

# Nicolas Murray Butler

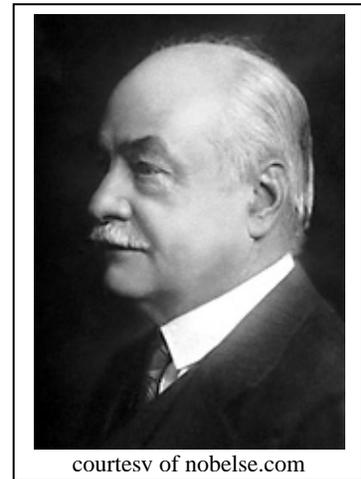
1931

*"Optimism is essential to achievement and it is also the foundation of courage and true progress."*

Nicolas Butler was born in New Jersey. At the age of 20 he graduated from Columbia University. He studied in Paris and Berlin where he became friends with Elihu Root, another Nobel Prize Laureate. They would remain friends for their whole lives.

He taught for 60 years at Columbia.

While he was teaching at Columbia, Butler started a class for teachers. He also started a magazine to help teachers improve their teaching. He was the editor of this **Journal** for 30 years. He had a strong interest in helping teachers. In 1902 he became the president of Columbia and remained president until 1945.



- President of Columbia University
- Advisor to Presidents Taft and Roosevelt
- Member Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Kellogg Brand Pact Candidate for President

During his time at Columbia Butler made amazing progress. Columbia became a major university. All graduate programs grew larger, and new schools were added such as journalism and dentistry. Columbia grew larger because of the many good programs it had for students.

Butler was also interested in serving in the US government. He was friends with powerful men that included Elihu Root, William Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt in the early days of the century.

In 1912 Roosevelt ran for the presidency as candidate of the **Progressive party**, a **part** of the Republican Party. Taft and Butler ran for president and vice president as Republicans. Because their candidacy split the vote among Republicans, Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat won the election.

In 1916 Butler supported Elihu Root's unsuccessfully campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. He tried to win the nomination for himself in 1920 and 1924 but failed to win it.

Butler tried to link the world of education and the world of politics to create world peace through worldwide cooperation. He was chairman of the Conferences on International **Arbitration** which met from 1907 through 1912. He was a member of the Carnegie **Endowment** for International Peace for thirty five years. He persuaded Andrew Carnegie to create the Endowment in 1910 with a gift of ten million dollars.

He was a supporter of the **repeal** of Prohibition in 1933 because he felt it was having negative effects on the country.

Butler shared the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize with Jane Addams. He was honored for his work with Carnegie as well as the Conferences on International Arbitration.

Butler became almost blind in 1945 after writing his biography, "Across the Bully Years". He died in 1947.

Butler was a Nobel Peace Laureate, an educator, a university president, an advisor to seven presidents, and a friend of foreign leaders. He received awards from fifteen foreign governments, had thirty-seven honorary degrees, and was a member of more than fifty academic societies and twenty clubs. Butler was the author of many books, pamphlets, and speeches, traveled to Europe more than 100 times, was a leader in the Republican Party, and an advocate of peace. He was nicknamed Nicolas "Miraculous" Butler by Theodore Roosevelt because of his many educational and political achievements. This described him perfectly.

## Classroom Activities

Nicolas Butler

### Introduction/Warm Up

Using these quotes from Butler to discuss or write reactions/explanations

*America is the best half-educated country in the world.*

*An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less.*

*Many peoples' tombstones should read 'Died at 30, buried at 60.'*

### Discussion Questions

1. Butler knew Nobel Laureates as friends and in his professional life. Who were they, when did they win, and why? (Level 1)
2. Butler said "Many peoples' tombstones should read 'Died at 30, buried at 60.' What do you think he meant by that?(Level 1)
3. Butler's professional life was centered on education. What influences did he have on education? (Level 2)
4. What caused the Republican Party to lose the election of 1912? (Level 2)
5. What influenced Butler's win of the Nobel Peace Laureate in 1931? (Level 3)
6. Butler's three interests were politics, education and peace. How do these influence each other in positive or negative ways? (Level 3)

### Vocabulary Terms:

1. **Alliance**
2. **Progressive Party**
3. **Offshoot**
4. **Arbitration**
5. **Endowment**
6. **Repeal**

**Technology Option:**

On the Internet find pictures of Murray, Root, Roosevelt, Wilson, Taft, Carnegie, and Jane Addams. Copy and Paste the pictures into a Word document and write about how they knew each other and how they worked together.

**Selected Bibliography**

<http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/nfhtml/nfgal1.html> Portraits of Butler and contemporary men

[http://experts.about.com/e/n/ni/Nicholas\\_M\\_Buler.htm](http://experts.about.com/e/n/ni/Nicholas_M_Buler.htm) Biographical information on Butler

<http://www.nobel.no/> Nobel Peace Prize official site