

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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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
 **Sagamore Hill National Historic Site**
20 Sagamore Hill Road
Oyster Bay, New York 11771

The Volunteers of Sagamore Hill
20 Sagamore Hill Road
Oyster Bay, New York 11771

TRIVIA



ANSWER: This is a heat shield used to protect someone sitting near or in front of the fireplace from being “toasted.”

JOHN A. GABLE LECTURE SERIES 2009

All programs will be held at Christ Church Parish Hall, 61 East Main St., Oyster Bay. Doors open at 7:00 pm, program begins at 7:30 pm refreshments served. **No charge.**

Thursday, March 26th: “The Literary Antecedents of *Theodore Roosevelt*”, books, writings and authors that influenced TR’s life. Speaker: *Charles Markis*, Chief of Interpretation at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site.

Tuesday, April 28th: “*Theodore Roosevelt’s* Use of the US Navy in Foreign Diplomacy” Speaker: CDR *Henry J. Hendrix II*, National Secretary of Theodore Roosevelt Assn.

Tuesday, May 12th: “TR and the Art of His Time”: Speaker: *Franklin Hill Perrell*, Chief Curator Nassau County Museum of Art.

INAUGURATION DAY



At eleven-thirty on Tuesday, curatorial staff and volunteers joined the rest of the site’s staff in the conference room to watch the presidential inauguration. Double-tasking, they watched the President take the oath of office and had lunch. Thanks to *Eric Witzke*, those who wanted it had pizza from *Mario’s*. It was a momentous occasion watching *Barack Obama* become the 44th president in the home of *Theodore Roosevelt* the 26th president. It wasn’t exactly TR’s home it was TR, Jr’s. Then again Old Orchard didn’t exist during TR’s lifetime. After lunch, it was back to the house for more cleaning and back to work for the rest of the staff.



SEVEN DAYS MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

What a difference a week makes. On Friday, January second, a bitter cold day, people came from everywhere to visit the house. Starting at 10:00 a.m. and every half-hour thereafter, every tour was booked to capacity, plus some that had sixteen and seventeen visitors. On Friday the 9th of January, it was also bitter cold but the count was different. Visitors included one school group and two people from Florida. The rest of the world stayed warm wherever they were. Everyone likes Sagamore Hill on a holiday weekend.

A NOTE FROM ETHEL DERBY

The following note was found in the site’s archives concerning the layout of the Dining Room. “The rug was from Mr. Dyer’s house. There was a table on the north side of the room at which the children ate. A small table on the south side of the room was used as a serving table. The Japanese silk screen was in front of the pantry door. The moose head (as now) looked over it.” Mrs. Derby 1-19-67

The Rough Writer

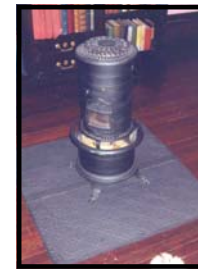
The News of the Volunteers at Sagamore Hill

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Tusk on west side of North Room



Kerosene heater in Alice’s Room



Edith & Richard Derby with TR



Tusk on east side of North Room

THEY CAME OFF THE MOUNTAIN

No it wasn’t *Moses* and the Ten Commandments; it was the four presidents from *Mount Rushmore*. In town for a day at Cold Spring Harbor High School, *George Washington*, *Thomas Jefferson*, *Abraham Lincoln* and *Theodore Roosevelt* dropped in at the meeting of the Volunteer Advisory Board (VAB). The four famous First Citizens have occasionally made appearances together in many venues across the country. They graciously posed for our photographer during the VAB meeting. Maybe it is an omen of future greatness that had Superintendent *Tom Ross* pose with the “Fabulous Four.” Of course you guessed they weren’t the real presidents but rather *Dean Malissa* as *George Washington*; *Bill Barker* as *Thomas Jefferson*; *Jim Getty* as *Abraham Lincoln* and the most realistic, *Jim Foote* as *Theodore Roosevelt*.



Some of the members of the Volunteer Advisory Board: Leslie Handler, Michael Vezzi, Roy Fuchs, Rita Onorato and Toby Selda

During the regular portion of their meeting, the VAB discussed the purchase of light-weight portable seats for visitors to the TRH who have difficulty standing. The *Friends of Sagamore Hill* were officially thanked for their support of volunteer activities. The Volunteer Awards Ceremony will be held during the week of April 27th at a location to be determined. *Josh Reyes* has been appointed Assistant Coordinator of Volunteers. *Tom Ross* reported that the site has had an extensive accessibility survey performed. The ramp that had been in front of the house was removed because it wasn’t in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A new photo album of the TRH is being compiled. This will permit those unable to climb the stairs, to appreciate the house layout, decorations and artifacts.

TR DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Theodore Roosevelt was **not** known as a man of a few well chosen words but rather someone who could expand on any topic. There was at least one exception. While doing archival work, *Shaun Roche* came upon a telegram that TR sent to *Leonard Wood* in Cuba. TR wrote, “I won. **Roosevelt**”

Theodore Roosevelt: His Life, Health and Death

By Mark Koziol

Editor's note: Mark Koziol made two presentations on the above topic on Sunday, January 11, 2009. Planned for the TV room at Old Orchard, the powerpoint presentation was transferred to the conference room to accommodate all the visitors. Thirty people braved the cold for the first presentation and seventeen came to the second show.



Theodore Roosevelt was an energetic man who accomplished many things. He was a statesman, soldier, politician, author and explorer. However, he had to persevere and overcome serious illnesses, accidents and challenges throughout his life. His serious health problems included: Asthma, Malaria, Trolley Car Accident, Assassination Attempt, Brazilian trip, Final Illnesses.

TR's asthma attacks began in 1860 when he was two years old. While the asthma problem was a real, physical illness that hampered young Theodore, it appears that his attitude played a role in the illness as well. Anxiety over the birth of his younger brother Elliot in 1860 seems to have contributed to the asthma attacks TR suffered. His parents tried many things to comfort and "cure" young Theodore. His mother read books to him and his father took TR on cool, nighttime carriage rides in NY City to help "force good night air" into his son's lungs. Having his parent's attention during the asthma attacks put TR at ease and calmed him down.

When he was 12 years old, after being teased by kids his age over his asthma and his fragile nature, Theodore told his father of the incident and TR, Senior, challenged his son to remake his body through exercise. Therefore, TR's father built a gym in his NY City town house. In the gym, young Theodore's workout included weights, parallel bars and medicine balls and he grew stronger. He also took boxing lessons at this time and enjoyed the

sport immensely, sticking with it for years. This dedication to vigorous exercise successfully remade TR's body and he became a physically strong young man.

For his entire adulthood, TR dedicated himself to never going back to the days when he was vulnerable, weak and frail. According to author Norman Keill in his book, "The Asthmatic Child," for the rest of his life, TR seemed to be a man who "refused to give in or to acknowledge any physical discomfort or pain or weakness." This brave attitude would have unhealthy consequences through Roosevelt's life. (Asthmatic Child, p. 85)

Evidence abounds in many letters TR wrote during his adult years that he occasionally had episodes of asthma. These letters were often written during times of stress such as in 1878 when his father died suddenly while the young Roosevelt was studying for his Harvard final exams. TR overcame the deep tragedy of his father's early death by dedicating his life to public service and political reform, following his father's example and applying himself and succeeding in his college studies. Roosevelt also successfully passed his 1878 Harvard exams.

Despite an occasionally nervous stomach and asthma attacks, TR served with distinction as a NY State Legislator from 1880 to 1884. When his first wife Alice was pregnant in 1884, TR had asthmatic episodes, most likely from anxiety over being an expectant father. When visiting the Dakota Territory, TR's nervous stomach and asthma did not slow him down and prevent him from becoming a skilled cowboy and rancher. At the same time, he wrote letters home saying that the western climate contributed to his good health.

TR contracted malaria in 1898, when was serving in the US Army as a Colonel of the Rough Riders regiment, during the Spanish-American War. When ailing from malaria, TR suffered from nausea, fever, vomiting, and flu-like symptoms. This illness would follow TR for the rest of his life (20 years) and slow him down and coincide with other major events in his life.

After becoming president in 1901, TR began redefining the office and putting his unique stamp on the presidency. The next year, President Roosevelt broke tradition by traveling and speaking on behalf of Republican congressional candidates during mid-term elections. On such a mission on September 3, 1902, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, TR's horse-drawn carriage in which he was riding, collided with an electric trolley car on the way to a speech at the Pittsfield Country Club. TR was thrown 20 feet and suffered a bruised face, cuts to his mouth and a deeply bruised lower left leg (between the ankle and knee). Tragically, TR's favorite Secret Serviceman William Craig was killed instantly when he was thrown from the carriage into the path of the trolley car.



Quickly, a shaken and angered TR reassured everyone that he was alright, ignored calls for him to get medical attention and urged doctors to care for the other passengers who were injured. He made his speech at the country club and took part in subsequent scheduled events. Keeping a full schedule, despite the continuing pain in his leg was not a wise action. Weeks later, TR's leg was still swollen, stiff and sore, making it clear he needed medical attention.

After a speech in Indianapolis, he checked into St. Vincent's Hospital, where doctors drained the leg and diagnosed that President Roosevelt needed rest and he was to stay off the leg, so that the wound would heal. In late September, shortly after returning to Washington, TR did not show improvement and his doctors decided to perform another, more serious operation. The leg abscesses were drained and the infections scraped away all the way down to the shin bone. In an era of no antibiotics, any operation was dangerous because of the risk of infections that could become serious or fatal. Doctors ordered TR to rest and recover, and to use a wheelchair.

Even though confined to a wheelchair for eight weeks, President Roosevelt continued to move around and work. In late 1902, while still in pain, TR averted a nation wide coal strike by the miners. He successfully negotiated a deal between labor and mine owners that prevented a crippling coal strike from happening before the winter heating season. He later said this was one of his finest accomplishments. Unfortunately for his health, his active work schedule aggravated the leg situation and prevented the wound from fully healing. This leg would remain for years vulnerable to trauma and become re-infected on and off for the rest of his life.

{to be continued next month}

Abraham Lincoln in New York: a Rail Splitter Bicentennial Celebration at Federal Hall

The Rail Splitter, national organization of Lincoln scholars, in association with the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Abraham Lincoln Institute, is proud to have been chosen to host an exhibit of authentic period Lincoln memorabilia to be displayed during February, March and April 2009, a few days before Lincoln's birthday (Feb. 12) at Federal Hall on Wall Street in Manhattan. The exhibit, under the auspices of the National Park Service, will draw upon public and private collections and showcase unique treasures of American history—most never before seen in public. The objects will include original photographs, manuscripts, ephemera and a wide and colorful assortment of political artifacts, all of which articulate a cohesive story: how the image of Lincoln was formed and shaped for the national stage and the role New York played in sending him to the White House.

The exhibit, containing hundreds of items, is displayed in the mezzanine galleries surrounding the rotunda of Federal Hall, the area in which the TR exhibit by the Smithsonian was installed about a decade ago.

The exhibit opens to the public on Feb. 9, 2009. Federal Hall is located at 26 Wall Street and is open from 9-5, Monday through Friday. There is no on-street parking in the area and garages are hard to find and very expensive, so the subway is the best way to get the area.

TR and Lincoln: As you know, TR felt a strong connection to Lincoln and admired him greatly. There are several images of him displayed in the home. These include the engraving of Lincoln on TR's wall of heroes, the inkwell on his desk in the library and the bust of Lincoln, on the top of one of the bookshelves in the North Room. Old Orchard Museum displays the famous photo of the Lincoln funeral procession showing TR's grandfather's home in NYC at Broadway and Union Square with seven year old Teedie looking out the window.

TR's "Lincoln Ring," containing a lock of the sixteenth president's hair, is displayed in Old Orchard Museum as well. TR received the ring from John Hay, Lincoln's secretary who was present at the death of Lincoln. Hay, who was TR's Secretary of State, took a strand, Lincoln's hair and had it encapsulated in a rock crystal ring. It was given by Hay of TR on the occasion of his Inauguration in 1905.



TRIVIA



QUESTION: What was the purpose of this item, with the Roosevelt crest on its top, located in the Library?