
Although great classics still dominate the field, like Henry F. Pringle’s *Theodore Roosevelt*, John M. Blum’s *The Republican Roosevelt*, Edward Wagenknecht’s *The Seven Worlds of Theodore Roosevelt*, or William H. Harbaugh’s *Power and Responsibility: The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt*, a one-volume biography that has not really been surpassed, the historiography of Theodore Roosevelt these days is characterized by a steady flow of publications, some by established scholars, some by non-academic researchers, and others by authors of juvenile literature that will find no place in this essay. Quite obviously, there is a market for new, if sometimes repetitive, books about

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the first Roosevelt. The publishing landscape calls for a second remark: gone seem to be the days of bulky, comprehensive one-volume biographies like Nathan Miller’s *Theodore Roosevelt: A Life*, H. W. Brands’s *T.R.: The Last Romantic*, or Kathleen M. Dalton’s popular *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*. The latest trend points to the fragmentation of his life and/or a concentration on specific aspects of his personality, possibly in imitation of Carleton Putnam’s *Theodore Roosevelt: The Formative Years, 1858-1886* and David McCullough’s *Mornings on Horseback*, two essential books on his early life, or Paul R. Cutright’s *Theodore Roosevelt the Naturalist* and *Theodore Roosevelt: The Making of a Conservationist*. Because so much has already been written on the twenty-sixth president, the end result is often an impression of déjà vu, especially when a new book borrows from or duplicates previous publications and does not actually contribute new research and insights, as is the case with Edward J. Renehan, Jr.’s *The Lion’s Pride: Theodore Roosevelt and his Family in Peace and War*, Louis Auchincloss’s *Theodore Roosevelt*, Richard D. White’s *Roosevelt the Reformer: Theodore Roosevelt as Civil Service Commissioner, 1889-1895*, Aida D. Donald’s *Lion in the White House: A Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, or Roger L. Di Silvestro’s *Theodore Roosevelt in the Badlands: A Young Politician’s Quest for Recovery in the American West*—with the possible exception of Paul Grondahl’s *I Rose like a Rocket: The Political Education of Theodore Roosevelt* that has interesting things to say.

And then there have been what great-grandson Tweed Roosevelt humorously calls “the really, really bad books.” Sarah Watts’s *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire* exaggeratingly lumps Roosevelt together with the

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6 The first volume of an unfinished biography.


Victorian white males and their hang-ups at the turn of the nineteenth century. Jim Powell’s *Bully Boy: The Truth about Theodore Roosevelt’s Legacy* is an unconvincing and biased attempt at debunking Roosevelt’s record. James Bradley’s *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War* is an angry, unscholarly denigration of one of America’s greatest presidents. Thomas Evan’s *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898* has nothing to offer but a string of clichés about Roosevelt in its gallery of portraits.

In the last decade and a half several works, however, have added significantly to Rooseveltian scholarship. James Chace’s *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs—the Election That Changed the Country* revisits the 1912 campaign while David H. Burton’s *Taft, Roosevelt, and the Limits of Friendship* reexamines their friendship and its split. Candice Millard’s *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt’s Darkest Journey* follows in the footsteps of Joseph R. Ornig’s *My Last Chance to Be a Boy: Theodore Roosevelt’s South American Expedition of 1913-1914* and offers another gripping account of the former president’s Brazilian adventure. Leroy G. Dorsey’s *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism* surveys Roosevelt’s public rhetoric on and tactical approach to race, ethnicity, and national identity. Joshua D. Hawley’s *Theodore Roosevelt: Preacher of Righteousness* provides an illuminating analysis of Roosevelt’s thinking, while Paul M. Rego’s *American Ideal: Theodore Roosevelt’s Search for American Individualism* focuses on the dialectics of individualism and collective power in his political thought. Peri E. Arnold’s *Remaking the Presidency: Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, 1901-1916* and Will Morrisey’s *The Dilemma of Progressivism: How Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson Reshaped the American Regime of Self-Government* throw new light on how Roosevelt and his immediate successors adapted to and coped with the challenges of the progressive era. Sidney M. Milkis’s *Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressive Party, and the Transformation of American Democracy* deals with the 1912 Bull Moose campaign and undertakes a brilliant reinterpretation of progressivism and its legacy in American politics. The prolific Douglas Brinkley has put himself on the record with an extensively researched volume short by only forty pages of the thousand-page mark, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*, a book on the president as conservationist that looks at the influence the natural world played on him. Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *The Bully Pulpit*:

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Theodore Roosevelt and the Golden Age of Journalism\textsuperscript{12} recaptures the man, his progressivism, and his relations with the press while at the same time looking into his friendship and partnership with William H. Taft and devoting a couple of chapters to their respective spouses. Published in the wake of his *Hot Time in the Old Town: The Great Heat Wave of 1896 and the Making of Theodore Roosevelt*, Edward P. Kohn’s *Heir to the Empire City: New York and the Making of Theodore Roosevelt* offers a new view of the future president’s early career that is critical of previous biographers but regrettably unsupported by footnotes—a flaw no doubt due to the publisher’s choice.\textsuperscript{13}

The relative scarcity of publications on Roosevelt’s post-presidential years has come to an end, especially regarding his reaction to the Great War and his attacks on Woodrow Wilson. In addition to older volumes,\textsuperscript{14} and the new ones mentioned above on the break with Taft and the 1912 campaign, several notable works now cover the last ten years of Roosevelt’s life. Patricia O’Toole’s engaging *When Trumpets Call: Theodore Roosevelt after the White House* and Edmund Morris’s last volume of his monumental, yet unequal, trilogy, *Colonel Roosevelt* (cf. supra)\textsuperscript{15} take the reader from the African safari to the death of the ‘old lion.’ J. Lee. Thompson’s *Theodore Roosevelt Abroad: Nature, Empire, *


\textsuperscript{15} The *Theodore Rex* volume on the presidency does not quite meet the criteria of excellence that the other two legitimately deserve.
and the Journey of an American President offers the entertaining and fascinating tale of ‘Colonel’ Roosevelt’s African experience and European tour in 1909-1910. Interestingly, Roosevelt the citizen received a hero’s welcome and was granted royal treatment wherever he went, thus giving the measure of his and America’s popularity in the Old World. J. Lee Thompson’s second book, Never Call Retreat: Theodore Roosevelt and the Great War, covers his political activity from 1914 to his death on January 6, 1919, and magnifies his anti-Wilson campaigns, his preparedness crusade, and his commitment to intervention in the Great War, despite obvious contradictions and shortcomings, like his initial refusal to take sides in the conflict and his virulent denunciations of “the hyphen.”

The twenty-sixth president’s foreign policies have possibly inspired more books than his domestic policies. They have often been studied separately and the interest in them has never abated. A number of studies have tried to emulate Howard K. Beale’s remarkable Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power. Frederick W. Marks III, with Velvet on Iron: The Diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt, is the only one to have attempted an overview. Other major studies have singled out only certain episodes.

Raymond A. Esthus’s Theodore Roosevelt and the International Rivalries leaves out the Caribbean that Richard H Collin examines in great detail but uncritically, and even approvingly, in Theodore Roosevelt’s Caribbean: The Panama Canal, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Latin American Context. William C. Widenor has a remarkable chapter on Theodorus Pacificus in his Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy.

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17 Efforts at an overall approach by two foreign scholars, one French, one German, resulted in the publication of Serge Ricard, Théodore Roosevelt: principes et pratique d’une politique étrangère (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l’Université de Provence, 1991), and Raimund Lammersdorf, Anfänge einer Weltmacht: Theodore Roosevelt un die transatlantischen Beziehungen der USA 1901–1909 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), which have had a limited readership in the United States.


Regarding the Caribbean, the seizure of Panama remains a highly controversial episode that historians by and large have dealt with critically. The best studies remain Dwight C. Miner’s, *The Fight for the Panama Route: The Story of the Spooner Act and the Hay-Herrán Treaty*, Gerstle Mack’s *The Land Divided: A History of the Panama Canal and Other Isthmian Canal Projects*, and David McCullough’s, *The Path between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914*. Roosevelt’s intervention in Santo Domingo is viewed severely in Melvin M. Knight’s *The Americans in Santo Domingo*. So is the second occupation of Cuba in Louis A. Pérez, Jr.’s *Cuba under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934* after receiving a more favorable treatment in Allan R. Millett’s *The Politics of Intervention: The Second Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909*.²¹

With the exception perhaps of Oscar M. Alfonso’s *Theodore Roosevelt and the Philippines, 1897-1909*, scholarly treatment of the Philippines naturally includes Theodore Roosevelt but generally within works that deal with the conquest of the archipelago and the United States’ Philippine policy. Most of them are severely critical of the U.S. and its twenty-sixth president: Moorfield Storey and M. P. Lichauco’s *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925*; William J. Pomeroy’s *American Neo-Colonialism: Its Emergence in the Philippines and Asia*; Norman G. Owen’s edited collection, *Compadre Colonialism: Studies on the Philippines under American Rule*; Stuart C. Miller’s “Benevolent Assimilation”: *The American Conquest of the Philippines*.


The European arena, in which the main players were the great powers of the day, is where Theodore Roosevelt attained his world-leader status. Monographs abound on transatlantic relations: Eugene N. Anderson's *The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904-1906*, which does not use the French archives; Alfred Vagts's *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik*, 2 vols., an opus magnum never translated into English but nonetheless cited all the time; Lionel M. Gelber's still useful *The Rise of Anglo-American Friendship: A Study in World Politics, 1898-1906*; Charles C. Tansill's *Canadian-American Relations, 1875-1911*, which is extremely detailed and views the Alaska boundary dispute from the Canadian vantage point; the British historian Alexander E. Campbell's *Great Britain and the United States, 1895-1903*; Bradford Perkins's *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914*, a classic study of Anglo-American relations from the first Venezuela Crisis to the Great War; Stuart Anderson's *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904*, on

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diplomacy and ethno-cultural solidarity; Peter Larsen’s “Theodore Roosevelt and the Moroccan Crisis, 1904-1906,” an exhaustive study of the First Moroccan Crisis using German, French, British, and American archives; and Nancy Mitchell’s The Danger of Dreams: German and American Imperialism in Latin America, which claims that the German peril was imaginary.24

The most striking evolution in the twenty-first century historiography of Theodore Roosevelt is the switch from a partial arraignment of the imperialist to a quasi-unanimous celebration of the master diplomatist, as illustrated by several important studies that reveal a persistent interest in his foreign policies. William N. Tilchin, with his Theodore Roosevelt and the British Empire: A Study in Presidential Statecraft, is the first to have underlined cogently Roosevelt’s exceptional statesmanship in the construction of the nascent twentieth-century ‘special relationship’; he furthers the demonstration with William N. Tilchin and Charles E. Neu, eds., Artists of Power: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Their Enduring Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy. James R. Holmes makes an interesting contribution to the study of Rooseveltian diplomacy, Theodore Roosevelt and World Order: Police Power in International Relations, but fails to produce an all-encompassing volume. The “Legacies of Theodore Roosevelt” are explored in a special issue of Diplomacy & Statecraft 19.4 (2008).25 Two major works address anew Roosevelt’s naval expertise, Lisle A. Rose’s Power at Sea, 3 vols.,26 and Henry J. Hendrix’s Theodore Roosevelt’s Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century. More recently, a multi-author volume throws light on Theodore Roosevelt and transatlantic relations in Hans Krabbendam and John M. Thompson, eds., America’s Transatlantic Turn: Theodore Roosevelt and the “Discovery” of Europe.27


26 See volume one, The Age of Navalism, 1890-1918.

The twenty-sixth president’s reputation as a brilliant diplomatist and realpolitician has undeniably reached new heights in the twenty-first century as we doubtlessly prepare to go through half a decade of World War One-related centennial celebrations of all kinds; yet, his Philippine policy still prompts criticism. Three magisterial narratives reexamine the United States’ inglorious conquest and pacification of the archipelago, America’s first experiment in ‘nation-building’: Paul A. Kramer’s *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, Gregg R. Jones’s *Honor in the Dust: Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines, and the Rise and Fall of America’s Imperial Dream*, and Michael Patrick Cullinane’s *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism, 1898-1909.*

There had been no comprehensive multi-author volume since that of Nathalie Naylor, Douglas Brinkley, and John A. Gable, eds.: *Theodore Roosevelt: Many-Sided American*, prepared under the auspices of Hofstra University. *A Companion to Theodore Roosevelt*, edited by Serge Ricard, has recently bridged a nineteen-year old gap and revealed on both sides of the Atlantic a new generation of Roosevelt scholars alongside well known senior specialists: Michael Patrick Cullinane, Adam D. Burns, Claire Delahaye, Edward P. Kohn, Andrew M. Johnston, Stephen L. Levine, Gary Murphy, J. Simon Rofe, John M. Thompson. The *Companion* provides background, new material, and interpretive reading for both scholars and the general public, and achieves a multi-faceted portrait of the first modern chief executive, an innovative shaper of American foreign relations who launched the rising United States on the world stage.

Of course, anyone seeking extensive in-depth knowledge of the twenty-sixth president will have to turn to three indispensable sets of resources: the Theodore Roosevelt Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (also available at Harvard in the Houghton Library’s Theodore Roosevelt Collection and in


Online material is available in particular on the websites of Harvard’s Theodore Roosevelt Collection, the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University, the Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt, the American Presidency Project, and the Theodore Roosevelt Association:

http://www.hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/roosevelt.html
http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/
http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/theodore_roosevelt.php
http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/

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30 The National Edition of *The Works*, however, comprising 20 volumes, also edited by Hermann Hagedorn (New York: Scribner’s, 1926) as a condensed version of the Memorial Edition, is more readily available and is generally used by most researchers.