

Abstract: The following research paper compares the populism of William Jennings Bryan during the Presidential election of 1896 with that of Donald J. Trump during the Election of 2024. The aim of this paper is to show that Trump's populist campaigning style is an inheritance of Bryan's. In addition, it shows that there is a long tradition of American political leaders that were influenced by Bryan, who in turn were influential to Trump's victory in the Elections of 2016 and 2024. To compare the two figures, the paper is divided into two main chapters. The first examines American populism in the late 19th century, represented by Bryan, and how Bryan in 1896 foreshadowed Trump in 2024. The second chapter examines populism in the 21st century and draws a line connecting Bryan to Trump, via 20th century populist leaders such as George Wallace and Patrick Buchanan. While the first chapter examines populism through the lens of silver and the standards debate, the second chapter looks into populism through the debate on immigration. In their respective times, both Bryan and Trump were able to capitalize on a controversial issue, and frame it in the context of a long-standing battle between the people and the elites. The paper concludes by showing that the study of 19th century populism is important to understanding Trump's victory, and how Trump appeals to the enduring concerns of Americans who felt underrepresented and unfairly treated by the political establishment, much like Bryan two centuries before him.