Effect of Roentgen's "Rays" political cartoon, 1896

Using an X-ray machine, Anti-Combine politician Boies Penrose and Republican Boss David Martin knock down Wencel Hartman, the Combine candidate for President of Select Council. During the 1896 Select and Common Council election in Philadelphia, the Anti-Combine wing of the Republican party in Philadelphia, led by Israel Durham and Boies Penrose opposed the Combine faction. The Anti-Combine won a decisive victory and elected thirty-two members in the two branches. The most contested election was held in the eighth ward between Wencel Hartman and John Roberts. Despite the Anti-Combine's efforts, Hartman won.

Wilhelm Roentgen made the first X-ray film in November 1895. After he gave a public lecture on his discovery, people became fascinated with "Roentgens Rays" and began taking "bone portraits." Advertisers tried to take advantage of the craze by associating their products with new discovery. For example, consumers could buy X-ray soap or aspirin. In February 1896 the Wanamaker & Brown clothing store in Philadelphia bought an X-ray machine. The store gave a public demonstration of the apparatus and displayed "bone portraits" in their window for public viewing.