

Theodore Roosevelt

26th U.S. President, Nobel Laureate (1858 – 1919)

Roosevelt was born in New York City, the son of the wealthy THEODORE ROOSEVELT, SR. and Mittie Bulloch. His father, whom he adored, died in his 40s, just six years before Teddy joined the Century. Young Teddy (a nickname he detested) struggled against poor health, and in his triumph became an advocate of the strenuous life.

In 1884, his first wife, Alice Lee Roosevelt, and his mother died on the same day, and he spent much of the next two years on his ranch in the Dakota Territory. In 1885, he built Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, which would become his home and estate until his death. In 1886, Roosevelt ran for Mayor of New York as “The Cowboy of the Dakotas,” but he lost to Democrat SMITH ELY, JR. On a visit to London that same year, he married Edith Carow, and they had five children: Teddy had a daughter Alice by his first wife.

During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was a lieutenant colonel in the Rough Riders Regiment, which he led on a successful charge at the Battle of San Juan. He was one of the most conspicuous heroes of the war, which propelled him into the Governor’s chair in 1898. He became the vice-presidential running mate of

William McKinley in 1900. In 1901, as Vice-President, the 42-year-old Roosevelt became President following McKinley’s assassination. In the 1904 presidential election, Roosevelt won the presidency in his own right in a landslide victory over Democrat ALTON B. PARKER.

Roosevelt ensured the construction of the Panama Canal, and was a leading conservationist, adding enormously to the national forests of the West. He was the first president to call for universal health care and national health insurance. Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for mediating the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the first American to win the prize.

Roosevelt chose not to run in 1908 and backed his Secretary of War WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT. In 1911, he broke with Taft, but lost the GOP nomination to him and ran on his own one-time Bull Moose ticket in 1912. He beat Taft in the popular vote, but WOODROW WILSON won the election.

Roosevelt was considering a third presidential campaign in 1920 until he was laid low by illness. On January 6, 1919, he died in his sleep at Oyster Bay.



For reasons that are unclear, Roosevelt submitted a letter of resignation to president JOSEPH CHOATE, but then changed his mind. He wrote to Choate on May 5, 1913 stating, “All right, I throw up my hands and withdraw my letter of resignation to the Century Association. I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing you at lunch at Oyster Bay with the members of the British delegation.”