

Theodore Roosevelt's America

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF
THE OYSTER BAY NATURALIST

EDITED BY

FARIDA A. WILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY

UGO MOCHI



AMERICAN NATURALISTS SERIES

12971.29
E601

7997153

Theodore Roosevelt's America

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE
OYSTER BAY NATURALIST

EDITED BY
FARIDA A. WILEY

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS BY

JOHN BURROUGHS

GIFFORD PINCHOT

HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN

AMBROSE FLACK

AND A FOREWORD BY

ETHEL ROOSEVELT DERBY

ILLUSTRATED BY

UGO MOCHI

1955

THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

New York

Copyright 1955 by THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

NO PORTION OF THIS BOOK MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM
WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM THE PUBLISHERS,
THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY, NEW YORK 10
OR FROM THE FOLLOWING PUBLISHERS AND PERSONS
CONTROLLING COPYRIGHTS OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES
FROM WHICH SELECTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE.

*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, by whose permission the selection is reprinted from *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*, by Theodore Roosevelt; copyright 1914 by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942 by Edith K. Carow Roosevelt.

Natural History magazine, by whose permission are reprinted the following selections: "His Americanism Reached to the Marrow of His Bones," by John Burroughs; "Theodore Roosevelt, the Man of Abundant Life," by Gifford Pinchot; "Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist," by Henry Fairfield Osborn; "Louisiana Bird Preserves," by Theodore Roosevelt; "In Defense of Accurate Scientific Writing," by Theodore Roosevelt; copyright 1919 by *Natural History* magazine.

The *New Yorker* magazine and the author, by whose permission the selection is reprinted "Theodore Roosevelt and My Green-gold Fountain Pen," by Ambrose Flack; copyright 1948 by the *New Yorker* magazine.

MRS. LEO MILLER, by whose permission is printed "The Roosevelt Expedition in South America," by Leo Miller.

Canadian Agents: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., Toronto
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 55-10834
MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

7997153

Theodore Roosevelt's
America

AMERICAN NATURALISTS SERIES

Farida A. Wiley, General Editor

Published

JOHN BURROUGHS' AMERICA

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON'S AMERICA

THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S AMERICA

In Preparation

WILLIAM BARTRAM'S AMERICA

WASHINGTON IRVING'S AMERICA

Foreword

IT IS A SOURCE of great pleasure and satisfaction that Farida Wiley, with her background and her experiences in the natural history field, should treat of this important aspect of my Father's life. She has asked me to write these paragraphs, and I am happy to have been allowed the association.

North Dakota: the Bad Lands; my Father's ranches—both the Chimney Butte and the Elkhorn—were names to conjure with in my childhood. We used to hear of the strange wild beauty of that country and of the pioneer virtues of the people who lived there. Men, women and children who were hardy, brave and self-reliant, who faced adventure and dangers of which we knew nothing.

We used to hear stories about Father's long, lonely trips on the prairies when it was often hard to find water in that arid land. Of the delicious taste of tomato juice at such times; and how he even learned to like prune juice. Whether this was told us in a commendable effort to increase our somewhat lukewarm enthusiasm for prunes I do not know.

We also learned of the scarcity of wood on the great plains; of the camps by blazing fires; of good food enjoyed by hungry men. Father in some measure re-created those days for us at Oyster Bay, when once a year we went on a camping trip. A great band of cousins would row over to join us where an old wreck was beached

off Lloyd's Neck. There we would spend the night, and after a wonderful supper, cooked by my Father, there would be stories, peculiarly terrifying ghost stories, which he told with great effect and blood-curdling drama.

We learned of the long wearing days and nights of the roundup; of journeys in the great mid-day heat; of the relief of the evening hours; of bitter cold; of Manitou, his favorite hunting horse; of the pleasure of arriving home after a hard trip and reading by the fire in the Ranch House, or in summer on the veranda overlooking the Little Missouri River—reading in a rocking chair, I'm sure, for rocking chairs which have now so nearly vanished, were what he preferred. As he got interested in what he was reading the chair would be rocked more and more vigorously and he would be oblivious to all that went on around him.

Much of the Bad Lands where Father had his two ranches are now in the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park established by Act of Congress in 1947.

It was not until the summer of 1954 that I was able to visit this area. With children and grandchildren, we drew into the little station of Medora, North Dakota, on the North Coast Limited. At the station we were met by Chester Brooks, the Park Librarian, and other friends. We were taken out to the Park Headquarters at Peaceful Valley. That was an unforgettable drive, for the sun was sinking and the whole country was a scene of indescribable beauty; the sharp buttes were purple and mauve and red, the sage brush and grass were a soft background to the vivid splendor.

We stayed at the Custer Trail Ranch, south of Medora, on the Little Missouri River, where, in the old days, my Father had often visited the Eatons, and where Mr. and Mrs. Christianson made us welcome. It was here that General Custer crossed the river on the way to his last desperate battle at the Little Big Horn.

When I woke there I thought of my Father's description of the songs of the meadow larks. "I cannot say that either song would appeal to others as it does to me; for to me it comes forever laden with a hundred memories and associations; with the sight of dim hills reddening in the dawn, with the breath of cool winds blowing across lonely plains, with the scent of flowers on the sunlit prairie,

with the motion of fiery horses, with all the strong thrill of eager and buoyant life."

We visited the site of the old Chimney Butte Ranch. The little building itself was moved some years ago to the grounds of the State Capitol at Bismarck to preserve it, but there is a new ranch there and a fine young cowboy, Joe Hild, who gave us coffee, took two of the six-year-old grandchildren riding on his spirited horse and showed us where the cattle crossed the Little Missouri.

The Elkhorn Ranch is about forty miles north, down the river. The building on this ranch has long since vanished.

We met representatives of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, which now, as in the days when my Father worked for its establishment, is an active organization promoting the cattle industry. I was interested to learn that cattle rustlers no longer alter brands and drive off cattle; but, adapting themselves to the modern age, take big trucks down to some lonely spot, and carry the cattle away.

We were fortunate in seeing several old timers who had known my Father. One of them, Ben Byrd, still takes a string of race horses round the country and does much of the training of them himself. Another, Mrs. Palissier, lives nearby in Dickinson, and recalls my Father playing games with her. She also remembers when she was so small that she had to stand on a box to reach the table when skinning buffalo tongues for the winter supply of meat. What a young country we are! To think that T.R.'s great grandchild should actually meet someone with that memory!

We were greatly impressed with the work being done by the Staff of the Park. Their plan is to restore the region to what it was in the '80's, and to show the life of those days in a Museum. All that was taking place was the sort of effort and interest which would have delighted my Father.

As we left I could well understand my Father saying that the years in North Dakota had affected his whole life.

ETHEL ROOSEVELT DERBY

Oyster Bay, N. Y.

Acknowledgments

IN ASSEMBLING the material for this book, many people have helped. My sincere thanks are extended to the following individuals in particular: Ethel Roosevelt Derby, for her foreword, for her encouragement and for her approval of the contents of the volume; Lois Hussey and Catherine Pessino for persuading me to do the book and helping to get it started; Josephine D. Kimball for her valuable assistance in regard to reference materials; Walter Scott Shinn for permission to use (for the first time) the distinctive photograph of Theodore Roosevelt which appears here; the librarians of the American Museum of Natural History, Sagamore Hill, and Roosevelt House for their ever willing help in locating isolated writings; T. Donald Carter and Harold E. Anthony for checking materials having to do with mammals; Mrs. Leo Miller for permission to use portions of Leo Miller's unpublished manuscript; the American Museum of Natural History for allowing me to reprint articles from the January, 1919 issue of *Natural History* magazine; and Ugo Mochi for his tireless efforts to make his illustrations worthy of his high regard for Theodore Roosevelt.

FARIDA A. WILEY

Introduction

*"He was loved by those who should love him
and hated by those who should hate him"*

GIFFORD PINCHOT

WHAT A FITTING tribute to pay to our many-sided, twenty-sixth President, Theodore Roosevelt, who lived from October 27, 1858 to January 6, 1919.

In an attempt to summarize the characteristics of this man who was so heartily beloved and respected by some and so thoroughly hated by others, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City when designing its memorial to him used these descriptive words: Ranchman—Explorer—Scientist—Conservationist—Naturalist—Statesman—Author—Historian—Humanitarian—Soldier—Patriot.

Those words are carved in the stone wall which flanks an equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt as Colonel of the "Rough Riders." On one side of this bronze statue stands an Indian; symbolic of the days Roosevelt spent in the Bad Lands of the Dakotas. On the other side of the statue stands the figure of an African native, recalling the hunting trips in Africa. The group is placed at the entrance to the spacious Roman style memorial façade. On the walls are murals which portray some of the important periods of Roosevelt's life: as Police Commissioner of New York City and later as Governor of New York State; putting through the Panama

Canal while President of the United States; negotiating peace between Russia and Japan; as a hunter of big game and as an explorer of wilderness areas.

A section of each wall is devoted to quotations from Roosevelt's own writings. It seems appropriate to reprint them here, for they are a measure of the man.

O F N A T U R E

"There is delight in the hardy life in the open."

"There are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy and its charm."

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation, and not impaired in value."

"Conservation means development as much as it does protection."

O F M A N H O O D

"A man's usefulness depends upon his living up to his ideals insofar as he can."

"It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed."

"All daring and courage, all iron endurance of misfortune . . . make for a finer, nobler type of manhood."

"Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die; and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joy of life and the duty of life."

O F Y O U T H

"I want to see you game, boys, I want to see you brave and manly, and I also want to see you gentle and tender."

"Be practical as well as generous in your ideals. Keep your eyes on the stars and keep your feet on the ground."

"Courage, hard work, self-mastery, and intelligent effort are all essential to a successful life."

"Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike."

OF THE STATE

"Ours is a government of liberty by, through, and under the law."

"A great democracy must be progressive or it will soon cease to be a great democracy."

"In popular government results worth having can only be achieved by men who combine worthy ideals with practical good sense."

"Let us give every man in this country his rights without regard to creed or birthplace or national origin or color."

Further to portray events in the life of Roosevelt, four large habitat groups have been built in the memorial section of the Museum. One group shows a scene in early New Amsterdam in recognition of his Dutch ancestors. A second group pictures his Elkhorn Ranch on the Little Missouri River in what is now North Dakota. Another group shows a forest scene in the Adirondack Mountains, where he spent many months as a young man. The fourth group depicts the Oyster Bay Bird Sanctuary and the simple iron railing that surrounds his grave.

Placed at the side of this habitat group is a letter written on February 16, 1899, from Albany, to Frank M. Chapman, who was then President of the Audubon Society:

My dear Mr. Chapman:

I need hardly say how heartily I sympathize with the purpose of the Audubon Society. I would like to see all harmless wild things, but especially all birds, protected in every way. I do not understand how any man or woman who really loves nature can fail to try to exert all influence in support of such objects as those of the Audubon Society. Spring would not be spring without buds and flowers and I only wish that besides protecting the songsters, the birds

of the grove, the orchards, the garden and the meadow, we would also protect the birds of the seashore and of the wilderness. The loon ought to be, and under wise legislation could be, a feature of every Adirondack lake; ospreys, as everyone knows, can be made the tamest of the tame; and terns should be as plentiful along our shores as swallows around our barns. A tanager or a cardinal makes a point of glowing beauty in the green woods; and the cardinal among the white snows. When the bluebirds were so nearly destroyed by the severe winter a few seasons ago, the loss was like the loss of an old friend, or at least like the burning down of a familiar and dearly loved home. How immensely it would add to our forests if only the great logcock were still found among them! The destruction of the wild pigeon and the Carolina parakeet has meant a loss as sad as if the Catskills or the Palisades were taken away. When I hear of the destruction of a species I feel just as if all the works of some great writer had perished; as if we had lost all instead of part of Polybius or Livy.

Very truly yours

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

At least forty books, and an innumerable number of magazine articles, have been written about our twenty-sixth President. With the exception of a few books and a very few magazine articles, almost none have dealt wholly with Roosevelt's vital interest in the natural sciences. This is a rather amazing fact, considering that his love for the natural world was instrumental in bringing about protective laws having to do with land, water, and forest resources which were of incalculable value in his day and even more so in our day.

Theodore Roosevelt was a great naturalist—and because he was a great naturalist he became a great conservationist, a fact for which the people of America and the whole world should be thankful. In commenting on his policies which had to do with the conservation of natural resources, the late Senator La Follette had this to say in the spring of 1909 shortly after Roosevelt had finished seven and a half years as President of these United States:

This immense idea (of conservation) Roosevelt, with high statesmanship, dinned into the ears of the Nation until the Nation heeded. He held it so high that it attracted the attention of the neighboring nations of the continent, and will so spread and intensify that we will soon see the world's conferences devoted to it.

Nothing can be greater or finer than this. It is so great and so fine that when the historian of the future shall speak of Theodore Roosevelt he is likely to say that he did many notable things, among them that of inaugurating the movement which finally resulted in the square deal, but that his greatest work was inspiring and actually beginning a world movement for staying terrestrial waste and saving for the human race the things upon which, and upon which alone, a great and peaceful and progressive and happy race of life can be founded.

What statesman in all history has done anything calling for so wide a view and for a purpose more lofty?

The writings of Theodore Roosevelt are very numerous. A list of these items, as estimated by William F. Kellerher, dealer in rare books, would include about 5000 items. A large number of these items have to do with his lifelong interest in the natural world.

In *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter*, Roosevelt makes this statement: "it is an incalculable pleasure to any one's sum of happiness if he grows to know, even slightly or imperfectly, how to read and enjoy the wonder-book of nature. All hunters should be nature-lovers. It is hoped that the days of mere wasteful, boasting slaughter are past, and that from now on the hunter will stand foremost in working for the preservation of wild life." Would that such were the case!

Roosevelt's interest in the natural world had its beginnings early. Jacob Riis tells of them in his book, *Theodore Roosevelt the Citizen*: "and now when I cast around me for a starting point, there rises up before me the picture of a little lad in stiff white petticoates, with a big curl right on the top of his head, toiling laboriously along with a big fat volume under his arm, David Living-

stone's *Travels and Researches in South Africa*, and demanding of every member of the family to be told what were 'foraging ants' and what they did. It was his sister, now Mrs. Cowles, who at last sat down in exasperation to investigate, that the business of the household have a chance to proceed, for baby Theodore held it up mercilessly until his thirst for information was slacked."

This thirst for information concerning the doings in the natural world was so much a part of him that at times even the affairs of the Nation had to wait. "One morning the President electrified his nervous Cabinet by bursting into a meeting, with 'Gentlemen, do you know what has happened this morning?' They waited with bated breath as he announced, 'Just saw a Chestnut-sided Warbler—and this is only February!' " *

Another indication that during this period of his life he took time to observe the doings of birds will be found in the bird list he prepared for Lucy W. Maynard for her book *Birds of Washington and Vicinity*. He listed ninety-three species with comments about some of them, e.g.

Sparrow Hawk. A pair spent the last two winters around the White House grounds, feeding on sparrows—largely, thank Heaven, on the English Sparrows.

Screech Owl. Steady resident of White House grounds.

White-throated Sparrow. Sings; this year sang now and then all through the winter.

His diary-keeping habit dates back to his very young years. At the tender age of nine he recorded in a very wobbly hand: "We discovered a weasel's hole and a foxes burrow."

At the age of eleven in the "Preface" to a work he called *Natural History of Insects*, he has this to say: "All these insects are native of North America. Most of the insects are not in other books. I will write about ants first.—The common black ant is found in cracks in the rocks.—Ants are divided into three sorts for every species. These kinds are officer, soldier, and work. There is about one officer to ten soldiers and one soldier to two workers." (*Species* he could spell, but not soldier!—Ed.)

* Quoted from *My Brother Theodore Roosevelt* by Corinne Roosevelt Robinson.

In 1869 at the age of ten he was taken to Europe by his family. Even though he writes in his autobiography of being rather bored with the trip, he did record in his diary, when writing about Italy, this interesting bit: "All alone I went to the Natural History Museum. It has 101 anamils in all but has a good collection of reptiles and fishes but birds are the chief thing and it has the best collection of nests I have seen. I have two reptiles and one nest and three birds in my museum at home and I have wild birds and nests wild at home."

Later on, after he arrived home, we find these records in his diary:

"July 5th. I went hunting birds nests (In which I splendidly succeeded.)"

"July 16th. I hunted birds nests"—

"July 18th. Hunted birds nests"—

His interest in the natural world extended beyond birds, however. Among other animals mentioned in this section of his diary are deer, wolves, bears and frogs, and he gives the scientific name of each. At the age of thirteen he was a careful observer and recorder.

Young Theodore had been a delicate child from birth and had spent much time in bed due to various ailments. Asthma took a heavy toll of his energies. He frequently had to be taken to the mountains "so I could breathe." He was also extremely near-sighted, a condition of which he was not aware for a number of years. Roosevelt gives this account of his near-sightedness: "Quite unknown to myself, I was, while a boy, under hopeless disadvantage in studying nature. I was near-sighted, so that the only things I could study were those I ran against or stumbled over."

The gift of a gun when he was fourteen changed all this, for it was then that he realized that the other boys were seeing things that he could not see. "One day they read aloud an advertizement in huge letters on a distant bill-board, and then I realized that something was the matter, for not only was I unable to read the sign, but I could not even see the letters." A short time later spectacles were obtained for him which "literally opened an en-

tirely new world to me. I had no idea how beautiful the world was until I got those spectacles.”

Hoping to help his son overcome some of his physical weaknesses, his father had various devices for exercising placed in the home. These exercises were to be looked upon as a part of play rather than as a task.

Ill health prevented Theodore from attending school and therefore he was cut off from much of the companionship and rough and tumble of school experiences. He became an inveterate reader at an early age. Books on science, travel, adventure, history, or folklore became close companions in those days.

His much beloved aunt, Anna Bullock, became his tutor, and she and his mother became his entertainers, educators and directors of activities.

Looking back to this boyhood, Roosevelt tells us that he thinks his first interest in zoology probably dates from the time he discovered a dead seal in a Broadway marketplace near his home at 28 East 20th St., New York City. He was so fascinated by this animal that he took many trips to the market to examine and measure its carcass.

By 1871, when Roosevelt had reached the age of thirteen, he was giving quite a scientific slant to his diary recordings. “In the bush. August 8th—We rode through the lower St. Regis, in the Adirondacks, for about three miles.—While in the lake St. Regis region we saw other kinds of wild duck (*Aythya americana*) loons (*Colymbus torquatus*) and a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*). While going down stream we saw numerous tracks of deer and occasionally of wolves and bears.—After supper Father read aloud to us from *The Last of the Mohicans*. In the middle of the reading I fell asleep. Father read by the light of the campfire.”

In the Fall of 1876, at the age of eighteen, Roosevelt entered Harvard University fully determined to make science his life work. At the end of his four-year course, however, because of defective eyesight, which made work with a microscope very difficult, he gave up the idea of making science his life work. But he continued his research in field biology throughout life.

His four-year college term ended in June, 1880 and in October