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THE

KEYNOTER

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL ITEMS CONSERVATORS



**THEODORE ROOSEVELT & WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT:
AN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP**



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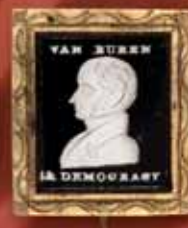
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FROM THE APIC PRESIDENT

Friendship is often defined as a relationship of mutual affection between at least two people. Characteristics of friendship can include sympathy, mutual understanding and compassion. It also can include enjoyment of each other's company and the ability to be oneself, express one's feelings, and perhaps the most important - make mistakes without fear of judgment from the friend. True friendship blossoms regardless of differences or barriers. The friendship and falling out between Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft is the primary subject of our *Keynoter*.

Here we had two giants – TR and Taft – both public servants for most of their adult lives; one of physical prowess, the other of extensive girth (Taft even joked that if he was sitting on a bus he could give his seat up so three women could sit down). One with a booming voice, the other noted for his more high pitched voice. One would suck all the oxygen out of a room when he entered, the other had a presence much more reserved. One preferred to be called “Colonel” while the other “Judge” even though both had served in the highest office in the land. Both believed what they were doing was for the betterment of the country despite different tactics and different speeds; and thus the rub.

Theodore Roosevelt had had a whirlwind of a Presidency - one of action and taking the world by storm. Taft, coming from a judicial background, believed in exploring options and moving at a much slower and thus conservative pace. Upon his return from abroad, TR felt that his vision of America had been curtailed by not only President Taft – his handpicked successor – but also by a conservative Congress. TR believed the only way to save the United States was for someone to seize the Presidency from Taft and TR thought the best person for the job was him.

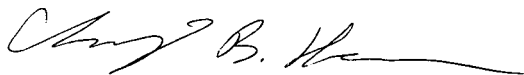
To do so TR was willing to sacrifice his friendship with Taft, sacrifice his membership in the Republican Party, and run for President – only believing to win he had to defeat Taft – forgetting for most of the campaign the Democrats had put up a formidable candidate in Woodrow Wilson. TR also forgot about the left and their candidate Eugene Debs who had taken Roosevelt's progressive policies even farther. In the end Taft and Roosevelt were both defeated by Wilson who received 41.8% of the popular vote. Debs garnered over a million votes, making the 1912 election the last time in American history four separate nominees received at least 5% of the popular vote.

Between 1912 and 1918 there would be only two more meetings between TR and Taft. In 1916, the Republican presidential nominee Charles Evans Hughes arranged for a meeting between the two to show that the Republican Party was once again united. The meeting was not cordial and only for show; TR mentioning that it was one of those type of meetings where “before entering the meeting place, [we] made sure the hardware was in good working order”. It would not be until May 1918 that the two had a chance encounter at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago and each made their peace. They say that nothing brings people together more readily than a common enemy or an understanding of one's own mortality. Those two things came into play at the Blackstone.

TR and Taft were in Chicago for various reasons but were simply staying at the same hotel. Taft noticed TR sitting alone and simply walked up to him, extended his hand, and said “Theodore”. The two sat down and talked for a period of time, and when they parted they parted as friends once again. TR was described as being as “happy as a proverbial lark”. It was said by observers the meeting was like a Grand Army of the Potomac Reunion of old soldiers. Taft and TR told reporters they talked of “patriotism” and “the state and welfare of the Nation” but much more than that they made their peace with each other. TR was so happy that he was observed humming “Garry Owen” his favorite battle air. Knowing that for at least one of them the end might be near, they put away all the animosity that occurred in 1912 and were friends once again. It showed even the Titans could put old hard feelings to rest.

Enjoy the articles and all that is included in this issue. Hope to see all of you at our National Convention in Denver – it promises to be less contentious than the 1912 Republican National Convention.

All the best,



Chris Hearn, President



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I suspect I was only one of many Keynoter readers to find a copy of Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Bully Pulpit* under my Christmas tree last year. Goodwin's work (such as her *Team of Rivals* which inspired the recent film "Lincoln") has always been interesting and informative but her recent book has broken new ground in exploring the relationship between Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft.



That book inspired me to revisit the TR/Taft friendship in this issue. There is a wealth of material demonstrating the close political and personal relationship between these two Republican presidents.

The material culture of the TR/Taft early friendship and later rivalry is rich with variety and color. The tragedy of their story is how two dear friends became bitter enemies, leading to the battle of 1912, which saw the immediate past President running against the incumbent President, a battle that was won by the next President, Woodrow Wilson. This is the only election to feature three American presidents contesting the Presidency at the same time.

With American politics becoming increasingly bitter these days, it may be worth looking at these two close friends who began as comrades, became angry enemies and finally found reconciliation with each other. May we go and do likewise.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Michael Kelly
Editor

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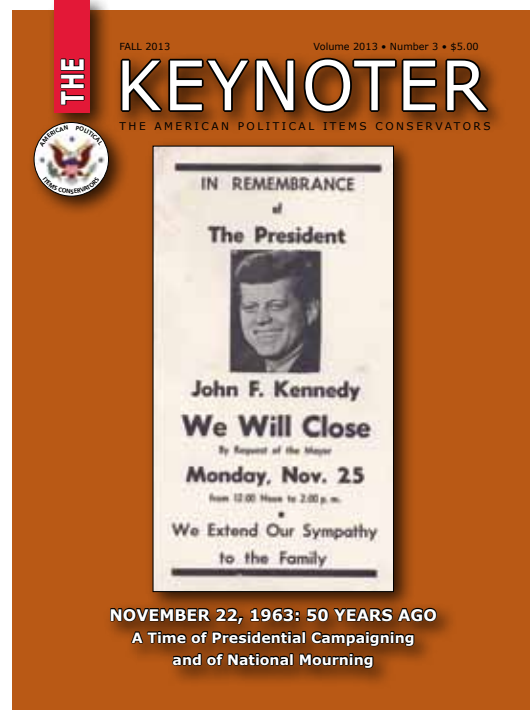
FRONT COVER-- A famous 1" button from the 1908 campaign showing TR and Taft.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The last issue of *The Keynoter* inspired a vigorous debate on one of the APIC-related pages on Facebook. Rather than select just a few comments here, we reprinted most of the debate on page 28.



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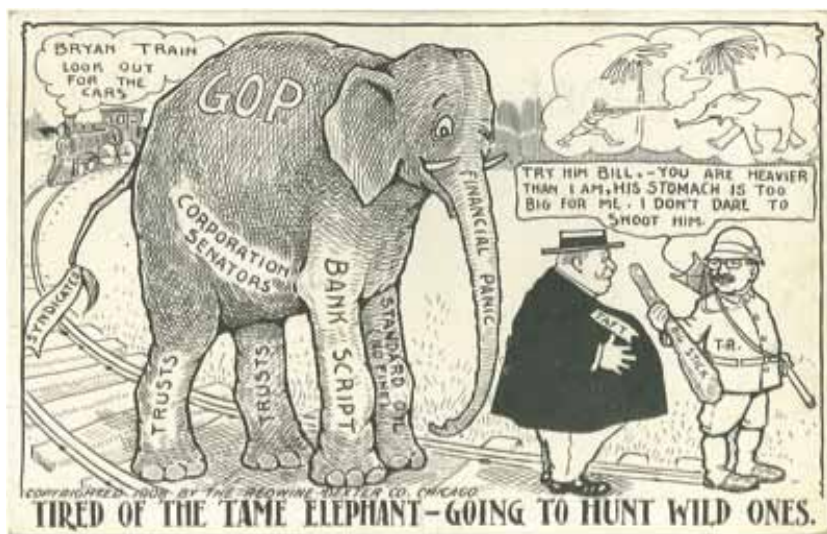
Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft: an American Friendship

By Michael Kelly

Anyone interested in American history, especially political history, quickly comes upon Theodore Roosevelt. Even to Americans with little interest in politics, TR's *pinz-nez* glasses and grinning teeth are easily recognized.

Those of us drawn to learn more about this remarkable man soon come across the rupture between Roosevelt and his chosen successor, William Howard Taft, leading to their eventual clash in 1912.

Their battle is well known. But a recent book by noted historian Doris Kearns Goodwin explores more fully just how deep was their doomed friendship and how highly Taft and Roosevelt thought of each other. In her recently published *The Bully Pulpit*, Goodwin recounts a friendship founded on a close political alliance, shared values and personal affection.



joyful warmth combined with a great capacity for work made Taft a favorite with all who knew him. His dream job was a seat on the Supreme Court but he reluctantly turned down Roosevelt's offer of that appointment so that he could continue his work in transitioning the Philippines to independence.

Both men stood for honest public service during an era in which bribery and corruption were the norm in much of America's local, state and federal government.

Both men had come to the Republican Party as a family legacy. Taft's father served as Secretary of War in the Grant administration. TR's father played a leading role in the effort to take patronage out of civil service, even being appointed by President Rutherford B. Hayes to replace Chester Alan Arthur as Collector of Customs for the Port of New York (the most lucrative patronage post in the federal government) only to have his nomination rejected by the patronage-friendly Senate.

Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft were more than allies, they were friends. When young members of the Harrison administration, their Washington homes were nearby and the Tafts and Roosevelts were frequent guests at each other's homes. Their wives were close and the children in their young families developed friendships.

Upon becoming President, TR begged Taft to join his cabinet. Assuming the post of Secretary of War, the cabinet post held by his father, Taft was soon seen as TR's second-in-command, serving as practically an acting President when Roosevelt was out of town. From the Philippines to the Panama Canal, from strengthening the Army to confronting the powerful railroad industry, Taft more than carried his substantial weight in the Roosevelt administration.

Theodore Roosevelt took the route of electoral politics at a young age. He won a seat in the New York State Assembly at the age of 23 and was chosen by his colleagues as the leader of the Republican minority caucus after only one year. He lost a race for Mayor of New York City and won a race for Governor of New York State. Nominated by the GOP for Vice President by public acclaim over the wishes of most party bosses, he ascended to the Presidency at the age of 42, making him the youngest President ever, a record that still stands to this day.

Taft disliked the jostling and tumult of elections, preferring to work through the medium of the law. He, too, began his work young with an appointment to a key judgeship at an early age. His

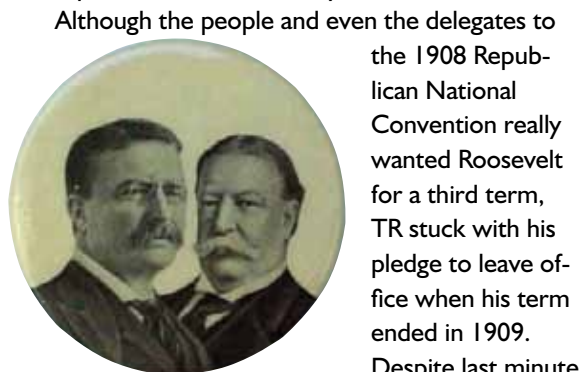
During TR's campaign in 1904, Taft took the lead in campaigning at a time when it was thought unseemly for incumbent presidents to campaign on their own behalf. When time came for Roosevelt to leave the White House, Taft was his pick to follow him, despite Taft's reluctance to run for President.



Goodwin described the situation thus: "Of paramount importance was a successor who would sustain and advance his agenda, and there was no man he trusted more to uphold the progressive cause than William Howard Taft. Reporters were fascinated by 'the deep, unbroken friendship' the two shared, 'like unsophisticated schoolboys when together,' one journalist expounded, "each apparently under the spell of a romantic affection, a strong, simple sense of knightly companionship in the great field of moral errantry and patriotic adventure."

"He is going to be greatly beloved as President," Roosevelt said of Taft, "He has the most lovable personality I have ever come in contact with."

fighter and enjoys it," she warned him when he announced his availability for the Republican nomination in 1908, "but the malice of the politicians would make you miserable."



Although the people and even the delegates to the 1908 Republican National Convention really wanted Roosevelt for a third term, TR stuck with his pledge to leave office when his term ended in 1909. Despite last minute

chaos reflecting the delegates' desire to renominate the incumbent, Taft won the GOP nomination easily when the votes were finally counted.

Learning of Taft's nomination, President Roosevelt immediately issued a statement: "The country is indeed to be congratulated upon the nomination of Mr. Taft. I have known him intimately for many years and I have a peculiar feeling for him, because throughout that time we have worked for the same object with the same purposes and ideals. I do not believe there can be found in the whole country a man so well fitted to be president."

Meanwhile, nomination in hand, Taft confided to a friend, "The next four months are going to be kind of a nightmare for me."

Taft's less aggressive style became evident even in the 1908 campaign. Roosevelt seethed at what he felt was Taft's passivity in the election. "Hit them hard, old man," he advised his friend, "Do not answer Bryan; attack him."

Before the campaign was done TR had taken the initiative in a series of public letters directly debating Taft's Democratic opponent. The letters revived the Republican cause and Taft moved into the lead. On Election Day Taft swept to an easy victory. Although his victory margin was half the size of TR's in 1904, Taft still outpolled Bryan by well over a millions votes and swept the Electoral College.

At his victory celebration, Taft stated, "I pledge myself to use all the energy and ability in me to make the next Administration a worthy successor to that of Theodore Roosevelt...I could have no higher aim than that."



TR and Taft were both political allies and close friends. Taft was a leader in the Progressive movement before he was elected President but eventually came to symbolize the old machine politics he had fought against for so long.

Sadly, the deep personal bonds between the two men could not survive the pressures of the practice of presidential power. Whether Taft could have done anything different or TR could have ever been satisfied with anyone other than himself in the White House can only be guessed.

What is certain is that the friendship of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft was a genuine American tragedy. The two friends found themselves in a titanic clash that nearly shattered the Republican Party they both loved and allowed Democrat Woodrow Wilson to win the White House in a three-way race.

Years later, the two enemies began to find some peace, if only in their agreement on how badly Wilson was handling matters. In 1918, Taft spotted TR sitting in the crowded restaurant of Blacktone's Hotel in Chicago. Walking across the dining room, he greeted his old friend and recent rival: "Theodore! I am glad to see you." Roosevelt rose to his feet: "Well, I am indeed delighted to see you. Won't you sit down?"

The other diners watched in silence for a moment and then the entire room burst into applause.

A reconciliation of sorts followed. On the very day that he learned of the death of his son, Quentin, in air combat over the battlefields of the Great War, TR travelled to the New York State Republican Convention for a joint appearance with Taft to clearly demonstrate that their disagreements should be set aside to present a unified opposition to the Wilson administration.

Taft outlived his old friend by a decade and was finally given the seat on the Supreme Court he had always wanted when he was nominated by his fellow Ohioan, President Warren Harding. Taft is the only person to have served as both President and Chief Justice but his legacy and grip on the national imagination would never come close to that of the man who had been both his closest friend and most bitter enemy.



TR offered the small businessmen and laborers of America a "Square Deal" regarding the growing monopolies known as "the trusts." These three buttons from 1904, 1908 and 1912 respectively, all hearken to the Square Deal. Buttons are not shown at their original sizes.



Taft writing to TR as the latter was on his way home from his African safari: "I do not know if I have had harder luck than other presidents but I do know I have succeeded far less than others. I have been trying to carry out your policies. But my method of doing so has not worked smoothly."



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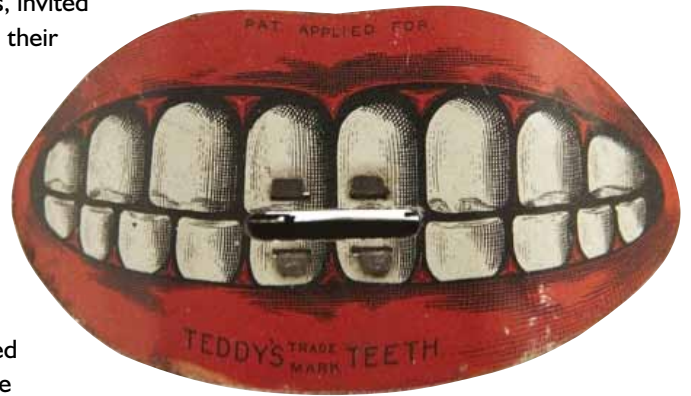
Teddy Bear and Billy Possum

By Michael Kelly



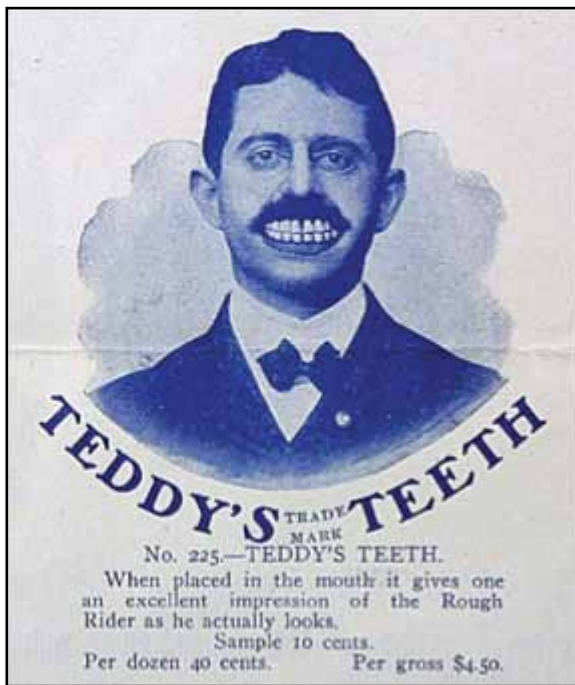
Theodore Roosevelt broke new ground in the realm of political imagery. As Doris Kearns Goodwin wrote in *The Bully Pulpit*, ‘The essence of Roosevelt’s leadership...lay in his enterprising use of ‘the bully pulpit,’ a phrase he himself coined to describe the national platform the presidency provides to shape public sentiment and mobilize action... Roosevelt understood from the outset that this task hinged upon the need to develop powerfully reciprocal relationships with members of the national press. He called them by their first names, invited them to meals, took questions during his midday shave, welcomed their company at day’s end...and designated, for the first time, a special room for them in the West Wing.”

Roosevelt himself was such a larger-than-life character that he couldn’t help giving the nation a variety of symbols that came to represent him as an easily grasped image. His hat, glasses, moustache and even teeth functioned as instantly recognized logos.



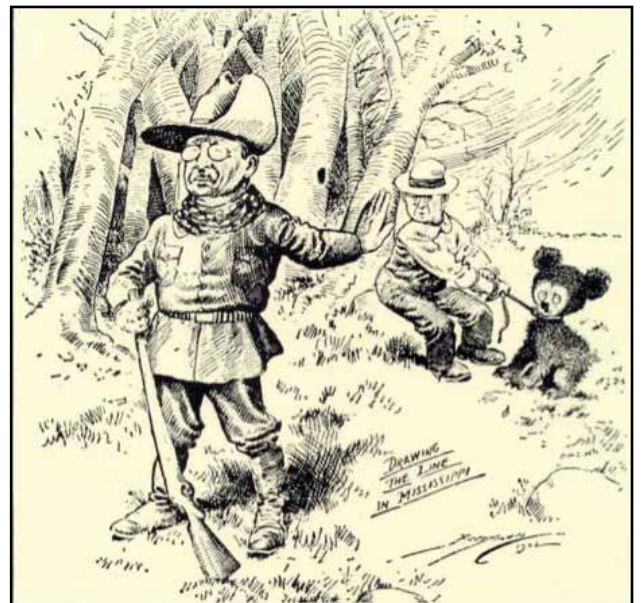
The Big Stick summarized an assertive world view and came to be widely used in cartoons, buttons, postcards and other political items for TR and even for Taft, when the latter was presented to the nation as TR’s anointed candidate for President. (See page 27)

But the image of TR that remains most intimately woven into the fabric of our culture is the Teddy bear. The story is well known of how Roosevelt was on a bear hunt in Mississippi when his hosts were embarrassed that a long trek through rough country hadn’t presented the President with an opportunity to shoot a wild bear. Hoping to make amends, they found an old bear and tied



him to a tree for the President to dispatch. In keeping with his high ethical standards, TR refused to take such an unsporting shot.

The Clifford Berryman cartoon (“Drawing the line in Mississippi”) picturing the event was just the start of the Teddy bear craze. Soon children were clutching stuffed bears, playing board games and reading adventure tales about Teddy and his bears while checking the temperature on Teddy bear thermometers.



Cartoonist Clifford Berryman popularized the Teddy bear through his cartoons (cartoon on right)



At least two political buttons feature Berryman's version of the bear, including one showing a bear cub parading behind TR and Vice President Charles Fairbanks while waving a banner reading "'Four More Years of Theodore!'"

Goodwin writes, "As renditions of the original Clifford Berryman cartoon proliferated, the bear dwindled in size until he appeared as a tiny cub, prompting store owners to market stuffed bears in honor of Teddy Roosevelt. Soon the Teddy bear became one of the most cherished toys of all time."

Games and toys picked up the Teddy bear theme as well. Board games like "Teddy's Bear Hunt" and the mechanical bank that allows coins to be deposited

by TR shooting a coin into a tree revealing a hidden bear attest to the popularity of Teddy and his bear.



Savings bank in the shape of a bear.



Thermometer.



A tin toy boosting "Teddy Bear Bread."

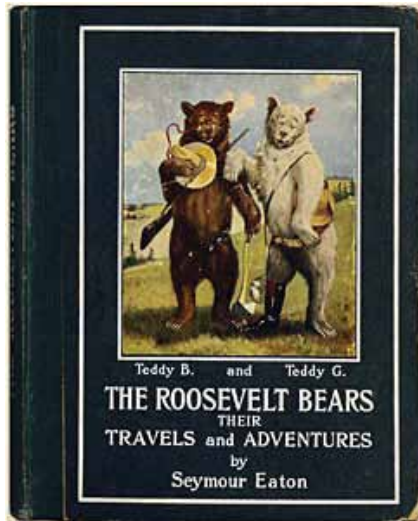


Mechanical savings bank.



Teddy bear bicycle toy.

A popular series of children's books told tales of the rollicking adventures of The Roosevelt Bears (Teddy B. and Teddy G.) and those popular images soon appeared on children's pitchers and plates.



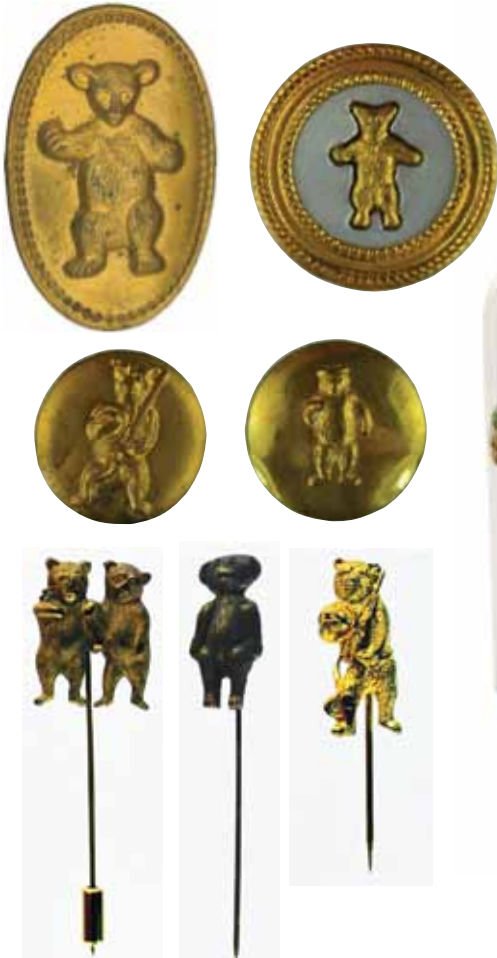
The postcard above shows cartoonist Clifford Berryman's version of the Teddy bear becoming a symbol of the Nation's Capitol.



A detailed pitcher decorated with The Roosevelt Bears.



Children's plates featuring The Roosevelt Bears.



Teddy bear buttons and pins were very popular.



Roosevelt Bears milk glass candy container, somewhat different than the classic McKinley Full Dinner Pail.

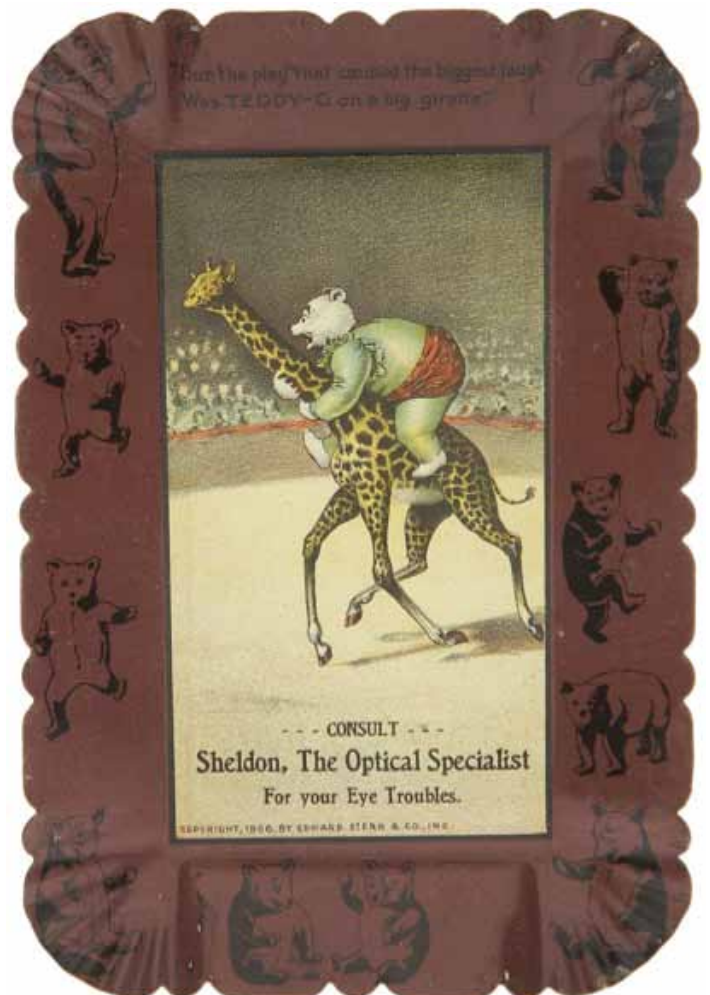
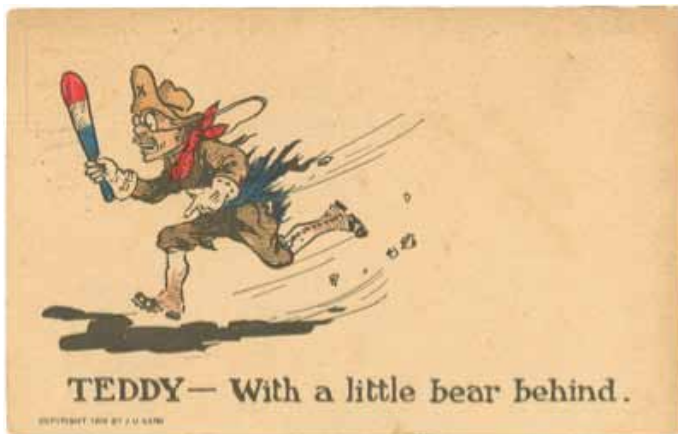


The cute bear cub on the West Texas Republican Club button symbolized optimism about Republican hopes in heavily Democratic Texas.



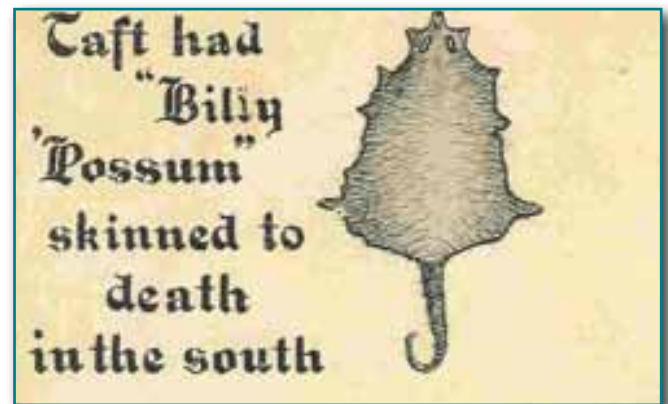
“A vote is like a rifle; its usefulness depends on the character of the user.”

- Theodore Roosevelt





In *The Bully Pulpit*, Goodwin notes the arrival of Taft's answer to the Teddy bear. On the pre-inaugural visit to Atlanta, President-elect Taft was treated to a "possum and taters" banquet. "Newspapers described specially constructed cage that housed each arriving batch of twenty possums until a hundred were gathered to feed six hundred guests. Featuring songs and the release of doves, the gala evening was ranked the most brilliant event ever held in Atlanta, marking 'a social epoch' in the history of the new South."



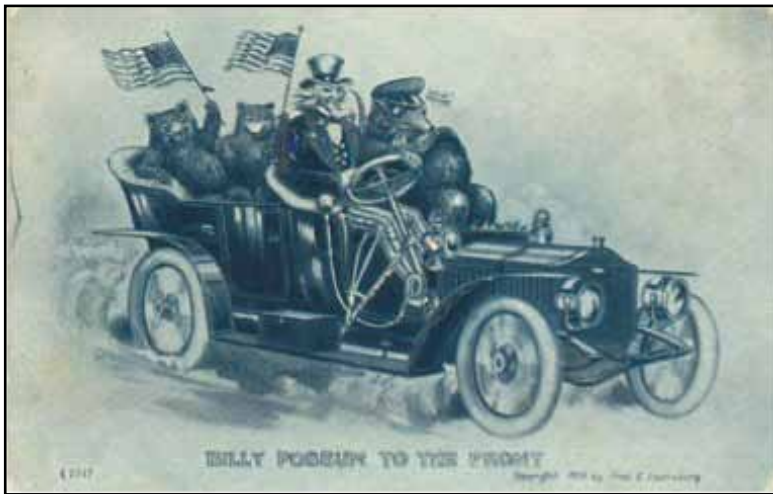
Once again cartoonists jumped on what they hoped would be a good thing and portrayed Taft as "Billy Possum." There is abundance of Billy Possum items, especially postcards but including some very handsome buttons.



A lovely 7/8" color cartoon buttons shows a smiling Taft with a possum on his shoulder.

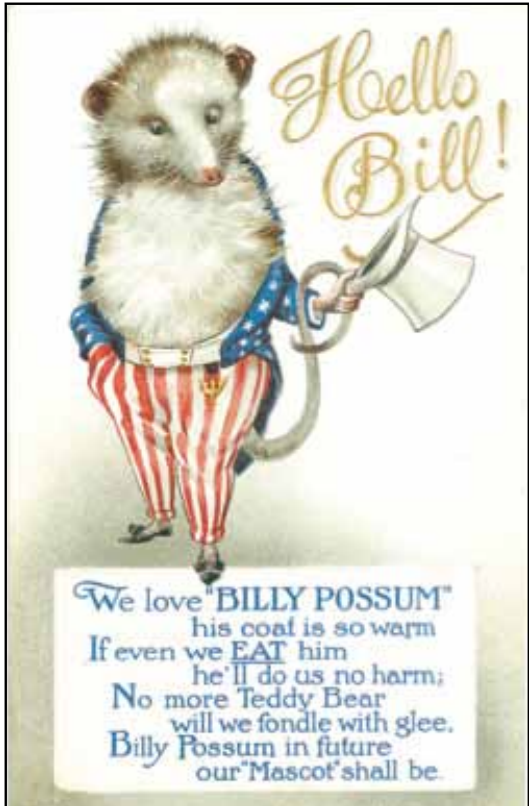
But poor Taft's possum never entered the national culture in the lasting way the Teddy bear has. As Goodwin relates, "expectations that Billy Possum would rival the Teddy bear in popularity were swiftly dashed when the stuffed creature, resembling 'a gigantic rat,' caused children to cry."







These two Taft ribbons might at first glance seem to be using the Billy Possum image but at second look one can see these Wisconsin ribbons are really using that state's symbol, the badger.



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Teddy the Lion

By Michael Kelly



Theodore Roosevelt's imagery is so rich with symbols that he is identified with no fewer than the three animals quite aside from the frequent use of images of him astride a spirited horse. TR was portrayed as a bear, a bullmoose and a lion. Each animal projects a sense of power and energy.

While the Teddy bear is almost universally known (see preceding article) and the Bullmoose came to symbolize his 1912 presidential race on the Progressive Party ticket, it was the African safari that followed his leaving office that brought the image of the lion into the Roosevelt imagery.

The story is told of the White House dinner where President Roosevelt delighted in big game hunter Charles Akeley's tales of hunting in Africa. One of his stories described sixteen lions Akeley had seen emerging from a single cave. The President turned happily to a congressman sitting next to him and said, "Congressman, I wish I had those lions to turn loose on Congress." The congressman stammered a reply: "Well, Mr. President, aren't you afraid they might make a mistake?"

TR shot back, "Not if they stayed long enough."

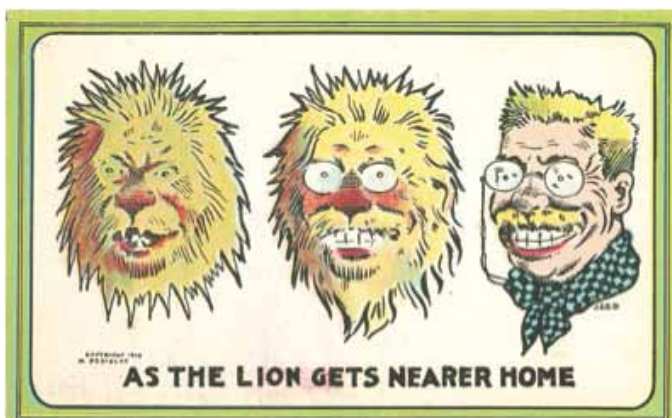
That evening planted the seed of TR's African safari.

Leaving the White House at the still young age of 50, TR needed a significant distraction to sooth his transition from a position of power. His choice was classic Roosevelt; he would head to Africa for a major hunting expedition that would last more than a year. This gave him an interesting activity with the added benefit of removing him from the scene during Taft's first year as President, thereby avoiding drawing attention away from the new administration.

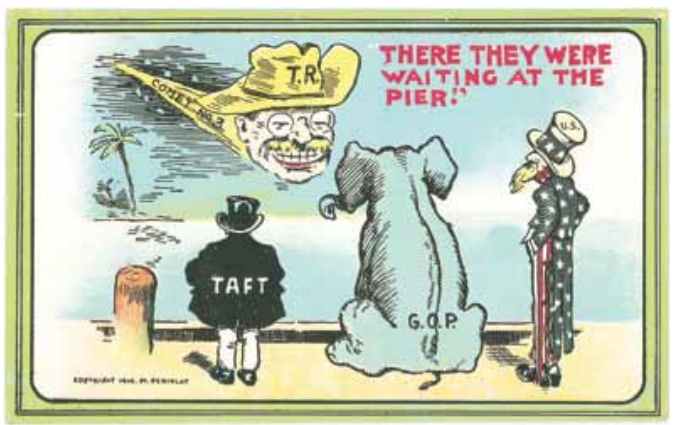
As his Presidency dwindled to its last days, President Roosevelt famously sent a friendly note to President-elect Taft reading, "Ha ha! You are making up your cabinet. I in a lighthearted way have spent the morning testing rifles for my African trip. Life has compensations!" His year-long journey commenced only three weeks after he turned over the Presidency to his handpicked successor.

Being the sort of man he was, TR included more than hunting in his plans and soon the expedition became as much about collecting specimens for the Smithsonian Institute as bagging trophies. Eventually the Smithsonian received over 23,000 specimens for its collection, making it the most complete in the world. The naturalists on the trip established their reputations by accompanying Roosevelt as, contrary to what was then the custom, TR insisted on giving them full credit for their work.

On his way home from Africa, TR took a six-week swing around the capitols of Europe, stopping in Italy, Austria, Hungary, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Germany and England. Everywhere he went he was celebrated with popular enthusiasm and royal welcomes.



But the enthusiasm of the world was topped by the rapture with which America welcomed their hero home. His arrival in New York harbor was cause for a national celebration. The harbor was filled with ships and boats decked in flags while huge crowds awaited Roosevelt on the shore. The *Atlanta Constitution* wrote that “It is a remarkable tribute to the man’s personality that virtually every element of citizenship in the country should be more or less on tiptoes in the excitement of anticipation.”



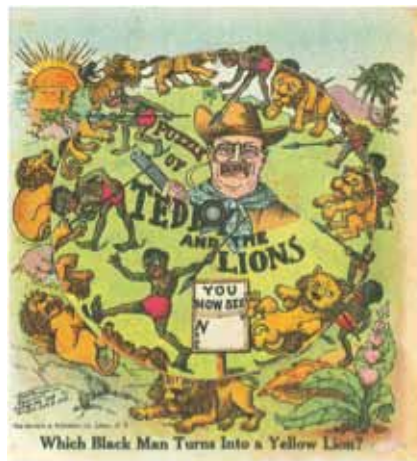
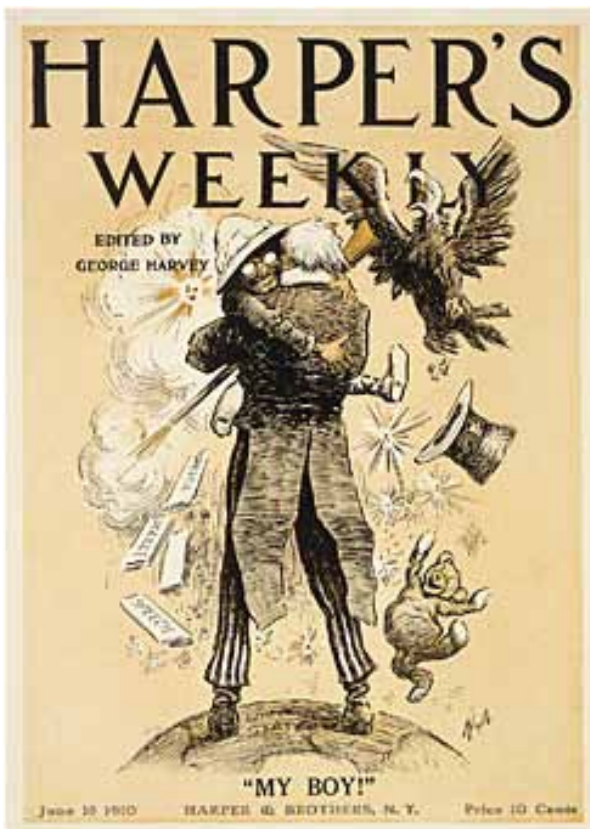
This handsome set of postcards celebrates former President Roosevelt’s return from Africa. They reflect the popular excitement at the time. Note that several cards show President Taft as being pleased with TR’s return as well. It would turn out that the old friends were in for rough times.



Soon enough would come the split with his old friend. Soon the image of Teddy the Lion would be eclipsed by a new animal; the Bullmoose of the Progressive Party and the 1912 presidential election that saw Roosevelt and Taft pitted against each other in a destructive conflict that allowed the Democrats to win the White House for only their second President since the Civil War.



Tin lion with a familiar grin.



A puzzle inspired by TR's safari.



Watch fob showing TR on his safari.



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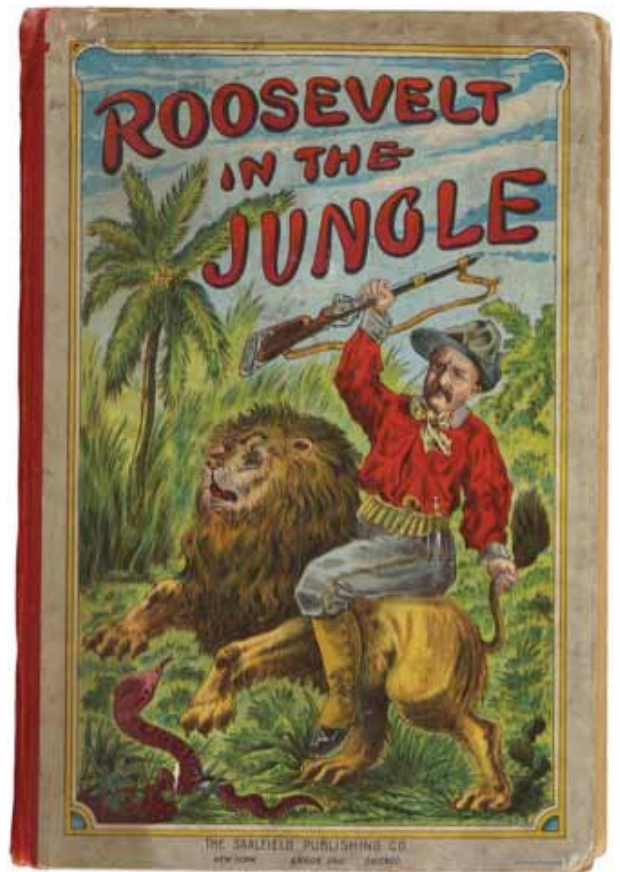
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A big question on Roosevelt's return to America was what his relationship would be with President Taft. Taft had moved forward in TR's absence and not everything he did would meet with his predecessor's approval. A cartoon from the day shows a troubled TR and a lion labelled "Personal Popularity" as Uncle Sam, Taft and the GOP elephant watch to see what he might do.



Above: two small lapel pins; one showing TR astride a horse and the other TR astride a Republican elephant.



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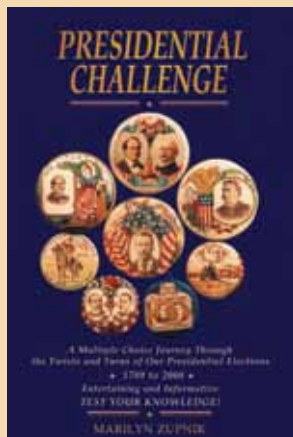
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The Big Stick

Of the various symbols associated with Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most popular was the Big Stick.

TR first used the expression while Governor of New York during a battle over patronage appointments with the state's Republican machine boss, Senator Thomas Platt.

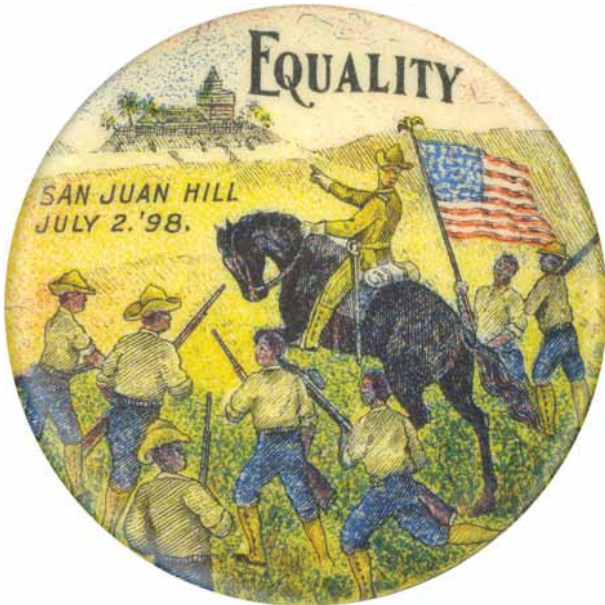
On January 26, 1900, in a letter to a political ally about the conflict with Platt, Governor Roosevelt wrote, "I have always been fond of the West African proverb: 'Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.'" The phrase became a Roosevelt trademark. Cartoonists frequently used the Big Stick as shorthand for an assertive presidency in both domestic and foreign affairs.

During the 1908 campaign, the Big Stick was used by Taft forces to associate their candidate with TR's assertive policies, including a stick carrying a picture of Taft and the phrase "Taffy on a stick." When the two friends parted company, Taft dropped the Big Stick as a symbol, For TR, it was still a perfect summary of his assertive and strenuous personality. The Big Stick was often found on material from the 1912 campaign.



The Big Stick was widely used in Taft's 1908 campaign to show how he would continue TR's policies.

The first animal with which Roosevelt was associated was a horse. Whether as a North Dakota cowboy or as a Rough Rider charging up San Juan Hill, TR was often pictured astride a spirited mount. TR himself was rarely pictured as a horse, unlike the bear, lion and bullmoose. TR's ease in the saddle was one more way in which he fulfilled popular expectations of the ideal leader.

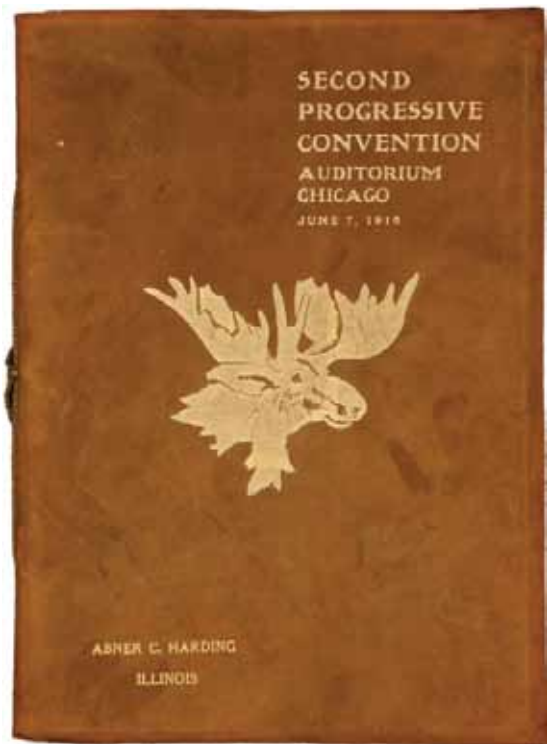


Clock showing TR is a familiar equestrian pose.

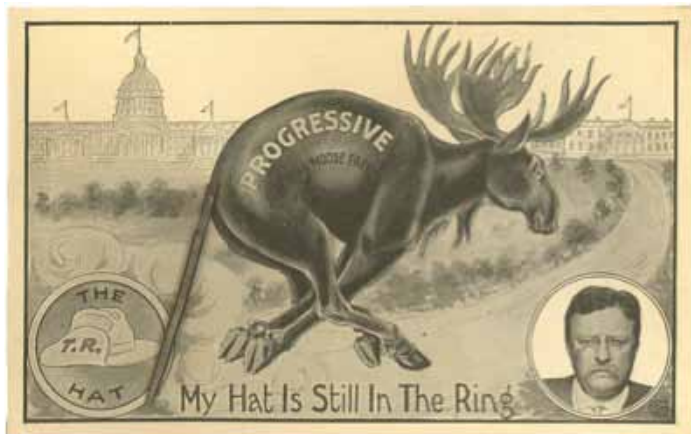


Two buttons and a tonic label showing the popular image of TR on horseback. Items shown larger than actual size.





The Bullmoose became the symbol of TR's 1912 campaign for President.



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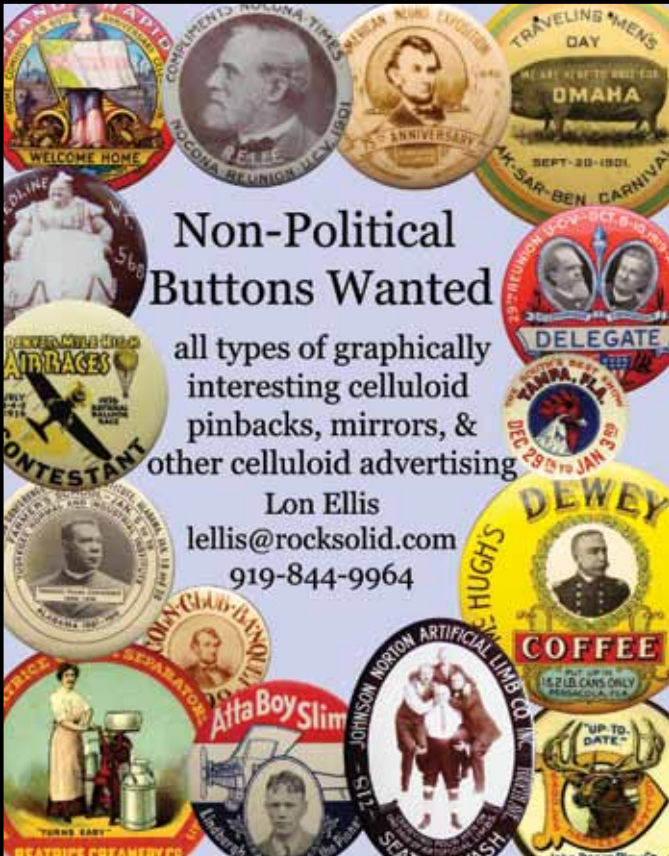
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"Kennedy for King" sparks an APIC controversy

[Editor's note: In the last issue, John Vargo's article on President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963 sparked some controversy among APIC members. In that the debate took place on an APIC Facebook page, which most members likely did not see, it was felt that it would be worth reprinting much of the discussion as it adds to our understanding of the issues. History is a tricky business as the perspective of both the writer and the reader can have a powerful impact on how the story is understood.]

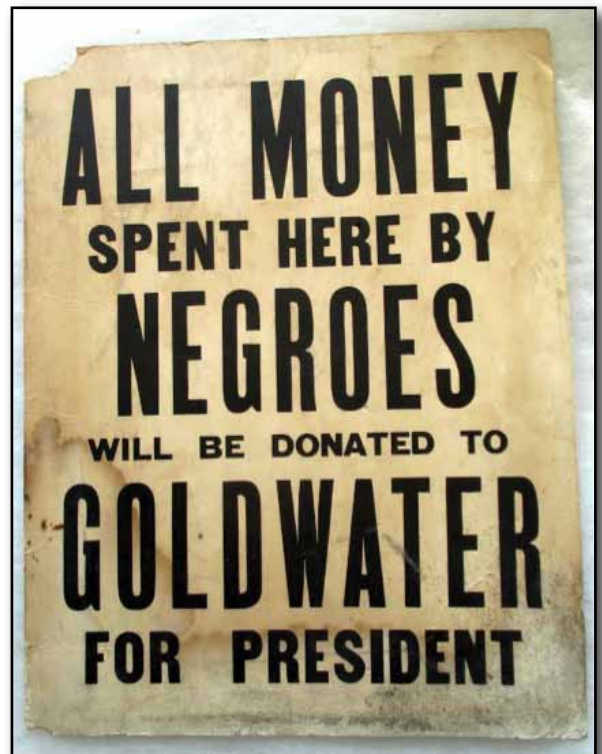
Original Facebook post by Tom Huston (APIC#31)

I would be mad as hell at John Vargo's article on John F. Kennedy in the Fall issue of *The Keynoter* if I were not convinced that it never occurred to the author or to any of the editors that there may be APIC members who do not believe that all conservatives are racists and therefore, as day follows night, all political campaigns run by conservatives are racist. None of them may have ever met someone who voted for Barry Goldwater or who doubts that John Kennedy walked on water. It is hard to be mad at the clueless partisan.

My quarrel with Vargo is rooted in two observations. First, that hagiography ought not be a principal business of authors of *Keynoter* articles and, if a legitimate sideline, it ought to be kept to a level that doesn't result in huff-haws from those who view history from a different perspective. Second, the narrative of conservative Republicans as racists is not merely false, it is a libel.

I don't feel a need to illustrate the first objection. I am content to call your attention to the last paragraph of the article. The narrative of conservative racism, however, needs to be confronted point by point since, apparently, it is accepted without question by those who make editorial decisions for the magazine.

Vargo first raises the issue thusly: "Nevertheless, a good case can be made that in the 1960s, it was racial issues that energized this new conservatism and ultimately gave it real electoral clout." Since I was one of those so energized, I have some notion of the sources of that energy. They are no mystery and are summed up in a readily obtainable book which, at barely more than one hundred pages, can be easily consumed at a single sitting: *The Conscience of a Conservative* by Senator Barry Goldwater. Of those hundred plus pages, seven were devoted to the issue of civil rights or, in Vargo's formulation, "racial issues." I have written about my introduction to Goldwater's book and the influence it had on my subsequent political life at <http://inpolicy.org/2013/11/huston-remiscences-of-a-conservative-dawn/>. Racism had absolutely nothing to do with it.



The next illustrative incident cited by Vargo is really something. He takes the slogan “Kennedy for King, Goldwater for President” and posits that it has a secret, esoteric meaning. It does not mean that in the eyes of Republicans President Kennedy had royalist pretensions; no, it is “plausible” to conclude that it is a coded message meant “to relegate President Kennedy to Martin Luther King and the Negroes while putting Republican Barry Goldwater in the White House.” Having thus clued us in to this secret messaging, a few pages later Vargo cites a “savage” attack upon the Kennedy administration delivered by Barry Goldwater in Boston in October 1963 in which the Senator charged that “[W]hat we have now in Washington is a would-be king and a want-to-be-dynasty, not a President and a party.” So here we have a Republican presidential contender developing in a campaign speech the “Kennedy for King” theme reflected on campaign buttons and bumper stickers and illustrating this theme by reference to the dynastic pretensions of a president, attorney general and senator, and Vargo nonetheless encourages us to believe that it is entirely “plausible” that the “Kennedy for King” theme is racist code. It takes real partisan stamina to trot out this story line with a straight face.

In case the reader missed the point, Vargo is quite explicit about Senator Goldwater’s views on civil rights: “while personally opposed to racial discrimination, since the late 1950s he had also been stating his strong opposition to federal action to end segregation.” This is simply untrue. Senator Goldwater voted for the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960. He believed that under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments Congress had the right and duty to protect the voting rights of blacks as well as their liberty interests in rights of contract, property and security. Education, however, was another matter entirely. In *Conscience of a Conservative*, he asserted unequivocally that “no powers regarding education were given the federal government,” and therefore he opposed not only federal financial “aid” to education but also intervention by the federal government to advance the laudable objective of racial integration of the schools. He voted against the 1964 Civil Rights Act because he did not believe that the federal government had a constitutional right to regulate privately owned places of public accommodation and commandeering the interstate commerce clause for that purpose did not pass the smell test. He cast his vote fully aware of the adverse political consequences of doing so. He was not so naïve as to believe that any electoral advantage he might gain in the South would not be offset by losses elsewhere.

Vargo goes on to assert that Senator Goldwater “rapidly became the darling of the South, and while the Republican Party had been moribund in the South since the late 19th century, it quickly began to rebuild largely on the basis of racial issues.” Not so. Republicanism had been on the rise in the South since 1928 when Herbert Hoover carried five Southern states. Following the war, Republicans began to win congressional seats in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida and Texas. In 1952, General Eisenhower won four Southern states; in 1956 he won five. In his contest with John Kennedy, Richard Nixon carried three of the former Confederate states notwithstanding that Texan Lyndon Johnson was on the Democratic ticket. There is no evidence that “racial issues” drove this move toward Republicans. Indeed, the latest scholarship emphasizes the emergence of a strong Southern middle class with the corresponding flight from urban centers to the suburbs as the primary drivers of Republican growth in the South prior to 1968. By the time of Nixon’s second run for the presidency racial upheaval nationally had led to the disruption of the traditional Democratic alliance between Big City Bosses and the largely rural and small town One Party South which opened new opportunities for Republicans.

I chalk up the final distortion of the record more to a misunderstanding of conservative politics during the Kennedy presidency than to partisan malice. Vargo makes a great deal of the “nationalization” of two 1963 state legislative races in Dallas in which the Republican candidates “teamed up to run an anti-Kennedy, pro-Goldwater campaign.” The implication is that somehow this local race was either racist or reflective of the right-wing “hate” that according to leftwing mythology led to the assassination of President Kennedy. Fortunately, the campaign brochure issued in this “highly unusual campaign” is illustrated so we can judge for ourselves if there is anything in it that would support the intimations of Vargo.

In the brochure the candidates identify themselves as “Goldwater Republicans.” This self-identification meant something in 1963 not merely in Texas but throughout the Union. These Republicans were of another breed from the “modern” Republicans of the Eisenhower era or the “Rockefeller” Republicans who were scared to death by the prospect of a Goldwater candidacy. I identified myself as a “Goldwater Republican” as did all my conservative friends. There was nothing malign in such self-identification.

The most controversial public policy expressions by the candidates that I find in the brochure are these: “As a businessman, Jack knows the need for legislators who will stand up for conservative principles.” “As a legislator, Jack Sampsell will work for fiscal responsibility at all levels of government.” “Hughes will be an effective addition to the responsible conservative Republican team in the Legislature.” “Hughes Brown is a dedicated conservative who will be another strong voice for Dallas County in the Legislature.”

These conservative Republicans do make the naked assertion that their election will “Aid the Goldwater drive which will give America a conservative President in 1964” and “Block the Kennedys and the New Frontier in their attempt to take over Texas.” It is unclear to me why those would be the results of their election, but the results themselves, stated electoral objectives, strike me as perfectly harmless.

With the exception of Dallas, which had a Republican Congressman, Texas was a solidly Democratic state in non-presidential elections until 1961 when John Tower quite remarkably won the Senate seat vacated by Lyndon Johnson. Unlike a traditional two-party state with a lengthy list of stalwarts of both parties available to provide welcome political endorsements, Texas had no such tradition on the Republican side. Nationalizing local races makes sense under those circumstances and doing so when for the first time in a dozen years a strong conservative challenger for the Republican presidential nomination was on the field makes even more sense. Identifying with Barry Goldwater and opposing John Kennedy was an effective campaign strategy for any conservative in 1963 running in a district favorably disposed to conservatives. It was run-of-the-mill politics at the time, and the subsequent assassination of a president does nothing to render it something different.

I have long admired John Vargo's contributions to *The Keynoter*, not least because of his vast knowledge of and appreciation for paper campaign memorabilia. This article, however, should never have been published with its decidedly partisan, ahistorical bias. The editors were either asleep at the switch or else the narrow partisan perspective of the editors precluded them from seeing that the article was not appropriate. In either event, the institutionalization of partisan or ideological bias does not advance the hobby among the broadest range of collectors.

[At this point several APIC members posted Facebook “likes” expressing approval or agreement with Huston’s comments. Others posted brief statements.]

Randy Fischer (APIC #16926) Clear, factual and well documented. Bravo

Paul Bengston (APIC #3514) "I think we just delivered the South to the APIC for a long time to come." - LBJ

Ed Kellerman (APIC #15259) Very good, Paul!

John Silvertooth (APIC #16935) Too much coffee? I agree Barry Goldwater was not a racist. People can tell the difference between views and history. Watch the blood pressure, el compadre.

Tom Huston John, the problems as I stated them are (a) a response to a *Keynoter* article on any matter unrelated to political memorabilia should be unnecessary and (b) political agreement among the editors (and, as the foregoing indicates, Paul and Ed) is such that they don't recognize partisan arguments to which they subscribe as potentially inappropriate for a collectors publication. *The Keynoter* should not be a vehicle thorough and by which we debate whether Barry Goldwater was a racist. I would not have posted my own partisan view of pre-1964 events on this site except for the fact that once introduced into discussion by Vargo, it seemed to me appropriate in the context of the conceptual problem of appropriateness to contest Vargo's "facts" that I don't believe are facts. Paul obviously didn't read my comments closely or he would have noticed that I distinguish between pre-1964 and post 1964 political conditions in the South (only the former being addressed in Vargo's article) so that the LBJ quote is irrelevant. However, I appreciate his and Ed's comments since they confirm the problem I have sought to describe.

Tony Kirk Amen, Tom. *The Conscience of a Conservative* by Senator Barry Goldwater is the main reason of my interest in politics today. So if Barry was such a racist and it seems only "Republicans" can be so, then how does Wallace carry five states in 1968? Either way I was pretty dismayed by this article.

Jeff Kolpek (APIC #9310) The article had an interesting spin on the campaign slogan 'Kennedy for King, Goldwater for President'. My favorite is the '33 million cannot be wrong' pin. Histrionics does not change History, only our perspective changes

John Gingerich (APIC #3170) Very interesting. Thank you for sharing another view of "reality".

Robert Fratkin (APIC #793) I don't think there is any question that there were conservatives like Tom who were not racist in all sections of the country, but that doesn't obviate John's observation about racism being at the heart of the conservative movement's core constituency, the Confederate states that continued to believe in segregation. One only has to look at where most of Goldwater's electoral votes came from in an election where integration was a major issue to get the message. I do not question John's first sentence of page 9.

Tom wants to paint a prettier picture of the conservative movement in the early 60s than existed. The white racial beliefs of a majority of eligible (almost all white) voters in the Southern states and JFK's actions against segregation were the uniting factors for the movement, which allowed conservatives in other parts of the country to join the Goldwater movement without seeing themselves as supporting the racist undercurrent of the movement in the South. Those of us who were active in national political activities did see the "Kennedy for King" as saying that Kennedy favored MLK (and a potential dynasty) and Goldwater would be "our" kind of president. I think that both meanings were intended, and since we don't know who came up with the slogan, we will never know what was the original intention--but we saw **both** meanings. This bumper sticker appeared more often in the South--at least that is where I saw it most often--than the North.

Anyone who reads this as a generalized attack on all conservatives needs a better course in reading comprehension. *The Keynoter* editors (us) have always tried to keep politics out of the magazine, but that doesn't mean that we will change history to suit our readers.

John Gingerich For what it's worth department...I started out as a Teenager for Goldwater (mostly to collect whatever political items I could find) and went on to become not a "leftist" as Gary puts it, but a full on Progressive. But I still admire Goldwater and his determination to speak out on what he thought was right. I think he was an honorable man, unlike so many involved in "parlor tricks" these days.

Robert J Saypol (APIC #3233) I was a Democrat, worked on Fred Harris National staff, Ted Kennedy Staff, but John Gingerich, I grew up and became a Conservative.

William P Davis (APIC #334) I also started out as a strong Republican working for Goldwater and have always remained a Republican (though the party I originally joined no longer still seems to exist and I am now proud to be called a RINO). I respected Goldwater for his integrity and honesty about where he stood. In the years since I have drifted far to the left as my sense of empathy grew, but I have not lost my respect for the man and wonder where he would stand today. Probably, he would not be comfortable in either party. I do not believe Barry was a racist. I know there were racists who supported him at the time and there were many others who were simply insensitive to or relatively unaware of the plight of African Americans who supported him, but no man is responsible for all the beliefs of all of his supporters and people will often read into a candidate what they want to see, not what is reality.

Jeff Kolpek 27 million votes were not casted in vain. IYHYKHR!

Jeff Kolpek Illegitimus non carbarondum!! Truer words were never spoken from the senator from Arizona.

William P Davis (APIC #334) After reading the article once more I think we should remember that the author relates the MLK interpretation as one held by aides to Kennedy and probably by Kennedy after they explained it to him. The author then gives background as to why they had this interpretation. He states the interpretation as plausible and if I check my dictionary that word is defined as "superficially fair, reasonable, or valuable but often specious." I agree it was plausible but also agree it was specious. I don't think Vargo goes beyond explaining the view that was held and why it was held. Giving an explanation of why a viewpoint was held does not mean one necessarily subscribes to that view.

Michael Kelly (APIC #395) Tom - From the editor's perspective, Vargo was discussing the double meaning on the button/sticker slogan. Nowhere was there an assumption that all Goldwater supporters were racists but -- even as one who was an active Republican then and since -- there was certainly a racist element within the country that favored Goldwater.

Paul Bengston Nor did he say Goldwater was a racist. He said "Senator Goldwater expressed his personal opposition to racial discrimination since the late 1950's."

[In conclusion, author John Vargo added his comments in an email to the editor.]

I thought I'd put in my two cents, even though I'm not on Facebook and so haven't seen the screed. If the guy read the article as a general attack on conservatives then, as Bob said, what he really needs is a course on reading comprehension.

Here's the main point I'd like to make. Everything I said about the rise of conservatism in the late '50s and early '60s was said for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the campaign items I was picturing and discussing. I don't think anyone fully appreciates the Kennedy/Goldwater items or the '63 Mississippi button, etc., without having that background. Everything I said is fully consistent with the materials pictured and, I think more generally, with historical fact.

By the way, I was awfully pleased to find that Oval Office exchange on the Kennedy/Goldwater slogan. How often does something like that show up? If it would help, the source for the Oval Office exchange on the Kennedy/Goldwater stickers is Taylor Branch's *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65* on p. 153.

What I don't think the APIC wants to do is get into the historical debate on the extent to which racism played a role in the rise of conservatism. That's getting pretty far afield from its mission. If someone wants to come in with a piece showing memorabilia that shows conservatives' concerns and focus on non-racial issues, that's a different matter, and a piece like that could be considered on its own merits.

Again, while I don't think the APIC wants to get into the historical debate, let me mention the sources I've read and relied on. One is Rick Perlstein's *Before the Storm* on Goldwater's rise and fall. Another is *Chain Reaction* by Thomas and Mary Edsall. A book on the other side of the issue (i.e., one that I think tries to whitewash conservatism insofar as racial issues are concerned) is Donald Critchlow's *The Conservative Ascendancy*. There was another book that came out in the past 10 years or so (the title of which escapes me) that argued basically that all Democrats from FDR through LBJ were bigots. What's said in the books I relied on accords with what Bob said, as well as my own experiences growing up in an ethnic suburb of Cleveland in the 1960s.

Finally, since I like to say it with memorabilia. I've also seen, but haven't yet been able to obtain, a bumper sticker that was something of a follow-on to the Kennedy/Goldwater. It reads "Johnson for integration – Goldwater for President."

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DAVE LINDEMAN

"Retire the Kennedys in '64" Taken Seriously by Grassroots

By Carl Fisher

John Vargo had an excellent article in the Fall 2013 issue of the APIC Keynoter about the origins of the various movements for the 1964 election prior to the death of JFK. There are several really nice paper items put out by the RNC and pro-Goldwater forces advocating to retire 'The Kennedys'. The thinking was that if the GOP did a good job in the 1964 elections, JFK and RFK would be out of the White House and 'Teddy' Kennedy would be defeated in the Massachusetts Senate race. Items included two bumper stickers featuring the famous rocking chair and a RWB item from the Midwestern Regional Leadership Conference that was taking place in St. Louis, Missouri. The conference was taking place November 22-23, 1963. At similar conferences a set of three rocking chairs would be set up near the lobby of the conference for display.

Vargo's article mentions a mailer the RNC started sending out to raise funds for JFK's retirement fund. Upon some further research, it was discovered that some Republicans in the early fall of 1963 took this solicitation request seriously and were not very happy about it. The Toledo Blade covered one such Utah Republican's response to the fundraising request. The RNC wanted individuals to donate \$10 dollars to help fund efforts for the party at defeating JFK in the upcoming election. A man in Utah sent back his mailer to the RNC with this response, "I think this is silly. Why can't the Kennedys live on the liberal provisions provided for upon retirement the same as Hoover, Truman and Eisenhower are managing to do? I'm not interested in contributing to any additional retirement fund for them." Sometimes things just go over our heads.

John Chamberlain of the *Ocala Star-Banner* never recalled getting political mailers asking for funds in such a humorous manner prior to 1963. He believed that if GOP forces and Goldwater were going to develop a sense of humor, that the 1964 campaign might get interesting, having two candidates at the top of the ticket that can make'em laugh. He wondered how you can attack Barry Goldwater if he takes every attack at him and turns it into a compliment.

As Vargo, and many others have pointed out this past week in various publications and mediums, we never did have the chance to experience a Goldwater vs. Kennedy campaign in 1964. Makes you wonder how it would have played out. It is a shame we never got the chance to find out.



"Retire the Kennedys in '64" was a fundraising theme for the Republicans in 1963. They anticipated the 1964 campaign as their chance to kick all three Kennedy brothers out of office. If they could defeat President Kennedy, his brother Bobby would lose his post as Attorney General while the third brother, Teddy, would also face Massachusetts voters in 1964 to keep his seat in the U.S. Senate.

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site

By Bren T. Price, Sr.

At the dawn of the 20th century, Buffalo, New York was located within a 500-mile radius of the most populated cities in North America. Its proximity to Canada, Niagara Falls and the Great Lakes made it a perfect backdrop for the Pan-American Exposition. Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt presided over the opening ceremonies in May 1901 with great hope and inspiration. But its glittering grandeur and optimistic outlook were dimmed and scuttled by the assassination of President William McKinley during a visit to the Exposition in September.

Upon hearing of the shooting, Vice President Roosevelt, who was at a speaking engagement in Vermont, rushed to Buffalo. When the President appeared to be recovering from his wounds, Roosevelt left for a trip to the Adirondack Mountains, only to be called back when the President took a sudden turn for the worse. A frantic carriage and train ride across the state returned Roosevelt to Buffalo but not before McKinley had died.

While in Buffalo, TR had stayed at the home of his friend, Ansley Wilcox. In the afternoon of McKinley's death, many cabinet members and Judge John Hazel had gathered in the library of the stately Wilcox home where Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as the 26th President of the United States at about 3:30 p.m. on September 14, 1901.

The years since were not kind to the posh Wilcox home, especially when it was transformed into a restaurant, and then left unoccupied for several years. But a renewed effort in the 1960s and 1970's saved one of Buffalo's greatest treasures. It has been painstakingly restored to its grand 1901 appearance, with many original furnishings and fixtures returned, and a truly 21st century touring experience.

Today it is part of the National Park Service and under the recently appointed executive leadership of Mr. Stanton Hudson, who follows long-time Executive Director, Mrs. Molly Quackenbush. It flourishes with a professional museum staff, hundreds of volunteers, comprehensive education programs, a yearly lecture series, many holiday/seasonal events, a Pan-American and Assassination Exhibit, a gift shop and, of course, TR memorabilia.

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is open Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5:00 p.m. It is closed on major holidays. Guided tours are available on demand for a nominal fee. It is located at 641 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14202-1079. Phone 716-884-0095 or check the web site at www.nps.gov/thri.



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