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## Claude G. Bowers: A Partisan Hoosier

*Sabine Jessner and Peter J. Sehlinger\**

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Traditionally biographers are fond of identifying their subjects according to professions or positions held, describing them as politicians, generals, presidents, theologians, or the like. It would be misleading, however, to try to understand Claude G. Bowers by classifying him either as a celebrated journalist, the author of several well-received historical works, an influential political aide, a United States ambassador for two decades, or a speech writer for the Democratic party for half a century. Indeed, Bowers served in each of these capacities, but he should be remembered above all as a fervent partisan of liberal democracy. Before reaching adulthood this democrat became a confirmed Democrat, convinced that the Democratic party represented the forces of economic and social justice in the United States. Bowers's many professional endeavors were not ends in themselves; instead, they offered this partisan Hoosier diverse forums that he used to expound his liberal political creed and to promote the Democracy.

Lewis and Juliet Tipton Bowers lived in the Hamilton County village of Westfield, Indiana, in 1878 when their son Claude Grenade was born on November 20.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later the family moved to Jolietville, near the Boone County line, where Lewis ran a store. Soon the three Bowerses settled in Whitestown where Claude spent most of his early childhood. There in Boone County, some twenty miles north of Indianapolis, Lewis was a merchant, but his father, Christian, a German immigrant, owned a farm

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<sup>1</sup> For biographical material on Bowers, see Claude G. Bowers, *My Life: The Memoirs of Claude Bowers* (New York, 1962); Claude G. Bowers, "The Reminiscences of Claude Bowers," interview by Louis Starr, August 24, 30, 1954 (Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York City); and "Introduction" in Holman Hamilton and Gayle Thornbrough, eds., *Indianapolis in the "Gay Nineties": The High School Diaries of Claude G. Bowers* (Indianapolis, 1964), 1-14.

nearby that he had carved out of the virgin timbered terrain. The Bowers family were all staunch Democrats, and Lewis favored Winfield Scott Hancock in Hancock's 1880 presidential campaign against James A. Garfield. When some Republican friends teased Lewis's son by cheering for Garfield, the two-year-old reputedly blurted out, "Naw, naw, rah for Hancock."<sup>2</sup> Certainly Bowers was correct in recalling later, "My politics came early and I have been a partisan ever since."<sup>3</sup>

School, the stories of Civil War veterans, sermons, political speeches, and reading offered Claude more than a rudimentary education in Whitestown. Contemporaries recognized oratory as an edifying art that provided them with opportunities for both entertainment and social gatherings. Claude eagerly attended the meetings of the local debating society directed by the Lutheran minister and the schoolmaster. Political rallies and the county fair in Lebanon eight miles away also attracted the denizens of Boone County in the summer and the autumn. Once, after hearing Democratic Senator Daniel W. Voorhees lash out at his opponents, Claude was presented to the solon, who laid his hand on the lad's head. Bowers later remembered this and remarked, "I felt I had been anointed."<sup>4</sup> So partisan was the nine-year-old Claude that he was almost frightened to death when he heard a Radical Republican warn his audience: "In Michigan where it's cold, they're almost all Republicans; in Indiana where it's a little warmer, there are a few more Democrats; in Kentucky where it's still warmer, there are more Democrats; in Mississippi where it's very warm, they're almost all Democrats; and in Hell, which is hot, they're all Democrats."<sup>5</sup>

Claude's years in Whitestown left a lifelong legacy of pleasant memories that helped shape his confidence in the innate intelligence and capacities of the common man. Tinkling sleigh bells, heated political debates, county fairs, childish pranks, and the accurate aim of tobacco chewers toward ever-present cuspidors were but some of Bowers's Boone County recollections. More important were the attitudes he took with him from his hometown. He later asserted, "I think I learned more of the American mind from the villagers of Whitestown than I ever learned afterwards."<sup>6</sup> Forged in rural Indiana, his lifelong respect for the dignity of hard work and the opinions and sentiments of the people would remain with him as he climbed the ladder of political importance and experienced the sophistication of cosmopolitan and diplomatic life.

Following his father's death from a fall, Claude and his mother moved to Lebanon where she worked as a milliner for more than a

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<sup>2</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 2.

year. Then in 1891 they went to Indianapolis where Mrs. Bowers established a dressmaking shop in her home on North Alabama Street. During the last decade of the century the Hoosier capital was a prosperous but unsophisticated metropolis that grew from 128,000 to 170,000 souls. The first electric streetcar ran up muddy, unpaved Massachusetts Avenue from the downtown business district; several railroads made the city an important regional center; and business enterprises were attracting a steady stream of rural and immigrant laborers. Meat-packing, ironworks, lumberyards, breweries, brickworks, and commerce were some of the diverse sources of employment. The tall Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Circle was nearing completion, and the chairman of the Monument Commission, the father of one of Claude's friends, allowed the adventuresome boy to climb the off-limits shaft to survey his new home.<sup>7</sup>

For the small-town youth Indianapolis offered numerous opportunities for personal development.<sup>8</sup> Claude regularly frequented the Indianapolis Public Library, first at the corner of Pennsylvania and Ohio streets and later at Meridian and Ohio. There he spent more than two hours a day reading biographies of American, Irish, and British statesmen, particularly those of orators such as John C. Calhoun, John Philpot Curran, and William Gladstone. On Sundays Claude attended churches of various denominations in order to listen to the long but carefully worded sermons. He watched the "Divine Sarah" Bernhardt and other visiting performers at English's Opera House on the Circle. At Tomlinson Hall at Delaware and Market streets Bowers attended virtually every political meeting and listened to the speeches of both parties' candidates. However, the faculty at Indianapolis High School, subsequently called Shortridge High, exercised the greatest influence on his intellectual growth as a teenager. He particularly enjoyed classes in civil government and politics. Bowers was president of the school's Senate, an organization for students modeled after the chamber in Washington, and he also was elected to head the school's debate team.

For a short while Claude was a Republican in Indianapolis. His removal from the paternal Democratic precincts of Whitestown played a role in this change of allegiance, but the strong Republican zeal of his maternal relatives certainly contributed as well. Originally a Whig, Claude's grandfather, James Tipton, had be-

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<sup>7</sup> For a thorough description of Indianapolis in the 1890s see Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), I.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter II, "The Golden Age in Indianapolis," in Bowers, *My Life*, 13-16; and Hamilton and Thornbrough, *Indianapolis in the "Gay Nineties,"* for Bowers's life during these years.

come a Republican after that party was organized prior to the Civil War. Later killed at the Battle of Missionary Ridge in 1863, Tipton had greatly admired Abraham Lincoln. In high school Claude was a member of the executive committee of the Lincoln League, and in the presidential campaign of 1892 he supported Benjamin Harrison of Indianapolis in his unsuccessful bid for reelection.

Bowers's Republicanism proved of short duration. In the epic encounter of 1896 between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan, the Hoosier youth sided with the Democrats. Of the Republican platform, Bowers opined: "There is one bad feature about the thing. It was written by the upper class. It was formulated in Wall street. Now has the interest of Wall St ever been know[n] to coincide with the interests of the masses?"<sup>9</sup> Of the Republican standard-bearer, McKinley, Claude wrote, for his "abilities I have little respect";<sup>10</sup> however, it was Bryan's advocacy of an economic policy in favor of the common man that won Claude for the Democracy. Bowers agreed that the Republican party's untiring efforts to keep prices high through protective tariffs and by vigorous adherence to the gold standard were, in fact, tantamount to crucifying the citizenry on a "Cross of Gold." After hearing Bryan in person in Indianapolis, Bowers was so impressed with the Democratic orator that "from that hour I thought in terms of politics."<sup>11</sup>

Bowers found the model for his political ideals in Thomas Jefferson. As president of the high school debate team, Claude chose to defend Alexander Hamilton's influence on the early American republic at the state oratorical contest in 1898. When the Hoosier youth researched his subject, he found Hamilton's ideas "obnoxious."<sup>12</sup> Bowers saw Hamilton as the proponent of an aristocratic-dominated political system and Jefferson as the spokesman for a democratic America. Because it was too late to change his topic, Bowers focused his oration on Hamilton's role in securing the ratification of the Constitution—something he could sincerely admire—and earned first place at the contest. Thereafter, however, Claude for life identified himself as a "Jeffersonian Democrat," by which he meant a proponent of government by all of the people in the interests of the majority of the people.

College was not in Bowers's future. Only the sacrifices of his mother and the frugality of both had allowed him to complete high school. Instead, Bowers found a temporary job in 1898 with a publisher in Indianapolis, the future Bobbs-Merrill Company. He continued his active interest in politics and made his first appearance on the stump in 1900, appropriately in Whitestown. Throughout

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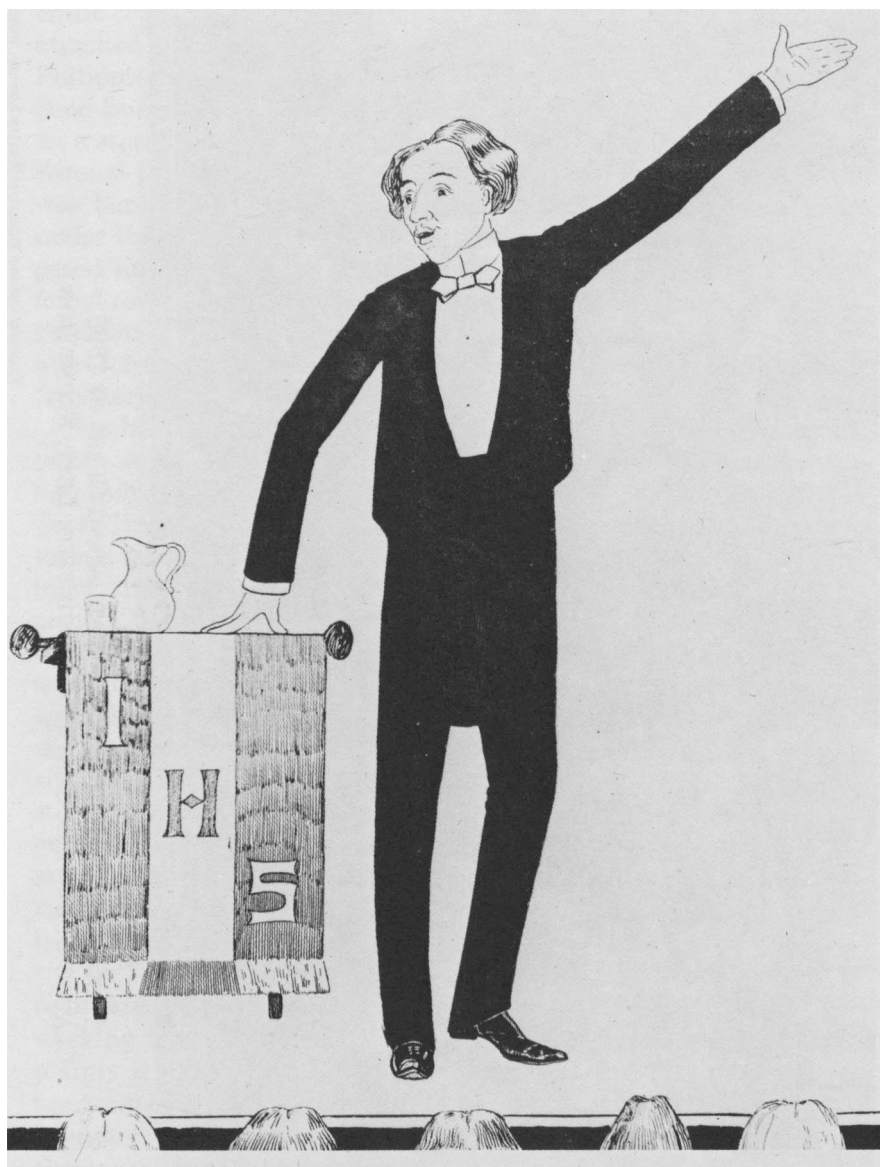
<sup>9</sup> Hamilton and Thornbrough, *Indianapolis in the "Gay Nineties,"* 60.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>11</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 44.

<sup>12</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 7.





**CLAUDE G. BOWERS AT THE INDIANA STATE HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST, OPERA HOUSE, RICHMOND, INDIANA, MARCH 25, 1898**

Reproduced from the *Indianapolis High School Album* (Indianapolis, 1898), 58; courtesy Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.



INDIANAPOLIS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS OF 1898  
CLAUDE G. BOWERS, SEATED, FOURTH FROM LEFT, FRONT ROW

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis.

the summer and autumn of that year Bowers defended the Democratic candidate, Bryan, as the spokesman of the common man and attacked President McKinley's annexation of Puerto Rico and the Philippines as "a repudiation of everything America stood for."<sup>13</sup> Soon Bowers was dubbed the "Gatling-Gun Orator of the Wabash." At a state party gathering in Lebanon future Democratic Governor Samuel M. Ralston was very impressed by the young speaker, who was barely old enough to vote. Although Bowers was four years under the requisite age to serve in Congress, Ralston jokingly proposed him as a congressional candidate. The partisan orator also found time to contribute two pieces to the *Jeffersonian Democrat*, a publication of the national party. Indiana's future Democratic Senator John Worth Kern read these articles and described them as "crackerjacks."<sup>14</sup>

In his twenty-first year Bowers began his long career as a journalist. In 1900 he became the major editorial writer for the *Sentinel*, Indianapolis's Democratic daily. Three years later he went to Terre Haute where he wrote for the *Gazette* and the *Star*. His editorials revealed his adherence to the goals of the progressive movement, the proponents of which were well represented in both major parties. These reformers confidently believed that active participation by the people in the political system would make government serve the interests of the majority of the citizenry instead of the special concerns of those of great wealth. Bowers's editorials urged the adoption of primary elections to make politicians more responsive to public opinion, and his every published piece reflected his strong belief that "the people are the great source of power."<sup>15</sup> An outspoken advocate of public education, he attacked efforts of the state legislature to cut school support and noted that "the vast majority of the poor are unable to attend the higher institutions of learning."<sup>16</sup>

In Terre Haute Bowers also served the city administration by composing proclamations and speeches for the mayor as well as working for the Board of Public Works. His municipal job was so plainly political that his friends joked that the only public-works function he fulfilled was to jump up and down with all of his 109 pounds on the newly brick-paved streets before perfunctorily declaring them well constructed.<sup>17</sup>

By 1904 when Bowers ran for elective office for the first time, he was an outspoken champion of liberal democracy. His self-identification as a "Jeffersonian Democrat" in high school and his

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Bowers, *My Life*, 40.

<sup>15</sup> Terre Haute *Star*, November 9, 1905.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, June 17, 1905.

<sup>17</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 21.

youthful enthusiasm for Bryan's candidacy in 1896 led him into the progressive movement. He did not abandon his liberal tenets during the conservative 1920s, and he was a fervent supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. For Bowers, liberal democracy meant an active government that would ensure the rights of the majority against the influence of a wealthy oligarchy represented in his eyes by the magnates of banking and industry. Although a severe critic of Wall Street, the Hoosier Democrat believed in capitalism. He insisted, however, that this system must be controlled by the state in the interest of the citizenry. Inherent in Bowers's faith in liberal democracy was his trust in the people's ability to guarantee their rights through the electoral process.

At least in part because of Bowers's party ties and his oratory the Democrats made him their congressional nominee in 1904 and 1906 for the usually Republican Terre Haute district. In his candidacy he stressed the ideas so dear to the essentially middle-class Republican and Democratic reformers who made up the progressive movement. He championed the expansion of democracy through women's suffrage and the direct election of senators and promised to regulate monopolies and to outlaw giant trusts such as Standard Oil. As expected, Bowers was soundly defeated in 1904, the year of Republican Theodore Roosevelt's landslide presidential victory.<sup>18</sup> In his active 1906 campaign the Democratic journalist once again vowed to fight "to control and regulate the great financial interests of the nation."<sup>19</sup> He managed to attract Republican voters by lauding the progressive reforms achieved by President Roosevelt and noting, "If I had been a member of congress during the last two years, I would have supported all the reform measures of the president . . . because they were patriotic American measures."<sup>20</sup> After a very close contest the election officials declared Bowers the loser by eight hundred votes, but the Democratic candidate never agreed with this verdict. "I was elected and counted out—no question about that . . ."<sup>21</sup> Despite his political disappointments he campaigned throughout Indiana for the Democratic national ticket of Bryan and Kern in 1908 and again two years later for Kern's successful election as senator.

Called to Washington in 1911 as secretary for the new Hoosier solon, Bowers worked as Kern's trusted aide for six years.<sup>22</sup> A progressive Democrat, the senator was an outspoken champion of the

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<sup>18</sup> For Bowers's views in this campaign see the *Terre Haute Star*, September 13, 22, 25, 1904; and the *Rockville Tribune*, October 5, 1904.

<sup>19</sup> *Terre Haute Star*, November 4, 1906.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 20.

<sup>22</sup> For Bowers's activities in Washington in these years see Claude G. Bowers, *The Life of John Worth Kern* (Indianapolis, 1918).

right of workers to unionize and of government regulation of big business. When the mineowners in West Virginia hired thugs to terrorize miners striking for higher wages, Kern led an investigation of these excesses, even inviting eighty-one-year-old Mother Jones, a leader of the striking workers, to Washington. Kern's success in calling the nation's attention to the deplorable working conditions of the coal miners marked, according to Bowers, "the first clear-cut victory ever won in the Senate by labor."<sup>23</sup> Bowers firmly believed in moderate political solutions that would avoid conservative government by the elite as well as revolution by the masses. "Between the Republican party flying the black flag of legalized piracy," he declared in 1913, "and the Socialist party with the red flag of revolution, the Democratic party proposes to lead the people back to the days of equal opportunity . . . ."<sup>24</sup>

With the election of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson in 1912, Kern was the administration's floor leader in the Senate.<sup>25</sup> He became the first party whip in the upper chamber, a post later occupied by such men as Alben W. Barkley and Lyndon B. Johnson. Because of Kern's responsibilities in marshaling support for Wilson's progressive reforms, Bowers undertook many of the tasks that senators normally handled themselves—overseeing the office, tending to liaison duties with the public and politicians back home, and on occasion taking care of speaking engagements. In addition to his duties as Senator Kern's secretary, Bowers regularly contributed editorials to the *Terre Haute Star*. Kern's defeat for reelection in 1916 sent Bowers home to Indiana where he accepted an editorial post with the *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* the following year.

By 1917 Bowers had been married for six years. His wife, Sybil McCaslin, had been an Indianapolis schoolteacher whose family owned a large farm on the west side of the city. Although she regularly attended social functions with her husband throughout his public career, Sybil was an unassuming, loyal mate who preferred to stay behind the scenes. Perhaps a bit shy, she occasionally suffered an attack of nerves when the press of official duties seemed to crowd in on their private lives. Claude and Sybil had one daughter, Patricia, who later was graduated from Sarah Lawrence College.

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<sup>23</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 78.

<sup>24</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *The Democracy of Woodrow Wilson* (Washington, D.C., n.d.), 7. This address, given in Boston, June 16, 1913, and published in pamphlet form, can be found in Claude G. Bowers Papers III (Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington).

<sup>25</sup> For Kern's senate career see Peter J. Sehlinger, "John W. Kern: A Hoosier Progressive," in Ralph D. Gray, ed., *Gentlemen from Indiana: National Party Candidates, 1836-1940* (Indianapolis, 1977), 191-217; and Virginia F. Haughton, "John Worth Kern and Wilson's New Freedom" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1973).

Bowers was almost forty years old when he arrived in Fort Wayne with his wife and young daughter. His slight stature certainly belied his future importance, but acquaintances were immediately impressed by his seriousness of purpose and his historical and political knowledge. Bowers's rather sunken, doleful eyes and prominent ears likewise endowed him with no special aura of respectability. However, his general demeanor did offer intimations of a man of forthright opinions who favored an informal, middle-class life-style. Particularly later, when as an ambassador he was forced to dress in formal garb, his obviously awkward countenance conformed more to the world's notion of a small-town Hoosier than to that of a sophisticated, upper-class diplomat.

Bowers had added another dimension to his public life by 1917. Just as his political convictions had taken him into journalism and to Washington, they likewise found expression in his historical writings.<sup>26</sup> While working for Senator Kern in 1916, Bowers published his first book, *The Irish Orators*. In this study the author displayed his deep respect for formal political discourse by eulogizing the Hibernian statesmen he had first encountered in his afternoons of reading in the Indianapolis Public Library. In 1918 Bowers wrote *The Life of John Worth Kern*, a laudatory biography that emphasized the importance of his former employer in passing President Wilson's New Freedom legislation.<sup>27</sup> During the next fourteen years Bowers would contribute other well-received works that reached a large national audience. For him history served as a lesson for those interested in current political issues. In *The Party Battles of the Jackson Period* (1922) he argued that "the election of Jackson was due to the rising of the masses" and vigorously defended the democratic policies of the seventh president of the United States.<sup>28</sup> In his most popular work, *Jefferson and Hamilton* (1925), a volume that has gone through twenty-seven printings and is translated into several languages, the journalist-historian castigated Hamilton for favoring "the rule of 'gentlemen'—the domination of aristocrats . . .," while lauding the Virginian for taking "upon himself the organization of the forces of democracy . . ."<sup>29</sup> Bowers claimed that "from the time of the Civil War on down practically every book written about Jefferson had attempted to damn him if only with faint praise. That wasn't so strange, after all. It

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<sup>26</sup> For an evaluation of Bowers as a historian see Oliver Knight, "Claude G. Bowers, Historian," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LII (September, 1956), 247-68.

<sup>27</sup> For a critical review of this work see George C. Roberts, "Claude G. Bowers: Hoosier Historian and the Politics of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*, XVII (1982), 61-69.

<sup>28</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *The Party Battles of the Jackson Period* (Boston, 1922), 65.

<sup>29</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *Jefferson and Hamilton: The Struggle for Democracy in America* (Boston, 1925), 29, 115.

was political. The old Hamiltonian group was in power, and the writers of history didn't have the guts to combat it."<sup>30</sup>

In *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln* (1929) the Hoosier Democrat blamed the Radical Republicans for humiliating the defeated white southerners following the Civil War. The author later admitted that his thesis reflected his boyhood notions of the Republicans' Reconstruction policies, but Bowers buttressed his conclusions by consulting boxes of diaries and letters supplied him by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>31</sup> As later historians have observed, certainly one of Bowers's purposes in writing *The Tragic Era* was a partisan political consideration. In 1928 Republican Herbert Hoover proved to be the first strong presidential candidate of his party in the South, so Bowers realized that his book would serve to remind southern Democrats in 1929 of the Republicans' Reconstruction measures.<sup>32</sup> Despite the political focus of his writings he later published a praise-laden biography about an Indiana Republican, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (1932). Like Kern, Senator Beveridge was an effective advocate of progressive political reform and a friend of the author.

Bowers's historical works originally met with critical acclaim, but today his reputation as a historian is tarnished. In 1926 Samuel F. Bemis, later president of the American Historical Association, reviewed Bowers's *Jefferson and Hamilton* and wrote, "The author of the *Party Battles of the Jackson Period* has done even a better thing with the party battles of the Jefferson and Hamilton period." Bemis lauded Bowers's research and noted that the work served "as a good antidote to the several recent studies extolling the marvels of Federalism and glorifying too exclusively the genius of Hamilton."<sup>33</sup> Likewise, Charles R. Lingley praised *The Tragic Era* in the *American Historical Review* and asserted, "With . . . [Bowers's] conclusion, all judicially minded will have to agree."<sup>34</sup> However, more recent historians have reinterpreted Jefferson's contributions and Reconstruction, and their conclusions differ from those of Bowers. Dumas Malone, the outstanding modern Jefferson scholar, maintains that the label "Jeffersonian" should not be used to describe twentieth-century politicians, and he carefully reminds the readers of his six-volume *Jefferson and His Time*

<sup>30</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 61.

<sup>31</sup> Holman Hamilton, "Before 'The Tragic Era': Claude Bowers's Earlier Attitudes Toward Reconstruction," *Mid-America*, LV (October, 1973), 235-44.

<sup>32</sup> David E. Kyvig, "History as Present Politics: Claude Bowers' *The Tragic Era*," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXIII (March, 1977), 17.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Flagg Bemis, review of *Jefferson and Hamilton: The Struggle for Democracy in America*, by Claude G. Bowers, *American Historical Review*, XXXI (April, 1926), 544, 545.

<sup>34</sup> Charles R. Lingley, review of *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln*, by Claude G. Bowers, *American Historical Review*, XXXV (January, 1930), 383.

(1948-1981) that "in these pages he [Jefferson] has been viewed in his own time and circumstances."<sup>35</sup> Writing of the post-Civil War period, a leading contemporary historian, Kenneth M. Stampp, singles out for attack Bowers's conclusions in *The Tragic Era* and argues that the policies of the Radical Republicans are worthy of praise because they reflected their commitment to guaranteeing the new rights of the former slaves. Stampp charges that Bowers viewed blacks as "ignorant, barbarous, sensual Negroes who threatened to Africanize the South and destroy its Caucasian civilization."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Bowers's advocacy of liberal democracy did not lead him to champion the cause of black Americans in his historical works or in politics. Like so many of his liberal and conservative contemporaries in the 1920s, the Hoosier author was not sympathetic to the plight of the freedmen and depicted them in pejorative terms. For example, in *The Tragic Era* Bowers referred to their "bizarre notions of labor," "indulgence in sexual promiscuity," and "indolence," and he noted that many black troops in the postwar South "were children, acting as children would under the circumstances."<sup>37</sup>

Recent historical criticism of Bowers's works cannot detract from their immense popularity. Scholars agree that *Jefferson and Hamilton* probably has been read by more Americans "than any other single volume on Jefferson or on the formative era of American politics" and that *The Tragic Era* "has attracted more readers than any other dealing with the period."<sup>38</sup> In his historical studies Bowers affirmed that he sought "to re-create as nearly as I could the atmosphere . . . of the time, the reaction of the people to what was going on."<sup>39</sup> The author's success in accomplishing this goal accounted in large measure for the appeal of his books, which in turn brought him welcome, if not vast, royalties.

For six years in Fort Wayne Bowers contributed two columns of editorials daily and a page of book reviews each Sunday for the *Journal-Gazette*. Predictably, he vigorously opposed the 1920 Republican presidential nominee, Warren G. Harding, and called him "the most reactionary tool of the special interests who has ever been named for the presidency . . ."<sup>40</sup> Bowers used his pen to lambaste the Harding presidency for favoring big-business interests

<sup>35</sup> Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. VI: *The Sage of Monticello* (Boston, 1981), 499.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction* (New York, 1965), 4-5. Quotation is located on p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 48, 49, 51, 52.

<sup>38</sup> Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jeffersonian Image in the American Mind* (New York, 1962), 347; Stampp, *Era of Reconstruction*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 65.

<sup>40</sup> Fort Wayne *Journal-Gazette*, October 6, 1920.



instead of those of the average citizen and warned, "Radicalism has flowered from the dung heap of reactionary policies."<sup>41</sup> In addition to editorial duties for the *Journal-Gazette*, a leading Democratic newspaper, Bowers continued to speak throughout Indiana at political rallies. In 1922 he was urged by friends to run for the United States Senate, but his party's nod went to his friend Samuel Ralston who defeated former Senator Beveridge that year.

Bowers's strident Democratic editorials brought him to the attention of the staff of the New York *Evening World*, and in 1923 he accepted an editorial post with this daily. When the *Evening World* ceased publishing in 1931, William Randolph Hearst offered the transplanted Hoosier an editorial position at the New York *Evening Journal*. For two years Bowers's columns were carried coast to coast by papers in the Hearst chain.

In New York as in Indiana, Bowers continued to aim his editorial fire at the conservative Republicans in control of government in Washington, claiming that the administration of President Calvin Coolidge was in fact "the tacit tool of Privilege . . ."<sup>42</sup> In an editorial titled "Working for the Reds," Bowers asserted, "The hard-headed business man, even though he has read no history must know that the continuance of the policies that have created the unrest and awakened the radical sentiment will but accentuate the evil and hasten the day of reckoning."<sup>43</sup>

In New York Bowers also became a close friend of Theodore Dreiser, a Terre Haute native, whom the newspaperman considered "one of the most heroic and significant figures in our literary history."<sup>44</sup> Though Bowers did not agree with the realistic novelist's sympathy for socialism, both writers respected each other's distrust of big business and shared a common concern for the poor.

Bowers's partisan political stands immediately involved him in the activities of the Democratic party in New York. In 1926 he wrote innumerable political speeches for his new friend Robert F. Wagner and was given credit by the New Yorker as the force responsible for his election to the United States Senate. Wagner became a New Deal stalwart and remained an influential political ally of Bowers. In one speech for Wagner the Hoosier journalist included the admonition "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts," which the ethnically conscious New York candidate immediately struck from the text to avoid offending the Greek-American voters. Bowers later recalled this political mistake and remarked, "Then I knew I was in New York."<sup>45</sup> The Democratic journalist also was a friend of

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, November 14, 1922.

<sup>42</sup> New York *Evening World*, October 3, 1924.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, October 21, 1924.

<sup>44</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 172.

<sup>45</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 60.

Alfred E. Smith and was the keynote speaker at the 1928 Democratic convention that nominated the "Happy Warrior" for the presidency. Bowers entertained his audience with a bitter attack on the Harding-Coolidge years. He charged that "privilege and pillage are the Gold Dust twins of normalcy" and argued that "under the rule of this regime the average man has no more stake in the government for which he may be called upon to die than if he had never touched our soil."<sup>46</sup>

Like many other progressives Bowers did not embrace a concern for civil rights for blacks, but he was a bitter foe of religious bigotry in the 1920s. His first work, *The Irish Orators*, praised the efforts of Roman Catholic patriots in Ireland who sought independence from Britain, and James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore contributed the introduction to this volume. Bowers opposed the Ku Klux Klan and noted with disapproval that by 1922 its members "fairly swarmed in Indiana from the river to the lake."<sup>47</sup> He was particularly distressed at the religious fanaticism displayed in the 1928 presidential campaign against Al Smith, a Roman Catholic. Later, in his autobiography, Bowers recalled the intolerance that marked the 1928 contest and condemned the "marching men in uniforms of bedsheets and pillowcases, the fanning of the flames of hate, the burning of crosses, intimidation—all quite similar to events in Germany in the 1930s."<sup>48</sup>

Franklin D. Roosevelt was Bowers's most influential New York political ally. Bowers had first met FDR in Washington in 1913, but their friendship dated from the Hoosier's years as a journalist in New York City. At the request of Hearst, his Republican employer, Bowers declined to make the nominating speech for Roosevelt at the 1932 Democratic convention, but during the campaign the partisan journalist spoke for the national ticket in Terre Haute, Detroit, Buffalo, and Syracuse. He even substituted for Roosevelt on a nationwide radio hookup when the candidate's schedule prevented him from delivering his own speech. In his election-year editorials Bowers continued to attack the policies of President Hoover. Bowers blamed the Great Depression on "the policies of the Coolidge regime of complete subservience to Wall Street . . ." and argued that "Mr. Hoover has done little and has done the little that he did very late after irreparable damage had been done."<sup>49</sup> At the same time Bowers compared Roosevelt to Jefferson and Jackson, claiming that all three represented the tenet that "gov-

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<sup>46</sup> Claude G. Bowers, keynote address to the 1928 Democratic convention in Houston, reprinted in *The Political News*, July, 1928, pp. 11, 10, Bowers Papers III.

<sup>47</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), 533.

<sup>48</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 203.

<sup>49</sup> *New York Evening Journal*, October 1, 15, 1932.



CLAUDE G. BOWERS'S "DECORATION DAY" SPEECH, JULY 4, 1917,  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA



CLAUDE G. BOWERS GIVING A TALK AT A DEMOCRATIC PARTY EVENT  
IN NEW YORK CITY IN THE LATE 1920S

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

ernments exist for the equal benefit of all the people, and for the protection of the public against the exploitation of powerful monopolies."<sup>50</sup>

Bowers played a part in shaping Roosevelt's view of himself and his administration as contemporary continuators of Jefferson's democratic principles. At Bowers's request the future president had, in 1925, written his only book review, a laudatory critique of *Jefferson and Hamilton* for the *Evening World*. Reflecting on this work, Roosevelt remarked: "I wonder if, a century and a quarter later, the same contending forces are not again mobilizing. Hamiltonians we have today. Is a Jefferson on the horizon?"<sup>51</sup> As president, Roosevelt readily accepted the role of the "new Jefferson" and went to great lengths to associate himself with the Virginian.<sup>52</sup> The Hyde Park executive often quoted Jefferson and on occasion instructed his subordinates to search for statements by the third president that could be used to support New Deal initiatives. In his appointments Roosevelt favored Democrats who were known admirers of the Virginian. Roosevelt's first ambassador to Germany was University of Chicago historian William E. Dodd who was well known for his laudatory views of Jefferson. Both as a loyal supporter in the 1932 campaign and as a renowned defender of Jefferson, Bowers was particularly deserving in the president's eyes to be a part of his administration.

The president-elect in 1933 offered Bowers the choice of several European ambassadorial posts. "I selected Spain," Bowers stated, "partly because they had just established a republic and I was very anxious to watch what progress they would make."<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the Spanish monarch had been voted out of power in 1931 by a liberal-leftist majority. For Bowers the essential issue for contemporary Spain was whether the conservative monarchists would prevail or whether the republicans would construct a democratic society based on universal suffrage and equal social opportunities. Almost predictably Bowers noted that the strong opposition of the Spanish right to liberal reforms reminded him "so much of the struggle of the first twelve years of the United States when the Hamiltonians were fighting democracy and trying to establish a plutocratic republic."<sup>54</sup> In Madrid the ambassador was shocked to discover that almost all American embassy personnel, like their business counterparts in Spain, preferred the security of a conserv-

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, October 5, 1932.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Peterson, *Jeffersonian Image in the American Mind*, 352.

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of Bowers's influence on Roosevelt and the New Deal's use of the Jefferson legacy, see *ibid.*, 347-76.

<sup>53</sup> Bowers, "Reminiscences," 92.

<sup>54</sup> Claude G. Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," November 13, 1935, Bowers Papers II.



**AMBASSADOR CLAUDE G. BOWERS**

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

ative monarchy to a democratic republic. Concerning the republic Bowers acidly observed, "It seems no one is for it but the mass of the people."<sup>55</sup> As the political fortunes of the right and the left ebbed and flowed, Bowers remained correctly neutral, but in his diplomatic dispatches he angered the conservative Republicans in the State Department by siding with the democratic parties in the center of Spain's political spectrum.<sup>56</sup>

Bowers never became accustomed to the rather meaningless social life of the diplomatic corps. Reflecting his background and his beliefs, he went out of his way to be a democratic, "shirt-sleeves" ambassador. His frequent comments on diplomatic entertaining reveal his forthright, commonsense approach: "This evening went to a tea at the home of . . . the counsellor of the French embassy. . . . We got away as soon as possible. Lord spare me from such an empty life."<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, in many ways he was forced to conform to the aristocratic requirements of his position. Since the United States owned no embassy in Madrid, Bowers rented a large ducal palace which served both as his residence and offices.<sup>58</sup> The building occupied an entire city block and included a Goya salon built around a series of this Spaniard's paintings, a sacristy and chapel, a marble-floored dining room with paintings on the ceiling and a table that seated more than twenty guests, a tennis court, and a large formal garden with a stone terrace. The staff required for the embassy consisted of a butler, two footmen, two chefs, a doorkeeper, a gardener, a kitchen maid, two house maids, and a charwoman. These servants' wages totaled \$253.00 a month, and their food allowance came to an additional \$165.00. Because of his limited personal resources, Bowers hired a French chef only when he gave formal state dinners.

Entertaining in Spain represented myriad, often unique problems. The government was a parliamentary democracy, but the instability of the party coalitions meant frequent ministerial changes. Bowers twice offered luncheons for the prime minister, only to discover after it was too late to cancel the function that the honored guest was in fact an ex-minister and prohibited by protocol from attending. One typical menu described by Bowers demonstrates the elaborateness of these affairs as well as the ambassador's faulty French:

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, July 11, 1933.

<sup>56</sup> For harsh criticisms of Bowers by career diplomats in the State Department, see William Phillips, "Diary," August 5, 21, 1936, William Phillips Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts); and John D. Hickerston to Jay Pierrepont Moffat, October 14, 1936, Jay Pierrepont Moffat Papers (Houghton Library).

<sup>57</sup> Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," April 12, 1934.

<sup>58</sup> For details of the Madrid embassy see *ibid.*, June 2, 16, 1933; and Claude Bowers to Patricia Bowers, May 31, 1933, Bowers Papers III.



AMBASSADOR CLAUDE G. BOWERS PRESENTS HIS CREDENTIALS  
TO MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LUIS ZULETA ESCOLANO,  
JUNE 1, 1933

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Oeufs Poches Princesse  
 Filets De Soles Normande  
 Noisette de Veau Forestier  
 Mousseline de Volaille Strasbourgoise  
 Salade de Saison  
 Mousse de Fraises Glacee  
 Gateau  
 Delices de Camerbert.<sup>59</sup>

During the summer months the Spanish government and the accredited foreign missions left sweltering Madrid for the cool ocean breezes from the Bay of Biscay in the northern city of San Sebastián. Just across the border in France at Biarritz the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII of England, vacationed. Bowers noted with amusement that some of the snobbish foreign summer residents complained that the future monarch's attire was too casual. They say, he wrote, that the prince "lowers the tone" of their resort.<sup>60</sup> In August of 1934 Bowers reported that a friend saw the future king at a night club "with Mrs Simpson, his latest mistress, looking much dissipated and unhappy."<sup>61</sup>

The ambassador's duties of course involved far more than the boring rounds of social engagements. In addition to such normal diplomatic chores as reporting to Washington on the Spanish political situation and overseeing the freeing of drunken American sailors arrested in Iberian ports, Bowers devoted most of his energies in his first three years in Madrid to economic concerns.<sup>62</sup> Despite his personal suspicion of big business he was a vigorous defender of the rights of United States firms in Spain, particularly International Telephone and Telegraph, the Firestone Company, General Motors, Ford, General Electric, and the National City Bank Corporation. He also labored for a commercial accord between the two nations, but sensitive economic interests in each country so complicated negotiations that no treaty was signed.<sup>63</sup> Bowers did successfully argue for a \$650,000 loan to Spain from the United States Export-Import Bank in 1934 and managed to convince the Tariff Commission to permit increased imports of Spanish wines, produce, and sausages into the American market.

<sup>59</sup> Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," May 4, 1934.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, August 9, 1934.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, August 28, 1934.

<sup>62</sup> For an analysis of Bowers's diplomacy concerning United States-Spanish economic relations, see Sabine Jessner, "Claude G. Bowers, New Deal Advocate of Spanish-American Commerce, 1933-1939," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*, XX (1985).

<sup>63</sup> Correspondence between Bowers and Roosevelt concerning United States-Spanish trade difficulties is found in President's Personal File, 1936-1945, 730, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers as President (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York).



Spanish elections in February, 1936, brought to power the Popular Front, a coalition of moderate groups and the Socialist and Communist parties. The traditional conservatives opposed these republicans' program to secularize public education and to initiate land reform and personal income taxes. Terrorist attacks between the right and the left became increasingly frequent following the election. In July, 1936, the frightened conservatives, led by a military uprising, resorted to civil war to overcome the Popular Front government. Soon the conflict turned into a drawn-out struggle between the conservative army troops commanded by General Francisco Franco and the forces of the moderate-leftist political parties under the leadership of Prime Minister Manuel Azaña.

The United States, France, and Britain declared their neutrality in the military's attempt to overthrow Spanish democracy. Bowers soon realized that Adolph Hitler's Germany and Benito Mussolini's Italy were pouring men and materiel into Spain to assist General Franco, and the ambassador, of course, emphasized this intervention in his many reports to the State Department.<sup>64</sup> True to his democratic principles, the ambassador confessed to his diary, "My sympathies are wholly with the Government."<sup>65</sup> However, many career diplomats in Washington were conservative Republican appointees of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Unlike Bowers, these foreign service officers feared the alliance of the small Communist party with the Popular Front government of the republic far more than the totalitarian forces backing General Franco.<sup>66</sup> Suspicious of political appointees, Undersecretary of State William Phillips reportedly had acquiesced to Bowers's ambassadorship in Madrid only after Roosevelt exerted pressure.<sup>67</sup> The undersecretary was convinced that the Popular Front victory in 1936 meant that "Spain may become Communistic," and he consistently opposed the ambassador's suggestions.<sup>68</sup> Bowers certainly held foreign service officers in low esteem. Typical of his views of professional diplomats was a comment to his wife that "the more I see of career men the more I doubt their interest in or partiality for democracy."<sup>69</sup> Bowers was very aware of the hostility of some career officers toward him. Once on encountering difficulties with the State

<sup>64</sup> Bowers to Cordell Hull, September 21, 1936, Bowers Papers II; Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," June 1, 1939.

<sup>65</sup> Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," August 21, 1936.

<sup>66</sup> For an analysis of Bowers's difficulties with the State Department, see Douglas Little, "Claude Bowers: The Diplomacy of a Jeffersonian Diplomat" (Paper given at the convention of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., December 29, 1980); and Douglas Little, "Claude Bowers and His Mission to Spain: The Diplomacy of a Jeffersonian Democrat," in Kenneth Paul Jones, ed., *U.S. Diplomats in Europe, 1919-1941* (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1981), 129-46.

<sup>67</sup> Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York, 1939), 131-32.

<sup>68</sup> Phillips, "Diary," June 2, 1936.

<sup>69</sup> Bowers to Sybil and Pat Bowers, March 22, 1939, Bowers Papers III.



AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN CLAUDE G. BOWERS AT  
HIS DESK IN THE WARTIME EMBASSY, ST.-JEAN-  
DE-LUZ, FRANCE, DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL  
WAR

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Department, he wrote, "I am sure some bureaucratic pups are responsible, and they are all Republicans and hate me like poison."<sup>70</sup>

Bowers sent many reports and letters in favor of the republican cause to the State Department and to President Roosevelt, but the ambassador exerted no discernible influence on United States policy toward Spain during the civil war. Despite his many reports to Washington that the Popular Front could not hold out indefinitely unless the democracies permitted the elected government to purchase arms, the State Department was quite content to witness the victory of General Franco with the support of Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>71</sup> American businessmen with Spanish investments, particularly International Telephone and Telegraph and National City Bank, also feared the influence of the Socialist and Communist parties in the Popular Front and were outspoken in favoring a fascist victory. Executives of these firms, of course, helped to influence United States policy during the civil war.<sup>72</sup> Like his ambassador, Roosevelt sympathized with the legitimate democratic government in Spain, but throughout the Spanish civil war the United States followed the lead of Britain and France in carefully avoiding any outright confrontation with Hitler and Mussolini. Both Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull were quite aware that public opinion in the United States during the 1930s strongly opposed American involvement in foreign conflicts. France followed the policies and dictates of Britain. In London, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain directed his popular policy of appeasement by sanctioning Hitler's annexation of Austria and rape of Czechoslovakia and by accepting Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia. In the case of Spain, France and Britain pretended that the civil war was a localized conflict in order to placate the fascist powers. Both democracies refused to permit the republic to buy arms from them, as did the United States.<sup>73</sup> With one million dead in Spain and after such infamous atrocities as the German pilots' bombing of Guernica on market day—immortalized by Pablo Picasso's mural—fascism conquered Spanish democracy in early 1939.

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<sup>70</sup> Bowers to Secretary of Commerce Daniel C. Roper, July 31, 1935, Official File, 1933-1945, 303.1, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers as President.

<sup>71</sup> For Secretary of State Cordell Hull's defense of United States policy toward Spain during the civil war see Hull to Bowers, November 2, 1936, Volume 40 (microfilm edition, reel 14), Cordell Hull Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.); and Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (2 vols., New York, 1948), I, 485, 504.

<sup>72</sup> For Bowers's views on the importance of International Telephone and Telegraph and National City Bank in influencing United States policy toward Spain during the civil war, see Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," May 11, June 1, 1939.

<sup>73</sup> Concerning the diplomacy of the civil war see Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1958); F. Jay Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1956); Richard P. Traina, *American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War* (Bloomington, 1968); and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York, 1981).

Because of his strong democratic beliefs and the opposition toward him in the State Department, Bowers did not negotiate with Franco's regime. Aware of the pro-Franco sentiments of Joseph P. Kennedy, United States ambassador in London, Bowers suspected that the diplomat's eldest son, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., had worked out the details of American recognition of the new government.<sup>74</sup> This notion was based on Bowers's knowledge that this Kennedy son was in Madrid when the city fell to the insurgents in the spring of 1939.<sup>75</sup> Bowers later accepted Hull's statement that William Bullitt, United States ambassador to France, had arranged this matter.<sup>76</sup>

Recalled to Washington in the spring of 1939, Bowers was greeted by a downcast Roosevelt: "I have made a mistake. You have been right all along. I have been imposed upon by false information from across the street [the State Department]."<sup>77</sup> For the Spanish republic, however, this conclusion came too late. That same day Senator Key Pittman confessed to Bowers, "I am afraid we made a mistake about Spain."<sup>78</sup> In 1936 Pittman had introduced the neutrality bill that prohibited the sale of arms to Spain. Back in Washington Bowers was offered the post of ambassador to Poland, but he refused it. Instead, he chose to become ambassador to Chile.

Bowers served in Santiago for fourteen years, 1939 to 1953, primarily during the administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman.<sup>79</sup> President Dwight D. Eisenhower accepted Bowers's resignation in August, 1953. Early in Bowers's tenure in Chile the European war between democracy and fascism broke out again, just as the ambassador had predicted. Six months after the fall of the republic in Spain, the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, started World War II. Two years later Pearl Harbor would bring the United States into the war against fascism.

In Chile Bowers again encountered an elected Popular Front government intent on improving the living standards of the masses. Needless to say, he sympathized with its goals. This time the State Department assisted him in his defense of democracy. A large and influential German-Chilean population made Bowers's advocacy of the Allied war effort important in Santiago. When Chile later joined

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<sup>74</sup> Bowers, "My Spanish Diary," March 10, 1939.

<sup>75</sup> Walter C. Thurston, St.-Jean-de-Luz, April 11, 1939, telegram 612, Department of State, 130 Joseph P. Kennedy (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

<sup>76</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *My Mission to Spain: Watching the Rehearsal for World War II* (New York, 1954), 420.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Bowers to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., April 12, 1951, Bowers Papers III.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> For the details of his ambassadorship in Chile see Claude G. Bowers, "My Chilean Diary," Bowers Papers II; and Claude G. Bowers, *Chile through Embassy Windows, 1939-1953* (New York, 1950).



LEFT TO RIGHT, MRS. IBÁÑEZ,  
PRESIDENT CARLOS IBÁÑEZ DEL  
CAMPO, MRS. ELEANOR ROOSE-  
VELT, MRS. SYBIL BOWERS, AND  
AMBASSADOR CLAUDE G. BOW-  
ERS, SANTIAGO, CHILE

Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

the struggle against Germany, Italy, and Japan, the United States embassy under Bowers's guidance helped increase the export of strategic Chilean copper to supply the essential armament industries.

Despite his full schedule as ambassador for twenty years, Bowers continued to expound his democratic views in his published works. Two more volumes were dedicated to an appreciation of Thomas Jefferson's contributions to American democracy: *Jefferson in Power* (1936) and *The Young Jefferson* (1945). Basing his research on materials found in the archives of the United States embassy in Madrid, Bowers recounted the experiences of one of his famous predecessors as minister to Spain in *The Spanish Adventures of Washington Irving* (1940). Since his days as a high school student reading in the Indianapolis Public Library, Bowers had admired Pierre Vergniaud as a spokesman for personal liberties and an opponent of dictatorship during the French Revolution. While ambassador to Spain, Bowers found time to do research in Paris on this French democrat and published *Pierre Vergniaud: The Voice of the French Revolution* in 1950. In this biography the author paid the Frenchman the ultimate compliment by asserting that "his conception of a good society was identical with that of Thomas Jefferson."<sup>80</sup>

Claude, Sybil, and Pat returned to New York City in 1953. In his apartment near Central Park the partisan Democrat continued in his retirement to disseminate his views through his speeches and his writing. He gave lectures on United States history and foreign policy in Memphis; Oxford, Mississippi; Indianapolis; New York; Washington, D.C.; Lexington, Kentucky; Princeton; and New Haven. A lifelong advocate of free speech, he opposed the excesses and the hysteria generated by Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist crusade, and in 1955 and 1956 Bowers found time to serve on a New York committee supporting Adlai Stevenson for the Democratic presidential nomination. In his first year back in the United States the retired ambassador published *My Mission to Spain* (1954), a volume recounting his experiences between 1933 and 1939. Likewise, in *Chile through Embassy Windows* (1958) he discussed his fourteen years in Santiago. When he died in 1958, he had finished all but the final chapter of his autobiography, *My Life*, which was published posthumously in 1962. In each of these volumes Bowers emphasized his efforts to promote the cause of democracy in the United States, Spain, and Chile.

Claude G. Bowers was an outstanding representative of a generation of important midwestern reformers. From his high school

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<sup>80</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *Pierre Vergniaud: The Voice of the French Revolution* (New York, 1950), 9.

days in Indianapolis on, he fervently believed that “government and its policies are the business of every citizen.”<sup>81</sup> As an outspoken progressive, the Hoosier native dedicated his life to a defense of his ideals. Throughout the progressive era, the conservative decade of the 1920s, and the New Deal years and until his death in 1958, he continued to champion his faith in representative government. As a journalist, orator, political aide, ambassador, and author of historical works, Bowers was a proud partisan of popular democracy.

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<sup>81</sup> Bowers, *My Life*, 42.