

The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism Study Guide

The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism by Doris Kearns Goodwin

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Plot Summary

In the early years of the 20th Century, Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft formed a political and personal alliance that reconfigured American history. Their effectiveness was amplified by a working relationship with muckraking journalists, but Taft and Roosevelt then drifted apart and become enemies—never to fully reconcile.

The author describes Taft as the more scholarly, careful politician whose real ambition was to sit on the Supreme Court. Although a large, physically imposing man, Taft was gregarious but a bit shy, given to long-winded and often boring public speeches. Roosevelt, perhaps overcompensating for childhood fragility, presented himself as a "Rough Rider" or rugged specimen of outdoor manhood with big ideas, big power and big connections. Roosevelt's speeches were fiery where Taft's were innocuous, his viewpoints on social and ethical issues sharply defined. Together, theirs was a symbiotic relationship to which each man brought considerable strengths—Roosevelt as mentor and political guide, Taft as the slow but certain voice of reason and moderation.

Their partnership grew and flowered until their differences became more liabilities than assets, when Roosevelt decided to seek another term as president because of what he saw as Taft's ineffectual, self-effacing presidential leadership. Their clash was mostly about style rather than substance: they both continued to espouse the same ideas for change although Roosevelt was ready to push harder for progressive change than Taft, and thus was born the short-lived Bull Moose Party. Although the labels shifted, the ideas for change remained to be picked up by other men, another political party, after the election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson.

The book shows how the rift between Roosevelt and Taft seemed driven by hubris—overbearing pride and ego—on Roosevelt's part. And the paradox is that, without his zeal and self-confidence, Roosevelt might not have been able to accomplish as much as he did otherwise. Sam McClure, publisher of the very influential McClure's Magazine, on the other hand seems to have been driven to accomplishments that supported the progressive movement by his own bipolar illness — which ultimately proved to be his undoing. But during the heyday of McClure's Magazine investigative journalists such as Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens and William Allen White supported - and sometimes supercharged - the progressive agenda of both Roosevelt and Taft.

Chapter 1: "The Hunter Returns"

Summary

Theodore Roosevelt, after completing two terms as president, was on an African safari when word reached him of growing discontent with his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft. The two men had grown close personally and politically, as their ascending public service careers paralleled and sometimes intersected each other. Both men professed great admiration for each other, publicly and privately. But Roosevelt became concerned that the progressive agenda for which they had both worked so hard to implement could be unraveling.

Roosevelt got a hero's welcome as his ship sailed into New York harbor June 18, 1910. He had remained true to his promise not to seek a third term, but his arrival in the midst of political uncertainty prompted him to express regret that he ever made that vow.

Roosevelt reined in runaway corporatism and worked for the common man in his Square Deal administration; worked to preserve the environment from exploitation; tried to close the disparities of wealth; and supported organized labor. Now the consensus among progressives in the Republican Party was that Taft had slipped, or reverted, to cozy relations with those powerful individuals who personified the evils that Roosevelt's populism sought to overcome. Progressives, not to mention Roosevelt himself, were alarmed and somewhat befuddled. And Taft, whose normal weight was 320 pounds, had gained more weight and appeared sickly.

Taft was uncomfortable making speeches and seemed unable to hold an audience's attention. His wife, Nellie, was an outgoing, vivacious woman of many accomplishments who welcomed visitors of all types to the White House; she suggested that Taft shorten and condense his speeches. But at 47 she suffered a debilitating stroke that took her out of the limelight and "wrapped (her husband) in darkness," according to friend and adviser Archie Butt. Although Taft generally felt a failure as president, he was pleased to learn that two key progressive measures—a corporate tax law and an act giving the president power to preserve millions of acres of land for conservation purposes—were passed by Congress just before Roosevelt returned home.

Analysis

The story begins "in medias res" (in the middle of things) with a description of the American political scene when Theodore Roosevelt returned to find that progressive ideals and programs he'd worked so hard to implement — conservation, corporate regulation, elimination of child labor, workers compensation, a minimum wage and a rudimentary social security — were threatened. Worse still, Roosevelt's hand-picked successor and close friend, William Howard Taft, seemed adrift in the office of the presidency and too accommodating to former political foes. Roosevelt's reentry to



politics after a brief respite was welcomed by true progressives. A high-energy man with strong willpower, Roosevelt is described as the kind of hands-on, take-no-prisoners workaholic who stood in opposition to Taft's jovial, easy-going manner although Taft had earned a distinguished record as a politician. Taft was more reticent, less aggressive than his counterpart. A modern psychologist might classify Roosevelt as a classic Type A personality and Taft as a Type B. Perhaps this difference in temperaments is why the two could work together so effectively. Roosevelt remained an extremely popular figure who inspired love and respect from the masses of American people. Taft was respected, Roosevelt beloved.

Discussion Question 1

Because of his vacillation about running for a possible third presidential term, Roosevelt was compared to Hamlet, the melancholy Danish prince who is racked by indecision. Is this a fair comparison?

Discussion Question 2

Who is better suited temperamentally for the job of president—Taft or Roosevelt?

Discussion Question 3

Does Roosevelt act as if the progressive movement hinges, to some extent, on his participation?

Vocabulary

inauguration, conservationist, excursion, correspondent, rendezvous, meticulous, boisterous, pugilist, prodigious, promenade, fraternal, "bully," exploitation, rampant, disenchantment, equitably, discourse, tumultuous, exhilaration, trepidation, empathize, egalitarian, plaintive, jubilation, succor



Chapter 2: "Will and Teedie"

Summary

Theodore Roosevelt was born into wealth as a result of the family's successful import-export business. A product of private schools and Yale University, Roosevelt seemed to exude plenty of the optimism that also characterized his cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Theodore went all out for sports, the social life, symbolic acts of manhood such as hunting; he professed a real empathy and concern for the common, working man. As a child, Roosevelt earned the nickname of "Teedie" among his numerous cousins and extended family. Teedie was a strong, outgoing personality seemingly without fear compared with the measured, cautious demeanor of Taft who seemed naturally shy and self-possessed.

Taft was the perfect "good boy" as a child: he worked hard at his studies and at extracurricular activities, earning the approval of his peers and parents. Although Taft was not yet obese, his childhood photos reveal a young man who was a bit chubby although healthy-looking. His cool blue eyes seemed to project an image of stability and sanity. He seemed born with the judicial temperament, which is perhaps why in adulthood he craved nothing more than a seat on the Supreme Court — even over the presidency or any other elected position. As president, Roosevelt requested and read a daily summary of news from major newspapers; he made friends with reporters and editors. President Taft, on the other hand, refused to read anything in the press negative about himself or his policies.

Roosevelt's family and wealth seem to have elevated him above the so-called working middle class with its Babbitt-type mores and codes of conduct; Taft's demeanor and personality reflected his upper-middle class background. Where Roosevelt was brash and assertive Taft was silent and reticent. Taft also embodied the unwritten rule of the middle class: don't make waves. Roosevelt, on the other hand, showed something of the cavalier attitude of the wealthy, although he worked hard to overcome this political liability. What the two have in common was a belief that serious changes needed to be made in American politics and society.

Taft's father Alphonso became a lawyer and was appointed to the Cincinnati Superior Court when Will was a small boy. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, Alphonso Taft was appointed by President Ulysses Grant as secretary of way, then attorney general. Will Taft excelled at a private high school in Cincinnati then gained admission to Yale. His parents had high expectations for all their children but Will never felt parental unconditional love and experienced it "as a conditional reward dependent upon his achievements," (page 29, paragraph two, line five)

At Yale, Taft was an uninspired student who worked hard to improve his grades, but graduated nevertheless as salutatorian He was admired by his fellow students for his



good disposition and companionable nature. He was also respected for his moral and ethical principles. After Yale, Taft attended Cincinnati Law School.

The difference between their personalities showed up during their college years: Teedie was an "intellectual adventurer with a passion for reading and a wide-ranging curiosity" stimulated by a diversity of experiences, but Will worked ploddingly within the intellectual boundaries defined by his instructors. The first was self-assured and directed by his own inner lights; the other less self-confident and more inclined to please than challenge others.

Teedie attended Harvard and became very class-conscious, deciding he shouldn't waste time on those students of inferior socioeconomic status—in other words, a snob. As Roosevelt matured, his relationship to other less fortunate people shifted to compassion. Roosevelt developed the habit of tackling school assignments right away, without procrastination. Later, Taft expressed admiration for this trait admitting he didn't have it.

While Teedie was at Harvard, his father, with whom he was very close, was denied an appointment as customs collector for the Port of New York. His nomination by President Rutherford Hayes was denied by the Senate and the senior Roosevelt went into a serious funk and was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 1878. Theodore Roosevelt pursued and married Alice Hathaway Lee at the age of 20 when he was a college senior. They had four children in eight years.

Analysis

A flashback takes the reader to the early childhoods of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, who would become the pillars of a new surge in progressive politics just after the turn of the 20th Century. Roosevelt was born into a family of wealth and influence in New York; Taft was from an upper middle-class family in Cincinnati. Self-assured and outgoing, Roosevelt was the kind of man who met life's challenges head-on. Taft was less self-confident and tended to hide himself behind academic rhetoric; he was afraid of public speaking and sometimes rambled on to the point of distraction.

After college Roosevelt awakened to the suffering and challenges of those less fortunate. Once the door of compassion was opened, it never shut despite all the political battles Roosevelt endured. He seemed able to not only identify with but assume as part of his own well-being, the condition of American have-nots.

Taft, on the other hand, seemed driven to become a lawyer by family pressure and the influence of his father, a superior court judge in Cincinnati. Although very bright, Taft's was not the dynamic personality of Roosevelt who was a natural-born politician. Where Roosevelt was intense and driven by his goals and agenda, Taft was less secure and a "people-pleaser," as characterized by the author.



Discussion Question 1

Why might Theodore Roosevelt's have approached life in adulthood the way he did? Were there any aspects of his childhood that may have influenced his direct approach to life?

Discussion Question 2

Both William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt were close to their fathers. How much, in each case, did that relationship affect and shape their adult courses in life?

Discussion Question 3

What accounts for Taft's "people plerasing" behavior?

Vocabulary

clamorous, upbraid, relinquish, procrastinate, delinquent, beget, oration, presentiment, paternal, voracious, philanthropic, ornithologist, formaldehyde, reverberate, benefactor, avocation, cajole, mesmerize, suffrage, ingratiate, rigorous, conjure, fervent, chivalry



Chapter 3: "The Judge and the Politician"

Summary

William Howard Taft grew up in a family where his father had a successful law firm that also employed two of his brothers, Charley and Peter. While a student at Cincinnati Law School, Taft decided he could learn more by being a court reporter for the Cincinnati Commercial newspaper where he wrote a column on the courts. As a vigorous young man in his 20s, Taft enjoyed a wide circle of friends with whom he socialized frequently. Not long after passing his bar exam and graduating from law school, Taft was appointed assistant district attorney. When his father ran for governor of Ohio, Will took an active part in his campaign. When a tabloid newspaper published an anonymous letter ridiculing his father, Will cornered the editor on the street one day and beat him senseless, telling him to leave town — which he did forthwith.

Taft stumped for Republican candidates for office, gaining valuable experience in public speaking and overcoming his innate shyness. At the age of 23, Taft was appointed collector of internal revenue for the Cincinnati federal district. His parents both had reservations about his new position, but Taft learned he had no stomach for public life and enjoyed just being a lawyer with the hope of someday becoming a judge. After less than a year in the position of federal tax collector, Taft resigned and joined a former law partner of his father. As Taft returned to his law career, he was pleased to be named junior counsel to a special committee created by the Cincinnati Bar Association to investigate possible disbarment of Tom Campbell, an old nemesis, for bribing jurors in a notorious murder trial. Because of illness on the part of the prosecuting attorney, Taft took his place and delivered an overwhelming argument covering all aspects of the complex case. He became an overnight “star” in the Cincinnati legal community.

Taft, and many others, were devastated when the panel exonerated Campbell of all charges with the exception of one minor violation. But Taft saw room for optimism in the outcome and told his father that the incident was really the birth of a new wave of legal and political reform. In 1887, Taft was appointed to the Ohio Superior Court and became the youngest judge in the state.

Theodore Roosevelt married Alice Lee during his first year in the Columbia University School of Law, and undertook the writing of a naval history as he pondered his future direction in life. His naval history was but one among his 40 published books. After a cruise honeymoon, Roosevelt returned to New York where he attended monthly GOP meetings of the 21st District.

In 1881 Roosevelt was elected to the state assembly, replacing another Republican who could not run for reelection because of pending corruption charges. When he got to the state capitol in Albany, Roosevelt ran head-on into the Tammany Hall Democratic



political machine. Roosevelt stood out because of his aristocratic mien and was repelled by politicians of both parties.

He described Democrat politicians — especially the Irish from New York City — as “vicious, stupid-looking scoundrels with apparently not a redeeming trait.” But he also found a small cadre of reform politicians intent on fighting corrupt political machines. In 1883, Roosevelt — the youngest member of the Assembly — was elected by fellow Republicans as minority leader.

Shocked and appalled at working conditions in cigar manufacturing operations in tenements, Roosevelt supported a bill introduced by the Cigar Makers Union to prohibit such abuses and squalid living conditions. The action represented a significant learning experience for Roosevelt, who was by background and temperament inclined to favor the interests of the wealthy property owner. The bill was passed in 1883.

Weekends found Roosevelt at home in the city with his pregnant wife he describes as “the sweetest and prettiest of all little wives.” After the birth of their daughter, Alice was diagnosed with Bright’s disease just as his mother fell ill with acute typhoid fever. On St. Valentine’s Day, Roosevelt’s mother died at 49; on the same day his wife Alice died at 22.

By the time Roosevelt showed up at the Republican National Convention, he was prepared to launch himself into national politics after three terms in the New York State Assembly. At the same time Roosevelt sought the limelight, Taft went to any length to avoid it.

Analysis

Roosevelt and Taft came to their progressive political views by different paths. For Roosevelt, it was exposure to the suffering of slum dwellers in New York City. For Taft, it was an early awakening to political and judicial corruption in Cincinnati. But however each got to that point, they found a true partnership in their zeal for reform that transcended any single election as well as their differences in personality and temperament. Both are described as good men from good families who learned as they progress through life. Taft, by nature retiring and less sure of himself, was easily overrun by Roosevelt’s strong and self-confident manner. But, at least in the early days of their friendship, they could play off each others’ strengths.

William Howard Taft steered his career as a lawyer in the same direction as his father—toward a judgeship. Taft’s personality was that of the cautious, play-by-the-rules conformist; Roosevelt was the iconoclastic visionary. Although he was shy and insecure — and rapidly becoming obese — Taft’s abilities were appreciated and rewarded within the legal circles of Cincinnati. He became the youngest superior court justice in Ohio history and presciently informs his father that a new wave of progressive politics is about to sweep the nation.



Roosevelt, the aristocratic swell from Harvard had several life lessons that shaped him as a man and politician. The most immediate and personal of these was the untimely death of his wife, Alice, at the age of 22 and the death of his 49-year-old mother, all within the space of one day. But a field trip to the slums of New York City as a state assemblyman opened his eyes for the first time to naked poverty and want, as well as the reality of child labor. These experiences distilled in Roosevelt's personality as compassion for the aged and infirm as well as those caught in the cycle of poverty — especially children.

Discussion Question 1

Did Taft live his life in the shadow of his father—a successful attorney and politician?

Discussion Question 2

What attributes did Roosevelt and Taft possess that served to strengthen their relationship?

Discussion Question 3

How is it that Roosevelt, who came from a wealthy family, attacked trusts and big business? Does this seem like a mere political ploy or the expression of a deeply-felt belief or value?

Vocabulary

matriculate, foreclosure, embezzlement, amiability, affiliate, nemesis, disbarment, succumb, impugn, sumptuous, entrench, prodigious, cuspidor, tenement, taciturn, culminate, circumvent, coterie, perfidious, arraignment, collusion, exhortation, impeachment, galvanize, brownstone, consecrate, diatribe



Chapter 4: "Nellie Herron Taft"

Summary

Like William Howard Taft, Nellie Herron was born into a prominent Cincinnati family connected both to the legal profession and to politics. Her father, John Herron, had been a classmate of future president Benjamin Harrison at Miami University of Ohio, and had shared a law office with future president Rutherford B. Hayes. The Herrons and the Hayeses become close friends. At the age of 16, Nellie accompanied her parents on a visit to the White House in 1877 when Hayes was president and was so impressed that she vowed to herself to marry a man who would become president. At the age of 18, she met the 22-year-old Taft at a "coasting party" or winter sledding event, and was impressed by him. Nellie was described by her contemporaries as "handsome" rather than beautiful. She was a bookworm and something of a social butterfly, interested in the arts and culture.

Nellie and Taft developed a close friendship and supported each other in their relationships with other friends and intimates. Nellie told him that "love" is already an almost-meaningless buzzword, but that friendship is a good basis for affection that becomes "a blessed happiness." After a stint at the University of Cincinnati, Nellie took a teaching job at a private boys' school, over the objections of her mother who believed the job would cut into her social life where she would be most likely to find a husband. Although she felt harassed and pressured by her mother, Nellie established a Saturday night salon where the Tafts and Maria Herron—her younger sister—met each week to discuss assigned topics on which they had done research and writing, such as the French Revolution. This circle of friends became closer, and included socializing as well as folk dancing. Will Taft was invited to spend a long summer weekend with Nellie and her family at Little Boar's Head near Boston; by the fall he realized he was quite in love with her. He wrote her love letters that she ignored. This only served to convince him of her high quality. As their friendship ripened into a two-way romance, he proposed and she accepted an engagement.

In summer 1885, Nellie disappeared with her family in the Adirondacks and Taft was bereft. He wrote her lengthy letters daily describing the kind of life he hoped they could share once they are married. Sheepishly, he vowed to Nellie that he would do everything possible to make himself worthy of her. They were married June 19, 1886 and then went on a cruise ship to Europe. When they returned, their new house was still under construction so they stayed temporarily with Taft's parents. Shortly thereafter, Taft was appointed to the superior court by Governor Foraker at a salary of \$6,000 per year. His elder colleagues on the court were impressed with Taft's "equanimity and penchant for research," while his reputation spread and he rose politically quite fast. President Harrison appointed him solicitor general but Taft had to overcome family and geographic ties to accept the high-level post in Washington, D.C. His wife and family all encouraged him to take the position. Taft's spirits brightened when Nellie and their son, Robert,



arrived. The Tafts rented a modest home very near the rented home of Theodore Roosevelt, recently appointed a member of the civil service commission.

Analysis

True to his mild temperament and predictable behavior, Taft pursued the socially correct Nellie Herron, but only after being friends within their inner circle. Nellie was not a drop-dead gorgeous beauty but rather a plain woman of the plains. In every way, Nellie and William seemed like a perfect match. Their marriage was put to the test right away when Taft was named solicitor general by President William Henry Harrison. Both had to adjust to the metropolis of Washington, D.C. and leave behind the comfortable little world of Cincinnati.

Discussion Question 1

“What likely attracted Taft to Nellie? Was his proposal to her likely entirely motivated by love, or were social or political influences involved?”

Discussion Question 2

What accounted for Taft's persistent shyness?

Discussion Question 3

How could Nellie Herron be described? Why was she a good match for Taft?

Vocabulary

relinquish, hanker, cumulative, virtuosity, solicitous, disconcert, whist, salon, peripatetic, augury, precipitous, exacerbate, ignominious, levity, libel, formidable, sideboard, equanimity, disconsolate, verbose, equanimity



Chapter 5: "Edith Carow Roosevelt"

Summary

Depressed after the death of Alice, Roosevelt visited "the Badlands" where the Little Missouri River intersects the Dakota Territory in an austere and bleak place that reflected his own gloom. He invested in property with a pair of cowboys, and returned in the summer of 1884 when he threw himself into ranch work with gusto. He built a ranch home near Medora to share with family and friends. He wrote a series of sketches published in book form, "Hunting Trips of a Ranchman." in 1885, Roosevelt returned to New York City for the publication of his book and visited the new home at Oyster Bay that he and Alice had planned to make their own. Roosevelt crossed paths with Edith Carow, a childhood friend who was just leaving his sister's Madison Avenue town house where she was visiting. Ancient feelings of affection blossomed again, and within three weeks they were engaged.

Having grown up in an alcoholic family, Edith was a bookish, somewhat retiring young woman who, despite her family's strained circumstances, attended the best private schools and tutors, developing a lifelong love of Shakespeare and other literary figures. At school, her shyness was mistaken for aloofness and she was mercilessly teased and bullied. As a young person growing up in close proximity, geographically as well as emotionally, to the Roosevelt family, Edith saw her impending marriage to Theodore as a promise of stability, comfort and happiness. Theodore wanted to go slowly with their engagement and wedding plans, so as to not offend those who are highly dubious of second marriages. After another stint as cowboy in the Badlands, Theodore returned to New York and was appalled to learn that word of their engagement had slipped into the social pages of *The New York Times*.

Then, in an urgent face-saving gesture, he informed his entire family of the engagement to Edith. But before he returned, Roosevelt learned that his two partners in the ranch had decided there was no future there and had returned to Maine. Roosevelt, too, wanted out when a serious blizzard killed most of his cattle. But Roosevelt maintained a positive attitude, and viewed the experience as important to his understanding of and empathy for ranchers and those who labor at the frontier to make a life for themselves and their families. Almost immediately upon his return, Roosevelt was encouraged by Republican figures to run for mayor of New York City. He ran against a democrat, Abraham Hewitt, and a so-called radical named Henry George. He lost the race to Hewitt, but found that it felt good to be involved once again in politics. Immediately after the election, Roosevelt sailed for England with his sister, Bamie, and Edith Carow. He married Edith in London and they left for a three-month honeymoon in England, France and Italy.

The bride became perturbed when she learned that Theodore planned to leave his three-year-old daughter, Alice, in the care of his sister. Edith insisted that Alice remain with Theodore and herself which created tension between Roosevelt, his daughter and



new wife. Years later, Alice reflected that her father never mentioned her mother's name. "He obviously felt tremendously guilty about remarrying...It was awfully bad psychologically," Alice recalled. Once Roosevelt got settled in his new house and with his new wife, he became restless, sociable, athletic, outgoing and political once more. As the domestic bliss settled, Roosevelt announced he was once again returning to Washington to take the position of civil service commissioner in the administration of President Benjamin Harrison. For his wife, Edith, this was not good news, especially since she was pregnant with their second child. Edith joined him in Washington after the birth of their second son, Kermit.

Analysis

Edith Carow was the proverbial diamond-in-the-rough when Theodore encountered her in adulthood, after they had been childhood friends. Although she was from a socially-prominent family that lived near the Roosevelt homestead, Edith's personality was maimed because of family alcoholism. Despite the straitened circumstances of her family, Edith attended good schools and was a somewhat shy young woman who was also a bookworm. After she accepted Roosevelt's engagement and marriage offers, she faced a psychological dilemma involving his daughter, Alice. Roosevelt at first didn't want Alice to live with him and Edith, but Edith believed Alice should be with her father which caused conflict. The outcome was very damaging to Alice who didn't really know where she fitted in. This situation revealed that Roosevelt dealt with disappointment and death by denial perhaps because of his fear of death, after the loss of his first wife. The gung-ho liberal and political progressive had feet of clay when it came to family matters.

Discussion Question 1

Did Edith Roosevelt put herself in a second-class status in relationship to Theodore, as most political wives of the time did?

Discussion Question 2

Why might Roosevelt have wanted Alice to not live with him and Edith?

Discussion Question 3

What did Edith do at the outset of their marriage, and what did that demonstrate about her personality and influence over her husband?

Vocabulary

alleviate, disconsolate, butte, bequeath, russet, bankruptcy, comportment, recrimination, deportment, façade, frugal, foray, diligent, hypochondria, suggestive, postulate,

excursion, beseech, melancholia, calamitous, decimate, gravitation, gregarious, plucky, impetus, intrepid, disparity



Chapter 6: "The Insider and the Outsider"

Summary

Taft and Roosevelt became fast friends, as well as neighbors, and began walking together to work each day in Washington. Sometimes they lunched together, Roosevelt talking a blue streak and eating indifferently, Taft savoring every mouthful of his abundant meal. Taft had the temperament of a draft horse, Roosevelt that of a race horse, and yet because of opposite attraction they develop a deep and genuine friendship. Roosevelt was impressed with Taft's character; as an example, Taft had offered his resignation as revenue collector rather than fire a man in his department because of his (Democratic) party affiliation.

The blatant cronyism of Washington across the board offended both men, and they formed common cause in their desire for political reform. Roosevelt, the more flashy and egocentric of the two, gained fast attention because of his campaign to rid the Civil Service Commission of entrenched cronyism. To accomplish his goal, Roosevelt developed a coterie of journalists who were willing to report on the corruption he so fiercely opposed. Taft, less mercurial than Roosevelt, could work with almost anyone. The two different personalities functioned well together as a team to address corruption that radiated out from Washington to the far reaches of the country.

Working with Lucius Swift, publisher of the Civil Service Chronicle newspaper, Roosevelt exposed cronyism by Indianapolis Postmaster William Wallace and — despite hectoring by established interests including members of his own party — Roosevelt administered what he called a "galvanic shock" to the postmaster that caused him to correct his ways within two years. Next Roosevelt trained his cross-hairs on Milwaukee Postmaster George Paul for manipulating postal service exams to favor political allies. Roosevelt demanded that Paul be removed from office. Political opposition came from Postmaster General John Wanamaker, a friend and political ally of President Harrison. The president accepted Wanamaker's resignation instead of dismissing him. Roosevelt felt he'd missed "a golden chance to take a good stand."

Roosevelt then accused Baltimore Postmaster Charles Bonaparte with using postal appointments as a kind of "bribery chest." Wanamaker conducted his own internal investigation and reported the results to a committee of the House of Representatives, exonerating postal employees of any improper or unethical behavior and accusing Roosevelt of "unfair and partial" political behavior. Roosevelt's relationship with President Harrison deteriorated because of his crusades. But the president was hesitant to remove Roosevelt from office because of his friendships with powerful journalists and politicians.



Edith developed a close friendship with Nannie Lodge, wife of Henry Cabot Lodge, senator from Massachusetts. The two women shared strong literary interests and developed a small salon of friends that included their husbands, other politicians and writers. Soon, the Roosevelts were part of the intellectual and social elite of Washington and Theodore earned a reputation as the man who shook up civil service, for the better.

Taft, on the other hand, created a high profile through "meticulous habits and an affable disposition." Although he was nervous and a bit put off by the justices' behavior when he argued his first case before the revered Supreme Court, his father encouraged him and, in fact, he made a very favorable impression on the justices. Taft grew fond of his boss, Atty. Gen. William Miller, and formed friendships with him and with President Harrison. By the end of his first year as solicitor general, Taft was pleased to note that he'd "come into exceedingly pleasant relations with the Supreme Court." President Harrison appointed Taft to one of nine new circuit court judgeships created to clear a backlog of cases. Will, of course, was delighted to be put in line of succession for an appointment to the Supreme Court although Nellie liked Washington and had no desire to return to Cincinnati. She was somewhat mollified when newly elected President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, asked Taft to remain in his position for another year to smooth the transition.

Edith Roosevelt, in a parallel manner, balked at the prospect of Theodore running for mayor of New York City, as his Republican bosses suggested. To please his wife, Roosevelt declined the offer then regretted that he may have missed his one big opportunity in life. But later that year (1895), with the blessings of his wife, Roosevelt accepted an appointment from Mayor William Strong as New York City police commissioner.

Analysis

Each in their own unique way, Roosevelt and Taft began to make their marks on Washington, D.C. and on the world. The quiet, solicitous Taft won friends and admirers through his knowledge of the law and his methodical decision-making as a judge. The flamboyant Roosevelt attracted attention for his aggressive way of going after corruption and incompetence within the postal system that results from cronyism and the old "boss" style of politics. Roosevelt earned a reputation as an iconoclastic outsider to Washington and its many layers of favoritism—a political rabble-rouser determined to chart his own course. These same traits made him a hugely popular figure within the budding progressive movement in the Republican party.

The personal friendship that developed between the two men was based upon the complementary aspects of their personalities; they were temperamentally different but each drew strength from the other. Their later political bond grew from this close friendship and mutual respect.



Discussion Question 1

Why didn't President Harrison dismiss Roosevelt when his anti-corruption crusade against the Post Office fell flat on its face?

Discussion Question 2

What did Edith Roosevelt do that opened the door for her and Theodore into the elitist cultural and intellectual circles in Washington, DC?

Discussion Question 3

What did Theodore do to access power as he began his crusade against corruption?

Vocabulary

animate, camaraderie, acerbic, rectitude, approbateness, cannily, impertinence, insolent, incontrovertible, unscrupulous, commemorative, opulent, aplomb, lucid, vignette, self-deprecatory, cherubic, bigwig, intrepid



Chapter 7: "The Invention of McClure's":

Summary

The missing third leg of the emerging stool of progressive politics appeared in the form of McClure's Magazine. Certainly by accident rather than human design, the triumvirate of Roosevelt, Taft and McClure's ushered in a new era or reform politics that permanently unsettled the status quo and opened the door to modern political parties. By mid-19th Century, the staggering inequities of wealth produced by industrialized capitalism became evident: factory owners grew obscenely wealthy while workers were expected to put in long grueling hours at their factory jobs, earning barely survival wages. In this time, labor unions became powerful forces for reform of wages and working conditions as well as safety issues.

In 1893 America experienced a serious depression that was a foreshadowing of the Great Depression of the 1930s: bank failures, massive unemployment, widespread homelessness born into this world of struggle and strife to play a muckraking role as the sentinel for many of society's problems. The politically radical magazine attracted some of the best journalists of the time, including Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, William Allen White and Lincoln Steffens. Founder/publisher Sam McClure, a poor Irish immigrant, had a well-developed sense of style and quality as well as an eye for journalistic talent. McClure was also afflicted with a mood disorder today called bipolar illness, that gave him bouts of intense energy and creativity, followed by bleak despair and depression.

The author notes that contemporary descriptions of McClure's personality match almost exactly the personality profile of Theodore Roosevelt. McClure left his home in Ireland at an early age in search of an education and to escape poverty. As a student at Knox College in Illinois, he fell in love with Hattie Hurd — the brilliant and beautiful daughter of a Knox professor. They were secretly engaged, then she broke the engagement for fear of her father's disapproval. They became reengaged. Working with a classmate, McClure made his first money selling microscopes door-to-door, an experience that he later credited with enlarging his empathy and understanding of other working class families. Hattie once again broke off the engagement.

With classmate John Phillips, McClure started a monthly literary magazine, Wheelman, that attracted favorable attention among the intelligentsia. McClure feverishly went about recruiting writers and seeking more business while Phillips manned the offices in Boston. Until McClure's magazine appeared, the American literary scene was dominated by Century, Atlantic and Harper's. McClure was credited with introducing Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, J.M. Barrie and Arthur Conan Doyle to American readers.

The advent of letterpress printing that replaced the older wood engraving method, afforded a speed in printing that enabled McClure to expand his operations. These



included several specialized syndicates through which he sold material to other publications and the reproduction of photographs in his magazine that gave him a competitive edge with other established journals. The first issue of McClure's Magazine went on sale just as the economy descended into depression following a financial panic in 1893. Writer Conan Doyle, classmate John Phillips, geologist Henry Drummond and others invested funds in the magazine in hopes it would survive and thrive. McClure dreamed of having a large stable of good staff writers paid salaries with generous expense accounts to ensure the highest quality journalism, at a time when few other publications had staff writers and relied instead on freelancers.

McClure met American writer Ida Tarbell in Paris and recruited her as his first staff writer. Her strengths include meticulous research, careful assembly of the facts, and a fluid writing style that seemed effortlessly to smooth any piece of writing into a polished, finished whole. Her first target as a muckraking journalist was John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil: her reporting of corporate power-grabbing, collusion, price fixing and unfair competition led to a public outcry and eventual passage of federal legislation — championed by both Roosevelt and Taft — to correct these abuses that caused all sorts of secondary social ills such as low wages, unregulated working hours and conditions, and child labor. McClure became very attached to Tarbell because of her fine work and sterling character. Sometimes their relationship seems like that of a married couple, other times like brother and sister.

McClure also hired 27-year-old Ray Baker, reporter for the Chicago Record, to serve in his journalistic storm troopers. Baker, a crackerjack reporter, felt that he needed to expand into a format that allowed him to do more in-depth writing, such as a magazine. And McClure also recruited 29-year-old William Allen White, editor of a small weekly newspaper in Emporia, Kansas. White was eager to join a new publication with such talented writers already on staff. The final and fourth member of the original editorial staff is Lincoln Steffens, then a police reporter for the New York Evening Post. Part of McClure's decision to hire Steffens was based on his close relationship with Theodore Roosevelt. Steffens was the product of private schools in San Francisco and the University of California, Berkeley. All four of his new hires were "the children of prominent and enterprising businessmen" and had not known the kind of crushing poverty that was the mark of McClure's childhood.

Analysis

In a strange way, McClure's Magazine was the result of a relationship between the mercurial publisher Sam McClure and his talented staff that mirrored the kind of relationship between Roosevelt and Taft. In both instances, a high-energy firebrand was able to achieve his goals by working with others who are brilliant but more grounded in the day-to-day realities. There was a synergy between the politicians Taft and Roosevelt, just as there developed a synergy between the crusading publisher and his staff. Both politicians and journalists were able to define and achieve progressive goals through this mutual synergy and support. So the "bully pulpit" is as much the editor's desk as it is the power of the presidency. When these forces were aligned there was



sufficient energy to bring about the improvements to American society that all progressives envisioned.

Discussion Question 1

What technological advance enabled Sam McClure to expand his publishing operations beyond McClure's Magazine?

Discussion Question 2

What traits as a journalist did Ida Tarbell display that contradicted the stereotype of the news writer for the time?

Discussion Question 3

What family backgrounds did the initial group of four writers that McClure hired have in common among themselves, but not with their publisher?

Vocabulary

seismic, typify, stalwart, seminal, collectivist, precocity, coddle, convoluted, implacable, fortuitous, syndicate, preponderance, burgeon, heyday, machination, tenacious, volatile, ballast, stodgy, laissez-faire, rhapsodic, sardonic, florid, avaricious, niggardly, demagogue, castigate, supercilious, cocksure, precocious, clandestine, metamorphosis



Chapter 8: "Like a Boy on Roller Skates"

Summary

In May of 1895, Roosevelt was sworn in as New York City police commissioner and he stormed into office bright-eyed and bristly-tailed "like a boy on roller skates," as one observer noted. He literally ran up the stairs of city hall, pulling ace reporter Jacob Riis along with him as well as Lincoln Steffens. Reform was at the top of Roosevelt's agenda, and he was tutored in the minutiae and mechanics of serious urban poverty—and its links to crime—by Steffens himself after writing a series of reports on the situation. Impressed by the credentials of both newspapermen, Roosevelt befriended them and allowed them into his inner circle of political advisers and supporters. Riis took Roosevelt on a series of police inspections between midnight and 4 a.m. so Roosevelt could get an idea of how responsible the men on the beat were. Delinquent officers were then summoned before the police board to explain themselves or face disciplinary actions.

At Riis's suggestion, Roosevelt began to enforce an old law that prohibited saloons from operating on Sundays as a way to halt the corrupt practice of saloon keepers paying politicians and police officials if they looked the other way while their businesses remained open on Sundays. Within a few months of enforcement, Riis and Roosevelt found that 95 percent of saloons have become closed on Sundays. Opponents organized a massive parade and demonstration against enforcement of the saloon law. Roosevelt accepted a mocking invitation to attend, and positioned himself on the reviewing stand on Lexington Avenue where he smiled and waved at the marchers. The protesters were stunned at his boldness and sense of humor. On the bipartisan, five-member police commission resentment toward Roosevelt and his high-profile antics built.

One member, Democrat Andrew Parker, became a hardened enemy of Roosevelt because of his gung-ho approach to reform and essentially prevented Roosevelt from further efforts in that direction by splitting the votes of the commission. During the 1896 presidential contest, Roosevelt campaigned tirelessly for the Republican ticket and for McKinley although he saw real weaknesses in the GOP presidential hopeful. When McKinley was elected, he appointed Roosevelt assistant secretary of the Navy—ostensibly through the same spoils system that Roosevelt himself so adamantly opposed. Lincoln Steffens became despondent that Roosevelt's reforms on the police commission would lapse and saw the imminent return of the Tammany Hall web of corruption.

Because of his broadening political experience, Roosevelt began to loosen the staunch Republican anti-government attitudes that brought him into office. He saw the plight of the inner-city poor, their tenements and sweatshops, and came to believe government might be the only tool to help.



While Roosevelt was beating his brains out in New York City struggles, Taft enjoyed a relatively calm eight-year tenure on the circuit court. His affable, congenial and relaxed personality were natural magnets that drew others to his side. In his judicial capacity, Taft ruled on the Phelan case arising from the 1894 Pullman railway workers' strike and on a number of other union cases involving railroads, bricklayers and corporate price fixing violations. Despite his rising judicial stature, Taft remained a hesitant and unsure public speaker. Nellie, meanwhile, spearheaded the foundation of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and was active in numerous civic and social causes.

In 1898, the U.S. Battleship Maine exploded in the Havana, Cuba harbor after a long struggle between Spain and Cuban freedom fighters. Roosevelt called the attack "an act of dirty treachery on the part of the Spaniards." Congress declared war on Spain, and the Spanish-American War was ignited. Ida Tarbell, star reporter for McClure's Magazine, dug into piles of government documents and interviewed dozens to produce high quality investigative reporting on the buildup to war. Roosevelt accepted a commission as lieutenant colonel in the Army and organized a militia that he called the Rough Riders. Roosevelt and his Rough Riders gallop to eternal fame for their charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba, driving the Spanish into retreat. Upon his return after the conclusion of the war, Roosevelt was met with an organized effort to recruit him as the Republican candidate for governor of New York State.

Analysis

Boldness and audacity emerged as key character traits in Theodore Roosevelt's political profile. One observer said Roosevelt appeared on the political landscape like a one-man band, beating his drum and blaring his trumpet, all for himself. Once he "gets it" that the world is filled with poverty and suffering, he was unafraid to widen his political consciousness beyond the traditional Republican role of defender of business. As a police commissioner he was genuinely distressed to see dire poverty in New York City. As a reformer, Roosevelt began enforcing an old statute prohibiting New York saloons from opening on Sundays. When protestors staged a demonstration parade, Roosevelt gamely appeared with a smile on his face and waved at the protestors. But some of his bravura earned him the enmity of a Democrat member of the police commission, who outmaneuvered Roosevelt and curbed his reformist zeal. This was an early indication of how Roosevelt's strong personality affected others, splitting them into true believers and mortal foes.

Discussion Question 1

How did Theodore Roosevelt's personality affect those he encountered in the political world?



Discussion Question 2

Why did some of the old guard Republicans disparage Roosevelt and resist his reforms?

Discussion Question 3

Did Roosevelt's bully-bully, over-the-top enthusiasm seem genuine or a political mask? Or could it have been both?

Vocabulary

exuberance, tenement, blackmail, uncompromising, emblazoned, derision, bipartisan, respite, overwrought, rectify, frenetic, adjudicate, explicate, preposterous, elephantine, soldierly, solicitous, sabotage, ludicrous, zeal, foolhardy



Chapter 9: "Governor and Governor General"

Summary

Roosevelt was inaugurated governor of New York Jan. 2, 1899 on a great tide of public approval. Roosevelt reached out to old friend Lincoln Steffens and offered "an understanding" by which the journalist would, in effect, serve as the governor's media manager in exchange for unlimited access to the inner working of government and to the levers of political power. Their bond reached back to Roosevelt's tour of New York City tenements, guided by Steffens, when he was police commissioner. Such an arrangement in modern times would be considered unethical and probably cause the journalist to be cast out of the profession.

Regardless of ethics, their partnership proved effective in building up a head of steam for progressive, reform politics in New York State. When Roosevelt consulted labor leaders about their objectives, he was told that enforcement of existing labor laws would be a good place to start. Another round of tenement tours resulted in Roosevelt ordering building inspectors to totally prohibit any kind of manufacturing (such as sweat shops) in unsafe fire traps where women and children were exploited. The governor introduced legislation to overhaul the code relating to tenement buildings which was approved by the legislature, and hired more inspectors.

Roosevelt also championed conservationist causes by setting aside from development thousands of acres of timber lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains; he also threw his support behind the Audubon Society. But when the reform governor attempted tax changes that would end corporate loopholes, he ran into the buzzsaw of machine politics. He was threatened with a withdrawal of support from the machine if he continued his tax reform crusade. For purely strategic reasons, Roosevelt agreed to suspend his efforts until a special commission completed and submitted its report on needed state tax law changes. An operative of the political machine told Roosevelt that corporate supporters had grown wary of his "altruistic" impulses, by which he implied "communist" or "socialist" ideas. Roosevelt countered that the Republican Party couldn't just stick its head in the sand and ignore social and economic issues that affected the poor and working class citizens.

After successfully enacting into law in New York a franchise tax, Roosevelt prepared in 1899 to head west for a reunion of his Rough Riders. He wrote to his friend, Kansas newspaper editor William Allen White, and asked him to join his train for part of the journey to New Mexico. Roosevelt discovered that his mid-western friend had been hard at work promoting him for president in 1904. As they traveled along the train route, Roosevelt was amazed at the outpouring of support demonstrated by the public. White and Roosevelt deepened their friendship on the journey, and Roosevelt was especially interested to hear his friend's views of how to manage trusts and large corporations so



they did not pose a threat to the security of working Americans. He was surprised to learn that so many citizens had lost faith in the Republican Party because of its inability to rein in corporate power and greed.

When Roosevelt's term as governor drew to a close, he was approached by party operatives about his possible interest in being a vice presidential candidate in the next general election. Roosevelt declined for financial and political reasons: the vice presidential salary was less than his pay as governor and he did not see the office as a springboard to the presidency. But at the Republican convention, Roosevelt supporters and delegates from across the country urged his nomination as vice presidential candidate. Almost simultaneously, President McKinley notified Taft that he intended to appoint him to a special commission charged with crafting a civilian code for governance in the Philippines. Taft accepted the appointment on condition he would be made chairman of the body.

When he arrived in Manila Bay, Taft was underwhelmed by the paucity of friends and supporters to greet him. He also got the cold shoulder from Gen. Arthur MacArthur, military governor of the Philippine Islands for the two previous years. Evidently, MacArthur felt threatened by Taft and the commission, and did not go out of his way to assist Taft in his duties. Taft, in turn, was offended that the military seemed determined to treat the Filipinos as third-class citizens. As the commission went about the task of revising the undemocratic Spanish tax code, 500 recent college graduates from America arrived as a kind of forerunner to the Peace Corps, to assist in everything from building roads to making legal reforms.

Taft sent Roosevelt his congratulations on the vice presidential nomination, and had hearings throughout the islands to gather public comment on the transition from military to civilian rule where he heard support for the change "manifest on every side." Roosevelt bathed in self-loathing as he relaxed in Oyster Bay and awaited further political developments. He wrote to Taft that he was bored with the domestic routine there, convinced he was living "a life of unwarrantable idleness." Not long after the inauguration, Roosevelt's boredom was shattered by gunshots that killed President McKinley, and he was sworn in at age 42 as the youngest president ever.

Analysis

Taft and Roosevelt pursued parallel but separate career paths that prepared them for their political pairing as progressives. Each man developed and refined characteristics that would enable them eventually to complement and support each other as president and vice president. Roosevelt was elected governor of New York State and Taft was appointed civilian governor of the Philippine Islands. As Roosevelt struggled with machine politics and entrenched interests in New York, Taft struggled to create and maintain political and civil stability in the islands by writing a new constitution and revamping the civil code in Manila. Both men were successful in these high-level administrative/political positions although Roosevelt—because of his fiery personality—



bumped heads and made some enemies. Taft operated in more low-keyed fashion and got things accomplished through consensus and compromise, friendship and goodwill.

Discussion Question 1

Did Roosevelt possess a "sixth sense" about how far he could push his progressive, reformist agenda without triggering a backlash? How effective was he in mastering this political skill?

Discussion Question 2

What was the surprising lesson Roosevelt learned about how the public viewed the GOP on his train trip west?

Discussion Question 3

What sort of reception did Taft receive when he arrived in Manila as governor of the Philippine Islands? How did this affect him?

Vocabulary

renunciation, staid, sully, sinister, proffer, querulous, habitat, placate, altruistic, demagoguery, franchise, exuberance, predilection, trajectory, quandary, escalate, amorphous, invective, recrimination, acrimonious, gubernatorial, doff, insurgent, exacerbate, oligarchy, kaleidoscope



Chapter 10: "That Damned Cowboy is President"

Summary

Although Roosevelt pledged publicly to sustain and move forward the policies of the slain President McKinley, conservatives in the Republican party were nervous that he might go off on a "liberal" tangent and somehow threaten their wealth and status. To a hand-picked group of journalists, Roosevelt seemed a different individual and politician. William Allen White, for one, was "astonished" at such openly defiant rhetoric, but he knew Roosevelt was sincere.

Roosevelt was delighted at the turn of events and the fact that his political opponent, Boss Platt, had lost his political right arm (McKinley) in national politics. William Allen White visited Washington, D.C. to write a profile of Boss Platt for McClure's Magazine and met up with Lincoln Steffens. When White returned to Kansas, he noted that he'd used "my best and most burning adjectives expressing my scorn of Senator Platt and his machine." White described the New York boss as an "earthworm devoid of morals" and loyal only to his machine and its corporate supporters. When Platt read White's article, he vowed legal revenge on author and publisher alike. White apologized to Roosevelt for ensnaring him in a difficult situation by writing his piece on Platt. Soon White experienced a nervous breakdown and took a five-month leave from the magazine to recuperate in the mountains.

Initially, Roosevelt's presidency was marked not by historic accomplishments so much as personal magnetism. A contemporary described "the infectiousness of his exuberant vitality" that gave a lift to the political atmosphere as well as to the average citizen. Roosevelt held daily meetings with top government officials from 10 a.m. to noon, then opened the doors of the White House to the public and greeted them individually with smiles and handshakes. Then a daily visit to the barber at 1 p.m., followed by lunchtime that was a moveable feast including a wide range of people invited by the president. Afternoons were set aside for some form of vigorous exercise—boxing, hiking, riding horseback.

The friendship between Roosevelt and Taft was tested—and strengthened—when a completely unexpected guerrilla attack on the small American military outpost in the Philippines was launched. Although some hot criticism was directed toward Taft for his failure as governor of the Philippines to anticipate the attack, Roosevelt stood behind him. Taft was stricken with an infection that turned into gangrene; a quick surgery removed the gangrenous flesh from his groin and he began a slow, bedridden recovery of several weeks. Meantime, Roosevelt appointed Luke Wright as vice governor during Taft's convalescence.



Although Roosevelt spoke out about the threat posed by more than 1,000 trusts created by corporate mergers, such as U.S. Steel, he'd gotten no legislative victories to rein in these huge monoliths. As president, he searched for allies in this quest in the House and Senate, and ran into Mark Hanna, one of the inner GOP power circle in the Senate. Hanna had earned the title of "national boss" of the Republican Party because of his management of the assassinated President McKinley's presidential campaign.

Hanna said he cautioned McKinley about having Roosevelt as vice president but "now look—that damned cowboy is president of the United States!" As Roosevelt prepared his first State of the Union speech, he reiterated his intention to bust up the big trusts and demanded that huge corporations be required by law to make regular public reports of their financial operations, profits and corporate structures. President Roosevelt followed his words with action: the government brought an anti-trust action against Northern Securities Company which had merged the rail and shipping lines of J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt with those of the Rockefellers and Goulds.

Sniffing ongoing controversy, Sam McClure assigned Ray Baker to write a series of in-depth profiles for his magazine of the big capitalists who are players in the anti-trust action. Baker, as much as his readers, was shocked at the breadth and depth of the "alarming dimensions" of financial interests clustered in the hands of a few individuals such as J.P. Morgan.

Taft returned with his wife, Nellie, to Washington for a series of Congressional hearings on the Manila insurgency. Soon after arriving in San Francisco, doctors perform more surgery because his previous incision was not healing properly. At the same time, Nellie received word her mother is gravely ill in Cincinnati. But she was unable to attend the funeral because of train delays caused by severe winter weather. When he finally reached Washington, Taft had yet another surgery to correct an infection from the prior surgery. The Taft family decided to make a trip to Rome before returning to the Philippines.

Taft left his family in Europe and headed for the Philippine Islands when they learned of a cholera epidemic in Manila, and Taft didn't want Nellie and the children exposed to the dreaded disease. Taft was greeted with a hero's welcome upon his return to Manila. Roosevelt, meanwhile, prepared his New England campaign to support Republican candidates in the mid-term elections although very disappointed that Congress had yet enacted no legislation to control the trusts. His campaign stalled because of a trolley-car carriage accident that injured him and killed a secret service agent.

And he became caught in the middle of an east-west divide over tariff laws; westerners want sharply reduced tariffs and easterners want them maintained because they were good for business. Roosevelt saw a direct link between protective tariffs and the elephantine growth of trusts. Roosevelt attempted to settle a coal miners' strike in 1902 by inviting the opposing parties—miners and mine operators—to meet at the White House. Despite its good intentions, the effort failed, but when J.P. Morgan was asked to referee the creation of an arbitration panel, both sides were able to agree and end the already-punishing strike.



Analysis

The irrepressible Roosevelt soon burst his bonds to the assassinated President McKinley and asserted himself in every area. He intensified his search for political partners to enact legislation to regulate the trusts and large corporations—the very core of Republican financial interests. In doing so, he upset the old guard and created a dichotomy between status quo and progressive forces within the GOP. He crossed swords with Mark Hanna, the behind-the-scenes Republican godfather and king-maker. Roosevelt was true to his word about destroying political machines, fighting favoritism and cronyism, and attacking corruption at every level of the federal government. Hanna, who had never liked nor trusted Roosevelt, was appalled at his ascendancy to the White House and referred to him as a "damned cowboy" because of his love of horseback riding, the outdoors and vigorous exercises of the mind and body. For Roosevelt, his hour in history was really just beginning and he was not inhibited or hindered by those who resisted, or detested, him in his own party. His nature was expansive and inclusive; he was already a champion of the everyday worker, the common man, by the time he was sworn in as McKinley's successor.

Discussion Question 1

How did William Allen White characterize New York Boss Platt in an article for McClure's Magazine?

Discussion Question 2

What Republican power broker referred to Roosevelt as "that damned cowboy", and where did that nickname come from?

Discussion Question 3

What accounted for the east-west divide over reform of tariff laws, as proposed by both Roosevelt and Taft?

Vocabulary

portentously, impetuous, mollify, bullwacker, laudatory, dauntless, unbeknownst, fearmongering, dengue, wrest, platitude, equivocation, tycoons, supine, induct, archipelago, vehement, abscess, itinerary, precarious, proverbial, henchmen, rabble-rouser, anthracite, insolent, belligerence, obduracy, cavernous, swashbuckler, evince, illuminate



Chapter 11: "The Most Famous Woman in America"

Summary

McClure's Magazine ushered in a new age of muckraking journalism in its January 1903 issue. Ida Tarbell reported on the predatory practices of Standard Oil. Lincoln Steffens exposed the illegal dealings of Minneapolis Mayor Albert Anes. And Ray Baker demonstrated the manipulation and deception of union members by their bosses. It was a powerful journalistic debut, and one that re-energized Roosevelt in his pursuit of the trusts.

McClure himself published a stinging editorial denouncing corruption that riddles American society from churches to colleges to courts to government and to politicians. That issue of the magazine far exceeded McClure's expectations in terms of readership, public impact and credibility. Readers across the country were astonished at the revelations, and looked upon the magazine as a source of truth and right-minded reform. Its reputation soared through the stratosphere.

A young writer from California named Frank Norris sold McClure on the idea of publishing a trilogy of novels he planned to write about the struggle of wheat growers to survive against machinations of the railroad trust including extortionate increases in shipping rates and a host of other predatory policies. "The Octopus" was a sprawling interweaving of stories about a dozen decent, hard-working men and their families who were driven to ruin by practices of the railroad trust. The book was widely read and garnered critical praise—a smashing success for both McClure and Norris, the author.

In a rush of manic energy, McClure purchased Harper & Brothers publishing house which included both monthly and weekly magazines and syndicate services. The stress overwhelmed him and he suffered a nervous collapse which sent him to Europe in search of the popular "rest cure" developed by an American physician. The unscientific regimen included consumption of raw milk which was supposed to restore "good blood" but which failed to help McClure through his depressive episode that followed the manic phase.

A restless McClure left Paris and was back at his offices in New York one year after leaving, filled with grand new schemes and plans. He directed Ida Tarbell to write a biographical/historical sketch of John D. Rockefeller as the most effective way to expose the Standard Oil trust, which he called "the mother of trusts." McClure invited Ida Tarbell to join him and his wife, Hattie, in Switzerland to get started on her Standard Oil piece which eventually turned into a 12-part history of the corporation that roused popular demand for reform and restructuring of the "rapacious" trusts.



When he returned again to his office in New York, McClure had lively "skull sessions" with his staff about future content, and made some staff reassignments that caused resentment and grumbling. But Tarbell reassured the writers, editors and designers that they should stick with McClure despite his mood swings or mistakes because he was a "genius" who had provided them with jobs.

McClure hired an assistant to Tarbell in Cincinnati to research the beginnings of Standard Oil there and serve as "leg man" in helping her assemble all the many disparate pieces of the story. And she made contact with Henry Rogers, a Standard Oil "deep throat" willing to discuss the firm in hopes of giving it a positive image. In her coverage, Tarbell discovered "a system of espionage by which Standard Oil bribed railroad agents to gain access to confidential shipping records regarding quantity, quality and selling price" of independent, competing oil companies." This information enabled Rockefeller to undercut small competitors and drive them out of business.

Shortly after her series reached the public eye, Tarbell was lionized and hailed as a heroine, "the most famous woman in America," according to McClure. She depicted Rockefeller as a duplicitous, deeply-warped personality who was strange but not unique because "he is simply the type preeminent in the public mind of the militant business man."

Public outrage put pressure on Congress to prevent monopolies such as Standard Oil from fleecing Americans. Several bills were introduced and debated. President Roosevelt proposed creation of a Department of Commerce and Labor — a move vehemently opposed by the trusts and their representatives. Especially loathsome to big business was establishment of a Bureau of Corporations within the Department of Labor. As corporate lobbyists descended like locusts on Washington, Roosevelt cultivated friendships with several Democrats sympathetic to his cause.

Roosevelt revealed he had proof that John D. Rockefeller was personally orchestrating a campaign among Republicans to kill the proposed legislation, suggesting, as one newspaper put it, "We own the Republican party and it must do our bidding." Faced with the prospect of Roosevelt releasing the telegrams, the Republican senator who entertained corporate lobbyists against the bill promptly sent them back to New York and the bill was passed. President Roosevelt was jubilant that he'd finally taken a decisive step toward correcting inequities that stemmed from unbridled corporations and trusts.

Analysis

Ida Tarbell—an exceptional woman in any era—became the spark plug in Roosevelt's reformist engine. Her in-depth coverage of Standard Oil and its founder, John D. Rockefeller, exposed the web of corruption and monopolistic schemes at the heart of this huge—and growing—corporation. Her careful, factual and sobering reporting caused a national uproar and demands for reform. President Roosevelt's response is to call for creation of a Department of Commerce and Labor to ensure the interests of the



common man were not trampled in the corporate stampede for wealth or by the rising power of labor unions—both of which he saw as potential threats to equitable economic growth. By focusing on the needs of everyday workers and their families, Roosevelt won the hearts of millions who undoubtedly would be considered Democrats in today's world. And Ida Tarbell, as both muckraking journalist and prototypical feminist, was "the most famous woman in America," according to publisher Sam McClure.

Discussion Question 1

Was Sam McClure's professed "love" for Ida Tarbell professional or personal?

Discussion Question 2

Was Ida Tarbell a "media celebrity" in her own time?

Discussion Question 3

What was the effect on the political system of Ida Tarbell's exposé of Standard Oil?

Vocabulary

prescient, convergence, exhortation, foray, muckraker, malaise, harrowing, manic, hitherto, diatribe, ebullient, defunct, exuberance, clandestine, protracted, intrepid, autocratic, countermand, avarice, bunko, rebate, emasculate, multifaceted



Chapter 12: "A Mission to Perform"

Summary

Theodore Roosevelt appointed George Cortelyou head of the newly-created Department of Commerce and Labor, then embarked on a railroad odyssey across the country both to meet everyday people and kick off his campaign for president. He traveled in a specially-outfitted train with private dining room, expert chefs, observation deck, rear platform, servants' quarters and accommodations for stenographers, Secret Service men, reporters and photographers. The president displayed patience, humor and warmth toward all during the trip. He genuinely loved speaking to live audiences. He won wild applause when he told a crowd in South Dakota that no legislation could ever "make a fool wise or a weakling strong, or a coward brave."

Roosevelt's conservationist tendencies became vibrantly visible when he visited Yellowstone, Yosemite and the great redwood forests of California. He proclaimed his reverence for the creations of nature and asserted his goal of preserving such treasures unspoiled, primarily for the purpose of protecting watershed areas that are key to survival of whole ecosystems. The president enjoyed a camping trip with John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, and continuously applauded the Reclamation Act of 1902 which used federal funds to finance construction of dams, reservoirs and irrigation projects. He singled out the proposed Salt River Valley dam project in Arizona as an example of forward-looking conservation works. Because huge private acreage in the project would be reclaimed and developed for sale, the issue of using federal funds to enrich private property owners became a fly in the nascent conservationist ointment.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt's favorite reporter, Ray Baker, severed his ties with Sam McClure and his magazine because the publisher wanted to slant news reporting of the coal strike to favor the non-union workers. He resigned and moved with his family to a small town in Michigan where his wife's father taught at Michigan State College. At first Baker reveled in his newfound serenity and, thanks to a small amount he'd saved, freedom from bosses. But McClure found Baker and lured him back to the staff with an offer to earn a full time salary for only working half time. McClure offered to publish Baker's books and to give him complete artistic freedom.

Baker wrote a series of excellent investigative pieces for McClure's Magazine on the issue of scabs, or men who work during a union strike. He demonstrated vividly the harm done to the families of scabs by union members during a strike. After his work was published, Baker returned to Michigan to write his novel but found he couldn't keep his mind on fiction when there was so much turmoil in the world. President Roosevelt contacted Baker and asked for his help in uncovering corruption at the Salt River project in Arizona. Baker published a series of articles on the role played by labor racketeering in the rise of the trusts. For this, he again won praise and admiration from Roosevelt.



Analysis

Almost single-handedly, Theodore Roosevelt put conservation front and center to the American people. Establishment of new national parks and maintenance of existing parks, such as Yellowstone, became priorities in his presidential campaign. It was prescient that Roosevelt seized the right time in history to advance the conservationist cause—decades before the use of federal lands would become embroiled in controversy over whether they should be held in trust for future generations or exploited for their natural resources, such as oil. And he demonstrated keen political timing to promote conservation at a moment when his popularity was at a peak.

Discussion Question 1

Why did President Roosevelt change his support for the Salt River Dam project in Arizona?

Discussion Question 2

Who was the muckraking journalist with whom Roosevelt formed a friendship for his coverage of labor racketeering and trusts?

Discussion Question 3

What was the name of the federal regulatory agency proposed by Roosevelt and passed by Congress to regulate both union and corporate activity?

Vocabulary

vexation, surmise, aphorism, sudsy, exploitation, sequoia, reclamation, quadruple, wageworker, capitalist, escalate, treacherous, ozone, exhilarating, implacable, breeches, vitriolic, pugnacity, alderman, extortion, engender, rueful, pernicious, expulsion



Chapter 13: "Toppling Old Bosses"

Summary

Roosevelt returned to the White House in the fall of 1903 after a delightful family summer vacation. Right away, he realized that his rants against political bosses and big corporations may have estranged them from supporting him in the presidential election, only 13 months away. Establishment Republicans were largely in the camp of GOP party chairman Mark Hanna, Roosevelt's likely opponent for the Republican nomination. But Roosevelt was cheered by the fact other reform-minded Republicans — as well as some Democrats — had defeated party machines to win public office and to usher in a new era in American politics.

Lincoln Steffens played a large part in supporting the reform agenda with his series on corruption "that plagued every level of government" and helped to "topple old bosses, bringing in a new generation of Roosevelt-type reformers to positions of power in cities and states across the nation." While McClure traveled abroad, Steffens also served as temporary editor of the magazine. When McClure returned, he rudely told Steffens he didn't know how to edit a magazine and encouraged him to travel far and wide to learn the craft of editing. Steffens took McClure up on his offer and spent three years on the road meeting and interviewing a wide swath of Americans in large cities trying to get the true pulse of the nation.

The result of this sabbatical underwritten by McClure was a six-part magazine series by Steffens called "The Shame of the Cities" that bared pervasive corruption at every level of society. Along the way, he met St. Louis District Attorney Joe Folk who had investigated a small newspaper notice by a St. Louis bank concerning a large deposit intended as a bribe to state officials for approving a bill to benefit Suburban Railway Co. Folk figured out who the corrupt officials were and served dozens of subpoenas to public and railway officials. The two top officials of Suburban confessed to bribery and resigned. Their action triggered similar confessions and resignations, plus conviction of 18 municipal assemblymen.

Then Folk went after the core of the corruption web — Col. Edward Butler. After he presented overwhelming evidence in court of Butler's bribery, Butler was convicted and sentenced to three years in prison.

Next, McClure focused Steffens' attention on widespread corruption in Minneapolis. Steffens jumped at the opportunity to test his evolving theory that corruption always starts at the top, among the big businessmen at the helm of utility companies, railroads and other public service corporations. McClure admonished Steffens to stick to the facts and not try to force them to support his new theory. He also directed the young muckraker to stay in St. Louis until his coverage was completed, then to move on to another city.



Because of his successes and public acclaim, Folk sought the democratic nomination for Missouri governor. Roosevelt, a big fan of Steffens' work, invited him to the White House for lunch. This visit was followed by an invitation for both Steffens and Folk to meet the president. Roosevelt was so impressed by Folk that he wondered aloud that Missouri Republicans didn't support him for governor. But Republicans instead nominated Cyrus Walbridge, a conservative businessman, for the position. Folk nevertheless got elected by a 300,000-vote margin.

Analysis

Reform of government at every level and dismantling of political machines became hot topics of public attention and discussion. The reformist bandwagon that Roosevelt rode into the White House was driven to a large extent by shocking exposures of collusion, favoritism and secret back room dealing. A six-part magazine series by Lincoln Steffens called "The Shame of the Cities" that bared pervasive corruption at every level of society was published first in McClure's Magazine, then in book form. The cycle became clear: muckraking journalists discovered and disclosed corruption, the public became outraged and demanded action, then the federal government stepped in with its tools of law enforcement, legislative action and executive authority. The engine of reform ran at top speed.

Discussion Question 1

What is the name of the magazine piece, that later became a book, written by Lincoln Steffens on pervasive corruption across America at the local, state and federal levels?

Discussion Question 2

How did St. Louis Dist. Atty. Joe Folk launch a successful campaign for governor of Missouri? Was his tactic something that Roosevelt hoped to emulate?

Discussion Question 3

What sentence did Col. Edward Butler receive on conviction of bribery in St. Louis?

Vocabulary

snobbery, excursion, nomination, dissipate, nemesis, pervasive, preconceived, incumbent, rheumatic, grafter, rapturous, disgruntled, preclude, boodler, entrenched, indefatigable, blithely, fortuitous, franchise, lucrative, idiosyncrasy, malfeasance, subpoena, congenial



Chapter 14: "Thank Heaven you are to be with Me"

Summary

With major questions regarding limits to corporate power arising in the courts, Roosevelt foresaw the need for a progressive justice on the Supreme Court. Roosevelt notified Taft in the Philippines of his intention to nominate him to the court. A second retirement, in fact, would leave the court with two vacancies. Taft wired the president that he was delighted and flattered with his wish to put him on the Supreme Court, but that his loyalties were now with the people of the Philippine Islands and he must decline. Roosevelt fired off a stern letter to Taft telling him that he expected him to matriculate at the court as soon as possible. Grudgingly, Taft agreed and prepared to move back to Washington. An outcry of support for Taft as governor of the islands arose there, as well as in the nation's capitol. In a brief exchange of telegrams, Taft asked meekly if Roosevelt would reconsider. Roosevelt agreed and told his old friend that he had unique gifts needed on the court at that moment in history.

Next, Roosevelt informed Taft that because of a resignation he will appoint him secretary of war, a high-level cabinet post later renamed secretary of defense. Taft's family were overjoyed about his reassignment because of concern for his health. Nellie, who was just getting comfortably settled in Manila, put aside her own concerns and urged her husband to accept the appointment because it is in line with his oft-stated career objectives. Taft accepted, and Roosevelt cabled him: "Thank heaven you are to be with me!" Roosevelt also mentioned that he wanted Taft close to him for political reasons, as a second mouthpiece to promote his principles and ideas.

It was evident that Taft's easygoing, informal and friendly manner would serve him well in the new cabinet post—one previously occupied by his father. Taft left his family in the Philippines while he got adjusted and found a new home. He visited with the Roosevelts often, sharing meals with Theodore at the White House and at their residence. In addition to his work as secretary, Taft spent a lot of time on Capitol Hill lobbying both Republican and Democrat lawmakers to pass a bill to authorize federal subsidies for construction of a badly-needed railroad system in the Philippines. Ultimately, the bill passed. Both Taft and Roosevelt celebrated a victory when the Supreme Court killed a proposed Northern Securities merger, using the anti-trust laws that Roosevelt champions.

Analysis

President Roosevelt could hardly wait to promote his friend Taft to the Supreme Court, or in some way to make him a key actor in his administration. Because Taft demurred on a long-cherished appointment to the court, Roosevelt then named him secretary of



war. The most astute politician of the two, Roosevelt knew that Taft could provide balance to his administration with his calm, reasonable demeanor and growing public favor. And because the two men were philosophically and politically aligned, the president understood the value to his administration—and to him personally—of having the capable Taft on hand to run interference for him and to help promote the legislative and executive agenda they both support.

Discussion Question 1

Why did Taft initially turn down Roosevelt's offer of a spot on the Supreme Court?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Roosevelt want Taft physically closer to him, in Washington, rather than in Manila?

Discussion Question 3

What political motivations did Roosevelt have for wanting Taft on the Supreme Court?

Vocabulary

stifle, monopoly, arrogance, revitalize, rinderpest, ladrones, belittle, morbid, din, archipelago, insurrectionist, sovereignty, allude, palatable, unabashedly, potentate, staid, innate, bereft, infrastructure, exorbitant, unambiguous, amuck, populist



Chapter 15: "A Smile that won't Come Off"

Summary

When Taft returned to Washington, it was a time of increasing volatility in the struggle between labor unions and corporations. Nowhere was this demonstrated more clearly than in Colorado, where a miners' strike for an eight-hour day had raised tensions to the point of violence. The governor, Republican James Peabody, had declared martial law and effectively suspended rights of habeas corpus. The governor urged Roosevelt to send in federal troops to stanch the chaos. Journalist Ray Baker arrived in Colorado to expose "corruption and bribery on the part of the corporations and violence on the part of the strikers." The governor had state militia arrest union members with no charges and officers entered and searched private homes without warrants.

Baker concluded that wrongdoing and heedless disregard for the law characterized the actions of all involved in the imbroglio.

On June 6, 1904 the situation literally ignited when 25 scab miners in Cripple Creek were blown up in a massive explosion as they waited for their early morning train home. A dozen were instantly killed, and most of the survivors suffered grave wounds. The Western Federation of Miners was blamed for the explosion, and soon rioting developed. State militiamen herded more than 100 union protestors onto a train leaving Cripple Creek. The union asked Roosevelt to send in federal troops to protect the rights of workers, but the president hesitated since he'd already rebuffed a plea by mine owners for the same show of force. The strike ended when the mine operators agreed to an eight-hour work day.

The GOP national convention June 21, 1904 in Chicago pitted old pols and party bosses against a new generation of reformers spearheaded by Roosevelt. The party platform reflected much of Roosevelt's positions on a wide range of issues; it diverged on the issue of tariffs so Roosevelt soft-petaled it for fear of creating a rift in the party between westerners eager for relief and eastern financial and industrial interests who want a continuation of the status quo. Roosevelt was unanimously nominated as the Republican presidential candidate.

Two weeks later in St. Louis, Democrats pursued a cautious path toward conservatism in nominating Alton Parker as their candidate for president.

Taft began stumping for Roosevelt, and gave speeches on his behalf in Vermont and Maine initially, followed by more speeches in Ohio, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. As he gained more experience and confidence in public speaking, Taft delivered the keynote speech at the Republican National Convention and directly



attacked the Democratic nominee Judge Alton Parker, accusing him of circulating lies about his administration of the Philippine Islands.

During the campaign, issues of labor and capital took the forefront of political debate; conservatives in the GOP accused Roosevelt of being too cozy with labor and unions. Ray Baker wrote a piece for McClure's Magazine defining where the two candidates—Parker and Roosevelt—stood on labor. For Parker's position, Baker relied on a half-dozen cases the judge had decided on labor but presented a more balanced portrait of Roosevelt because of his many public pronouncements and because the president made himself readily available to Baker. Roosevelt's campaign received large sums of money from wealthy donors, such as Jay. P. Morgan, for which he was raked over the coals by The New York Times.

Roosevelt defeated Parker by the greatest popular and electoral majorities ever given a presidential candidate, and thus earned another term in the White House, which he promised would be his last.

Analysis

The progressive reform movement built up a head of steam for government oversight and regulation of business and labor with the tragic mine explosion in Cripple Creek, Colorado in June 1904 that killed and injured dozens of miners who worked as scabs during a labor dispute. The explosion was then followed by rioting that caused the arrest of more than 100 miners. Both mine owners and miners themselves asked Roosevelt to send in federal troops to restore order, which underlined the need for some form of ongoing federal regulation. Later that month, at the Republican National Convention, Roosevelt won the nomination for a second term of office. Roosevelt was aware of how volatile issues — such as federal regulation of corporations and labor unions — pitted different interests and regions of the country against each other, and he learned how to function politically in the situation.

Discussion Question 1

Why did President Roosevelt refuse to send in federal troops to calm a mine strike in Cripple Creek, Colorado?

Discussion Question 2

Who was Roosevelt's Democrat opponent in the 1904 presidential election? What was the primary issue of the campaign?



Discussion Question 3

What pledge did Roosevelt give concerning his own future after winning the presidential election?

Vocabulary

surrogate, pivotal, volatile, escalation, chronology, unconstitutional, cataclysm, protectionism, schism, epileptic, rebuttal, acrimony, contingent, sweatshop, rejoinder, inflammatory, disparage, animated, coup, sanguine, subsume



Chapter 16: "Sitting on the Lid"

Summary

Shortly after his inauguration, Roosevelt departed on another of his cross-country railroad excursions, stopping along the way to greet well-wishers and to hunt game in the southwest and Rocky Mountain areas. While Roosevelt was away from the White House, he was pressed to explain how government would be handled in the event of a crisis. The president said that Taft was "sitting on the lid" so as to keep things from boiling over.

But a controversy soon arose over the way in which Roosevelt acquired the Canal Zone from Panama for the use of the United States. The deal Roosevelt struck provided America permanent rights to a 10-mile stretch of Panamanian land to build the canal for \$10 million plus a hefty annual fee.* The treaty was a result of Roosevelt sending American troops to aid Panama in its guerrilla war with Colombia. Roosevelt boasted, "I took the Canal Zone," although some—like Ida Tarbell at McClure's—were less than thrilled. She called it "a dishonorable outrage" and Panamanians began to wonder whether the U.S. planned to build a colony there.

Before Roosevelt could return to Washington, a conflict between the chief engineer and chief sanitation officer of the canal project arose over measures to control mosquitoes that spread yellow fever. The engineer refused to install screens on government buildings, as ordered by the sanitation officer, and a yellow fever outbreak occurred. Taft was left to decide the issue, and he supported the sanitation officer while asking the engineer to resign his post. Taft embarked on a cruise to the Philippines with 80 other people—American senators of both parties, congressmen and journalists—with the stated mission of uncovering the real needs of islanders and finding ways to meet them.

Filipinos welcomed Taft and party with booming cannons, festive celebrations and goodwill. Through visits to every corner of the Philippine archipelago, Taft concluded that the current administration exhibited a condescending attitude toward the native population that had caused the warm relations he'd nurtured as governor to cool, and along with it diminish the effectiveness of the administration. Scores of Filipinos told Taft they'd be much happier if he were back in Manila. On a side trip to Japan, Taft learned from its prime minister that Japan wanted the U.S. to broker peace talks with Russia to defuse longstanding hostilities.

Soon envoys from Russia and Japan met Aug. 5, 1905 aboard the presidential yacht, anchored in Oyster Bay. Agreements on contentious issues such as Korea, Port Arthur and Manchuria were negotiated easily. By Sept. 5, a peace treaty was signed between Japan and Russia; shortly thereafter Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Taft publicly attacked the corrupt Cincinnati GOP boss, Tom Cox, calling him "a curse" on the residents of Hamilton County and a "local despot." Taft added emphatically that



he would not vote the Republican ticket. In the fall elections, Cox and his political machine were voted out of power and young Republicans formed a new club dedicated to progressivism. Reform-minded Edward Hock, a Republican, was elected governor of Kansas by challenging the old GOP machine because of its parasitic connections with Standard Oil—a hot issue since the discovery of large oil fields in Kansas and Oklahoma. Roosevelt directed the Bureau of Corporations to do a thorough review of the corporation's operations in Kansas.

Ida Tarbell visited William Allen White and his wife in Emporia, Kansas and wrote a pair of articles about Standard Oil operations in the state—bribery, jury tampering, conspiring to restrict trade, illegal kickbacks—and concluded that Kansans fought the corporation for one reason only: to maintain principles of fairness and justice. The Justice Department brought legal actions against Standard Oil for illegal rebates and for conspiracy to restrain trade. Found guilty, the corporation was fined almost \$30 million.

Analysis

The partnership between Roosevelt and Taft was evident when the president left for a cross-country train tour shortly after winning reelection. In effect, Roosevelt left the government in the hands of Vice President Taft and made public assurances that Taft was quite capable of "keeping the lid on" simmering domestic and foreign issues. His comment resulted in editorial cartoons showing the porcine Taft sitting atop a huge garbage can overflowing with problems, issues and challenges. The implication was clear that Roosevelt believed his understudy could handle anything that arose by using his political heft and experience to hold things in place until Roosevelt returned. Taft did more than act as placeholder, however, by attacking a Republican political boss in Cincinnati.

Discussion Question 1

What conflict arose shortly after Roosevelt went "on honeymoon" after winning the presidency, that caused him to return to Washington?

Discussion Question 2

What international crisis was Roosevelt asked to help resolve just after the conflict in Panama?

Discussion Question 3

What did Ida Tarbell call the Panama Canal treaty?

Vocabulary

irreparable, disconcert, bated, rinderpest, ladrones, unanswerable, allure, precipitate, insurrectionist, grandiose, parable, acquiesce, palatable, dysentery, equivocation, unabashed, potentate, innate, anecdote, chaperone, exorbitant, scant, excerpt, explicate, rebuttal, trust-buster



Chapter 17: "The American People Reach a Verdict"

Summary

In 1905 Roosevelt foresaw a time when America could be "divided into two parties — one containing the bulk of the property owners and conservative people, the other the bulk of the wage workers and the less prosperous." Roosevelt predicted this "calamity" if Americans perceived that the Republican party represented just the wealthy and big corporations. And the key to preventing this rupture, Roosevelt believed, was to gain control through regulation of the railroads he saw as the source of much of the widespread corruption in American society. In his first address to Congress after his election, the president emphasized the importance of keeping "the highways of commerce" open to everyone equally. He called for an expansion of power in the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate railroad rates that favor the trusts.

As if on cue, Sam McClure determined to make the railroads the subject of his next major journalistic inquiry. In writing her exposé of Standard Oil, Ida Tarbell realized that Rockefeller's discriminatory freight rates are the instrument he uses to demolish independent oil competitors. McClure gives the railroad assignment to Ray Baker, who was soon invited to meet President Roosevelt for lunch at the White House. Roosevelt told Baker he believed he could get a railroad bill through the House but would likely run into flak in the Senate where many members were beholden to corporate interests. The president made speeches about the need for railroad regulation, and met again with Baker for lunch. His attempt at legislation passed the House but was defeated in the Senate, as predicted.

The railroads launched a vigorous public relations campaign to turn the public against regulation which resulted in a six-week series of hearings before the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee at which railroad representatives predicted dire economic consequences if regulation proceeded. Taft went before a convention of railroad executives and told them railroads are a public utility and should be regulated for the benefit of the public — not a wealthy few. Taft was attacked verbally by railroad executives, defended by President Roosevelt. Newspapers predicted "a fight to the finish between the railroads and the administration." When Baker completed the first article of a planned 50,000-word series, he sent a draft to Roosevelt for his review.

Baker informed the president the mood in the midwest over the railroads/corporations issue had become ugly and volatile. Midwesterners are fed up with the situation and could take "radical" action if the government failed to act. Roosevelt sent Baker the first draft of his annual state of the union address, and the reporter told the president people wouldn't be satisfied with a rosy outlook or snap answers to complicated problems. Roosevelt considered using existing legal authority to set maximum rates for railroads, but Baker disagreed and said such an action would not cure all the inequities in the



existing system. The two engaged in heated correspondence, with the president arguing that the ICC should have the power to set minimum rates as well as maximums.

An administration-backed bill that would give the commission authority to determine "just and reasonable" maximums for disputed railroad rates was introduced in Congress. To find a viable political middle ground, Roosevelt agreed to a provision that would limit judicial review of the commission's decisions on rates to the question of "fairness." Meanwhile, the publication of the second in Baker's series on the railroads heated up public pressure for reform to the boiling point. A further amendment to the proposed legislation would leave open the question of the scope of judicial review. With those changes, the measure passed the Senate June 29, 1906.

Socialist novelist/journalist Upton Sinclair wrote to Baker that only radical redistribution of wealth could cure the country's economic ills because "you are locking the stable doors after the horse is gone." When Sinclair's "The Jungle," describing insanitary and dangerous conditions in the meat packing houses, was published a great public outcry for further reform was raised. Roosevelt sent a representative of the Department of Agriculture to inspect the meat houses and confirm or deny the charges in Sinclair's book, but the author scoffed that the measure was like putting the proverbial fox in charge of guarding the hen house. Roosevelt sent new investigators who confirmed that conditions were as described in the book.

Within days, a White House-backed bill to provide rigorous inspection of meat houses and other food processing plants was introduced in the Senate and passed with no dissent. But Sinclair was not satisfied, and leaked the still-unpublished findings in his report to The New York Times. "Public outrage and disgust" drove the House to submit the bill to a conference committee of House and Senate members, where it was strengthened and enacted into law.

This success was followed by swift passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act, landmark legislation setting and enforcing standards of health and safety. This was followed by more reformist legislation as the president, Congress and the press worked if not in concert, at least in the same direction. Roosevelt basked in his successes, mindful they probably would not continue much longer.

Analysis

The gears of synchronicity meshed as the press, the executive and legislative branches tackled social and economic issues generated by laissez faire capitalism. These included unfair, predatory shipping rates by railroads such as those operated by John D. Rockefeller. Before publishing the first installment of an investigative series in McClure's Magazine on the issues of railroads, journalist Sam Baker showed his draft to President Roosevelt — a rare instance of press accommodation practically unheard of in today's adversarial relationship between journalists and politicians. As more severe domestic problems arose related to health and safety issues, the scope of the federal government was enlarged to address these issues such as food and worker safety.



Discussion Question 1

What legislation was enacted after publication of "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair, on the food processing plants of Chicago?

Discussion Question 2

How did Roosevelt and the Congress deal with the rising outrage over price-fixing on the railroads?

Discussion Question 3

Who informed Roosevelt that feelings in the Midwest about unfair railroad rates were volatile and could produce violence?

Vocabulary

truculent, tempestuous, sovereignty, sandpatter, bipartisan, equanimity, admonition, flamboyant, cryptic, accolade, prostrate, venal, placate, instigate, vindication, drolly, trenchant, tantamount



Chapter 18: "Cast into Outer Darkness"

Summary

Riding a crest of favorable public opinion, Sam McClure envisioned even greater accomplishments for his magazine when he was in the manic phase of his disease, and foresaw doom and destruction when his mood swung down in the depressive phase. The publisher invited Ida Tarbell to join him and Hattie, his wife, on a vacation to a spa resort in France. When she declined because of work pressures in New York, McClure invited a promising Greenwich Village poetess named Florence Wilkinson to accompany him, along with a newlywed couple — Alice and Cale Rice — who were friends. Several of Wilkinson's poems had already appeared in McClure's Magazine at McClure's direction. When Hattie felt ill, McClure left her at the hotel and went touring with Wilkinson and the Rices. The newlyweds became friends with Ida Tarbell and confided they have witnessed intimacy between the publisher and the poetess.

After he returned to New York, McClure planned another trip to Europe and then a solo trip to the Appalachian Mountains which transparently seemed designed to cover up a meeting with his lover, Florence Wilkinson. Tarbell and the other magazine staffers were practically in open revolt when they realized the affair, and feared for their futures at the magazine. McClure confessed to Hattie writing numerous letters to the poetess, and his wife urged him to retrieve them because of their potential danger. McClure told his wife and staff he would end the relationship. But morale crashed at McClure's as Sam became more unpredictable. Hattie tried to forgive her husband, but received a letter from Florence Wilkinson herself informing her that there had been other women in her husband's life.

Just as things seemed to calm down a bit, Hattie McClure received a proof copy of a book written by one of McClure's paramours, Edith Wherry, with the title "The Shame of S.S. McClure, illustrated with letters and original documents. When the staff became aware of the latest crisis, they met with McClure to conceive a plan for making hush payments to Ms. Wherry. Relations between McClure and his staff deteriorated further because of the scandals. Seized again by mania, McClure came up with a plan for a new monthly magazine to be a companion to McClure's. The proposed publication, McClure's Universal Journal, would be bigger, grander and more powerful than its original counterpart and would be produced by the existing staff of McClure's Magazine.

McClure also envisioned creation of a People's Bank, a People's Life Insurance Company, a People's University and a Universal Library. And McClure planned also to buy 1,000 acres of land upon which he would construct a model community with affordable housing. But Ida Tarbell recognized these schemes as pathological, and a threat to the existing magazine and its staffers. The employees asked McClure to abandon his plans temporarily to come to the rescue of his already-failing magazine. Top staffers, including Ida Tarbell, told McClure they would resign if he didn't shift his priorities. The staffers agreed to stay if McClure would create a board of directors and



place a portion of his stock in a trusteeship managed by Tarbell, Steffens, and Baker. McClure agreed, then changed his mind.

The disaffected trio resigned with the intent to start their own magazine. But William Randolph Hearst published a blistering account of political power and corruption in a hard-hitting series called "The Treason of the Senate" written by progressive novelist David Graham Phillips. Swept up in Hearst's net of suspects were New York Sen. Chauncey Depew — a friend of President Roosevelt — as well as railroad magnates Cornelius and William Vanderbilt. An irate Roosevelt lashed out at "hysteria and sensationalism" in shoot-from-the-hip exposés such as those published in the Hearst papers. Although the muckrakers at McClure's Magazine presented meticulously researched and carefully worded coverage, Roosevelt primarily targeted other poorly-researched and written journalistic escapades in his attack.

Lincoln Steffens visited Roosevelt in the White House and his frustrations over what he saw as press abuses are obvious to the journalist. Despite his displeasure with an over-achieving and sometimes heavy-handed corps of investigative journalists, Roosevelt continued to support Steffens in his probes into corruption in the federal government. He handed Steffens a letter addressed to everyone in the government telling them to cooperate with Steffens and to tell him whatever he wanted to know, so long as it's truthful and not classified information. The president was also stung by criticism from reformers that he hadn't been vigorous enough in seeking to curb the abuses of capitalism. He gave another speech cautioning against irresponsible and heedless attacks on the government, while also commending individual journalists for their work. Roosevelt's remarks were widely interpreted as an assault on progressive journalism.

At the same time his prized writers quit, McClure faced the loss of his partner, managing editor and three executives. And William Allen White left for The American Magazine. But McClure quickly recruited a new staff that includes Willa Cather — who went on to become one of the great novelists in American literature — and Will Irwin, a star reporter for the New York Sun. Ellery Sedgwick, who later became editor of The Atlantic Monthly, also joined McClure's. Investigative reporters George Turner and Burton Hendrick became staffers. Although these great talents began with high ideals and boundless energy, morale quickly deteriorated because of the unpredictability of McClure himself.

As they succored the new magazine, the journalists were subjected to a number of stresses. Among them was the need to fill editorial space, without the leisurely pace and generous expense accounts of McClure's. Writers ransacked their own closets and those of other writers in a search for quality material, on just about any subject, to fill the pages. Ray Baker contributed a 12-part series depicting the lifestyles of America's black population, but it never matched his coverage of labor and the railroads. Staffers were constantly hurrying to get enough material because the new magazine was under-capitalized from its outset. Ida Tarbell spent months in Washington researching the history of tariffs because she believed they would expose the special interests that benefitted from unfair advantages on the railroads and in business laws. But she found



the subject tedious and was unable to enliven it with the kind of reporting she did on Standard Oil.

Strangely, Tarbell received a letter from Sam McClure telling her how much he loved her and that she was frequently in his dreams.

Analysis

Sam McClure's behavior was symptomatic of classic bipolar illness, with its wild mood swings, manic grandiosity and depressive immobility. His manic swings tended to energize the staff at McClure's Magazine with idealistic notions about the power and purpose of an investigative press. But soon his shifts in mood began to undermine morale. McClure envisioned creating a complete utopia out of his fantasies that would include banks, housing, and a host of new publications — all created out of the sweat and labor of existing staff members at the magazine. Understandably, staffers began to think of other options. Several writers including Tarbell, Steffens and Baker resigned to start their own publication and thus began the gradual unraveling of the progressive alliance between press, president and Congress.

Discussion Question 1

What did Sam McClure, publisher of McClure's Magazine, do that undermined staff morale?

Discussion Question 2

What happened after McClure reached an agreement with rebellious staffers that convinced the writers they should leave the magazine?

Discussion Question 3

How was Roosevelt mistakenly implicated in the breakup at McClure's Magazine?

Vocabulary

rout, schism, frenetic, emblematic, buccaneer, buoyant, invective, missive, enervating, manic, megalomania, felicity, contention, antagonism, indefatigable, scathing, aught, triangulation, noxious, rail, exasperation, revivify, disenchantment, nebulous



Chapter 19: "To Cut Mr. Taft in Two"

Summary

Taft testified before Congress for two days on a bill regarding the Philippine Islands tariff. The measure passed the House but died in the Senate, to Taft's serious disappointment. Faced with a pending vacancy on the Supreme Court, Roosevelt was inclined to appoint Taft because he thought this was Taft's ultimate career objective. However, the waters became muddied as Taft sought advice from friends and family about whether to accept the appointment and end his political career, or decline and possibly run for president. Roosevelt talked with Taft's wife, Nellie, who was opposed to her husband joining the court and decided to leave the matter entirely up to his friend from Cincinnati.

The waters became even more clouded as several newspapers began touting Taft as the most likely Republican presidential candidate to defeat Democrat William Jennings Bryan. But Taft declined the president's offer, took a vacation with his family and put himself on a serious weight-reduction program that brought him down to 254 from 330 pounds. Taft prepared and delivered a lengthy speech to a Maine GOP gathering to kick off the mid-term campaigns.

Taft's emphatic defense of regulatory reforms and anti-trust efforts drew enthusiastic support from the delegates, as well as widespread newspaper coverage and editorial support. Taft had pared down the speech from its first draft that Nellie characterized as like a dull, long-winded opinion from the bench.

When revolution hung in the air over Cuba, Roosevelt summoned Taft and Assistant Secretary of State Robert Bacon to travel there as "intermediaries" in hopes of quelling actual revolution. They met with President Estrada Palma and members of his Moderate Party, but not with the Liberal Party that represented the poor and downtrodden. After listening to people on both sides of the disputed 1905 election, Taft decided there was evidence of "wholesale fraud" and worked out a four-point plan for Cuban President Palma to remain in office long enough to request American intervention. Taft would serve as interim governor general and the rebels would lay down their arms in return for American-supervised elections. His plan received accolades in Cuba and at home.

When Secretary of War Taft returned to Washington, the president sent him on a three-week speaking tour of 12 states ahead of the midterm elections. Roosevelt was delighted when election results came in: the GOP retained a majority in the House and added four new seats in the Senate. But Roosevelt and Taft clashed over the president's order to dishonorably discharge of 167 soldiers in a black Army battalion in Brownsville, Texas over a civil disturbance. Civilians were shot and killed after residents assaulted the black soldiers and denied them access to a bar. Because of an outpouring of outrage over the president's discharge order, Taft agreed to postpone its execution



until a trial could be held to determine which soldiers, if any, were guilty of criminal conduct.

Roosevelt cabled Taft that his order was within his presidential powers and he did not intend to renege. The president's inflexibility on this issue was a disappointing shock to the black Americans who supported him, and especially to Taft.

Analysis

Roosevelt surely would have liked to have two William Howard Tafts at his disposal, and events almost do bifurcate the second most powerful man in America. It was undoubtedly Taft's even temper and good-natured disposition that enabled him to put out the brush fires that surround the presidency as Roosevelt dithered once more over whether to appoint Taft to the Supreme Court. Events superseded his plans and he dispatched the vice president to Cuba to quell an imminent revolution and restore civil order, much as he did successfully in the Philippines. Roosevelt got egg on his face over his order to dishonorably discharge 167 black soldiers in Texas because of a race riot incited by whites. It became clear that Taft was not only Roosevelt's right-hand man but also his public relations agent.

Discussion Question 1

What was the essence of Taft's findings after being sent to Cuba by Roosevelt to quell an ominous revolution?

Discussion Question 2

How did Roosevelt mishandle a race riot in Texas involving black soldiers and white civilians?

Discussion Question 3

What did Secretary of War Taft recommend as a means to resolve racial tensions in Texas?

Vocabulary

intimation, laud, proclivity, rancorous, antagonism, cannily, ultimatum, reenlistment, indignation, peevishness, draconian, impeachment



Chapter 20: "Taft boom, Wall Street Bust"

Summary

Roosevelt encountered heavy resistance to his programs by the ultra-conservative wing of the Republican Party. Specifically, Congress only considered a small fraction of the 60 initiatives the president recommended in his 1906 state of the union address. Legislation to establish an eight-hour work day, outlaw child labor, end corporate contributions in federal elections, enact a Philippine tariff law, pass an inheritance tax and establish a progressive income tax were blocked or stalled in Congress. The final straw was passage by the Senate of an amendment to the agricultural appropriations act that canceled the president's executive power to create six new western national parks. But Roosevelt figured out a stratagem to salvage his conservationist measures. At the 11th hour before the amendment was to take effect, Roosevelt signed an executive order that prevented development on 16 million acres set aside for national parks and forests.

In other ways, Roosevelt was aware of strong resistance in Congress and decided he wanted to support Taft for president to carry out the programs he'd already started or planned. In fact, the president seemed more enthusiastic about the idea than Taft himself. An old Roosevelt nemesis, Sen. Joseph Foraker of Ohio, announced that he'll challenge Taft for the GOP presidential nomination. But then he said he'll endorse Taft for president if Taft would endorse Foraker's campaign for another Senate term. Taft disdainfully rejected the offer. Roosevelt told Taft that he might have taken a different political tack, but lauded him for his honesty and strength of character. When the Ohio state GOP committee met it wholeheartedly endorsed Taft for president and refused to support Foraker for Senate.

Despite this, Taft's tepid campaigning and his self-effacing manner served to dim enthusiasm for him in the body politic. Even before receiving the nomination, Taft defended his ideas and priorities as his own, not those of Roosevelt, and that they just seemed compatible politically—a fact that developed into a real friendship. There was uncertainty about Roosevelt's intentions regarding a possible third reach for the presidency, despite the fact Roosevelt pledged after his 1904 election victory that he wouldn't seek another term.

As Wall Street experienced a sharp slump in the summer of 1907, Roosevelt was quick to refute the notion that his new programs that impose restrictions on business to benefit the consumer were responsible for the downturn, or the notion that his administration was somehow anti-business and responsible for the stock market's \$1 billion in losses. Roosevelt lashed out at "malefactors of great wealth" who he said would go to any length to discredit his government policies. In October, investment bankers with Knickerbocker Trust Co. speculated in copper to drive up the prices in a



futile effort to corner the market. Their failure resulted in another sudden downturn in the market.

In the absence of a central banking system, capitalists such as J.P. Morgan and other financial magnates met around-the-clock to transfer funds between banks, monitor the market and do whatever they could to salvage certain banks and allow others to fail. But the cabal was informed by the president of the stock exchange they no longer had cash to continue trading. Almost instantaneously, the J.P. Morgan group raised \$25 million to keep the exchange functioning. When the brokerage firm of Moore and Schley faced bankruptcy, Morgan arranged a transaction in which U.S. Steel would purchase Tennessee Coal and Iron Co. — provided Roosevelt could be convinced not to file suit under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

Roosevelt denied charges he'd been tricked into allowing the creation of yet another giant trust and asserted his action to allow the merger is in the public interest to avoid financial collapse. Although the crisis eased, a "general malaise" settled on the economy and his opponents tried to make Roosevelt the scapegoat. Wall Street published a pamphlet called "The Roosevelt Panic" that blames the country's financial woes on him. Disillusioned and discouraged, Roosevelt proclaimed he will not seek a third term as president and endorsed Taft as the GOP heir apparent to his progressive legacy.

Analysis

By 1907, Roosevelt was on the defensive because of a Congressional logjam on his proposed legislation and because of an economic slump that caused some \$1 billion in losses on Wall Street. Roosevelt was blamed for the downturn because of his aggressive measures to curb trusts and corporations, but his response was that still more restrictions need to be enacted. This may have been the first time in modern history when a sitting president was blamed for economic woes — a pattern that has repeated numerous times in the last century. Roosevelt argued that the president, as one individual, wasn't powerful enough to make the markets go up or down.

Discussion Question 1

How did Congress signal its defiance of President Roosevelt? What was Roosevelt's response?

Discussion Question 2

What made it difficult for Roosevelt to stick to his pledge not to seek a third presidential term?



Discussion Question 3

What did financier J.P. Morgan do to prevent a collapse of U.S. Steel and possibly the American economy?

Vocabulary

dilute, reactionary, errantry, disavow, epigram, trajectory, unabridged, portentously, auspicious, slacken, noblesse, mogul, cabal, precarious, precondition, hoodwink, malaise, obloquy, incendiary, disinclination, amiable



Chapter 21: "Kingmaker and King"

Summary

As support for Taft's nomination grew across the country, he cast aside his diffidence and began to campaign like a pro. He asked West Virginia Gov. William Dawson for his endorsement, condensed his speeches, engaged in lighthearted banter with the press and generally became more comfortable in the role of politician. When it appeared that New York Governor Hughes was gaining some traction in his quest for the GOP nomination, President Roosevelt scheduled a special message to Congress on the same day that Hughes was to deliver a major campaign address. In his speech to Congress, Roosevelt excoriated the body for its failure to act on his recommendations, blasted the Supreme Court for its finding that the 1906 Employers' Liability Act was unconstitutional and challenged Congress to enact a new liability law to protect workers.

Taft's presidential push encountered a major roadblock in the form of black disapproval of his handling as secretary of war of the Brownsville Army incident. Hundreds of black leaders denounced him as a "menace" (racist) and declared they would never support him for president. Then Roosevelt issued a statement claiming full responsibility for the dismissal of black troops, exonerating Taft of any guilt. Gradually, opposition in the black community began to erode and some black leaders softened their opposition to Taft. In his ire at Congressional inaction, Roosevelt failed to connect the dots: with his imminent departure from the White House and the muffling of rake-hell investigative journalists, the wheels of the progressive movement were starting to come off.

At the same time, some of those journalists including Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens and Ray Baker became disenchanted with Roosevelt's leadership style. Steffens confessed he had lost confidence that Roosevelt's Square Deal could address the deep-seated inequities of wealth, class and power in the United States. In a lengthy visit with Roosevelt in the White House, Baker listened to him express frustration and disappointment, ending with the statement that he was "through" and wanted to go big game hunting in Africa. As the June 1908 Republican convention approached, Roosevelt began to get squirmy over his earlier promise not to seek another presidential term.

At the convention in Chicago, the mere mention of Roosevelt's name triggered an hour-long explosion of joy and support. Chants for "four years more" rang throughout the convention hall; clapping, whistling, floor-stamping provided a steady din and raised concerns about a stampede. But Taft won the nomination, with New York Congressman James Sherman as vice president. Faced with the monumental challenges, Taft decided to go on yet another vacation, this time for two months with his family at The Homestead, an historic and popular resort in Hot Springs, Virginia. Taft received a steady stream of visitors including senators, congressmen and members of the Republican National Committee.



The following week, the Democratic party nominated William Jennings Bryan for its presidential candidate on a platform of finishing the progressive legislation that Roosevelt had failed to enact. After his vacation, Taft returned to his hometown of Cincinnati where he was pleased to see both Democrats and Republicans marching in his welcoming parade. Taft decided to make public all donations to his campaign, which had the effect of depressing donations. Taft's political advisers created a busy schedule for the candidate in the West and Midwest where Bryan already had made inroads. Roosevelt grumbled that Taft is not putting enough time or energy into his campaign.

When Bryan claimed that the unfinished business of the Square Deal was more properly the purview of Democrats, Roosevelt attacked him by saying Taft and the Republican party were prepared to finish their business once elected. Roosevelt's feisty rebuttal stunned Bryan and caused a pause in his campaign. Taft won the election by carrying 29 of the 48 states and a popular vote of one million more votes than Bryan.

Analysis

Although Roosevelt encountered opposition in Congress and a growing disenchantment among his former journalistic allies, he remained an enormously popular public figure. Never one to take criticism or defeat passively, Roosevelt began to stew over his decision not to seek a third term as president. Instead of running away on a hunting safari in Africa, Roosevelt decided to face the discordant music, to go to the Republican convention and to support Taft as the Republican nominee for president. On election day Taft easily turned back a challenge by Democrat William Jennings Bryan and Roosevelt's hopes were raised that the incoming president would carry forward the progressive programs he'd started.

Discussion Question 1

What political payback did Taft have to face when he began his campaign for president?

Discussion Question 2

What caused the group of muckraking journalists to become disenchanted with Roosevelt's leadership?

Discussion Question 3

What criticism did Roosevelt offer Taft during Taft's presidential campaign?

Vocabulary

trounce, vicissitude, intemperate, execration, exemplar, impending, nascent, capricious, pugnacity, antithetical, intermittently, pandemonium, telegrapher, thwart, deference, transparency, stranglehold, nettled, mountebank, condescend, self-effacing, pithy



Chapter 22: "A Great Stricken Animal"

Summary

Once Taft was in the president's office and faced the challenge of naming a cabinet, he did what he usually does when under pressure: he went on a six-week golfing vacation in Virginia and Georgia. He was welcomed graciously by Atlantans and the entire family assembled at the Bon Air Hotel in Augusta. In considering cabinet posts, Taft tried to pick the best of former officials in the Roosevelt administration as well as his own choices to assert himself as his own man. His first two choices for secretary of state—Elihu Root and Henry Cabot Lodge—declined and he appointed Pennsylvania Sen. Philander Knox. When it came to other cabinet appointments, Taft found it difficult to honor his assurances that he would retain existing secretaries.

Taft replaced Interior Secretary James Garfield, a close associate of Roosevelt, with Richard Ballinger — a reform mayor of Seattle who served as head of the Land Office and was a conservationist in the mold of Roosevelt. Although Roosevelt was somewhat disappointed by Taft's cabinet changes, he remained loyal and supportive of his friend. The president was not secretive about his lack of enthusiasm for leaving the office. But before he left, Roosevelt spoke out against a congressional amendment that prevented the Secret Service from investigating anti-trust violations, land fraud and corruption by congressmen and senators. His comments triggered an outpouring of disapproval that did not change Roosevelt's course, but rather stiffened his belief that the Secret Service investigations have been targeting the right people.

After a grand and uplifting inaugural, Taft felt a bit disoriented in the office of president. Newspapers report that Taft had no natural enemies of his own making and predicted his arrival as president would usher in "an era of good feelings." Taft roughly followed Roosevelt's daily routine, freely allowing visitors to see him. However, instead of inviting guests for lunch, Taft took lunch alone — water and an apple because of his weight reduction diet. Whereas Roosevelt did some kind of vigorous exercise such as tennis, hiking or horseback riding, Taft opted for a tepid game of golf. And Nellie Taft, unlike Edith Roosevelt, was gregarious and outgoing in her role as first lady and a political activist. For example, she worked with a landscape architect to transform the south side of Washington's tidal basin and asked her husband to get \$25,000 from Congress for tree planting, trail creation and construction of an outdoor bandstand.

At a social function aboard the presidential yacht, Nellie Taft grew faint and collapsed. As they sped to shore and medical attention, Taft was so distressed that one friend said he looked like "a great stricken animal." Fears of a brain tumor were quelled when the physician said Mrs. Taft probably suffered a nervous collapse. Only later did it become clear that she'd suffered a massive stroke that wiped out her speech and coordination. Over a period of months, and with the help of the entire Taft family, Nellie was nursed toward health and her speech began to return. Taft obviously was distressed and miserable as his wife's recovery seems to stall.



Analysis

Taft's ebullience at gaining the presidency was eclipsed by the massive stroke that his wife, Nellie, suffered. He struggled with cabinet appointments as he realized that Theodore Roosevelt was a tough act to follow. Roosevelt began to nurture the faint prospect of another run for the White House as he continued his campaign to rein in trusts and corporations. Burdened with the responsibilities of the presidency, Taft could be excused for fantasizing about a Supreme Court appointment or a few rounds of his beloved golf.

Discussion Question 1

What action did newly-elected President Taft take shortly after the election — action he'd hoped to avoid?

Discussion Question 2

What beautification and public entertainment project did Nellie Taft undertake shortly after the Tafts moved into the White House?

Discussion Question 3

How did Nellie Taft's health worsen, and what was the impact on her husband?

Vocabulary

scion, disharmony, unanimity, dilatory, inadvertently, rheumatism, arrogate, magnanimity, touchstone, chivalry, eclectic, convergence, gauntlet, sardonic, vituperation, unnerving, animosity, mollify, indiscretion, truncated, octagonal, landaulet, impediment, myopia



Chapter 23: "A Self-Inflicted Wound"

Summary

Taft went into office "locked and loaded" for a Congressional fight over tariff revisions. During the GOP convention he pushed hard for inclusion of tariff reform in the Republican party platform. Nevertheless, Taft expected and found heavy resistance to reform among the older, established members of the House and Senate. But in the spring, Ida Tarbell published two pieces in *The American Magazine* that presented the tariff as a moral issue that affected the poor profoundly, even in increments of a single penny increase. Her article asserted that the "vast majority" of American families got by on \$500 a year or less, which created generational poverty and limited opportunities for economic advancement. The income gap between the super-wealthy and the poor in America had never been greater, she claimed.

Prospects for immediate action in Congress appeared dim largely because House Speaker Joseph Cannon, a strong protectionist and advocate of special interests, made a deal with President Roosevelt that he would allow anti-trust and regulatory legislation to reach the floor for debate and consideration only if Roosevelt pledged to maintain the protective tariff. Cannon angered Taft when he made a speech in Cleveland that seemed to repudiate the portion of the Republican campaign platform that promised tariff reform. A group of progressive insurgents in Congress considered ways to prevent reelection of Cannon to the speaker's seat and Taft initially supported their efforts. But then Taft abjured his first position and decided to work through existing party machinery to reach his legislative goals. Taft's about-face left the "insurgents" puzzled and rank-and-file progressives discouraged.

When Taft delivered his first state of the union message March 16, 1909 progressives fully expected him to use his bully pulpit—as Roosevelt had numerous times—to argue mightily in favor of tariff reform. Instead, he delivered a 340-word, two-minute speech that called on Congress to consider ways to proceed with tariff revision. Taft later explained to the press that he'd decided to kick off his administration with "no loud noises, no explosions, no disturbances of the atmosphere" in stark contrast to Roosevelt's fervid, long-winded speeches and often bombastic rhetoric. William Allen White, Ida Tarbell and Ray Baker offered their services to Taft, if he should need them, in the area of communications.

The House passed the Payne bill as a first start at tariff revision; the measure would remove tariffs on oil, coal, hides, tea and coffee and reduce tariffs on lumber, scrap iron and other items but would leave the important wool tariff unchanged. Senate leader Nelson Aldrich, a staunch opponent of tariff reductions, mustered opposition in the Senate and debate over the bill got rough and ill-tempered. Republican insurgents called Aldrich and his cronies "reactionary tools" of eastern corporations and trusts. When it appeared the Senate block might not be resolved, Taft proposed establishment



of federal inheritance and income taxes to offset revenue losses from changing the tariff code.

On Aug. 5, 1909, a delighted Taft signed into law the Payne-Aldrich bill that incorporated all the compromises and agreements between the two parties and the two legislative branches on tariff revisions, then signed into law a related bill that established free trade in the Philippine Islands. President Taft's satisfaction was complete when his wife, Nellie, arrived home by train. He then prepared for his planned 13,000-mile western railway tour.

Analysis

When Taft revived the issue of tariff reductions for political discussion, he was buttressed by Ida Tarbell from her office at the newly-formed American Magazine exposing the burdensome effect of existing tariffs on poor working families who get by on \$500 income per year. She claimed tariff revision was "a moral issue" and thus placed herself once again in alignment with progressive principles and with the Republican President William Howard Taft. Meanwhile, resistance to tariff revisions mounted in Congress and within the GOP. Progressive reforms of the type sought by Roosevelt and Taft now appeared unpalatable to Republican rank and file — business interests.

Discussion Question 1

What was the "self-inflicted wound" that Taft caused himself shortly after taking office?

Discussion Question 2

What sort of journalistic support did President Taft get for his tariff reform efforts?

Discussion Question 3

How did Taft's first state of the union message differ from those of his predecessor?

Vocabulary

schism, agrarian, tenacious, arcane, trenchant, subsist, workaday, protectionism, clarion, tariff, culminate, metaphor, purloin, jubilant, adjourn, aloof, prepossess, reprise, dissipate, feign, suture



Chapter 24: "St. George and the Dragon"

Summary

During Taft's two-month absence from the White House, smoldering hostilities between Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot — a close ally of Roosevelt — and Interior Secretary Richard Ballinger, named by Taft to replace James Garfield, flared into a big controversy. This personal conflict soon escalated into a conflagration of east vs. west, corporate vs. public interests, developers vs. conservationists. Just before the Roosevelt administration ended, Garfield set aside from private development 1.5 million acres of land adjacent to 16 rivers in six western states — through executive orders. This maneuver was intended to preserve lands and waters that have potential as hydroelectric power generating sites.

But Interior Secretary Ballinger restored by executive order the bulk of those lands to the public domain while Taft was on his railway tour — enraging conservationists and progressives. Ballinger brushed off reporters who asked him to explain his actions and found himself in the cross-hairs of newspaper editorialists who questioned whether Ballinger's behavior signaled all-out war between pro- and anti-growth factions. United Press International released a story accusing Ballinger of delaying the president's order to re-withdraw the western waterways from public lands, thereby permitting General Electric, Amalgamated Copper and Guggenheim to claim nearly 16,000 acres of land in Montana for possible hydroelectric power generation plants.

Another dispute arose over the legality of claims by Clarence Cunningham, a Seattle developer, to some 5,000 acres of coal-rich land in Alaska. A special agent of the Interior Department, Louis Glavis, discovered that Ballinger had been "closely identified" with the group of investors represented by Cunningham—a blatant conflict of interest. When Ballinger quit his job as land commissioner in 1908, he was retained by the Cunningham group of Seattle as legal counsel in violation of a federal prohibition against any former government worker providing legal counsel to a firm with a claim against the government for two years. When Ballinger returned to public service as Interior secretary, he pressed the department to immediately decide the Cunningham claims.

Taft reviewed the charges made against Ballinger by Glavis in the Cunningham case and said they amounted to "shreds of suspicion without any substantial evidence." Taft also gave Ballinger the authority to fire Glavis for disloyalty to senior officers in the Interior Department. And this was the turning point when the relationship between Roosevelt and Taft was dealt a mortal wound. Glavis gave his written account of the incident to Collier's magazine and it was published without any effort by the magazine to check sources or to get a rebuttal from Ballinger or anyone else in Interior. When other publications picked up the story, their accounts were largely distorted and inaccurate but Ballinger decided to attack the messenger rather than the message, calling the would-be muckrakers "literary apostles of vomit."



Ballinger then went on the offensive and demanded a thorough Congressional investigation of the charges against him, which was anathema to Taft who wanted the whole matter put to rest. The imminent investigation pitted those loyal to Ballinger and those in forester Pinchot's camp against each other. A frustrated Taft directed Agriculture Secretary James Wilson to fire Pinchot. At the Congressional hearing, Pinchot accused Ballinger of being "unfaithful to his trust, disloyal to the president and an intentional enemy to the conservation policy." When the hearings closed, the panel found that Ballinger had done "nothing illegal."

Ballinger resigned nine months later but the affair left Taft politically wounded and the Republican party split in two. Disillusionment and disappointment with Taft generated newfound public respect and support for Roosevelt. Some of the muckraking journalists who supported Taft upon Roosevelt's departure, now turned their sights longingly and nostalgically toward "Teedy." When Roosevelt returned from an African safari, friends and supporters anxiously awaited whatever action the former president undertook in the wake of the now-failed Taft administration.

Analysis

Political divisions that have simmered beneath the surface appearance of everyday reality suddenly became militant when Taft was on a sabbatical. This was the first time the conservationists and land developers had clashed head-on in the national arena — a struggle for power that continues today. Where Roosevelt's approach to this conflict was to employ the powers of the government to condemn and control land use, Taft took a more judicious, ponderous approach that relied on the strict letter of the law. Once again, differences in personality and style became evident.

Discussion Question 1

What caused Taft to balk at the tactics of the Roosevelt conservationists?

Discussion Question 2

Was the conflict over federal lands and the power of government vs. individual rights the first blow that led to the eventual estrangement of Taft and Roosevelt?

Discussion Question 3

What political action did Interior Secretary Ballinger take shortly after the land use conflict was settled?



Vocabulary

hydroelectric, requisite, callous, concession, denounce, malign, juncture, consolidate, buttress, jurisprudence, precipitous, exculpatory, culpability, incriminate, implicate, slander, rejoinder, exonerate, intimation, meticulous, cognizant, treachery, dragoon, pander, disseminate



Chapter 25: "The Parting of the Ways"

Summary

When Roosevelt returned to America in June 1910, communications between him and Taft had stalled and the president was miffed that Roosevelt had never acknowledged the golden ruler Taft gave him before Roosevelt left office. Furthermore, Taft's correspondence by mail and telegram had not been returned. So Taft was wary of his friend's return because of their estrangement. At the same time, Roosevelt was peeved that his family have not been shown the proper respect by the White House. Taft decided to send Roosevelt a greeting and welcome home note before he sailed from Europe. He sent Archie Butt — a longtime friend of both men — to deliver the note to Roosevelt. When Butt caught up with the former president and delivered Taft's message, he also told Roosevelt that Nellie Taft had suffered a massive stroke and was not well which may have impeded his friend's correspondence.

A week after his return, Roosevelt witnessed the Congress enact practically every goal of his administration — thanks to a lot of arm twisting and public relations by Taft himself. These included a new railroad act, creation of a Bureau of Mines to enforce miner safety, establishment of a postal savings bank, a federal mandate that financial contributions before and after Congressional elections be disclosed. Although Roosevelt claimed he would not make any kind of political speech for two months, it wasn't long before he got embroiled in New York State politics by telling old Harvard classmate and New York Gov. Charles Evans Hughes he supported his efforts to enact direct primary elections, replacing the old party machine with the will of the people.

Roosevelt visited his friend, Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who accompanied him on a visit to President Taft at the summer White House. At first, relations between Taft and Roosevelt were strained until Taft asked his mentor to tell him about his encounters with European royalty. Roosevelt then entertained the group for more than an hour with anecdotes. The swarm of reporters that accompanied the group reported "a love feast," "peals of laughter," "slaps on the back," and "evident delight." But, upon leaving, Roosevelt was asked if he would make a return visit and he replied, "I don't know that I shall." When the New York State Senate defeated the direct primary bill, Roosevelt realized that machine politics still thrived. Friends urged Roosevelt to run for the position of temporary GOP convention chairman.

But party hacks did an end run around Roosevelt and named Vice President James Sherman as temporary convention chairman. Based on misleading information, Roosevelt believed Taft had engineered his defeat; when Taft learned of this further breach, he was extremely distressed that his old friend would think he could engineer such a betrayal. Archie Butt watched helplessly as his two friends became ever more estranged. When Roosevelt returned to Washington from yet another western tour, he prepared to do battle with Sherman and Republican bosses at the state convention. But Roosevelt defeated Sherman by 567 votes against 445 for Sherman.



However, when Roosevelt went on the campaign trail in the fall for Republican candidates in the mid-term elections it seemed support and enthusiasm for the GOP had faded away. Voters were unhappy about the rising cost of living during the previous decade of Republican leadership, sick of machine politics and weary of high tariffs. In that election, Democrats scored huge success and took control of the House with a 60-vote majority; the Republican majority in the Senate was also trimmed by 10 votes; and 26 states out of 48 elect Democratic governors. It was also plain that public support for Roosevelt had waned. But, faced with widespread losses, Taft and Roosevelt reached out to each other and established a kind of reconciliation.

Analysis

During Roosevelt's African journey, communications between him and Taft cooled considerably. Although Congress enacted most of the important legislative goals of the Roosevelt administration shortly after his return, The Colonel and Taft each had allowed small resentments to fester to the point they were uncomfortable around each other. And when Roosevelt campaigned to help fellow Republicans in the fall 1910 primary elections, he sensed a loss of enthusiasm because of the continued existence of political machines, high tariffs and a rising cost of living. And when a majority of states elected Democrat governors, Roosevelt was convinced that the voters needed a major change.

Discussion Question 1

What alarmed Roosevelt when he campaigned for Republicans in the summer and fall of 1910?

Discussion Question 2

What was the state of the relationship between Taft and Roosevelt when the latter returned to Washington from an African safari?

Discussion Question 3

What Republican job did Roosevelt take after his return, to dabble his toes in the political waters?

Vocabulary

predetermination, placate, rhetoric, mandate, appropriate, jovial, substantiate, implore, alleviate, postprandial, notwithstanding, disconsolate, ipso facto, consternation, incendiary, [to] divine, divulge, offish, roly-poly, rebuke, reverberate, rapprochement.



Chapter 26: "Like a War Horse"

Summary

Concerned that the progressive movement was adrift, Wisconsin Sen. Robert La Follette pushed like-minded people to join a new organization, the National Progressive League, to restore the values and beliefs of the original progressive movement. These included direct elections of senators, direct primary elections, direct election of delegates to the party's national convention and state constitutional amendments providing for recall, referendum and popular initiatives. Original members included James Garfield, William Allen White, Louis Brandeis, Ray Baker and Gifford Pinchot. A sub-branch of the organization, the progressive Federation of Publicists and Editors, emerged with members such as Lincoln Steffens, S.S. McClure, Norman Hapgood.

Some newspapers saw the new group as an "anti-Taft" campaign to give Senator La Follette a leg up to nomination by the GOP as a presidential candidate. La Follette's efforts to gain support from Roosevelt came to naught, perhaps because the former president saw the senator as "an extremist with a touch of fanaticism." Furthermore, Roosevelt had promised himself that he wouldn't accept any kind of high-profile job in politics right away.

In March 1911, Roosevelt went on a train trip to the south and southwest to repay old favors, a trip he assumed would be his last political journey. But he was pleasantly shocked by the size, extent and intensity of exuberance that greeted him everywhere. Crowds larger than those for his various campaigns and public goodwill tours followed Roosevelt through the south, the Great Lakes and the west. The outpouring of support energized and cheered Roosevelt, who found upon his return that Taft had been currying favor with other factions pushing for tariff reform and that he was a "low tariff man." He proposed that Congress enact tariff reciprocity legislation with Canada, essentially neutralizing any gain or loss on either side.

Widespread support for reciprocity legislation in Congress was marred only by protests from midwestern agricultural states — the same states where progressives had to stand election every two years. An odd conjunction of progressives and conservatives occurred: progressive insurgents who opposed tariffs and "stand-patters" who opposed reciprocity were joined in common cause, at least temporarily.

Nellie Taft spent a lot of time coordinating a huge party at the White House for her silver anniversary with Will. At the party, Theodore and Edith Roosevelt were absent, reflecting the latest breach between the two men. A "mutual friend" of Taft and Roosevelt apparently told The Associate Press that Roosevelt would support Taft's nomination as president, even though Taft had indicated he would not stand for re-election. Roosevelt issued a denial to The Associated Press, although the political waters were already quite turgid.



Taft went on another train trip through the west, this one for two months. His train was equipped with bathtubs, dining cars, drawing rooms and "real beds" instead of bunks. The first week of his trip went well, but Taft received a telegram informing him that reciprocity had been voted down in Canada and the entire liberal government voted out of office. Taft was downcast and completed the tour with little enthusiasm. Taft resolved to go on another diet to try to bring his weight down to just 300 lbs.

Roosevelt wrote California's progressive Gov. Hiram Johnson of his disenchantment with Taft. The problem, Roosevelt said, was that Taft had stayed put in his thinking while the rest of the country had moved ahead. Although he would support him if he's nominated as the GOP presidential candidate, Roosevelt said it is "impossible" for him to have any enthusiasm for Taft. One instance of this shift in public attitudes concerned "trust busting," for which Roosevelt became famous. Public thinking now favored government regulations to prevent the creation of huge trusts, monopolies and oligarchies in the first place. In an effort to continue Roosevelt's policies, Taft pursued more aggressive legal action against all corporations.

Taft seemed intent on "break(ing) up all (corporate) formations merely because they are large and successful," Roosevelt argued. The clash between the two men generated headlines and delighted progressive Republicans. Roosevelt's re-emergence on the political scene generated an undercurrent of presidential aspirations, and by December 1911 there was fervid discussion of a third Roosevelt presidency. Although he disclaimed any intent to run for president, he didn't make a "flat-footed denial" that would put the issue to rest. Alice Roosevelt was enlisted to carry the word to old Roosevelt supporter Archie Butt that his former boss wanted him to immediately quit his job.

Analysis

Roosevelt and Taft circled each other in the political arena for a while, each trying to get a clear picture of what the others' intentions were. Roosevelt had made it clear he wouldn't seek a third term as president and wouldn't accept any kind of political job right away. Perhaps to cover his flank in case Roosevelt changed his mind, Taft doubled down on his anti-trust anti-corruption rhetoric and action. But the burning issue of the day was tariff reciprocity with Canada, and tariffs in general. Meanwhile, a resurgent progressive movement began to sit up and take notice of Taft's record; they were not thrilled at what they saw. The group, organized by Wisconsin Sen. Robert La Follette, included politicians, judges, journalists. Roosevelt hung back from the gathering storm, taking occasional potshots at Taft.

Discussion Question 1

What organization did Sen. Robert Follette create when concerns about the viability of the Republican Party surfaced?



Discussion Question 2

What did The Associated Press erroneously report about GOP political candidates for the upcoming election?

Discussion Question 3

What action did Taft take to shore up his own reputation and the party's stature in the midst of accusations the Republicans haven't delivered the equality and prosperity they promised?

Vocabulary

nominate, referendum, disparate, beneficiary, fiasco, reclamation, resurgence, reciprocity, concurrent, proximity, antagonize, citadel, kinsmen, conspicuous, arbitral, tantamount, ducat, disconsolate, impotent, oblivious, recreant, juggernaut



Chapter 27: "My Hat is in the Ring"

Summary

Lincoln Steffens compared Roosevelt to Hamlet because of his apparent inability to make up his mind about whether to run for president. Meanwhile, the writer claimed, Roosevelt was "mussing up" the progressive movement by his indecision. At a standing-room-only appearance at Carnegie Hall with other progressives and journalists, Senator La Follette expressed his anger that Roosevelt was using Taft as a stalking horse, or a test of his own potential strength if he should attempt a run for president. Others worried that, if both Roosevelt and La Follette were in the race it would only serve to split the progressive vote and help Democrats. Pinchot and others tried unsuccessfully to convince La Follette to withdraw his candidacy.

La Follette delivered a drunken soliloquy before the annual meeting of the Periodical Publishers' Association in Philadelphia on corporate power and its creeping influence on newspapers. The senator insulted the large number of newspaper reporters present by telling them he would release copies of his remarks so they will have no excuse for misquoting or misrepresenting his speech. His nearly-incoherent reading of his remarks was punctuated with occasional bursts of finger-pointing and insults to the newsmen. Many walked out, to the sounds of La Follette's damning voice. This craven display continued past midnight, when the senator collapsed in his chair and passed out.

Although a few expressed their support for La Follette, it was clear that he had destroyed his candidacy and perhaps his political career. Meanwhile, like a cunning fox, Roosevelt waited in the wings and continued to use his alleged uncertainty about a presidential campaign to put psychological pressure on Taft. Archie Butt accepted an invitation to visit the Roosevelts at their Oyster Bay home. The whole time, Theodore talked compulsively and jumped from subject to subject "with the agility of a flying squirrel," Butt reported, but without discussing his political plans. Taft grew bitter with the realization that Roosevelt was manipulating him and others.

In a speech in Columbus, Ohio in February 1912 Roosevelt proposed that whenever a judge makes a decision on a constitutional issue the people should have the right to "recall" that ruling if they disagree. Although he didn't mention the Supreme Court, Roosevelt's remarks were understood by some to be a frontal assault on the system of checks and balances in the federal government envisioned by the founders. Newspapers and a large constituency of the Republican party were alarmed by his proposal — so much that The New York Times declared Roosevelt had destroyed any chance of being nominated by the GOP. Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge — a staunch Roosevelt supporter — declared that "Theodore has gone off on a perfectly wild program."

As pressure mounted for Roosevelt to once again become a presidential candidate, he let slip at a news conference that "my hat is in the ring." Roosevelt backers demanded



that he go on the record either for or against running. "I will accept the nomination for president if it is tendered to me," he finally declared. When he received a letter from Roosevelt declaring his candidacy, Taft was surprised that there were no conditions attached. It was a straightforward call to progressives to rally to his side.

Both men had access to wealthy supporters, as well as family and friends willing to provide financial backing. Following up on Roosevelt's suggestion about appeals of judicial decisions, Taft emphasized in several speeches that the idea would "topple the pillars of the temple" and undermine the people's faith in the judiciary.

As Taft and Roosevelt lined up against each other in preliminary pre-convention sparring, violence broke out in Michigan, Missouri and Oklahoma as supporters of both men wielded baseball bats and clubs to keep the other side from entering state conventions. In Michigan, more than 1,800 men arrived to occupy 1,400 seats as brawls between the two camps escalate until police came and broke up the fighting with their clubs.

Roosevelt's proposal for direct primary elections gained currency once again as the political season got underway. Taft said he had no objection to direct primary elections—provided there is some legal means to prevent cross-voting, or allowing members of one party to vote in the other party's primary election. By spring, hard work by Roosevelt supporters established direct primaries in 13 states, including Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Ohio, Maryland, South Dakota, Illinois and New York. With the beginning of the primary season in March, La Follette beat Roosevelt by 58 percent to 39 percent. In New York's first trial of the new direct primary law, Taft decimated Roosevelt by a margin of eight to one.

Campaigning in Illinois, Roosevelt claimed Taft won that state's primary through fraud and corruption. He then proceeded to win every district but one in Illinois. Then Roosevelt pummeled Taft in Pennsylvania, crushing the incumbent's hope to stem the mounting crest of support for Roosevelt. Archie Butt decided to leave Europe and return to the U.S. to offer support to Taft. He boarded, and died on, the maiden voyage of the Titanic on April 15, 1912. Taft responded by going into a profound state of grief. Taft then eked out a narrow victory over Roosevelt in Massachusetts; Roosevelt countered by winning primaries in Maryland, Ohio and California. Then Roosevelt won in both New Jersey and South Dakota. In the final tally, Roosevelt's popular vote was 1,214,969 compared to Taft's 865,835 and La Follette's 327,357.

Analysis

Roosevelt's potshots at Taft became more of a fusillade as elections neared. Roosevelt coyly suggested he might be a candidate for president, after all. Roosevelt forces worked hard to get direct primary elections in 13 states as a way of bypassing political bosses and machines. The Republican field for the presidential nomination included Taft, Roosevelt and Sen. Robert La Follette. Roosevelt accused his former vice president of winning the direct primary election in New York through fraud, and Taft



dismissed Roosevelt's proposal for a judicial panel to review lower court decisions that touch on constitutional issues as a daffy notion. The split between the two men triggered violence in three states where opposing camps attacked with baseball bats to prevent each other from entering state conventions. Clearly, Roosevelt's legacy was strong and enduring. As the Republicans went after each other, Democrats were overjoyed at their presidential prospects. An historical showdown was in the works.

Discussion Question 1

How did Senator La Follette shoot himself in the foot politically as his progressive coalition is launched?

Discussion Question 2

How did both Taft and Roosevelt lose a good friend and political adviser in the midst of turmoil leading to the 1910 elections?

Discussion Question 3

How did Roosevelt let it "slip out" that he might be a candidate for president, after all?

Vocabulary

coterie, subservient, plutocracy, calamitous, admonish, enumerate, relinquish, grippe, foray, magnates, rebuttal, deplore, hoary, irascible, crescendo, intermediary, panacea, instigate, epiphany, disparage, castigate, deleterious, efficacy



Chapter 28: "Bosom Friends, Bitter Enemies"

Summary

Political pundits salivated and prognosticated over the looming, titanic battle between Taft and Roosevelt at the Republican convention. Even in the days before tabloid TV, news media sages exploited the melodrama of two former allies ready to fight to the death for the presidential nomination. First-ever primaries in Spokane, Tacoma and Seattle, Wash. favored Roosevelt two-to-one in the popular vote but the Republican National Committee awarded Washington's 14 delegates to Taft because of alleged election fraud and irregularities despite the fact Roosevelt workers demonstrated instances of double voting. Roosevelt won the California primary by 77,000 votes but the national committee, in a similar fashion, gave the state's 26 delegates to Taft. At last, the national committee gave 235 of the 254 delegates to Taft. Bitter, vitriolic rhetoric was hurled in both directions.

On his way to the convention, Roosevelt made a stop in Chicago where he was met with a stupendous hurricane of support: businesses closed, workers called in sick and bartenders invented special drinks in honor of Roosevelt. Asked by a reporter whether he felt up to the job of running for president, Roosevelt replied: "I'm feeling like a bull moose." And thus was coined the moniker of his campaign and, eventually, the name of his independent party. Roosevelt morphed from a "teddy bear" to a "bull moose" in rut. At the pre-convention assembly, Roosevelt extended an olive branch to supporters of Senator La Follette and invited them to his camp. He also demanded that delegates fraudulently placed on the rolls be barred from voting. Out of the rancor of the convention, the idea of a third party arose. As Roosevelt paced nervously in his hotel room, two of his largest financial backers pledged to support him regardless of what party he claimed.

When Taft's nomination on the first ballot seemed inevitable, Roosevelt called on his legitimate delegates to refuse to vote because of the lingering presence of Taft's allegedly fraudulent delegates. Roosevelt supporters began leaving the Chicago Coliseum even before Taft was actually nominated. Led by Gov. Hiram Johnson, the California delegation entered the hall and demanded Roosevelt be nominated. At the Democratic party convention in Baltimore in June. Progressive New Jersey Gov. Woodrow Wilson was nominated as that party's standard bearer for president. On July 7, Roosevelt's campaign manager announced the formation of a new National Progressive Party at an Aug. 5 convention in Chicago. The purpose of the NPP was "to secure the better and more equitable diffusion of property (and to) strike at the roots of privilege in both industry and politics."



Although 63 Republican leaders in 40 states signed the declaration of the new party, many of Roosevelt's old associates and supporters eschewed joining the NPP. The new political unit was promptly dubbed the "Bull Moose Party" by journalists.

Analysis

As the race for the Republican presidential nomination tightened, the mercurial Roosevelt decided to extricate himself from the intramural bickering. With assurances of unwavering support from major financial backers, Roosevelt declared himself the candidate of a newly-formed National Progressive Party, or Bull Moose Party. It appeared that Roosevelt's ego could not tolerate the uncertainty of the volatile and chaotic Republican Party — and the real possibility that he could be defeated at the convention. Running as a third-party candidate enabled him once again to rally his "true believer" progressive base. Roosevelt offered a clarion call to those disgusted with GOP internal politics, and the breakaway faction loyal to Taft, and himself as the one true apostle. The two former partners were now at each others' throats, as old friends and political allies tried to somehow calm the troubled political waters.

Discussion Question 1

What was Roosevelt's first action at the Republican National Convention when it looked like there would be a landslide for Taft's nomination?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Roosevelt feel confident about launching a third party as a vehicle for his return to the White House?

Discussion Question 3

What was the actual formal name of the Bull Moose Party?

Vocabulary

escalate, instigate, smelt, habeas corpus, validate, cataclysm, castigate, schism, protectionism, dissect, aversion, inveterate, impeccably, confine, grueling, antagonism, decipher, charismatic, beholden, unseemliness, sanguine



Chapter 29: "Armageddon"

Summary

From the outset, there were contradictions and paradoxes in the NPP. Roosevelt gave permission to states in the Old South to send only white delegates, although blacks from the north were admitted. Roosevelt rationalized his position by saying that racial progress would come only when unnamed "high-minded white men" in southern states decided to allow blacks to participate. He was also criticized for trying to give life to a national party using a sectionalist, or regional, approach. On most of the big progressive issues, however, there was near unanimity. The NPP convention drew people not usually seen at political conventions—young people, liberated women, suffragettes, social workers. And it was also clear from the outset that this was Roosevelt's party; he was the sole reason for its existence.

At the party's first convention in Chicago, Roosevelt repeated the themes of his candidacy: an eight-hour workday for women, prohibition of child labor, a "living wage" for all workers, federal regulation of interstate corporations, better standards for workers compensation, a graduated inheritance tax and a social security system. Former Roosevelt supporter, journalist Ray Baker, found himself excited by the Bull Moose party but somewhat disenchanted with Roosevelt; he expressed the wish for a candidate without a personality cult and with more humility. William Allen White, too, had some reservations about Roosevelt but nevertheless quit the Republican party and joined the National Progressive Party. Ida Tarbell remained somewhat ambivalent about Roosevelt. Lincoln Steffens continued to be sympathetic to Roosevelt and the NPP, but observed that the powerful money men of Wall Street were determined to defeat him and preferred Woodrow Wilson.

Taft accused Roosevelt of creating a third party "merely to gratify personal ambition and vengeance." He said many of the ideas in Roosevelt's platform were more blatantly socialist than those brewing in Europe, and called on the GOP to remain steadfast in its support for the ideas and principles of the founding fathers as embedded in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. For his part, Roosevelt geared up for a "tremendous amount of very hard work" and planned a 40-state railroad tour of the country making whistle stops at dozens of small towns to connect with voters.

Democrat Woodrow Wilson viewed Roosevelt as his main competitor and admitted that his professorial manner and academic coolness didn't inspire the kind of rabid enthusiasm as the kinetic Roosevelt. Finding himself lacking in "human traits and red corpuscles," Wilson admitted he hasn't the stamina to run a Bull Moose campaign of his own. He was appalled at the notion that he could undertake the kind of dynamic railroad campaign as Roosevelt, although he did agree to a trip to the Midwest followed by a second trip to Colorado.



Taft admitted privately that he was likely facing defeat in the general election, but as always maintained his buoyant composure. Wilson presented something new to the electorate — a cool intellectual who was mindful of his rhetoric and loathe to raise expectations that he couldn't satisfy even as president. By comparison, Roosevelt especially and Taft somewhat seemed like great windbags hurling invective to and fro without so much as pausing to take the measure of their own words. Roosevelt accused Wilson of being a progressive in name only and in fact a laissez-faire politician who would do no more to regulate corporations and great financial institutions than the run-of-the-mill Republican.

During a campaign stop in Milwaukee, a man raised a pistol and fired it at point blank range into Roosevelt's chest, striking a folded 50-page speech and a glasses case. Roosevelt insisted he was not seriously hurt. He spoke for a half-hour before becoming weak and unsteady, at which point he was rushed to the hospital. Doctors decided to leave the bullet at the outside of the rib cage rather than operate to remove it because there was no infection.

On election day, Wilson carried 40 of the 48 states to earn 435 electoral votes. Roosevelt got six states and 88 popular votes; Taft carried just Vermont and Utah and won a mere eight electoral votes. Wilson, by a huge margin, was declared the winner and received congratulatory telegrams from both Taft and Roosevelt. Although Taft suspected he'd be defeated, Roosevelt thought he could win and was very downcast.

Analysis

The Republican progressive movement came to a screeching halt when Democrat Woodrow Wilson was elected president. However, progressive politics as we know it today didn't die; it was merely co-opted by the Democrats. Most of Roosevelt's favorite issues such as the eight-hour work day, elimination of child labor, guaranteed minimum wage and a form of social security were adopted by the Democratic party and came to be regarded as cornerstones of "liberal" politics. Nor did investigative journalism disappear in the aftermath of McClure's Magazine. Some sensational examples of investigative journalism closer to today's world include the Watergate scandal and any number of personal and political misdeeds that affect large numbers of citizens. It is striking that many of the big issues of Roosevelt's era — such as excessive corporate power and influence in politics, a fair living wage and the plight of the poor — continue to haunt American politics as this book was published in 2013.

Discussion Question 1

What criticism of Roosevelt's third party candidacy did Taft make publicly?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Woodrow Wilson think he was unelectable on the Democratic ticket?



Discussion Question 3

In what condition did the Republican Party emerge from the disastrous 1910 election?

Vocabulary

exuberance, eloquence, abhorrent, vindicate, perfunctory, protracted, bipartisan, cloister, overwrought, incite, monopoly, avarice, pugnacious, jingoist, solicitous, insolvency, warmonger, intrepid, jostle, incandescent, mugwump, Rough Rider, rancor, disaffected



Characters

Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt retained throughout his life the enthusiasm of a novice, the wide-eyed wonder of a boy and the courage of a warrior. Born into a wealthy New York family of importers/exporters, Roosevelt went to private schools and to Harvard, where he was recalled as something of a callow snob. But after law school and marriage, Roosevelt moved into a political career during which he underwent a kind of transformation after seeing first-hand the poverty and desperation of New York City slum dwellers. His political career then became a sustained effort to make things "more equal," so there would be no longer disproportionate wealth at the upper end and dire poverty at the bottom.

Perhaps to compensate for his childhood infirmities, Roosevelt became an avid horseman, hunter and outdoors man. A typical day for him in the presidency might have included lunch with 40 or so members of the public, a long horseback ride and a vigorous swim. When he joined the Army during the Spanish-American war, his group was known as the Rough Riders and he carried the title of colonel throughout his life. Roosevelt was possessed of astounding energy, bubbling optimism and the ability to win friends easily. In many ways a visionary because of the social and financial legislation during his administration, Roosevelt also laid the foundation for what his cousin, Franklin, would label the New Deal—superseding the Square Deal of Theodore.

Roosevelt's strength of character showed in the way he handled the death of his first wife, his tireless championing of social causes and his dauntless pursuit of public service.

William Howard Taft

William Howard Taft was personality Type B to Theodore Roosevelt's Type A. Taft wanted to work through communication, consensus and deliberation. His methodical, logical approach to problems were well-suited in his role as attorney, then judge. But as Taft discovered, politics was a much more unpredictable, hurly-burly affair than jurisprudence. Although a very large man physically, Taft was nevertheless somewhat shy and uncomfortable with any kind of public speaking. He tended to dither and prolong action, and to deliver long, pedantic speeches. But Taft was a very likable man who made friends easily. He could often accomplish much by his sweet, kind disposition than Roosevelt through his wild enthusiasms and strong convictions.

Taft demonstrated his loyalty during a tenure as civilian governor of the Philippine Islands during a period of difficult political turmoil. Taft helped to spread oil on troubled waters, to arrange for elections and to draw up and see adopted a constitution for the islands. Although Taft's life's goal was to serve on the Supreme Court, he made a good



administrator, judge and eventually vice president. And, despite all, he also got a seat on the Supreme Court. From these pages, the reader is likely to feel some of the warmth that Taft generated, and to wish for the opportunity to have met such a superior man.

Alice Roosevelt

Alice Roosevelt was Theodore's first wife who died at an early age. She seemed nervous and high-strung and not an enthusiastic political wife. Their daughter was also named Alice.

Nellie Taft

Nellie Taft came from the same upper middle class society as William Howard Taft and was very involved with the arts community. She was a major player in the formation of the Cincinnati Symphony. Although she was very supportive of her husband, William Howard Taft, in his political ambitions she was not political by nature and derived most of her satisfaction from her family and charitable pursuits.

Sam McClure

Founder of the progressive McClure's Magazine, Sam McClure was given to wild mood swings from ecstatic to morose, but he was an extremely capable editor who attracted some of the best contemporary writers to his pages. He was described by contemporaries as "a genius [and] a vibrant, eager, indomitable personality that electrified even the experienced and the cynical. His periods of intense work where his mind "tumbled from one idea to the next while he prowled the room" were most likely signs of a mood disorder. His personality was so striking that several authors incorporated him into their fiction, including Robert Louis Stevenson, Willa Cather, Upton Sinclair, William Dean Howells and Alice Hegen Rice. His alternating moods would seem to fit the clinical profile of what is today called bipolar illness, once known as manic-depressive illness. In that regard, he shared a chemical imbalance in the brain like that of Van Gogh, Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, Arnold Schoenberg and many other writers, artists and musicians.

Ida Tarbell

Ida Tarbell was a down-to-earth person with strong character and an unflinching will to work, as a journalist, for the betterment of society. Thus her politics went along well with those of Sam McClure, founder and publisher of McClure's Magazine. Tarbell was known for her careful research, balanced presentation and thoroughness in covering "hot" issues, such as monopolies, the abuses of corporations and political corruption. Her first series in McClure's on the history, structure, growth and personalities of Standard Oil, was so meticulous in its shocking message that a public outcry for change



to control and/or prevent any more such monopolies arose from the American people. Congress heard the outrage and began formulating and debating changes needed to reform many layers of American society, from Wall Street to Bank Street, Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Tarbell remained a steadfast supporter of Sam McClure when the editorial staff considers a mass resignation.

Ray Baker

Baker joined the staff of McClure's, a pioneer muckraking magazine, and quickly rose to prominence along with LinAfter graduating from the State Agricultural College (now Michigan State University), he attended law school at the University of Michigan in 1891 before launching his career as a journalist in 1892 with the Chicago News-Record, where he covered the Pullman Strike and Coxey's Army in 1894. At McClure's Magazine, Baker joined Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell in a famous muckraking trio of investigative writers. He also wrote fiction, including children's stories for the magazine Youth's Companion and a nine-volume series of stories about rural living in America, the first of which was titled "Adventures in Contentment" under the pseudonym David Grayson. In 1906, Baker, Steffens and Tarbell left McClure's and created The American Magazine In 1908.

William Allen White

William Allen White was one of the so-called muckrakers of journalism around the turn of the 20th Century. Although based in Emporia, Kansas, White managed to write scathing exposés for McClure's magazine and to edit the Emporia Gazette weekly newspaper. In 1896 White attracted national attention with a slashing attack on William Jennings Bryan, the Democrats, and the Populists titled "What's the Matter With Kansas?" White married Sallie Lindsay in 1893. They had two children, William Lindsay, born in 1900, and Mary Katherine, born in 1904. Mary died in a 1921 horse-riding accident, leading her father to write a famous eulogy, "Mary White," on August 17, 1921. White became a leader of the progressive movement in Kansas, forming the Kansas Republican League in 1912 to oppose railroads monopolies. White helped Theodore Roosevelt form the Progressive (Bull-Moose) Party in 1912 in opposition to the conservative forces supporting incumbent Taft.

Lincoln Steffens

Lincoln Steffens, a wealthy San Franciscan, began his career as a journalist at the New York Evening Post. He then became an editor of McClure's Magazine and formed a celebrated muckraking trio with Ida Tarbell and Ray Stannard Baker. He investigated government and political corruption, and two collections of his articles were published as *The Shame of the Cities* (1904) and *The Struggle for Self-Government* (1906). He also wrote *The Traitor State* (1905), which criticized New Jersey for patronizing incorporation. In 1906, he left McClure's, along with Tarbell and Baker, to form The



American Magazine. In *The Shame of the Cities*, Steffens sought political reform in urban America by appealing to the emotions of Americans. He tried to provoke outrage with examples of corrupt governments throughout urban America.

John D. Rockefeller

John D. Rockefeller was the iconic cold-hearted millionaire out of American folk mythology. His avarice was matched only by his avidity for more of everything. By purchasing smaller oil companies, he created an oil monopoly. With the same instincts and skills, he created a huge national railroad system which also became a monopoly he could use to extort exorbitant freight shipping rates and drive smaller railroads out of business. Part of the reason for Rockefeller's success was that there were no federal regulatory statutes covering unfair competition, no federal agencies to oversee the operations of huge businesses, no minimum wage or child labor laws—not to mention worker safety and minimum wage standards. Roosevelt's "trust busting" zealots pursued Rockefeller and other monopolists during the Square Deal.



Symbols and Symbolism

Titanic

The Titanic was the cruise ship on which Archie Butt, a good friend and political adviser to both Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, perished along with some 3,000 other passengers and crew in the North Atlantic. If the Titanic is a symbol it would represent man's hubris or arrogance about his own wisdom and cleverness. The Titanic was a double-hulled steel passenger liner that was supposed to be unsinkable. And yet, on its maiden voyage, it struck an iceberg and sank—one of the great disasters of the modern age.

Bull Moose Party

The Bull Moose Party was the popular name for the National Progressive Party (NPP) that Theodore Roosevelt organized as a vehicle to get himself into the White House for a third term after he was denied the nomination by his own Republican Party. Roosevelt felt strongly that the progressive movement within the GOP had faltered and that incumbent president William Howard Taft had not upheld the principles of progressive politics that they once shared. The term derived from a statement by Roosevelt that he felt like a bull moose in springtime, filled with energy, ready to tackle Taft and the mainstream Republicans in a third party race. In fact, though, what he really did was bifurcate the progressive vote which helped to guarantee that Democrat Woodrow Wilson was elected president.

McClure's Magazine

McClure's Magazine was an important journalistic tool in support of the progressive movement, started by the brilliant but unstable Sam McClure. Its staff included some of the best left-wing writers of the day, such as Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, William Allen White, Ray Baker [and Upton Sinclair.] The magazine did an excellent job of explaining the monopolistic powers of the large corporations, such as Standard Oil, and the large trusts that control vast sums of money and help to further the income divide among Americans. McClure's also exposed political corruption within city, state and federal government. McClure's seemed to work in tandem with Roosevelt and Taft as they steered the progressive movement toward reform of political and financial institutions.

Panama Canal

President Theodore Roosevelt directed the entire creation of the Panama Canal, from land acquisition to construction and operation, providing a much faster route between the east and west coasts of the United States than the southerly route through Cape Horn. It is an economic boon not only to the United States but also employed thousands



of workers in Panama, in perhaps one of the largest public works projects ever undertaken. No action during his Roosevelt's presidency aroused as much controversy. The New York Times called it an "act of sordid conquest." It is often cited as the classic example of U.S. "gunboat diplomacy" in Latin America. Critics later charged that Roosevelt conspired to instigate the revolution in Panama but facts do not support the claim. In fact, there had been numerous uprisings in the region the U.S. had helped suppress.

Philippine Islands

The Philippine Islands was where Taft demonstrated his political and organizational skills, when appointed interim governor by President Roosevelt at a time when the Philippines were an American possession. Previous American administrations had failed to bring about domestic tranquility and had allowed the islands to slip into a state of near-revolution. Taft not only produced calm and productivity among the Filipinos but earned their respect, and eventually their love. His steady administrative hand guided restoration and expansion of the crucial railroad system, as well as other crucial projects such as the creation of a constitution.

Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone National Park was established by Congress and signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant March 1, 1872. Located primarily in Wyoming, it also extends into Montana and Idaho. Yellowstone was the first national park in the United States and is known for its wildlife and its many geothermal features, especially Old Faithful Geyser. Yellowstone is the icon of the national park system which was greatly expanded during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. When the park was threatened with closure because of poaching and destruction of habitat, Theodore Roosevelt and others pushed for the Park Protection Act, which saved the park. The Lacey Act of 1900 provided legal support for the officials prosecuting poachers.

Teddy Bear

"Teddy Bear" derived from Theodore Roosevelt (commonly known as "Teddy"). The moniker originated from an incident on a bear hunting trip in Mississippi in November 1902, to which Roosevelt was invited by Mississippi Governor Andrew H. Longino. Several other competing hunters had already killed an animal. A clutch of Roosevelt's attendants cornered, clubbed, and tied an American black bear to a willow tree after a long exhausting chase with hounds. They called Roosevelt and suggested that he should shoot it. He refused to shoot the bear himself, deeming this unsportsmanlike, but instructed that the bear be killed to put it out of its misery. This became the topic of a political cartoon by Clifford Berryman in The Washington Post Nov.16, 1902. While the initial cartoon of an adult black bear lassoed by a handler and a disgusted Roosevelt



had symbolic overtones, later issues of that and other Berryman cartoons made the bear smaller and cuter.

The Square Deal

In an odd prefiguring of the depression-era New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt, cousin Theodore Roosevelt launched his Square Deal—a social program of sweeping ambitions. Aimed primarily at the poor and working class, the Square Deal included such measures as abolition of child labor and establishment of a decent "living wage," or minimum hourly wage. It also encompasses a government financed retirement system, which is a precursor to Franklin Roosevelt's depression-era Social Security program. Theodore Roosevelt's so-called "trust busts" were intended to dilute the concentration of wealth in trusts and corporations owned by a few wealthy individuals and narrow the gap between rich and poor. In general, the Square Deal represented a widening of the power and authority of the federal government to create a so-called level playing field that did not permit unfair advantage to a few at the expense of the many. Roosevelt's Square Deal caused strife and dissent within his own Republican Party, but was viewed by some progressives as not bold enough.



Settings

New York

New York was Roosevelt's home state, and the early days of his career were spent in New York City as police commissioner and in Albany as state representative.

Washington, DC

As the seat of the federal government, Washington, DC is where the serious politicians gather to play serious games. Both Roosevelt and Taft were newcomers (and neighbors) when they arrived in Washington. Their physical proximity was matched by their philosophical similarities and they formed a long bond of friendship as progressives.

Philippine Islands

The Philippines was where William Howard Taft demonstrated his excellent leadership and governance potential. Manila was where he made a lot of close friends and felt a special loyalty to the Filipino people. The islands are also where Taft was taken seriously ill with a tropical infection that required several surgeries and almost killed him.

Oyster Bay

Oyster Bay is a small nook on the Atlantic seaboard north of New York where the Roosevelts had a family vacation home.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincinnati, named for the Society of the Cincinnati (Revolutionary War geneology association), was home to William Howard Taft and his family. It's where his father served as judge, where William started a law practice, and where he also served as judge.



Themes and Motifs

Progressive Politics

In the context of this book, progressive politics means simply a shift in power from the ultra-wealthy toward the common man. Theodore Roosevelt, himself an aristocrat, awakened to the suffering and poverty evident in New York City and was appalled. The desire to make positive changes in the balance of wealth and power became the overriding purpose of his political life. As a progressive within the Republican party, he was at odds with the party old guard whose political interests lay primarily in maintaining their social and economic status at the top of the heap.

But he found an ally in William Howard Taft, the product of an upper middle class family who was concerned about the same issues. Roosevelt also discovered some high-powered journalists who were quite liberal, tending toward socialistic views. Although the word "socialism" was an instant trigger for GOP reactionaries who would metaphorically grab their swords whenever they heard it, Roosevelt never used the term to describe his politics. His focus was on child labor, a fair (minimum) wage for workers, access to healthcare, some kind of government-sponsored retirement system, government regulation of trusts and large corporations and a huge emphasis on the environment as manifested in the national parks system.

The happy intersection of the right politicians (Taft and Roosevelt) at the same time there was a progressive press in the form of McClure's Magazine supercharged the efforts of progressive reformers. Legislation was enacted in all the primary areas of concern of Roosevelt and Taft, buoyed by the power of the press. Progressive politics of this nature did not succeed Theodore Roosevelt's administration for another three decades when his cousin, Franklin Roosevelt, marshaled the resources of an expanding federal government to pull the United States out of the Great Depression. The two Roosevelts stand in American history as outposts of classic liberalism.

Synergy

Synergy is the integration of systems or forces that produce more energy than any of the components could yield working separately. Political synergy was achieved from the "bully pulpit" (presidency) during the Roosevelt-Taft years, supercharged by a gang of left-leaning writers such as Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, William Allen White and Sam McClure. This unusually productive era was marked not by titanic battles between the press and the presidency, but rather a working alliance growing out of shared goals.

The Watergate era of the 1970s was probably the starkest example of the opposite end of the cooperation spectrum between the press and politicians. Republican Roosevelt was not just supported, but loved, by a huge majority of Americans. Republican Richard Nixon, by contrast, was forced to resign the presidency because of his role in the break-



in by agents of the president to steal secrets from the Democratic campaign headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington, DC.

The Roosevelt-Taft era stands as an example of how cooperation between press, politicians and the public can bring about sweeping governmental and social reforms.

For example, Ida Tarbell's muckraking coverage of the many examples of harm done by runaway capitalism, in the form of Standard Oil for one example, led to public outrage that ignited President Roosevelt's campaign to curb trusts and corporations that threatened the foundation of American democracy by creating and perpetuating unfair, exploitative economic systems that channeled most of the wealth to the upper one percent.

Corporate Elitism

Despite the best efforts of Theodore Roosevelt and others during the progressive era, little has changed regarding the elitist status of large corporations since then. The Supreme Court has ruled that corporations are people, and therefore have the unconditional right to freedom of speech. And, conveniently enough, the court has also ruled that money in politics is a form of speech. Thus, corporations in the 21st Century wield power probably undreamed of by Theodore Roosevelt—or even Thomas Jefferson who in the 1770s warned that the rising power of corporations threatened to "throttle in its infancy" the newly-launched democratic experiment called America.

It is a sad but true platitude that corporate lobbyists now overrun the halls of Congress, passing out favors and pressuring our representatives to do their corporate bidding. Theodore Roosevelt had a fear and loathing for enormous financial interests that operated to the detriment of honest, hard-working citizens. The John D. Rockefellers and J.P. Morgans of Roosevelt's era were as distasteful to progressives in Roosevelt's time as some of today's fallen Wall Street lions, so-called captains of corporate ships of state that operate in foreign countries beyond the reach of American laws and routinely violate child labor, fair wage and worker safety standards long ago placed in federal regulation.

The student of history would be challenged to find striking differences in the exploits, say, of former Enron chief Kenneth Lay and Rockefeller when he owned and operated oil, mining and railroad trusts. This parallel of yesterday's corporate robber barons and the political power of large corporations is one of the things that makes this book such informative reading. Of course, these parallels beg the question: what has changed in 100 years of corporate elitism?



Styles

Point of View

The point of view of the author is that of the dispassionate historian relating important events in as even-handed a manner as possible. It is similar to the point of view of journalists, who are said to write the first draft of history. But her history includes the very human natures of various important key figures from the president to a city mayor, the role that wives and family play in affecting how key players act and react. The detached point of view allows the reader to accept the narrator as a factual and authoritative source of information, and as a key to unraveling the often-complicated tangle of personalities, political parties, courts and Congress in making American history in this era. Most importantly, the objective viewpoint enables the author to treat the multiple characters as individuals, rather than simply political actors.

Language and Meaning

The author seems inordinately fond of the verb "thrill," and uses it in the past tense to express a state of happiness, excitement or pleasure. The Roosevelts, Tafts and any number of others are thrilled over and over. A cursory count indicates more than 40 uses of the term, to the extent that it becomes a distraction to the reader. People are thrilled on pages 40, 80, 243, 257, 297, 318 331 356, 360, 392 and 393. There are more instances but cataloging them all would itself be tiresome and redundant. It's surprising that a writer of Doris Goodwin's stature could not find other, more precise words to express herself.

In general, though, the language and writing are lively and Goodwin does an excellent job of making the reader feel she is actually living the scenes and important moments, rather than reading an historical account of them. This may be the highest challenge of the historian—to make history read like the daily newspaper. This fundamental skill is one of Goodwin's gifts and she uses it to good advantage. There is some authorial interpretation of events, but mostly the author strives to give an accurate and vivid account and let the reader decide the importance and meaning of events. This helps to make what is basically a work of scholarship appealing to the average reader.

Structure

Except for the flash-forward that opens the book, the remainder is told in straight narrative structure from beginning to middle, to end chronologically. The author has gone to pains to present balanced pictures of both Roosevelt and Taft, and to give insight into the dynamics of other political figures and alliances through side-narratives that help to enrich the reader's understanding of events. She has not shied away from psychological insight into the behavior of her characters, which also helps the reader get a full picture.



Quotes

Under Roosevelt's Square Deal the country had awakened to the need for government action to allay problems caused by industrialization—an awakening spurred in part by the dramatic exposés of a talented group of investigative journalists he famously labeled 'muckrakers.

-- author (chapter 1 paragraph Page 12, paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote introduces the concept of progressivism and shows connection between an aware press and a responsive politics.

Has Roosevelt reached the pinnacle of his fame, or is he to move forward to fresh conquests? It rests with him. He is at the height of his mental and physical powers. He possesses a great influence over the masses of his countrymen. Such power is a tremendous weapon for good or evil. How will he wield it?

-- Baltimore Sun (chapter 1 paragraph 3)

Importance: This portion of an editorial from the Baltimore Sun in 1912 indicates the power Roosevelt has over the Republican Party as he contemplates whether to seek a third term as president. Taft is coming to the end of his first term as president, and the political bookmakers cast an uncertain eye on both men since Roosevelt apparently holds the trump card over whether Taft will seek a second term. Roosevelt remains a very popular figure even after being out of office four years.

Even as he prepared to enter Cincinnati Law School the following fall, much of Will's (Taft's) motivation continued to stem from his father's high expectations rather than from any strong internal drive. Indeed, years later, Taft would credit his father's indomitable will and lofty aspirations in prompting his own achievements.

-- author (chapter 2 paragraph 5)

Importance: This quote matters because it points to a character defect that, more than anything else, causes the eventual rift between Roosevelt and Taft—Taft's inertia and lack of initiative. Although a highly accomplished man, Taft was never the ball of fire that his predecessor and mentor, Roosevelt, had been. Taft's amiable and kindly personality becomes a liability when he faces competition from other politicians who are more tenacious and more aggressive.

[Roosevelt] came into official life with a blare of trumpets and a beating of gongs, blared and beat by himself. He immediately announced himself the one man competent to take charge of the entire business of the government. He said to all who would listen to his incoherent gibberish: 'I am Roosevelt; stop work and look at me.' As he became more puffed up he became insolent, arrogant and more conceited.

-- Washington Post (chapter 6 paragraph 2)

Importance: The quote from the Washington Post reflects the way that Roosevelt's personality affects a good number of people. After his appointment to the federal Civil



Service Commission, Roosevelt goes on a crusade of reform that causes grief to many long-time civil servants and generates a backlash in Washington, DC. The initial object of his reform efforts is Postmaster General John Wanamaker, who is forced to resign following congressional hearings that substantiated Roosevelt's charges against him.

Some of the evils of which you [Henry George, radical labor independent presidential candidate] complain are real and can be to a certain degree remedied; others, though real, can only be gotten over through the capacity for steady individual self-help which is the glory of every true American, and can no more be done away with by legislation you could do away with the bruises which you received when you tumbled down, by passing an act to repeal the laws of gravitation.

-- Theodore Roosevelt (chapter 5 paragraph 1)

Importance: In this letter to potential presidential competitor Henry George, Roosevelt defines himself politically as a moderate liberal within the ranks of the Republican party. This "trust buster" is no political radical, nor even as liberal as his successor and cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In this letter, Roosevelt portrays himself more as populist reformer than rake-hell liberal.

My men here are hardworking, laboring men who work longer hours for no greater wages than many of the [Haymarket Square] strikers, but they are Americans through and through. I believe nothing would give them greater pleasure than a chance with their rifles at one of the mobs.

-- Theodore Roosevelt (chapter 7 paragraph 1)

Importance: At this stage of his political development, in 1886, Roosevelt is not yet the populist politician he later became. Perhaps reacting from fear that so-called "anarchists" had set off a lethal bomb in the midst of labor agitation in Chicago, Roosevelt's remarks are not unlike those of many Americans who did not face the same bread-and-butter challengers as these laborers. The incident became known in history books as the Haymarket Square riot."

I do not believe it is wise or safe for us as a [Republican] party to take refuge in mere negation and to say that there are no evils to be corrected. It seems to be that our attitude should be one of correcting the evils and thereby showing that...Republicans hold the just balance and set our faces as resolutely against improper corporate influence on the one hand and against demagoguery and mob rule on the other." (p. 248, l. 7)

-- Roosevelt (Governor & Governor General paragraph 1)

We do not wish to discourage enterprise; we do not desire to destroy corporations; we do desire to put them fully at the service of the state and the people. [We want to reveal] unscrupulous promotion, overcapitalization [and] unfair competition resulting in the crushing out of competitors.

-- Theodore Roosevelt (chapter 9 paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote lays out Roosevelt's motivation for trying to reign in the trusts



and mega-corporations of his time, which he is convinced cause undue hardship for working people. Eventually this mantle is picked up by FDR who extends government regulation to many sectors of the economy in an effort to quell predatory and manipulative corporate practices.

He [Taft] is not a New York politician who would sacrifice his soul for office; he is not an anxious member of Congress who would promise anything to get a second term. He is Judge Taft and when we say that he is Judge Taft we mean to imply that he represents all that is best in American manhood, involving integrity of character, a sane mind and the loftiest of motives.

-- Harper's Weekly (chapter 9 paragraph Page 268, paragraph 2)

Importance: Word of Taft's appeal as both politician and person begins to circulate. At this point in the story, it is difficult to guess whether Roosevelt—known for his mercurial flights of mood and sometimes imperious manner—may be envious of his counterpart's magnetism. If that were the case, it could provide some of the motivation for Roosevelt's campaign for a third term as president.

I should like to be president and feel I could do the work well. but it would be simply foolish for me to think seriously of my chances of getting the office when the only certain feature of the situation is that my own state will be against me.

-- Theodore Roosevelt (chapter 9 paragraph 3)

Importance: Here, Roosevelt reveals both his desire for the presidency and his acknowledgement of political realities. This is significant for it may be the point at which Roosevelt begins contemplating a third-party bid for the Oval Office—an idea that was to ripen into the Bull Moose Party.

The power of the mighty industrial overlords of the country has increased by giant strides while the methods of controlling them, or checking abuses by them on the part of the people, through the government, remained archaic and therefore practically impotent.

-- Theodore Roosevelt (chapter 10 paragraph Page 299, paragraph 1)

Importance: Roosevelt sounds a warning that he intends to go after "malefactors of great wealth" that have seized power in the capitalist system and used it to enrich themselves without regard for the public interest, the environment or the overall economy. Because of his vigorous pursuit of creating some kind of government safeguards against these capitalist transgressions, Roosevelt becomes known as a "trust buster."

More than any president since Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt was able to shrewdly calculate popular sentiment. He read daily excerpts from scores of newspapers, probed the eclectic assemblage of visitors and guests frequenting the White House and tested his ideas on reporters.

-- Author (chapter 10 paragraph Page 322, paragraph 4)



Importance: Roosevelt is sometimes described as a "populist progressive" although his background was patrician. This quote reveals how Roosevelt kept his fingers on the pulse of public opinion as well as his ability to quickly maneuver as the times and public sentiment shifted. It also underlines his close relationship with reporters and newspapers that helped him to launch his progressive agenda.

[Ida] Tarbell's first installment explores the birth of the oil industry in the [Pennsylvania] region where she was raised. The 'irrepressible energy' of the pioneers who settled 'this little corner of Pennsylvania' transformed the landscape and created an entire commercial machine. Scores of small businesses flourished: refineries were necessary to distill the oil, storage tanks to hold it, barrels to carry it, and teamsters to haul it to shipping points on the river or the railroad.

-- Author (chapter 11 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote is important because it derives from a piece of investigative journalism by Ida Tarbell, one of the first writers for McClure's Magazine. Tarbell's piece shows how a small corporation (Standard Oil) grew quickly into a national and multinational corporation, larger than some countries in revenue and land mass. The rise of the large corporations and their negative impacts on communities and families becomes an important theme in Roosevelt's progressive campaign.

You may be an editor, but you [Lincoln Steffens] don't know how to edit a magazine. You can't learn to edit a magazine here in this office. Get out of here, travel to—somewhere. Buy a railroad ticket, get on a train and there, where it lands you, there you will learn to edit a magazine.

-- Sam McClure (chapter 13 paragraph Page 368, paragraph 4)

Importance: Sam McClure the brilliant but unstable editor/publisher of McClure's Magazine, in this quote demonstrates the way he put fire in the belly of his writers to get their best work, and to make his own magazine one of the sensations of American journalism. The journal was one leg of the three-legged stool of progressive politics, with Taft and Roosevelt.

I do not think that I have ever known anyone with the equanimity, amiability, and kindness of Mr. Taft,' Alice Roosevelt reported. 'During all that summer I never once saw him really cross or upset. He was always beaming, genial and friendly through all his official duties and the task of keeping harmony among his varied and somewhat temperamental army of trippers.

-- Alice Roosevelt (chapter 16 paragraph Page 430, paragraph 1)

Importance: Alice Roosevelt puts her finger on Taft's tremendous warmth of personality and his eternal sunshine of the spirit. It is this quality, plus his formidable intellectual gifts, that endear him to Roosevelt and make him an eventual presidential candidate. Whether this benign persona is a mask is unclear; we know from the record that Taft agonized over his speeches and public appearances, all the while preferring to be on the Supreme Court rather than in the White House.



In truth, the president's [Roosevelt's] attack on the muckrakers reflected more than momentary anger at [William Randolph] Hearst and David Graham Phillips. His exasperation with the proliferation of increasingly sensational and shoddily investigated exposure journalism had been slowly building. Although 'the masters' at McClure's typically invested months and even years of careful research in their studies, a host of less meticulous and principled 'imitators' had followed in their wake.

-- Author (Chapter 18 paragraph Page 482, paragraph 3)

Importance: This quote throws light on the fact Roosevelt was an extremely media-conscious president who developed extraordinary symbiotic relationships with the journalists of his time: he was not averse to telling editors and publishers what they should cover, but was also very indulgent with reporters. His philosophy seems to have been to work with the media rather than against them. The resulting success of magazines like McClure's encouraged other, less polished sheets, to lean toward sensationalism to grab attention.

Taft's long struggle with conservative Republicans over the Philippine tariff had awakened him to the larger inequity of the entire domestic tariff structure—a system that created immense advantages for eastern manufacturers and massive corporations over western farmers and small business.

-- Author (chapter 19 paragraph Page 503, paragraph 2)

Importance: This passage helps define what the boundaries of the Republican Party were during the Roosevelt-Taft era: anything that might upset "the system" weighted heavily in favor of corporations and the wealthy would be unacceptable. Progressivism, as practiced by Roosevelt and Taft, posed a real threat to the hegemony of the GOP.

I am not very pleased with the way Taft's campaign is being handled. I do wish that Taft would put more energy and fight into the matter. The true friend of reform is the man who steadily perseveres in righting wrongs, in warring against abuses, but whose character and training are such that he never promises what he cannot perform...and never permits himself to be led into foolish excesses.

-- Roosevelt (chapter 21 paragraph Page 553, paragraph 3)

Importance: In a letter to his son-in-law, Nicholas Longworth, Roosevelt gripes about the lackluster campaign his friend is waging for the presidency. Although Roosevelt shares his opinion only with family and close advisers, he maintains publicly his support for Taft and his praise for his character. But this is one of the early signs of a rift between the two men that eventually leads to estrangement.

By wresting power from the Old Guard, the progressives aimed to regulate the economy in the interests of the many as opposed to the interests of the few. Although Roosevelt had occasionally 'dragooned' the Congress into supporting progressive policies through outside pressure, the party organization remained in conservative hands.

-- Author (chapter 24 paragraph Page 627, paragraph 4)

Importance: This quote gives a reading on the political temperature of the Republican



Party at a time when Taft is in the White House and Roosevelt spinning around in his head the notion of a possible third-party run for the presidency. AT this time, it had become apparent to Roosevelt and probably Taft as well, that the GOP had bent about as far it would in the direction of liberalism and reform.

We progressives believe that human rights are supreme over all other rights; that wealth should be the servant, not the master, of the people. Unless representative government does absolutely represent the people, it is not representative government at all.

-- Roosevelt (chapter 19 paragraph Page 678, paragraph 4)

Importance: These words by Roosevelt were uttered on the eve of his launch of the Bull Moose Party which he hoped would carry him back to the White House on a rising tide of good feelings toward him by the American people.