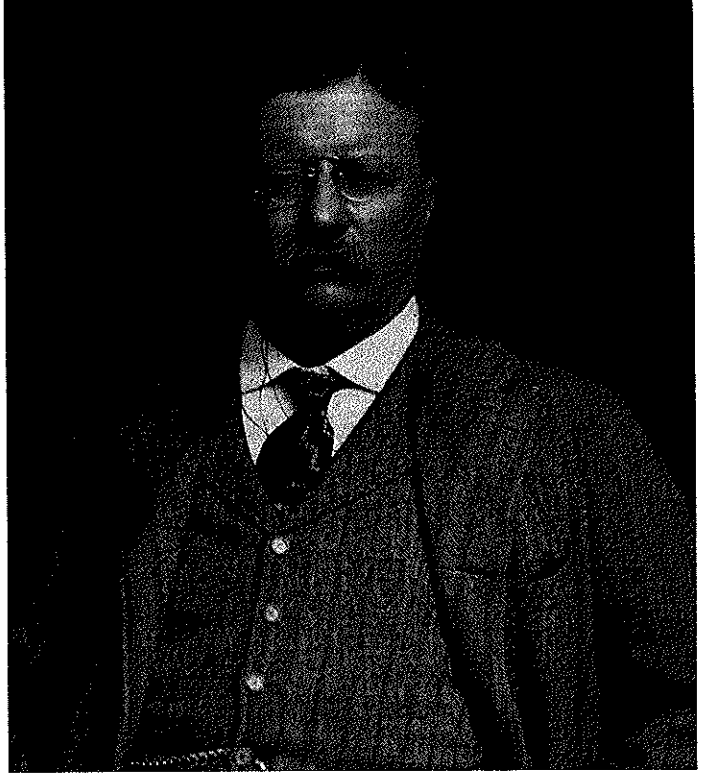
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

OCTOBER 27, 1858–JANUARY 6, 1919

"THE CONSERVATION PRESIDENT"

US PRESIDENT
CONSERVATIONIST
ADVENTURER
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER



A portrait of Theodore Roosevelt taken in 1911

In the late 1800s and the early part of the twentieth century, the Industrial Age changed the United States. More people came to the United States and built cities and towns. Teddy Roosevelt realized that all this progress could devour the US wilderness if we weren't careful. A good friend of his named John Muir (he's on our list of 50 heroes too) talked to TR about the need to preserve our national wilderness. Teddy Roosevelt became the first US president to take major action to protect the environment.

During his seven and a half years in the White House, TR designated 150 national forests; 55 bird and game preserves; 5 national parks (including Yosemite); and 18 national monuments, such as the Grand Canyon. Though an avid hunter, he once said: "More and more, as it becomes necessary to preserve the game, let us hope that the camera will largely supplant the rifle." More than sixty years later, in honor of Teddy Roosevelt's devotion to preserving the natural United States, the National Wildlife Federation awarded him first place in its Conservation Hall of Fame.

But Teddy Roosevelt wasn't only a giant in the world of conservation. He was also a dynamo in a hundred other ways. Before he became president, TR was colonel of the Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War (1898), governor of New York, a police commissioner, and a sheriff. Did you know he was also a founder of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association, which is now the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)? He ran a ranch out West, traveled all over the world, and raised six kids. He also managed to write thirty-five books and more than *150,000* letters to tons of people.

He did lots more after moving into the White House. He even won the Nobel Peace Prize. Not bad for someone who had begun life as a sickly, nearsighted kid with asthma!

POWER WORDS!

"It is not what we have that will make us a great nation. It is the way in which we use it." —*Theodore Roosevelt*

DIVE IN!

Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency by Heather E. Schwartz (Lerner Publications, 2017), 104 pages.

EXPLORE!

Across the country, areas large and small are being transformed from pavement to parkland. People are seeing the value of open space, even in the middle of congested cities. Is anything like this happening in your community? Maybe a neighborhood association is cleaning trash from a vacant lot and "greening it up." Your school, library, or newspaper might have information about local reclamation activities. Is anyone protesting the project? Who and why? Do you agree with them?

If you think the project is worthwhile, see if you can help. If work is just beginning, offer to take photographs of the site before, during, and after the cleanup is done. Share your photos online and they could become part of your community's archives—part of history.

From the time he was a boy, Teddy Roosevelt understood that bringing nature to people would help them appreciate it. In his room, he set up his very own natural history "museum," displaying specimens of insects, birds, and animals he had collected. He charged adults a one-penny admission, while kids could view it for free if they helped out by feeding his critters. Teddy's museum may have helped some of those kids look at nature in a whole new way. The pictures you take in your community can make a difference too. They may encourage future generations to preserve your local "green space" by showing how ugly it became when it was neglected.

EXPLORE SOME MORE!

Want more Teddy? Visit the www.theodoreroosevelt.org to learn all about this amazing hero!

Like Roosevelt himself, the first family was young, energetic, and a novelty in the White House. Public interest in them was spontaneous, as pictures of Theodore, Edith, and their six children began appearing in newspapers and magazines. For once in history, the executive mansion acquired aspects of a normal American home, complete with roller skates, bicycles, and tennis rackets.