

**Name:** Teddy Roosevelt

**Years:** October 27, 1858 to January 6, 1919

**Residence:** Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay, New York

**Brief Biography:** Naturalist, preservationist, conservationist, and reformer, President Theodore Roosevelt was born on October 27, 1858, at 28 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City to Martha Bulloch and Theodore Roosevelt, a partner in a prosperous glass-importing firm. The Roosevelt's were an aristocratic family of Dutch and English descent who had lived in New York since the 1600's. As a child Theodore Roosevelt (TR) was frail, asthmatic, and nearsighted. He was taught at home by tutors; and his father, a high spirited man with a domineering personality, instilled in him a strong sense of moral and civic responsibility. TR became involved in politics early. At twenty-two, following his graduation from Harvard in 1880, TR became the youngest assemblyman in the history of the New York State legislature. Midway through his third term in, 1884, Roosevelt lost his young wife, Alice Hathaway Lee, from kidney complications following the birth of their daughter, Alice Lee. Roosevelt threw himself into politics and then took a brief break at his ranch in Western Dakota. During a trip to London in 1886 he met and married Edith Kermit Karow. Between 1887 and 1897 they had four sons and a daughter, Theodore Jr., Kermit, Ethel, Archibald, and Quentin. During the war with Spain TR organized and led his volunteer "Rough Riders" in a victory charge up Kettle Hill near Santiago. In 1898, following the war, TR ran for and won the governorship of New York where he earned the reputation of being a tough reformer and champion of the public trust. Two years later he became the Vice President of the United States under William McKinley. When McKinley was assassinated in 1901, TR, age forty two, was the youngest person to become President of the United States. He served two terms until 1909. His bid for the office again as an independent in the newly formed Progressive ("Bull Moose") Party failed against President William H. Taft and Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson. Taft came in third. Theodore Roosevelt died at his home in Long Island on January 6, 1919. He was 60 years old.

**Major Achievements:** Some of Theodore Roosevelt's most significant achievements were in the area of conservation and the preservation of natural resources. While Governor of New York (1898-1900), he and the Governor of New Jersey created the Interstate Palisades Park, an 110,000 acre public preserve in the Highlands region of the Hudson River that was being despoiled by quarry operations. While Theodore Roosevelt was President he created 230 million acres of National Parks and National Forests, game and bird preserves, and other federal reservations to be placed under public protection. That adds up to 84,000 acres per day during his administration.

**More Information:** The Theodore Roosevelt Association: <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/index.htm>

**Sources:** The Library of Congress: *The Evolution of the Conservation Movement from 1850 to 1920*: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html> ;

*American National Biography*. 1999. Volume 18. New York: Oxford University Press. 829-835

By Steve Grim