

Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt

The 26th President of the United States



Theodore Roosevelt was born October 27, 1858 at 28 East 20th Street in New York City. His parents were Dutch immigrants in 1640's and part of wealthy upper class. Due to poor health as a child he was unable to attend school on a regular basis. At eleven to help him recover he began body building and exercising outdoors that gave him his love for nature. By the time he entered Harvard College in 1876 he was a pillar of strength. He wanted to become a naturalist but when his father died he decided to study law and enter the field of politics. He graduated Harvard in 1880 and married Alice Hathaway Lee, a girl from Massachusetts he fell in love with while at Harvard. He went to Columbia Law School where he began writing a book on the role of the navy during the War of 1812.

In 1880 he became a member of the Twenty-First District Republican Association of Manhattan. On October 28, 1881 he was nominated as the Republican candidate for the New York state Assembly, winning the seat On November 9th, a day after he turned twenty three. In 1882 his book *The Naval War of 1812* was published. A copy of his book was placed on board every vessel in the U.S. navy.

He was the youngest member of the state assembly and quickly made his mark helping establish the civil service system in New York and introducing nine bills for the reform of New York City governments – seven of which were passed. He soon became known as a scourge of crooked business and politics. He became the Republican minority leader in the assembly and candidate for speaker at the age of 24 in 1883.

In 1882-1883 he led the fight for legislation outlawing the manufacture of cigars in tenements; sponsored by Samuel Gompers' Cigarmakers Union (Gompers later became head of American Federation of Labor). He toured the tenements and saw the poor conditions and convinced Governor Grover Cleveland to pass the bill. The bill was passed but declared unconstitutional by the New York State Court of Appeals. Roosevelt often met defeats on other measures and many of his victories were only partial successes but he became known as leader of the "Roosevelt Republicans" a group of young New York reformists.

In 1883 Roosevelt was defeated after a bitter fight at the New York State Republican Convention but was elected as a delegate to the GOP national convention. He led the campaign to elect an African American from Mississippi, John R. Lynch over James G. Blaine (famed for his bribery and scandals). Blaine lost to the clean-record candidate of the Democratic Party, Grover Cleveland.

Personal tragedy then struck Theodore Roosevelt. In February 1884 his wife died suddenly after the childbirth of his daughter Alice Lee and then his mother died of typhoid one day later. After the double funeral Roosevelt headed west to find a new life as a cattle rancher in the Badlands of the Dakota Territory. He invested his money in two ranches and chronicled his adventures in three books, the first published in 1885. His exploits made him a legend. He had a close call with a grizzly bear and even captured boat thieves. It was here he came up with the idea of forming a regiment of cowboys in case of a war. Westerners soon considered him one of their own. It was in the West where he learned about democracy and how ordinary men and women lived their lives.



Roosevelt returned to New York City in 1886 to become the Republican candidate for mayor. He came in a poor third!

On December 1886 (in London) he married his childhood friend, Edith Kermit Carow. After an extensive honeymoon in Europe they took up residence at Sagamore Hill. There they had five children of their own, Theodore Jr., Kermit, Ethel, Archibald Bulloch and Quentin.

Roosevelt often returned to North Dakota to hunt but his ranching days were over after he lost most of his herd and his money due to the blizzard of 1887. Roosevelt became a full-time author.

- Biography of Thomas Hart Benton (1887)
- Biography of Gouverneur Morris (1888)
- Biography of Oliver Cromwell (1900)
- *The Winning of the West* (1889-1896)
- A 4 volume set on American westward movement from the end of the French and Indian Wars to the Louisiana Purchase
- A History of New York City (1891)
- *Hero Tales from American History* (1895)
- A children's book co-written with his friend Henry Cabot Lodge

In addition he wrote many political “sermons,” Collections of speeches, essays and reviews, the first appeared in 1888 entitled *Essays on Practical Politics*.

In the 1888 election Benjamin Harrison beat the democratic Grover Cleveland. Roosevelt was named part of the U.S. Civil Service Commission. Since the assassination of President James A. Garfield by a disappointed civil-service office seeker, the Pendleton Act (1883) meant that appointment and tenure was now based on merit. However this law was not enforced until Roosevelt came to office. He attacked the GOP spoilsmen year after year. Grover Cleveland beat Harrison in 1892 and the new Democratic President kept Roosevelt on his Civil Service Commission. He then attacked the Democratic spoilsmen. Roosevelt resigned from office in 1895, to become the police commissioner in New York City. Roosevelt immediately began to clean-up the corrupt police force of bribery and scandals. At night, often with his friend Jacob A. Riis, Roosevelt went undercover to make sure the police were doing their job correctly.

In 1896 Roosevelt vigorously campaigned for presidential candidate William McKinley. Roosevelt resigned from the police force in 1897 and became McKinley’s assistant secretary to the Navy. Roosevelt worked hard preparing the navy for the impending war with Spain (over the independence of Cuba). It was Roosevelt who instructed Commodore George Dewey in Hong Kong to buy coal and hit the Spanish fleet in the Philippines in the event of war. In public and in private Roosevelt advocated for war against Spain in order to free Cuba.

After the USS Maine incident and the government declaring war on Spain in 1898, Roosevelt was appointed lieutenant colonel of the First Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. He was offered full command but turned it down because he claimed he had a lack of military experience. His regiment, soon nicknamed the “Rough Riders” included polo players and Ivy League athletes from the East and cowboys and Indians from the West. The Rough Riders immediately saw action in Cuba. It was Roosevelt who led his men and regiments from the famous African American “Buffalo Soldiers” and other units in a charge up Kettle Hill in front of the San Juan Heights. Roosevelt would always refer to these charges as his greatest moment. At the same time the Spanish fleet had been defeated in the Philippines and the war was virtually over. However tropical diseases killed more American soldiers than in the war and the troops came home. Roosevelt himself contracted malaria and it would attack him throughout his later life.

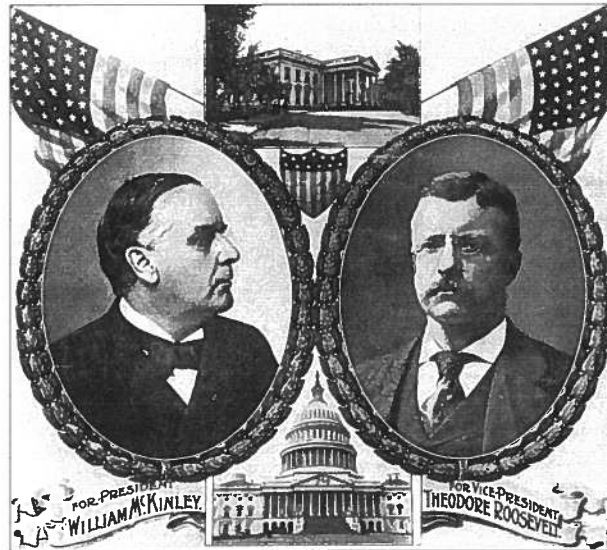


Teddy Roosevelt “The Rough Rider”

The Rough Riders returned to a base at Montauk, on the east end of Long Island. It was there that he was approached to run for state governor. The incumbent governor was involved in a scandal and a war hero was by far a better choice! The Republican Roosevelt beat the Democrat Augustus Van Wyck by just over 19,000 votes. Roosevelt began to push for reforms and service the people rather than the party:

- Abolished child labor in New York
- Limited hours for working women
- Reformed the state’s civil-service system
- Increased teachers’ salaries
- Extended conservation programs
- Set up new parks and forest preserves
- Abolished racial segregation in New York’s public schools
- Taxed corporations granting franchises for utilities, street railways and ferries.

Roosevelt’s corporate tax plan was not liked by fellow Republicans and in an attempt to remove him for office his party had him become President McKinley’s running mate in his re-election campaign of 1900. Roosevelt at first refused but then changed his mind and at the national convention in Philadelphia he was nominated for vice president. The ticket of McKinley-Roosevelt easily beat the Democrats William Jennings Bryan and Adlai E. Stevenson.



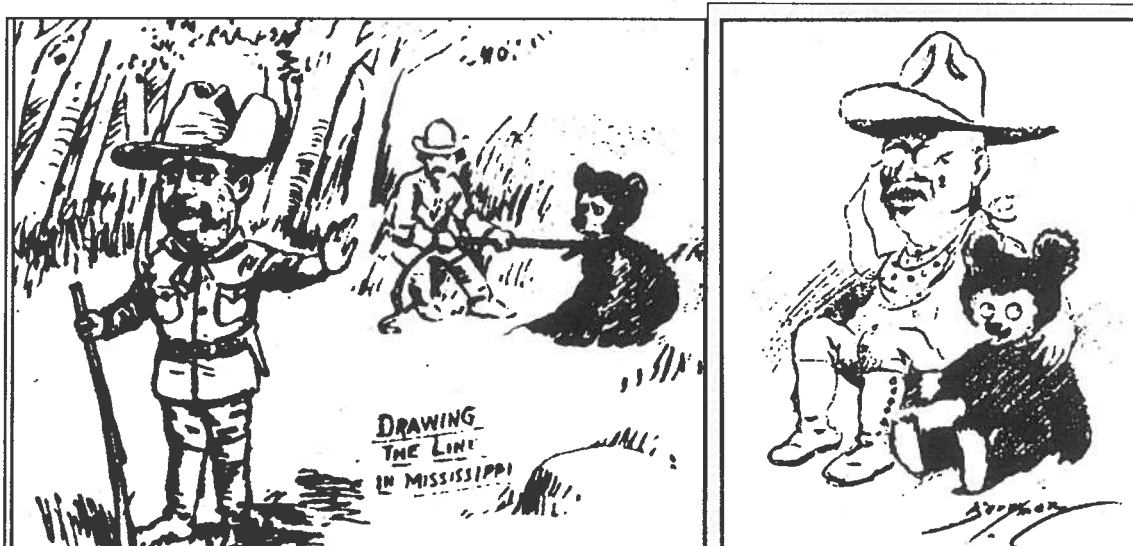
The McKinley – Roosevelt Campaign Poster

Usually being vice-president is the end of the line in one's political career but when McKinley was shot in Buffalo, New York Roosevelt, at the age of 41, became the 26th and the youngest President of the United States

One of his first actions as President was to change his presidential residence from the "Executive Mansion" to the "White House"

Roosevelt created the "modern Presidency." He called his concept of the President the "Stewardship theory." He took a broad or liberal interpretation to the Constitution; the president could do anything not specifically forbidden by the Constitution or statutes. Roosevelt firmly believed that the Federal Government is dominant over the states and the private sector in matters of the general public welfare.

Roosevelt created the first Federal Bird Reservation in Florida, to prevent the extinction of egrets and other birds. Not many know that the Teddy Bear is named after Roosevelt. While hunting in Mississippi in 1902 Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear. Not long after a famous cartoonist drew a sketch of Roosevelt rescuing the bear. A store owner in Brooklyn saw the cartoon and decided to make toy bears. He asked the President for permission to use the name "Teddy's bear" as a reminder. Today we call them Teddy Bears.



Early political cartoons telling the "Teddy Bear" story

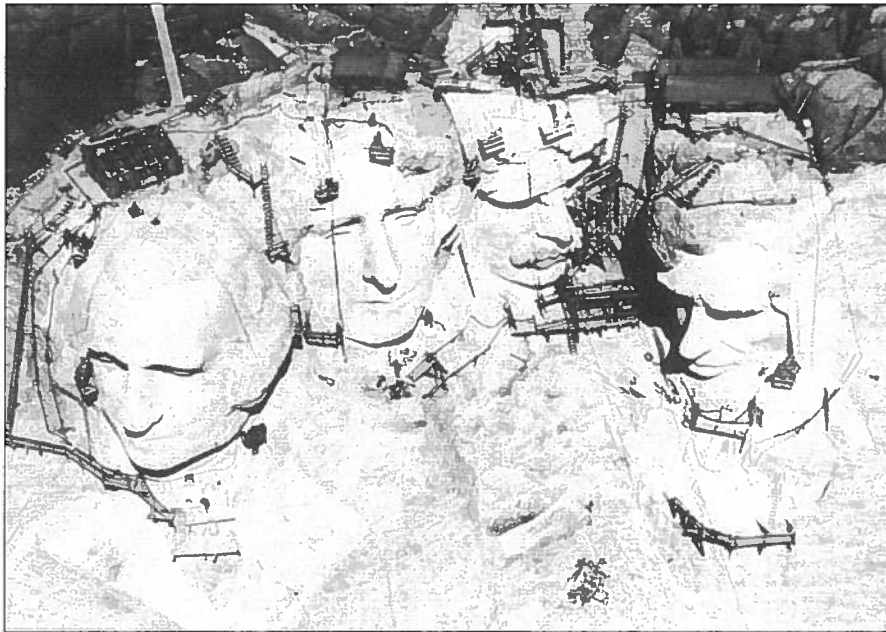
He intervened on behalf of the public in the anthracite coal strike in 1902
In 1903 he first used the term “Square Deal” for his domestic policies. In 1902 Roosevelt used the Sherman Act in an antitrust suite against Northern Securities Company, a holding company set up to control railroads. The Supreme Court ruled five to four in his favor. He then took action against Swift and Company (the “meat trust”, Standard Oil, Otis Elevator, Du Pont, the New Haven Railroad, American Tobacco and other giants, 45 antitrust suits in all.

Other notable acts passed by Roosevelt were:-

- 1902 – Newlands Act (24 federal irrigation projects)
- 1906 – Antiquities or National Monument Act
(The creation of 18 national monuments)
- 1906 - Hepburn Act (regulating railroads)
- 1906 - Pure Food and Drug Act
- 1906 - Meat Inspection Act
- 1906 - Employers’ Liability Act

Roosevelt’s additional accomplishments in conservation:

- Doubling the number of national parks
- Expanding to federal forest preserves to 194,000,000 acres
- Establishing the first federal wildlife preserves



Gutzon Borglum created the giant sculptures of Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln at Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota.

Roosevelt's Foreign Policy

The Panama Canal

In 1903 Colombia rejected a treaty to permit the United States to build the Panama Canal. (Panama was then a province of Colombia). Panama declared its independence and was immediately backed by the Roosevelt administration, preventing Colombia from attacking Panama.

The "Roosevelt Corollary"

An addition to the Monroe Doctrine, defining the role of the United States as a policeman for Latin America, one who will uphold law and order

Mediation for the Russo-Japanese War of 1905

Roosevelt arranged for the leaders of Russia and Japan to reach an agreement to their war at an arranged facility in Maine. Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel peace Prize in 1906 – the first American to receive this award and he gave the money to charity.

The Moroccan Crisis of 1906

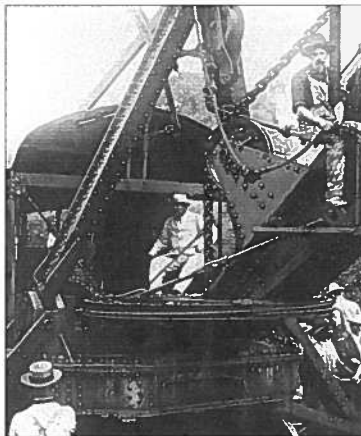
Roosevelt stopped a war between Germany and France with masterful diplomacy through the Algeiras Conference.

Roosevelt was the first leader to stand by the international court at the Hague where he unsuccessfully tried to limit naval arms worldwide.

The Roosevelt administration secured the adoption of the Drago Doctrine in 1899 which outlawed the use of force in collecting foreign debts.

He assisted both Venezuela (1902-1903) and Santo Domingo (1904-1905) from debtors.

In 1907 he helped create the Central America Court of Justices to stop disputes among Central American countries.



Roosevelt (center) inspecting construction of the Panama Canal

Teddy Roosevelt summed up his foreign and military policies with a West African proverb “Speak softly and carry a big stick – you will go far”

“Speaking Softly” means behaving like a gentleman

The “Big Stick” was Roosevelt’s navy.

In 1901, it was ranked fifth in the world, 1909 it was ranked second, behind Britain. From 1907-1909 Roosevelt sent the “Great White Fleet” around the world in a show of power and to create an image of peaceful intentions.



A cartoon of Teddy Roosevelt carrying his “Big Stick” and parading his power

Roosevelt was easily re-elected in 1904 and again his reformers came together in what came to be known as the “Progressive Movement,” a multi-faceted attempt to clean up and democratize politics, regulate big business and the conditions of labor, and bring “progress” to everything from education to architecture. Roosevelt did have considerable opposition; both political parties were divided into factions of “progressives” versus “standpatters” or conservatives.

In 1908 Roosevelt announced he was not going to seek a third term and endorsed his secretary of war William Howard Taft. Taft ran against William Jennings Bryan and Eugene Debs but Taft with Roosevelt’s support was easily elected. In his farewell address Roosevelt urged for more reforms but the following Congress did little.

Until his last day in office Roosevelt continued with his conservation policies. He created a National Conservation Commission and a Country Life Commission. The White House even hosted the North American Conservation Conference for five days in 1909.

On March 4, 1909, at the age of 50, Theodore Roosevelt left the White House.

On March 23, 1909 Teddy Roosevelt and his son Kermit left for an African safari sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute. He and his son toured Kenya, Uganda, the Congo, the Sudan and into Egypt. They kept about a dozen trophies for Sagamore Hill, the rest they gave to the Smithsonian. He wrote a book, *African Game Trails* in 1910 and co-authored another, *Life Histories of African Game Animals* in 1914. He was in Africa for nearly eleven months and then he was joined by his family and toured Europe.



Teddy Roosevelt and his son Kermit on safari in Africa

In 1910 Teddy Roosevelt was probably the most popular and famous man in the world. He visited capitals, met with kings and queens. He argued with the Vatican when officials tried to prevent him from meeting with Methodist missionaries in Rome so he declined to see either the pope or the Protestants. He gave lectures in Oxford, the University of Berlin and at the Sorbonne. Roosevelt arrived back in New York to a 21-gun salute and a parade along Broadway and Fifth Avenue.

While he was away President Taft's administration was seen as a failure by Progressives. Roosevelt avoided public criticism of Taft but did go on a national speaking tour promoting his policy of "The New Nationalism." He still preached conservationism, regulation of big business and better working conditions for the people. He was more aggressive than the old fashioned Republican president.

Roosevelt entered the 1912 Republican convention. That year saw the use of a new popular primary system; 12 Republican primaries selected their delegates to the national convention.

Robert M. LaFollette (Wisconsin) won two primaries, President Taft won one and Teddy Roosevelt won a total of nine primaries. When the delegate votes were counted LaFollette had 36 delegates, Taft had 48 and Roosevelt had 278 but 540 were needed to nominate.

The rest of the delegates were chosen in the old manner, by district and state conventions and caucuses. They were marked by name calling, violence and near riots; state troops were called out to keep the peace in Michigan. In total 254 delegate seats were contested.

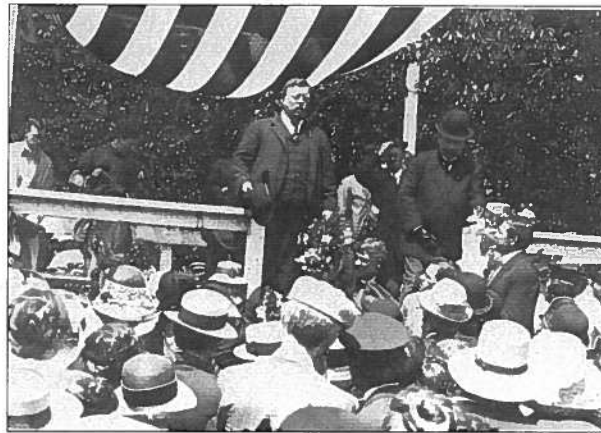
President Taft, who controlled the Republican national committee, awarded himself 235 of the contested seats and gave Roosevelt only 19.

Roosevelt went to the national convention in Chicago and ended up seeing his delegates withdraw from the affair, determined to form a new party with Roosevelt as the candidate. The first national convention of the Progressive Party, nicknamed the “Bull Moose party” (after its robust leader) was held in Chicago on August 5th to 7th in 1912. Roosevelt was nominated for president; his vice-president was Hiram W. Johnson of California.

Roosevelt’s platform was called “the contract with the people.” His campaign centered on:

- Democratizing the political process through primaries
- The recall of state officials
- Having some state judicial decisions settled by popular vote
- Expanded conservation programs
- Regulation of big business
- Changes in the wages and hour laws
- Abolition of child labor
- Women’s’ suffrage
- Social welfare policies (unemployment, disability and old age pensions)

Closely backing Teddy Roosevelt was Jane Addams, the famous settlement house worker.



Campaigning in 1912

“This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in if it is not a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.”

The race for President in 1912 went as follows: The Democrats nominated Woodrow Wilson, the Socialists stuck with Eugene Debs and the Republicans were lead by President Taft.

Roosevelt's chances were hurt by his opponents pointing out that he had previously declined to run for a third term, believing that two-terms were the tradition for a President. Also, in Milwaukee on August 14, 1912 Roosevelt was shot by an insane anti-third term fanatic. His life was saved by the thick, folded speech and steel eyeglass case in his inside jacket pocket. Instead of going to a hospital he made his scheduled speech, talking for over an hour.

Roosevelt lost the election due to the split in the usual Republican vote.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Popular Votes</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>
Wilson	6,301,254	435
Roosevelt	4,127,788	88
Taft	3,485,831	8
Debs	901,255	0

In 1913 Roosevelt sued a Michigan editor for calling him "a drunk, an old and unfounded slander." He won the suit but took only six cents – the minimum damages allowed by Michigan law.

In the same year he went to Brazil to lead an expedition down an uncharted river. He nearly died from an infected leg injury and jungle fever. His leg was to heal but the fever permanently damaged his health.

In 1914 he again led the Progressive Party this time campaigning against Wilson's policy of neutrality during World War I and a lack of American military preparedness. Roosevelt declined the position of Presidential candidate, asking for the nomination of Charles Evans Hughes. He believed that beating Wilson was the most important issue and he did not want the Republican Party split again as was seen in 1912. Wilson's campaign was solidified by the general public, "He kept us out of war" boasted the Democrats. Wilson was narrowly reelected in 1916 and weeks after his second inauguration in 1917, asked congress or a declaration of war against Germany.

Roosevelt campaigned for Liberty Loans and other patriotic causes and his four sons went off to war in Europe. Sadly, his youngest son, Quentin was killed on July 14, 1918 (Bastille Day). He was an army pilot and was shot down and killed behind enemy lines in France. With Quentin's death the "Boy" in Teddy Roosevelt died. Shortly after, (January 6, 1919 at Sagamore Hill), at the age of 60, Theodore Roosevelt died in his sleep of an embolism and heart failure.

Teddy Roosevelt once said “No Man has ever led a happier life than I have led.”



Roosevelt's home - Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, Long Island

Note that he had the front part of the balcony removed so that he could stand on his porch in front of a crowd and make “personalized” speeches to the public.

Teddy Roosevelt (TR) will always be remembered for his amazing energy, great leadership, and love for his country.



The “Square Deal” cartoon

A Party Political cartoon drawn by Robert Carter in 1912