

## 1900: Jeff Davis Speech

<p>Historic images of William Jennings Bryan and the like</p> <p>Cut to a courthouse square or similar scene. A crowd has gathered around a large man speaking from the bed of an old wagon.</p> <p>Davis is a spellbinding speaker and he soon has the crowd wrapped around his not-so-little finger.</p> <p>Cheers from the crowd</p> <p>Pictures of Jeff Davis, artifacts, etc.</p>	<p><b>Narrator Voice Over:</b> Its scare in 1888 prompted the Arkansas Democratic Party to move to the left in an effort to win back disaffected farmers, embracing the concerns, if not the solutions, of the Populists. Suddenly Arkansas Democrats found themselves among the leaders of the reform wing of the national party. Arkansans would play a prominent role in William Jennings Bryan's unsuccessful presidential bids. At home they spawned a new breed of politician that aimed its appeal at the common man. No one did this better than Jeff Davis.</p> <p><b>Davis:</b> The <i>Helena World</i> says I'm a carrot-haired, red-faced, loud-lunged, deep-voiced, ox-driving mountaineer. He says I'm a friend of the fellow that brews the forty-rod bug juice, and all that sort of stuff....</p> <p>They say I'm a demagogue. Every time a man comes out and stands for the interests of the people, he is denounced, either as a crank or a demagogue. I thank God if that is demagoguery that I am a demagogue.</p> <p>Ah, gentlemen, the war is on. It is knife to knife, hilt to hilt, foot to foot, knee to knee between the corporations of Arkansas and the people.</p> <p><b>Narrator:</b> Well in excess of six feet and 300 pounds at his prime, Arkansas's turn-of-the-century governor cast a giant shadow. Named for the president of the Confederacy, Jeff Davis had no rival as a political campaigner. Davis espoused a down-home brand of populism that with little actual program involved. His genius was a comic sense that always included a healthy</p>
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	<p>dose of self-parody.</p> <p><b>Davis:</b> I have a little boy. God bless him, a little pale-faced, white-haired fellow. I love him better than anyone on earth except his mother. If I find he is a smart boy...I will go and make a preacher out of him; if I find he is not so smart a boy, I am going to make a lawyer out of him; and if I find that he has not a bit of sense on earth, I am going to make an editor out of him and send him to Little Rock to edit the <i>Arkansas Democrat</i>.</p>
<p>More images of Davis</p>	<p><b>Narrator:</b> Davis had flair. When accused of having appointed his brother-in-law to public office, Davis relied: "If I don't help my brother-in-law, who will?" Once at a political debate, he added white lightning to the water pitcher of his prohibition-minded opponent. His straight-laced rivals accused him of hoodwinking the common man, never seeming to get the joke that Davis shared with his rural constituents.</p> <p><b>Davis:</b> If you rednecks or hillbillies ever come to Little Rock, be sure to come see me. Come to my house. It's the one with the six pointer dogs. If I am not at home, tell my wife you are a friend and that you belong to the sun-burned sons of toil. Tell her to give you some hog jowl and turnip greens or a mess of her biscuits — big fat ones with those little pimples on top. Knock loud. She may be out back making soap, but that will be all right.</p>
<p>Images of Donaghey.</p>	<p><b>Narrator:</b> Davis set the stage for the true Progressive governors who followed, men such as George Donaghey who reformed the state's prisons. Donaghey is perhaps best known as the man who built the current State Capitol and he was governor in 1911 when, after 75 years, the</p>
<p>Images of the Capitol being built</p>	

	government finally departed it home in the State House.
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