

William Howard Taft

1909-1913

Republican

The Philippines

Will came from a blended family. Will was younger than his half-brothers, but equal in size. So they nicknamed the big, strapping, blondish boy “Big Lub.”

Size came in handy for this middle child. Whenever his stepbrothers picked on his little brothers or sister, Will stepped in to protect them.

Predict:

During the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. took the Philippines. President McKinley then appointed Will as Governor of the Philippines. How did Will Taft treat the Filipino people?

He was fair!

No annexation

In 1900, Taft was opposed to the U.S. annexation of the Philippines. He did not believe the U.S. Constitution allowed the U.S. to own colonies. But if he did a good job, President McKinley might appoint him to the Supreme Court. So he established courts, a legal system, and limited self-government. And built roads, hospitals, and schools. In 1903, President Teddy Roosevelt offered Taft a seat on the Supreme Court. But native Filipino groups begged him to remain as Governor. So he did.

