

President roosevelt: steward of the people essay



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Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th President of the United States and made a huge impact on the world. Not only was he the youngest President at age 42, but he was also a greatly respected war hero (Theodore Roosevelt). He was also the first US President to win the Nobel Peace Prize (Theodore Roosevelt – Biography). As President, Roosevelt looked at the role of President as a “steward of the people” (Theodore Roosevelt). Theodore Roosevelt was not only known to be the first modern President but also as a man who worked hard for the people of the United States, an international relationship builder, and the everyday type of person who people liked to be around (Roosevelt). Theodore Roosevelt was born on October 27th, 1858 in New York, New York.

He was the son of Theodore Roosevelt Sr. , a flourishing merchant, and Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, a Georgia native with an aristocratic background. Theodore was not a very outgoing type of child, but rather a “sickly, puny, nearsighted lad” (Roosevelt). Theodore’s father, who worried about his son, always told him, “You have the mind but not the body and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must make your body” (Roosevelt).

Theodore took his father’s words to heart and began to work on his body by exercising, boxing and wrestling (Roosevelt). Theodore received his early education at home with private tutors. He later finished his education at the Harvard University where they graduated him with honors in 1880. He then entered Columbia University Law School in search of being a lawyer, but the lure of historical writing and politics were too strong for him to resist, and he dropped the idea of being a lawyer (Roosevelt). President Roosevelt recalled

in his autobiography that although his friends were against it, he decided to enter politics instead of finishing law school (Roosevelt).

They considered politics as a cheap, gaudy profession only fit for the lower class (Roosevelt). In 1881, voters elected Theodore to the New York State assembly as a Republican (Roosevelt). Theodore's promising career in politics came to a grinding stop in 1884. During the presidential election campaign that year, he separated himself from many of his fellow reformers by supporting the candidacy of Republican James G. Blaine, whose name had been dirtied by charges of illegal behavior in a business-related scandal (Cooper). What had an even bigger blow was the death of his much-loved wife, Alice Hathaway Lee, whom he had married after graduating from Harvard and also the death of his mother (Roosevelt; Cooper).

He then left politics and spent the next two years on his cattle ranch in the Dakota Territory (Cooper). His attempt to reenter public life was unsuccessful as he was defeated in a bid to become mayor of New York City in 1886 (Cooper). Theodore still remained active in politics by battling corruption as a member of the U. S. Civil Service Commission and the President of the New York City Board of Police Commissioners (Cooper).

Later in 1889, President Benjamin Harrison named him to the three-member Civil Service Commission (Roosevelt). Theodore began a steady stream of speechmaking, championing honesty and morality in both the government and politics. In 1895, the New York Mayor, William Strong, made Theodore commissioner of the city's police force (Roosevelt). After Theodore's two

years as commissioner he went to work for President William McKinley as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Roosevelt).

In April 1898, Theodore resigned from his government post and organized the first volunteer cavalry (Roosevelt; Cooper). They were known as the “Rough Riders,” a daredevil band of cowboys and aristocrats like himself (Roosevelt). They became national heroes as a result of the well-exposed exploits in the battle of San Juan Hill (Roosevelt). Theodore’s popularity again made him an attractive political candidate. As a result, Tom Platt, a Republican Senator from New York, sponsored him for Governor (Roosevelt). His actions bothered the party’s bosses so much that they planned to get rid of him by drafting him for the Republican Vice Presidential nomination in 1900 (Cooper).

Elected with President McKinley, Theodore felt irritation with his powerless office until September 14th, 1901, when McKinley was shot by an assassin and died a week after of an infection, thereby making Theodore the President (Cooper; Roosevelt). Even though he was the youngest person ever to hold the office of chief executive, President Roosevelt was prepared for the role in a way that few others had been before (Cooper). Despite his concern, President Roosevelt managed to do enough in his first three years in office to construct a “platform for election in his own right” (Cooper). In 1902, President Roosevelt persuaded Republican conservatives into making the Bureau of Corporations with the power to look into businesses occupied in interstate trade but without regulatory powers. He pursued this policy of “trust-busting” by starting lawsuits against 43 other major businesses throughout the next seven years (Cooper).

In 1902, President Roosevelt got involved in the anthracite coal strike when it threatened to cut off heating fuel for homes, schools, and hospitals. The grouping of tactics that he used worked to end the strike and gain a modest pay hike for the miners. This was the first time in history that a President had gotten publicly involved in a labor dispute and completely on the side of workers (Cooper). President Roosevelt characterized his actions as motivated toward a “ Square Deal” between capital and labor (Cooper). He would use those words as his campaign slogan in the 1904 presidential election.

He won that election, overwhelmingly beating the Democratic candidate Alton B. Parker by 336 to 140 electoral votes (Cooper). President Roosevelt believed that nations, like individuals, should live the strenuous life and do their part to preserve peace and order (Cooper). President Roosevelt also committed a great deal of his time to Japanese and American relations, trying to maintain the “ Open Door Policy” (Cooper). In 1906, for acting as third party between the combatants in the Russo-Japanese War, he became the first American ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize (Roosevelt). The end of President Roosevelt’s presidency was very emotional.

In particular after the financial panic in 1907, his already tense relations with Republican conservatives in Congress worsened into an unpleasant tie that ended any further domestic reforms (Cooper). President Roosevelt moved quickly to punish a regiment of 160 African-American soldiers, some of who had supposedly engaged themselves in a riot in Brownsville, Texas, where a man was shot and killed. Although no one was ever accused and a trial was never held, he assumed everyone was guilty and issued a release to everyone in the group (Cooper). Many of the soldiers were close to

retirement and several held the Medal of Honor (Cooper). When Congress complained about the President's actions he replied, " The only reason I didn't have them hung was because I could not find out which ones did the shooting.

President Roosevelt's term ended in March 1909, only four months after his 50th birthday (Cooper). Instantly after leaving office, President Roosevelt went on a 10-month hunting safari in Africa and toured of Europe. On his return he could not avoid being drawn back into politics. President Roosevelt had once said " I am as strong as a bull moose and you can use me to the limit.

" On January 6, 1919, Roosevelt died in his sleep at his home in Oyster Bay, New York (Cooper). Theodore's last words before he died in 1919 were " No man has had a happier life than I have led; a happier life in every way" (Theodore Roosevelt). He is the only twentieth-century President on South Dakota's Mount Rushmore monument (Roosevelt). Theodore Roosevelt was a not only a successful President but also a well-liked person.

Even though he was not very sociable child, he turned out to be one of the better 20th-century Presidents. President Roosevelt was known as one of the first modern Presidents, a writer, a fearless explorer and a guy everyone wanted to be friends with (Roosevelt). His great achievements and hard work illustrate that he indeed was a " steward of the people. "