



William McKinley: The American Presidents Series: The 25th President, 1897-1901

By Kevin Phillips

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A bestselling historian and political commentator reconsiders McKinley's overshadowed legacy

By any serious measurement, bestselling historian Kevin Phillips argues, William McKinley was a major American president. It was during his administration that the United States made its diplomatic and military debut as a world power. McKinley was one of eight presidents who, either in the White House or on the battlefield, stood as principals in successful wars, and he was among the six or seven to take office in what became recognized as a major realignment of the U.S. party system.

Phillips, author of *Wealth and Democracy* and *The Cousins' War*, has long been fascinated with McKinley in the context of how the GOP began each of its cycles of power. He argues that McKinley's lackluster ratings have been sustained not by unjust biographers but by years of criticism about his personality, indirect methodologies, middle-class demeanor, and tactical inability to inspire the American public. In this powerful and persuasive biography, Phillips musters convincing evidence that McKinley's desire to heal, renew prosperity, and reunite the country qualify him for promotion into the ranks of the best chief executives.

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Editorial Review

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Wasn't William McKinley the lackluster chief executive whose assassination left the dynamic Teddy Roosevelt president? In this latest volume in the publisher's American Presidents series, historian Phillips, author of the well-received *Cousins' Wars* (1999), shows us there is much more to McKinley. In fact, the author goes so far as to insist, "By any serious measurement, William McKinley was a major American president." Of course, Phillips is not asking that the twenty-fifth president (whose tenure ran from 1897 to 1901) be considered a first-rank chief executive, alongside Washington and Lincoln. But in this original reevaluation, he makes a strong case for placing McKinley on the "six- or eight-president second tier." Although Phillips sounds strained on occasion, he nevertheless convinces readers that McKinley was a healing, renewing, and reuniting leader--a near-great president, that is. A bold, new look that, itself, deserves a serious look. (Also see following review.) *Brad Hooper*

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Review

"An instructive, graceful look at a neglected presidency." *Kirkus Reviews, starred review*

About the Author

Kevin Phillips, author of *Wealth and Democracy*, *The Cousins' War*, and *Arrogant Capital*, is a regular contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Washington Post* and is a commentator for CBS and National Public Radio. He also edits his own newsletter, *American Political Report*. He lives in Connecticut.

Users Review

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Peter Mullins:

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