



## Frank B. Willis

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

### Introduction

Republican Frank Bartlett Willis (1871-1928) was Ohio's 47th Governor from 1915 to 1917. After graduating from Ohio Northern University in 1894, he stayed on to teach economics, history and eventually law courses. Willis was elected to office multiple times throughout his career, serving in the Ohio House of Representatives, the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate. He was the first Ohio governor to be elected under the direct primary system and advocated for Progressive measures such as eight-hour workdays. During his administration, Ohio implemented several reforms related to road laws, civil service and liquor control. As senator, he was isolationist and opposed the League of Nations. He died while visiting Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio, and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

### Important Dates

- December 28, 1871: Frank Bartlett Willis is born in Lewis Center, Ohio.
- 1894: Willis graduates from Ohio Northern University.
- 1900-1905: Willis represents the Hardin County district in the Ohio House of Representatives.
- 1906: Willis is admitted to the Ohio Bar.
- 1911-1915: Willis represents Ohio's 8th district in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- January 11, 1915: Willis begins his term as 47th Governor of Ohio.
- 1916: The Ohio National Guard is called to stop violence during Youngstown steel strike.
- January 8, 1917: Willis ends his term as Ohio's governor.
- 1921-1928: After Warren G. Harding resigns to run for U.S. President, Willis takes over his seat in the U.S. Senate.
- March 30, 1928: Willis dies in Delaware, Ohio.

### Suggested Search Strategies

- Search the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), as phrases or in proximity: Frank Willis, Willis, governor, Senate, congressman, vote, election, senator, Youngstown, steel, progressive.
- Use date limits to find information about specific events or legislation.

### Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- ["Willis, the Reactionary, Appears in True Colors"](#) *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), October 2, 1914, Image 2, col. 2-3.
- ["Willis is Governor of Ohio Now"](#) *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), January 12, 1915, Image 1, col. 1-4.
- ["Auditor's Figures Expose Extravagance of Governor Willis in State Affairs"](#) *Labor Advocate* (Cincinnati, OH), July 24, 1915, Image 1, col. 1-2.
- ["8 Killed as Mob Battles Police at Youngstown, O."](#) *Fulton County Tribune* (Wauseon, OH), January 14, 1916, Image 3, col. 7.
- ["Shall Ohio Build Up or Tear Down?"](#) *Greenville Journal* (Greenville, OH), October 5, 1916, Image 4, col. 2-4.
- ["For United States Senator: Hon. Frank B. Willis"](#) *Fulton County Tribune* (Wauseon, OH), September 10, 1920, Image 4, col. 3.