

When Roosevelt Visited Omaha

ON THE EVENING of October 4, 1900, a very distinguished and a very tired man stepped from a special train at the Webster street station into the hands of a committee of Omaha political leaders, headed by Mayor Moores, Howard Baldridge, Edward Rosewater, John C. Cowin, C. J. Greene, David H. Mercer, J. C. Wharton and W. S. Summers. The tired man was not allowed to rest. It was the first time he had ever been in Omaha, and he looked sooty and grimy and fatigued despite a tall hat and his black Prince Albert coat.

Some 40,000 persons had been intent upon his coming for hours, however, and for the good of the republican party the tired talker proceeded for five hours to exemplify what he meant when he said "strenuous life." Omahans have not forgotten their taste of it. More than 10,000 persons gathered in four different places heard sharp, ringing words fall from the lips of the man who wanted McKinley elected again and was willing to cease being governor of New York state to fight for an election as vice president and help to keep the republican president in office. Three times as many caught a view of his features as he passed through the streets.

That was President Theodore Roosevelt's first visit to Omaha. He reached Omaha about 8 o'clock in the evening from the west after a four days' campaign tour of Nebraska, and he left town about midnight via the Illinois Central, enroute through Iowa. During those four hours Omaha was a blaze of glory and a blaze of sound. The Ak-Sar-Ben illuminations glowed again after a week's darkness, and the city and thousands of visitors flocked down town to view Roosevelt. Enthusiasm as he passed through the streets reached a point properly termed grand, and the spell of intense nervous excitement produced by the expectant assembling of thousands in the city by night hung tense and splendid every moment of the time Governor Roosevelt spent in Omaha. Everywhere there was energy, effort, noise, excitement, light and voices. It was one of those times in the midst of a national political campaign when people

forgot they are Omahans or Nebraskans or westerners and feel most intensely all American, as though the right toe trod on 'Frisco ere the left heel had departed from the boundaries of Manhattan.

If President Roosevelt remembers Omaha other than a typical, high-colored picture of an American city at the acme of a national campaign, he is more than a wonderful man. The four black horses that conveyed him from hall to hall where he spoke were driven over the asphalt at top speed, and the mounted escort could hardly keep the pace. There was time for mirth and laughter and cheers and speeches, but none for rest or a view of the city under the sun and as it lives from day to day. That night was a conglomeration of sound, people and noise, and if the Rough Rider governor discovered more he used his observatory powers most excellently, despite the myriad incandescents and the red fire.

As he was being whirled from Bohemian hall on South Thirteenth street to Boyd's opera house, where he made the last speech, he did have time to say a few things about Omaha and her people. Substantially it was that he was tired, but happy—happy because he had found in the state and its metropolis an enthusiasm for the republican ticket and himself as a nominee that he had not anticipated. Mr. Bryan, it will be remembered, was for the second time the democracy's choice for the presidency. Nebraska is Mr. Bryan's state, at least by right of residency, and Governor Roosevelt, hearing good reports, had doubted them somewhat.

Speaking further to those about him in the carriage Governor Roosevelt said he thought the arrangements for the meetings and speechmaking in Omaha most admirable. The imposing illuminations pleased him and he marveled at the warmth of his welcome. He was delighted with the fervent Omaha he saw and expressed the hope that he would visit the city again and see more of it. Then the carriage stopped before the stage entrance to the theater and they hustled him on the stage, where he was perfectly ready "to puncture the bubbles of imperialism and militarism" before 2,000 people, at the beck and call of Mr. John L. Kennedy, who presided.

It was 11 o'clock when that meeting was finished and the governor and Senator Dolliver were driven to the Webster street station, where the private car awaited them. Obeying instructions, the trainmen waited until the governor had time to compose himself for sleep, and very likely to sleep, before the signal was given to proceed. Just at midnight the train was pulled softly and gently out of the station, every employe on it having been personally informed by the superintendent that if there was a jar or hitch the official would not be responsible for what might happen to the man to blame. It was recognized most strictly that the next vice president could rest only on the wing.

Some of the facts of the Rooseveltian visit are that 6,000 men carrying torches and banners marched in the procession that did honor to the hero, conveying him from the station to Farnam street, via Sixteenth; on Farnam to Nineteenth, back again to Fifteenth and thence to the big tent on Capitol avenue, where 6,000 persons heard the principal address. At Creighton hall 1,000 were addressed, the same number at Bohemian hall and 2,000 at Boyd's. It was estimated that at least 30,000 others viewed the procession and saw the distinguished guest.

Frequently during the march crowds would break through the guards around the carriage and insist upon stopping it until a few dozen could shake his hand. At the Webster street station the inevitable Rough Rider episode was performed, probably so that Omaha might not become famous as the only city where it did not happen. The real Rough Rider in this case was Jesse D. Langdon of Troop K, who reined a half-broken mustang to a moment's quiet beside the carriage.

The rest happened like this, according to the newspapers: "As the horse plunged beneath him young Langdon introduced himself to the colonel. The tired look vanished from the candidate's face and he beamed with real pleasure. He gripped the trooper's hand hard.

"I am mighty glad to see you," he said. "Where did you get that nice horse?" The animal was making an amicable effort to deposit its rider on the depot roof.

"I just brought him over from the stock yards this week," responded the rough rider rather breathlessly. "He had never been ridden when I got him." There was no time for more words and the Mexican bit drew the fractious steed into line behind the carriage."

Before arriving in Omaha Mr. Roosevelt had visited a lot of other western cities and states, just as he has done on his present trip. He had been in Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Colorado and Kansas. In Nebraska he had spent four days passing through forty-four of the ninety counties and all six of the congressional districts, speaking to many thousands along the way.

Since the first Omaha visit the city has been disappointed in not receiving another—that planned for last fall, which ended at Indianapolis owing to the president's physical condition. Extensive arrangements were made for the visit in connection with the Ak-Sar-Ben festivities and the anticipated presence of the chief executive of the nation widely advertised. He then promised to come in the spring to Omaha and other western cities that he had missed, and he is keeping good his word.

As on his first inspection of Omaha President Roosevelt will find the city in the throes of a political battle. This time the contentions are narrowed to the boundaries of the city, but the excitement runs almost as high, the occasion lacking only the lavish display that only national campaign exchequers can supply.

But the president himself will come refreshed and vigorous from a solitary and unmolested journey into Yellowstone park. He will reach the city while there is yet daylight, will ride through the principal main streets and will be at his leisure to observe various features of the city, physical and otherwise. While there will be crowds and generous expression of delight at his presence there will not be the thirty-second degree expression of it that he encountered before. In other words, he will have more chance to enjoy himself as is befitting the head of the nation.

How Other Presidents Have Been Received

WITH the coming of President Roosevelt to Omaha on Monday the people of Omaha enter on to the fifth era of presidential entertainment, for already four of the presidents of the United States have entered the gates of the city while holding the executive office, and four times has the city, through its officers and people welcomed and cheered the president. Yet these visits reach over a period of twenty-eight years and the president's being in Omaha is, as it always will be, an event.

The first of the presidents to come to Omaha was President Ulysses S. Grant, and that was 'way back in 1875. It was the morning of October 1 when the presidential train arrived in Council Bluffs and was met by a party of Omaha officials and men prominent in Omaha. The presidential party, which included, besides the president and his wife, Colonel Fred D. Grant and his wife, ex-Secretary of the Navy A. Borce and his wife and son, Secretary of War W. W. Belknap, General Babcock, General Alvord, General McFeeley, General Vincent, General William Myers, General M. J. Myers, Colonel Benjamin and Colonel Crosby, were brought from the Council Bluffs transfer to Omaha on a special train, which was decorated with bunting. As the train pulled into the station in Omaha the artillery from the barracks fired the presidential salute and the Twenty-third infantry band struck up with a national air.

Amid the shouts and cheers of a great concourse of people, that had come from all of eastern Nebraska, the president was escorted from the train to the carriage in waiting for him. The others of the party followed and took their places in the carriages and were driven slowly up Tenth

street until Farnam street was reached, when the carriages turned west. When the Grand Central hotel, now the Paxton, was reached the party stopped and Mayor Champion S. Chase announced from President Grant's carriage the order of the day. The party then proceeded to the high school grounds, where President Grant was greeted by the school children and spoke a few words to them, after which he took his way to the government building and for an hour held a reception. The remainder of his party, during the reception, drove out to the barracks. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the entire party took the train again and started on their way to Salt Lake City amid the cheers of thousands of people.

Four years and one month later to a day President Grant and his wife arrived in Omaha on their return from their trip around the world. It was nearly three years since he had sat in the presidential chair, but at every turn the people thronged and showed their enthusiasm by constant cheering. He was driven to the high school grounds and again spoke shortly to the children and the concourse of people that had gathered there. He was banqueted at the Withnell house and, on Sunday morning, attended the services at the First Methodist church, where Rev. J. B. Maxfield occupied the pulpit. Monday morning he started for the east and a committee including Mayor Chase, Senator Saunders, General Manderson, T. L. Kimball, M. R. Risdon, E. Rosewater, J. C. Bonnell and L. M. Bennett accompanied him to the Union Pacific transfer in Council Bluffs. During this stay of President Grant's in Omaha the entire police force, fourteen in number, were out in new uniforms and the hook and ladder company No. 1 joined in the parade given for his benefit.

In 1887 President Cleveland and his June bride were in the city for barely an hour, arriving at 10:50 in the morning, and were driven about the city as far west as Twenty-second street and as far south as Brownell hall. Arrangements had been made for him to deliver a five-minute speech, but he asked to be excused from doing so.

The train on which President Cleveland and his wife, Daniel Lamont, Colonel Bissell and Postmaster General and Mrs. Villas arrived was met at Council Bluffs by a party of Omaha citizens in a private car, which was coupled on to the presidential train and brought to Omaha with it. The party that met him included Congressman J. A. McShane, Judge J. M. Woolworth, Senator Manderson, Dr. George L. Miller, G. W. Holdrege, W. A. Paxton, General G. B. Dandy, Max Meyer, Hon. James E. Boyd and Hon. Charles H. Brown. When the train reached the center of the Missouri river bridge Congressman McShane delivered an address of welcome and was given the sobriquet of mayor at once and unwittingly by the president.

On the morning of May 13, 1891, President Benjamin Harrison arrived in Omaha from Lincoln. He was accompanied by his son, Russell Harrison and Mrs. Russell Harrison, his daughter, Mrs. McKee, Mrs. Dimmock, whom he afterwards married, and Secretaries Wanamaker and Rusk. Mayor Cushing, Senator Manderson, Governor Thayer, ex-Governor Saunders and Hon. J. C. Cowin acted as an escort to the president on his entrance to the city. President Harrison spoke from a platform erected at the northeast corner of the courthouse grounds, addressing one of the largest throngs that ever assembled in Nebraska. Afterwards he tendered a public reception in the court of The Bee building, when

many thousands of the people passed in line and shook hands with the president. After the reception President Harrison visited The Bee offices and rested for a time in the editor's office. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the president was driven to the high school grounds and gave a short address to the children. The party were then driven to the home of Alvin Saunders where they took lunch before returning to the train and taking their way to Kansas City.

The three days and a half spent by President McKinley in Omaha during the Trans-Mississippi Exposition are so near yet that they are in the memory of all people. It was 9 o'clock in the evening of October 11, 1898, when the special train arrived in the city, bearing the president and his party, among whom were Secretaries Gage of Treasury, Bliss of Interior, Wilson of Agriculture, Postmaster General Smith, Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles and many other men of the nation's affairs.

The night of the arrival of President McKinley the electric parade of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben was repeated for his benefit. Wednesday was president's day at the exposition and the grounds were thronged from morning to midnight with people. The president was on the grounds from 11 o'clock in the morning until 9 o'clock at night. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon he held a reception in the government building and at 6 o'clock a dinner was given in his honor at the Market cafe on the grounds. Thursday morning following he took his departure and returned but once afterward. That was on May 28, 1901, when he was returning with Mrs. McKinley from the coast after her serious illness there and the president left the car only for a few minutes while it stood at the Union station.

Roosevelt, Burroughs and Yellowstone Park

WESTERN people have known the president for at least twenty years, just that length of time having elapsed since he came out west and settled down to the life of a ranchman in the wildest part of the northwest, the Little Missouri country. Many tales of his career in the "bad lands," as that picturesque region is called in the west, have been told, and Mr. Roosevelt himself has made familiar some of his experiences in his books. His "Ranch Life in the West," one of the best known works on the topic, is especially interesting for the reason that it deals with the topic first hand and not from hearsay, being the result of his actual experience on a ranch and with the men to be met there. A great many stories have been published concerning the experience of the president on his trips to the mountains of the west in search of big game, but the majority of these are apocryphal. Some are founded on fact, though, and one of the best is the account of how he killed his first mountain sheep. It is thus related by Fred Herrig, who was a member of Troop K of the D Rough Riders, and who was also an em-

ploye of the Roosevelt ranch in North Dakota:

"I saw the colonel get a fine sheep one day. He and Bill and I were sitting on the porch, taking it easy, when Bill says: 'I saw a sheep's track up on that butte yesterday,' pointing to the range right in front of us, across the valley. A Rocky mountain sheep is about the rarest game we get out there. Bill had no more than got the words out of his mouth when something poked its head up over the edge of the cliff. 'There's the sheep now,' says Roosevelt. 'No, I believe it's a black tailed antelope and I've a mind to go after him.'

"Black tailed nothing," said Bill. "That's the whitest tailed antelope you ever saw."

"By this time the colonel was creeping up the river, with his rifle. We two sat still and watched him. The air was calm and clear as a bell, and when he was a half mile off we could hear every word he said. 'He ought to keep to the left and climb that coulee,' said Bill, never thinking the colonel would hear him. But he did keep to the left and began crawling up the butte, which was all fluted with gullies. 'Gimme them

opery glasses,' said Bill—he always called the colonel's field glasses opery—and just then the colonel fired. That was enough for us, and Bill and I went after him as hard as we could.

"Did you get your antelope?" called Bill, as the colonel stuck his head up from behind a boulder.

"It's a sheep," yelled the colonel, pushing the critter up over the rock in front of him. 'It's a sheep, by George, and I shot him through the heart.'

"My last hunt with Colonel Roosevelt was late in November. I guess he and I remember it mainly because we both froze our ears getting home to the ranch. He was anxious to kill a mountain ram before he went back east. It's all right to shoot Rocky Mountain sheep, but a whacking big ram with horns spread like all out doors is different. So we both made up our minds he must have a ram, and started early in the morning over the divide between the Yellowstone and the Little Missouri rivers.

"By that time of the year the bunch grass was so brown you couldn't tell it from the rocks. The country looked about as desolate as you can imagine. The buttes

raised their jagged edges against a cold gray sky and the only color in the landscape was in the sandstone and porphyry strata of the cliffs. We had a hard time of it making our way up to the crest of the divide, and just as we got there, along toward evening, I saw something moving ahead of us.

"Easy now," says I, 'and you'll get your ram.' 'Where?' says he, and I could see by his voice he was all on thorns. We had worked hard for this very chance. He had his 45-90 rifle swinging easy over his left arm. I pointed about 400 yards in front of us a little down the ridge. It was one of the finest rams I ever saw, his long brown hair so much lighter in color than an ewe's that he stood out tolerably plain, even among the boulders and at that distance.

"I was just pointing the critter out when he faced about, lifted his big horns over a rock he'd been grazing behind and caught sight of us against the sky line. 'There he goes,' I yelled, for 'twas no use keeping quiet any longer. Maybe that ram didn't

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