

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910787485503321
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Titolo	The climax of populism : the election of 1896 // Robert F. Durden
Pubbl/distr/stampa	[Lexington, Kentucky] : , : University of Kentucky Press, , 1965 ©1965
ISBN	0-8131-8601-3 0-8131-6265-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (208 p.)
Disciplina	324.2732/7
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	"Note on sources": p. [171]-181.
Nota di contenuto	Cover; Title; Copyright; Preface; Contents; 1. The Crisis for Populism; 2. The St. Louis Convention; 3. The Campaign: First Phase; 4. The Campaign: Final Phase; 5. Defeat and Aftermath; Note on Sources; Index;
Sommario/riassunto	Rarely has a third political party in the United States exerted a force upon national events comparable to that of the Populists during the 1890's. This force reached its climax in the presidential race of 1896, when the national reforms epitomized in the cry for free silver were at issue. Yet despite a number of recent studies, confusion and error regarding the Populists in the crucial election of 1896 still persist. Robert F. Durden, by extensive use of the papers of Marion Butler, Populist senator from North Carolina and national chairman of the party during the campaign, sheds new light upon