttling the entire peace treaty. The President, however, chose not only to disregard these suggestions, but to defy them openly.

<sup>7</sup>Margulies, *Mild Reservationists*, 8.

In a speech in New York prior to his return to Europe to finalize the treaty, Wilson bragged that "when that treaty comes back, gentlemen on this side will find the covenant not only in it, but so many threads of the treaty tied to the covenant that you cannot dissect the covenant from the treaty without destroying the whole vital structure."<sup>8</sup> In the end, that is precisely what happened, and the treaty was destroyed.

Wilson's unwillingness to allow the Senate to play even a small part in the writing of the treaty resulted in much bitterness, especially on the Republican side of the aisle; however, disappointment with Wilson's handling of the situation was not confined only to Republicans. Thomas J. Walsh was a loyal Democratic senator from Montana; nevertheless, he felt that "the President has handled the thing most maladroitly and has evidenced a disposition to exclude the Senate from any real, active participation in the making of the treaty."<sup>9</sup>

Wilson's actions during this time created considerable animosity between himself and the leading Republican senators. This animosity, in addition to the partisanship naturally present between the two political parties, virtually assured that Republicans would subject the Treaty of Versailles to more scrutiny than might otherwise be directed toward a similar treaty under different circumstances. These events set the stage for the heated battle which would occur in the Senate.

President Wilson did not present the treaty to the Senate until July 10, 1919, when he asked the Senate for its approval, as prescribed in the Constitution. The senators expected Wilson to present a defense of the treaty, with particular attention being given to the Covenant. Wilson, however, already considered the Republicans to be hopelessly against the treaty. While he did discuss the League during the address, he never referred to the specific issues opponents of the league had criticized. He instead delivered a speech in which he dwelled on "lofty generalities,"<sup>10</sup> as the *Chicago Tribune* disgustedly reported. The President seemed to be unwilling to respond to Republican complaints. The *New York Times* wrote that "from the outset he [Wilson]

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1919.

seemed to sense the hostility on the Republican side of the Chamber and to feel the virtual futility of an appeal to them.<sup>11</sup>

Wilson implored the senators to realize that the time had come for a world organization such as the League of Nations to be formed. He made an impassioned plea for adoption of the League:

They [statesmen] saw it [the League] as the main object of the peace, as the only thing that could complete it or make it worth while. They saw it as the hope of the world, and that hope they did not dare to disappoint. Shall we or any other free people hesitate to accept this great duty? Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world?<sup>12</sup>

While Wilson presented to the Senate an eloquent case for a league of one sort or another, he did not show clearly why this particular League of Nations proposal was better than other proposals that the Senate would consider.

Wilson's failure to respond directly to his senatorial critics fueled the opposition. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, a strongly Republican newspaper and a great antagonist of Wilson, "senators, generally, had supposed Mr. Wilson would endeavor to demolish the opposition by explaining the mysteries of the covenant." The article continued: "When Mr. Wilson touched upon none of these concrete objections, but continued to dwell on the beauties of self-sacrifice, national unselfishness, and the new order of internationalism, interest on the floor began to wane."<sup>13</sup> The senators were in no mood for idealistic rhetoric; they wanted to hear a cold, factual account of the treaty's provisions. Henry Fountain Ashurst, a Democratic senator from Arizona, summed up the situation acutely when he wrote in his diary that "his [Wilson's] audience wanted raw meat, he fed them cold turnips."<sup>14</sup> Wilson's speech changed few, if any, votes in the Senate.

<sup>11</sup>New York Times, 11 July 1919.

<sup>12</sup>Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, 1991), 61:434.

<sup>13</sup>*Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1919.

<sup>14</sup>Link, ed., *Papers of Wilson*, 61:445-6.

The treaty went first to the Foreign Relations Committee, where senators debated it for two months. As chairman of this committee, Lodge controlled the entire process. He assumed the difficult task of attempting to adopt some strategy which could garner the votes of two-thirds of a seriously divided Senate. While less than two-thirds of the Senate would have been sufficient to kill Wilson's treaty, this did not satisfy Lodge. He wanted the Senate to ratify a Republican version to be sent to the President, forcing Wilson either to sign a Republican treaty or to be directly responsible for rejecting the treaty himself. Lodge considered two possible approaches. The committee could either offer amendments or reservations. While the distinction between these two policies was sometimes confused even by the participants in the debate, the difference proved very important. An amendment added to the treaty during ratification required renegotiation. This meant that all parties to the treaty would have to formally agree to the change by signing the treaty again. A reservation, on the other hand, did not change the actual text of the treaty, allowing the other signatories to agree to it "without formal acknowledgment" of the alteration.<sup>15</sup>

The Senate, by this time, had broken into several fairly well-defined factions. A small, but unwavering group of senators were against the League in any form. Known as irrecconcilables, this group could be counted on to vote against the treaty with or without amendments or reservations. Composed of fourteen Republicans and two Democrats, this group did not play an influential role in the debate. Their minds were already made up, and nothing could change their stance. The remainder of the Republicans favored ratification, but harbored reservations of one type or another.<sup>16</sup> Mild reservationists favored interpretive amendments or reservations, which would only more clearly define what had originally been intended by the writers of the treaty. Strong reservationists, led by Lodge, wanted to define certain parts of the treaty more clearly, but not necessarily with the same meaning which had been intended by the framers of the treaty. The strong reservationists outnumbered the mild

<sup>15</sup>Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921* (New York, 1985), 176.

<sup>16</sup>Although this group is now called reservationists, some of these senators also favored amendments at the time.

reservationists, but treaty supporters needed to win both groups to ratify the treaty.<sup>17</sup>

All of the Senate Democrats supported the Wilsonian position of no reservations or amendments, with the exception of two irreconcilables. In several cases, Democrats gave the support only out of party loyalty. Senator Gilbert Hitchcock led the Democrats. Not actually the minority leader, he filled in for Senator Thomas Martin, suffering from a terminal illness. This change in leadership hurt the Democrats, not by injuring party unity, but by curtailing their ability to devise a policy to woo Republican support. Hitchcock's lack of experience as minority leader limited his influence among both Democrats and Republicans. About twenty Republican votes would be needed in order to provide a two-thirds majority when combined with loyal Democrats. Compromise would probably be necessary, but despite his attempts, Hitchcock failed to convince Wilson that this was so.<sup>18</sup>

One of the major stumbling blocks for ratification was Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which said:

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.<sup>19</sup>

This article expressed Wilson's view of collective security. It authorized league members to respond to any attack against another member nation. Reservationists thought that this article gave too much power to the League and took away the Congressional right to declare war. President Wilson, however,

<sup>17</sup>Magulies, *Mild Reservationists*, ix-x.

<sup>18</sup>Kendrick A. Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, American Presidency Series (Lawrence, 1992), 191.

<sup>19</sup>"Treaty of Peace with Germany (Treaty of Versailles)," 28 June 1919, *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949*, vol. 2, 51.

considered Article 10 to be "the heart of the Covenant,"<sup>20</sup> because in his opinion, it embodied the major theme of the entire League. In a conference with members of the Foreign Relations Committee, Wilson stated that "Article 10 seems to me to constitute the very backbone of the whole covenant. Without it the league would be hardly more than an influential debating society."<sup>21</sup> Since Wilson saw this article as one of the basic tenets upon which the League was founded, he did not want any reservations attached to it.

In the Foreign Relations Committee, Republican senators introduced different amendments and reservations to be discussed. The committee approved several amendments, sending them to the full Senate for debate. The committee also adopted four reservations which came to become known as the Lodge reservations. These reservations became the basis for several different sets of reservations subsequently proposed by Republicans for inclusion in the resolution of ratification. The first of the Lodge Reservations protected the United States' "unconditional right to withdraw from the league." The second reservation stipulated that the United States would not assume any obligations under Article 10, or any other article, except with Congressional approval. Lodge's third reservation affirmed the United States' right to determine "what questions are within its domestic jurisdiction," and therefore outside of the League's jurisdiction. The fourth reservation removed the Monroe Doctrine from the League's domain. This left the United States free to enforce the Monroe Doctrine as she saw fit, without obtaining approval from the League.<sup>22</sup>

In the full Senate, voting began on the Foreign Relations Committee's amendments. As expected, the Democrats stuck together and generally voted against the amendments. On the Republican side though, there was no such unanimity. The strong reservationists voted in favor of some amendments, but against others. Nine of the mild reservationists voted against all of the amendments, and as a result of this, all of the amendments were rejected. While this might have seemed to be good news for

<sup>20</sup>Link, ed., *Papers of Wilson*, 63:452.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 62:343.

<sup>22</sup>*Congressional Record*, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (1919), 7271.

Wilson and the Democrats, a closer look at the vote totals revealed that it really was not. The combination of loyal Democrats and mild reservationists was enough to provide the simple majority necessary to defeat amendments to the treaty, but it was well short of the two-thirds necessary to approve the treaty. Over one-third of the senators, more than enough to kill the treaty, voted for almost every amendment. This should have indicated to Wilson and the Democratic leadership that accommodating the strong reservationists would be a necessity if the treaty was to have a good chance of being approved.<sup>25</sup>

Wilson's next move demonstrated his idealism in action. Instead of looking for compromise at this point, he chose to take his case for the League of Nations directly to the people. On August 25, Wilson decided to deliver his message to the people through the Middle West and West. Prior to leaving for the tour, Wilson sent a secret memorandum to Senator Hitchcock, dated September 3 and titled "Suggestion." In this memorandum, Wilson outlined in his own words four reservations dealing with the same topics as the Lodge reservations. Wilson apparently intended the reservations to be proposed by Hitchcock, but not until Wilson himself gave him the order. If and when Wilson gave Hitchcock permission to propose the reservations, he was not to admit that they had actually been composed by the President.<sup>26</sup>

If Hitchcock had proposed the reservations at this point, a compromise might have been reached. Wilson, however, wanted to win ratification on his own terms. Consequently, he departed on his speaking tour on the same day that he gave the memorandum to Hitchcock. The potential reservations would have to wait until Wilson gave Hitchcock permission to propose them, which would likely be upon Wilson's return from his trip. By that time, though, the situation would be drastically different.

Wilson had wanted to launch his campaign as early as July 20, but at that time his advisers opposed the trip. Wilson hoped to demonstrate during the tour that the public at large favored the treaty, but his advisers pointed out that the Senate was fairly

insulated from any pressure which could be applied by public opinion.<sup>25</sup> The Seventeenth Amendment had just been ratified in 1913, so the populace lacked experience with electing senators directly. By late August, however, Wilson felt that an appeal to the people was the only option left that could turn the tide against reservations, so accordingly, the President left Washington by train on September 3. By the middle of September, the public was becoming very responsive at every stop, and the speeches drew large crowds. After a speech at Pueblo, Colorado on September 25, however, Wilson showed signs of an impending stroke. According to Dr. Cary Grayson, Wilson's personal physician saw this and informed the President that the remainder of the trip must be canceled. And Wilson grudgingly consented and returned to Washington.<sup>26</sup>

On October 2, only a few days after returning from the western trip, Wilson suffered a major stroke that paralyzed the left side of his body. The long-term political effects of this medical problem were almost as damaging. At the time, those individuals who were very close to the President employed a great deal of deception so that the American people would not find out how greatly the stroke had impaired Wilson's ability to hold the office. Irwin Hood Hoover was Head Usher of the White House during Wilson's entire term of office and was devoted to Wilson, but in his memoirs he writes that "never was a conspiracy so pointedly and so artistically formed."<sup>27</sup> A news report dated 10:00 p.m. October 3 stated that "the President's illness is diagnosed as 'nervous exhaustion,' but the danger is that the present attack...may develop into nervous prostration."<sup>28</sup> The fact that Wilson had suffered a stroke was not announced to the public.

According to Dr. Bert Park, a medical doctor who has studied Wilson's case considerably, "that Wilson was disabled for at least the first month of his illness in the constitutional sense, such that he was unable to carry out the duties of the office, the documents

<sup>25</sup>Clements, *Presidency of Wilson*, 192-3.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 63:518.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 63:634.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 63:545.

<sup>25</sup>Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (New York, 1987), 198.

<sup>26</sup>Woodrow Wilson, "Suggestion," *Papers of Wilson*, Link, ed. 62:621.

...make clear."<sup>29</sup> Irwin Hoover was a bit more descriptive when he wrote that "this original [sic] stroke or whatever it was simply put the President out of business, mentally & physically for at least a month."<sup>30</sup> Even when recovery finally did begin to become evident, it was painfully obvious to anyone who had known him prior to the stroke that Wilson was not the man he had once been. Hoover wrote that "there was no comparison with the President that went to Paris and before. He could not talk plain, mumbled more than he articulated, was helpless and looked awful."<sup>31</sup> Wilson would never fully recover from the trauma which he suffered during the stroke.

The relationship between Wilson's illness and the treaty debate is of great importance, because at a critical time during which some compromises might have been made, Wilson, the leader of the pro-treaty delegation, could not give any direction to Hitchcock in the Senate. Even after he regained enough strength to begin taking a limited interest in political affairs again, the long-term effects of his stroke still took their toll. Although it was not known in Wilson's day, strokes also have an effect on an individual's psychological well-being. These effects include disorders of emotion, impaired impulse control, and defective judgment. Furthermore, a stroke victim's underlying personality traits are greatly magnified and become plainly obvious. For Wilson, these traits included intransigence. Usually hidden by Wilson's sense of proper and prudent behavior, it came to the forefront after his stroke and became evident in his actions pertaining to the treaty.<sup>32</sup>

While Wilson's recovery continued slowly, action continued in the Senate. On November 6, Lodge introduced fourteen reservations which he hoped to attach to the treaty prior to ratification. Some of these were similar to the original four Lodge reservations which the Foreign Relations Committee had proposed, but there were several additional reservations as well. The list of reservations stated: that the United States would not enforce sanctions without the consent of Congress; that only the

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 63:644.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 63:636.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 64:523.

US would decide if it had fulfilled its obligations to the League if it withdrew; that mandates would only be accepted with Congressional approval; that only the US would determine what qualified as a "domestic" issue; that no issues pertaining to the Monroe Doctrine would be submitted to the League; that arms-limitation agreements would be binding only if they were given Congressional approval; and that the covenant of the League must be amended to equalize the voting power of the US and Great Britain in combination with its dominions. There were other reservations included, but these were the most important ones.

Senator Hitchcock realized the situation looked bleak. On November 13, Hitchcock wrote to Wilson so that he might be kept abreast of the latest developments. He informed Wilson that the Republicans were solid in their support of the Lodge reservations, and that the Democrats offered substitute reservations, similar to those suggested by Wilson prior to his speaking trip. These substitute reservations drew the support of all but three or four Democrats. Hitchcock also spelled out the Democrat's plan for voting on resolutions of ratification. They intended to offer a resolution of unqualified ratification to rival Lodge's resolution of ratification with reservations, knowing full well that their resolution would be defeated. They would then offer interpretive reservations in place of the Lodge Reservations, again expecting defeat. The purpose of this was to "make the democratic record clear."<sup>33</sup>

Hitchcock proposed to Wilson that the Democrats vote against the resolution of ratification containing the Lodge reservations when it came to a vote. This would assure its failure. There was, however, another possibility. Hitchcock wrote: "This plan is subject to modification, however, in case when the time arrives we shall determine, or the President shall advise us to vote for the Lodge resolution."<sup>34</sup> With this statement, Hitchcock intended to give Wilson an opportunity to change his stance on reservations, since the treaty would apparently not pass without the Lodge reservations attached. Hitchcock followed up this correspondence to Wilson with a personal visit on November

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 64:29.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

17. Hitchcock hoped that the spirit of compromise which Wilson had displayed briefly, prior to his ill-fated western trip, would again be manifested in Wilson's behavior.<sup>35</sup>

Upon asking the President if he had anything to suggest about the Lodge resolution, Hitchcock soon discovered that any disposition which Wilson might have had toward compromise had been destroyed. The President responded "I consider it a nullification of the Treaty and utterly impossible." Senator Hitchcock then noted that the Senate had made some changes to Article 10 of the League covenant, and proceeded to describe the changes. Wilson was not impressed, and stated: "That cuts the very heart out of the Treaty; I could not stand for those changes for a moment because it would humiliate the United States before all of the allied countries." Wilson's bitterness toward the Republicans was clear when he told Hitchcock that "I will get their [Republicans] political scalps when the truth is known to the people.... Mind you, Senator, I have no hostility towards these gentlemen but an utter contempt."<sup>36</sup>

Hitchcock wanted to make certain compromises with the Republicans, but Wilson was set against it. The President considered everything except interpretive reservations, which did not change the substance of the treaty, as being too compromising. After his conference with President Wilson, Hitchcock spoke to the press about his discussion with the chief executive. He informed them that "President Wilson will pocket the treaty if the Lodge program of reservations is carried out in the ratifying resolution."<sup>37</sup> In other words, even if the Lodge resolution passed with a veto-proof two-thirds majority in the Senate, Wilson would refuse to complete the ratification process. This action would send the treaty back to the Senate at the beginning of the next session to start the entire process over again.

By November 19, the Senate was finally ready to vote on the different resolutions of ratification. Before any votes were cast, however, there was one final bit of political wrangling. Before the vote took place, Senator Hitchcock circulated among the

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 64:43.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 64:48.

Democrats in the Senate a letter from President Wilson discussing the Lodge resolution in which he wrote: "In my opinion, the resolution in that form does not provide for ratification but, rather, for the nullification of the treaty. I sincerely hope that the friends and supporters of the treaty will vote against the Lodge resolution of ratification." Senator Lodge, sensing a chance to make Wilson look foolish for urging the Senate to vote against a resolution ratifying his own treaty, read the letter to the entire Senate. Finally, debate was closed, and the voting began.<sup>38</sup>

The senators first voted on the resolution of ratification with the Lodge reservations attached. This resolution received thirty-nine votes in favor of ratification and fifty-five votes against ratification. A motion was made to reconsider, so the same resolution came up for a second vote. This time the measure was defeated forty-one to fifty. Consequently, the Lodge resolution went down to defeat. Then, as planned by Hitchcock and the Democrats, the Senate voted on a resolution of ratification with no reservations at all. The resolution received thirty-eight votes in favor of ratification, versus fifty-three votes against ratification. Similar margins decided all three votes. None of them came close to the necessary two-thirds majority. The Treaty of Versailles was dead, at least in this session of Congress.<sup>39</sup>

When the next session of Congress began in January of 1920, Wilson again sent the treaty to the Senate for ratification. Unfortunately for the supporters of the treaty, he had not altered his stance in the least since the previous Senate's actions. In the President's traditional Jackson Day message to Democrats, he stood by his earlier position; namely, that interpretive reservations were acceptable, but nothing else. He wrote, "We cannot rewrite this treaty. We must take it without changes which alter its meaning, or leave it."<sup>40</sup> Only compromise could have saved the treaty in the Senate, but Wilson left no room for maneuvering. The treaty came up for another vote on March 19. The resolution of ratification including the Lodge reservations

<sup>38</sup>Congressional Record, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (1919), 8768.

<sup>39</sup>New York Times, 20 November 1919.

<sup>40</sup>Link, ed., *Papers of Wilson*, 64:258.

was defeated, with forty-nine senators voting in favor of the resolution and thirty-five voting against it. Despite the fact that twenty-one Democrats broke ranks to join with Republican supporters of the Lodge resolution, it fell seven votes short of being approved by two-thirds of the Senate.<sup>41</sup>

This second defeat ended Woodrow Wilson's dream of American participation in the League of Nations, but ultimately, Wilson himself was responsible for leading the Democrats to an ignominious defeat. By refusing every attempt at compromise, Wilson ignored the political realities of the situation. Even several members of his own party believed that some reservations were necessary, but Wilson stubbornly clung to the idea that the treaty could somehow be approved without reservations. He repeatedly refused to accept opportunities to reach some sort of agreement with his adversaries, and even with Senator Hitchcock, his own party's leader in the Senate. By asking Democrats to reject his own treaty, Wilson left them with no good alternatives. They could either vote for the treaty and humiliate the President, or vote against the treaty and kill it. In the final analysis, nearly half of the Senate Democrats did vote against Wilson's wishes, but this was not enough to save the treaty. For these reasons, the Democrats were responsible for defeating the Treaty of Versailles. This ended an unfortunate chapter in the storied history of Congressional debates.

## The Life of Mary J. Booth

Brandie E. Banks

*Brandie Banks, an Eastern Illinois undergraduate, wrote this biography for Historical Sources and Techniques (His 2500) under Professor Christopher Waidrep as a regular weekly assignment requiring use of the University Archives at Booth Library in Fall 1996.*

Mary Josephine Booth, librarian at Eastern Illinois State College from 1904-1945, was instrumental in the acquisition of the current library facility in use today. Had it not been for Booth's persistence and dedication to her profession, the building of Booth library would have been delayed considerably. Mary Booth was a truly remarkable woman whom everyone respected and admired for her commitment to the University. She fought for funding of a new library because she believed it would be an integral part of the University. Only by Booth's insistence was the need for a new library assessed by the Illinois State Legislature. By tracing Mary Booth's history, one can see more clearly her motivation.

Booth lived from 1876 to 1965. Booth was born in Beloit, Wisconsin, to John and Minerva (Leonard) Booth. She graduated from Beloit High School in 1893, attended Beloit College, and then the University of Illinois Library School where she graduated in 1904. She immediately was hired by President Livingston C. Lord and started work that fall at Eastern Illinois State College. Booth was the third librarian at Eastern where she stayed until she retired in 1945, except for a brief but important interlude when she served as a Red Cross relief worker during the First World War.<sup>1</sup> Booth was state treasurer and later President of the Illinois Library Association, as well as a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Women's Overseas Service League, and the American Association of University Women.

<sup>41</sup>New York Times, 20 March 1920.

<sup>1</sup>Mary J. Booth, 1804-1945, Mary J. Booth Collection, University Archives, Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois.