

This newsletter is produced by Milton Elis and the Volunteer Advisory Board for the volunteers and staff of the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site.

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Oyster Bay, New York 11771

The Volunteers of Sagamore Hill
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TRIVIA



ANSWER: The pillow sits on the rocking chair in TR's dressing

MARCH 2009 PODCAST ON WOMEN'S HISTORY TO BE LAUNCHED

As he did for Black History Month, Andrew Buttermilch will be producing a new podcast for Women's History Month. TR's feelings about women's issues of his day and his involvement with the women's suffrage movement will be covered.

WHAT ARE PODCASTS?

This writer is electronically challenged and doesn't know a nanosecond from a gigabyte. I still think that radios have tubes. When I received an e-mail, from Volunteer Advisory Board member *Ginny Perrell*, about the site using pod casts, all I could think about was the movie *The Body Snatchers*. Ginny's e-mail instructed me to contact Andrew Buttermilch and learn about pod casts.

I caught up with Andrew in the backroom of the House on **Presidents Day**. We were both giving tours. "What's with pod casts", I naively asked? Here is the story.

The site is using pod casts as monthly audio historical analysis of some facet in the life and times of *Theodore Roosevelt*, such as race relations or women's' rights. Andrew is writing the scripts for these fifteen minute in-depth segments. After the script is approved, Andrew records it and the message is accessible from the first page of the park's web site. I would classify these as mini-radio programs going out on the internet. They are great research tools for students.

THE THIRTY-TWO STAR FLAG

In the September 2008 issue of the **Rough Writer**, a thirty-two star flag was shown that followed the format of the current American flag which has the thirteen red and white stripes and showed the blue field with the thirty-two star following the current format of stars in straight lines. *Rich Althaus* and *Josh Reyes* took issue with the statement that most states followed the format mentioned above. They pointed out that once Congress mandated that there were to be only thirteen stripes, states were free to align the stars in any pattern they wished. The "star" design was used many times and its origin was traced to the Continental Period of this country's origin. It was not until 1923 that the Congress mandated the design of the American flag, the design with which we are now familiar, stars aligned in rows with a new star added on July Fourth, if a new state was admitted to the Union (1959 Alaska and 1960 Hawaii.) The editor appreciates corrections and comments about any article appearing in the **Rough Writer**. We also welcome any submissions.



PRESIDENTS DAY MAY HAVE BROKEN A RECORD

According to *Josh Reyes*, 225 people visited the House on regular tours during Presidents Day. An additional 35-40 walked through the first floor at 4:30 pm. Double tours were conducted for most of the day and a very cold day it was. The logistics were as if a tour was part of a school group with Blue ticket tour beginning their tour at the Kitchen and the Pink ticket tour starting at the Library. Tours were sold out by 1:00 pm.



We did it Tom!

The Rough Writer

The News of the Volunteers at Sagamore Hill

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Parcheesi game in the North Room.



Ceramic figurines in Alice's Room.



Owl in the Master Bedroom.

SITE NEWS: PEOPLE

Congratulations to Park Guide *Jim Ferri* and his wife Francine on the birth of their daughter Grace.

A recent tour of six visitors included two young men from Stroudsburg, PA. One of the men was Chief of Maintenance *Eric Witzke*'s son who is well over six feet tall and twice as wide as Eric is in the shoulders. He and his friend were very nice young men who seemed to really enjoy the tour.

As the above mentioned tour was going on, *Shaun Roche* was escorting Representative *Steve Israel* and his party of four people through the house. Shaun said that he supplied answers to any questions the group had, while Mr. Israel gave the majority of the tour.

REWARDING A SERVICEMAN

Andrew Buttermilch was charged with filling a request for a flag that had flown over Sagamore Hill. The flag was to be sent to a serviceman by a friend or relative. Andrew promised the person requesting the flag that he would send a photo of the flag aloft. He would also salute the flag. The pictures accompanying this article show Andrew fulfilling his promise.



A TOUR TIDBIT

The bust of *Abraham Lincoln* in the North Room was given to *TR* when he spoke at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 13, 1910. The bust was made by the Sevres Company after a life mask and bust by *Leonard Wells Volk*. Volk was a cousin by marriage of *Stephen A. Douglas*. Sevres also made the six figurines that the Roosevelts used to decorate the table at White House state dinners.



VISITOR GETS WARM WELCOME

At the conclusion of a tour on Presidents' Day, a young woman with a delightful English accent asked how she could get to TR's gravesite. She had arrived by taxi after a train ride from New York City. Since the weather was cold and it was too far to walk, I suggested that she ask her taxi driver to stop at Youngs Cemetery on her way to the railroad station. It was then that she revealed that she was related to *Theodore Roosevelt*. Her great-grandmother was TR's niece. She didn't know any more about her background but said she would ask her father for more information about her lineage.



Born in Cooperstown, NY, with an American father and a British mother, *Theodora Roosevelt-Clarke* had been raised in England and had only returned to the United States within the past month and was now living in New York City. Offering her camera, Ms. Roosevelt-Clarke asked that I take a picture of her with the house in the background. As if by planning, *Jim Foote* walked to the edge of the porch in full TR regalia. The photo-op was ideal and our visitor had the perfect picture to send to her father.

THE RIDER RETURNS

The **Bronco Buster** has returned from the *Gene Autry Museum*. After a long truck ride the *Fredrick Remington* sculpture is back on the mantel piece in the North Room.

Theodore Roosevelt: His Life, Health and Death

By Mark Koziol

Editor's note: This is the second installment from Mark Koziol's presentation made on January 11, 2009.

In 1905, at the White House, TR was boxing with an army captain when he was inadvertently struck in the head by the officer. He hit TR on the left side of the face so hard that the blow damaged the president's left eye, giving him blurry vision for years and then finally losing sight in it by 1909. Until the end of his life, Roosevelt did not tell anyone about the accident except his wife Edith. TR led a full life for the last ten years of his life despite the eye difficulties. He continued to enjoy his active lifestyle of book reading, writing, traveling and hunting. Neither the eye problem, nor the return of malaria, slowed him down during his African safari where TR shot and killed numerous lions, elephants, and water buffalo.

The October 14, 1912 assassination attempt on TR's life by *John Schrank* was the most vivid example of Roosevelt neglecting to follow his doctors' advice. Despite being shot at point blank range, the bullet did not kill TR but lodged in his chest muscles near his heart. His lungs were not damaged and perhaps that led TR to "bravely" refuse medical attention and give his scheduled speech.



Out of a sense of duty, and dramatics, TR went to the Progressive Party rally and spoke 90 minutes to a crowd of thousands of supporters. While on stage, he spoke softer than normal and was unsteady at times. After TR got medical attention, he was hospitalized for weeks. Since there was no immediate threat to his life, the doctors decided to leave the bullet alone instead of trying to remove it. Perhaps the doctors learned a lesson or two from the two previously assassinated presidents? Wrong medical procedures and non-sterile probing of the bullet wounds, by the doctors, most likely killed Presidents Garfield and McKinley.

The 1914 trip to Brazil was one of TR's most daring adventures that resulted in Theodore damaging his health and shortening his life. While a member of a two month long expedition exploring the route of the *River of Doubt*, TR seriously re-injured his vulnerable left leg, allowing invading micro-organisms and infections to invade his body. Abscesses appeared quickly and made him sick with a high fever, shakes, chills, fatigue, vomiting and headaches. He also battled malaria, dysentery and malnutrition.



When they emerged from the jungle, TR was not walking but was carried out on a stretcher because he was so sick and weak from the Brazilian ordeal. For the first few days during the journey home, doctors confined TR to his cabin because he was suffering from infections from the leg wound, malnutrition, high fever, slurred speech, delirium and malaria. But by late May when he arrived home in NY City, TR had recovered his strength, gained some of the lost weight and spoke clearly. The expedition had succeeded in mapping the entire 1,500 mile long river, collected dozens of new species of plants, insects and animals and TR was honored by the Brazilian government by having the river re-named *Rio Teodoro*.

The last four and half years of *Theodore Roosevelt's* life, from 1914 to 1919, included days of joy with his family, but also days of political

frustration, personal tragedy and health problems. Politically, TR was a persistent critic of *Woodrow Wilson's* delay in entering the fighting in World War One. But then he became a supporter after the USA entered the conflict in April, 1917. TR gave many speeches about the need to adequately supply the military before the public came to the same conclusion. Eventually the American people learned TR was right and that the soldiers were not being adequately supplied with weapons. They joined TR in successfully lobbying Wilson to correct the problem.

During these years, TR's left leg pained him, he developed a severe case of advancing rheumatism, and he gained weight. Eating big meals while he was younger was fine, but at mid-life (age 55), big meals put unneeded extra weight on TR's five foot, eight inch tall frame. He often enjoyed eating a breakfast of 6 eggs, half a pound of bacon or fried chicken, toast and lots of coffee. In 1917, on Edith's recommendation, Roosevelt spent a few weeks at a health camp in Connecticut. Unfortunately, he did not lose a significant amount of weight.

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

Elizabeth "Liz" Kolligs, 44, is a Thursday volunteer in curatorial. A long-time resident of Glen Cove, she is currently enrolled in a Queens College Graduate Program in Library Science. Liz is specializing in Archives Management and currently works as an art conservation technician helping to restore murals in large buildings. She earned a B.A. in Fine Arts and had no real interest in history. However, after many visits to Sagamore Hill over the years, she has learned a great deal about TR and found out about our archives. Liz is also an artist, maintaining a studio in Glen Cove. She has had professional exhibitions and takes commissions for portraits.

In her spare time, Liz likes to swim and is in the pool at the Glen Cove Y almost daily. A voracious reader, she will read whatever books friends recommend. Working here as a volunteer has been a joyful experience. Where college teaches theory and practice, the hands on opportunity is like being in a reality show.



TR: His Life, Health and Death, continued from page two.

TR's final illnesses of 1918 were severe and painful and yet he defied his doctor's orders to rest. He maintained a busy public schedule of traveling and giving speeches. When hospitalized that year, he kept working by reading books, writing magazine articles, answering correspondence, greeting visitors and talking politics. In early 1918, he was hospitalized for a serious throat infection that had led to severe ear infections in both ears. TR was operated on by his surgeons where they worked on his left leg problems and at the same time punctured both eardrums to allow for drainage. Fluid drained well but only the right ear healed correctly. The left ear did not heal properly leaving Roosevelt deaf in that ear. Also, TR suffered with severe vertigo for weeks.

Weeks later, the left ear problem had worsened as the infection spread to TR's mastoid bone region. Surgery was deemed too risky by most of his doctors due to the high mortality rate for this type of operation, regardless of the patient's age. Also, TR's weakened condition made it unwise to operate. After being in the hospital for several weeks, Roosevelt was discharged. Instead of obeying his doctors, TR spent weeks traveling by train giving patriotic speeches in support of the war effort. He gave his speeches despite suffering from periodic bouts of vertigo, a painful left leg, being deaf in the left ear and blind in the left eye.

Quentin Roosevelt's sudden death on July 14, 1918, in a dogfight over France, sent TR and the family into shock and depression. His grief over losing his youngest child was deep and weakened an already weak body wracked by illness. Despite his personal sorrow, TR kept up his public schedule. The day after Quentin died TR traveled by train to Saratoga, NY to deliver a speech to a Republican Party event. Men traveling with Roosevelt on the train noticed him spending hours staring off into space, lost in thought.

The lack of antibiotics made it hard to cure TR's leg situation and exposure to micro-organisms from his Brazil trip sapped his energy and made him sick. In early November, defying his doctor's orders yet again, TR gave a long, 90 minute speech at Carnegie Hall and on election day went into town to vote. His painful rheumatism was progressing quickly by the time he was admitted to New York City's Roosevelt Hospital on November 11th. He was also suffering from a high fever, anemia and vertigo. While having his wife Edith and other family and friends visiting cheered TR, his doctor's sobering news brought him back to earth. They told him he would be confined to a wheelchair in less than a year due to his ailments. He responded by saying he could just as easily battle sitting down as standing up.

TR spent a happy Christmas 1918 at Sagamore Hill with his family. On January 5, 1919 he went to bed not feeling right, saying to Edith that "I feel as if my heart and breathing were about to shutdown." At 4:15 on January 6th, *Theodore Roosevelt* died in his sleep. The doctor diagnosed death from a coronary embolism. Without an autopsy, one can never be fully sure of the cause of death but, most likely, TR died when a leg blood clot broke away and traveled to his heart. The 1902 leg injury and its complications haunted TR to the end of his life and most likely contributed to his death.

TR's wake was held in the North Room for two days with a funeral on January 8th at Oyster Bay's Christ Church. Over five hundred people attended the ceremony, including former President *William Howard Taft*. Following a 21-gun salute, Roosevelt was buried at Young's Cemetery, overlooking Oyster Bay Harbor.

TR never shied away from a challenge or living his life fully, especially after he remade his body through exercise. He persevered all his life, through illness and accident, to accomplish many things that benefited both him and the nation, from being a soldier, to an author, to statesman, to explorer, to conservationist.

TRIVIA QUESTION:



Where in the TRH is this pillow located?