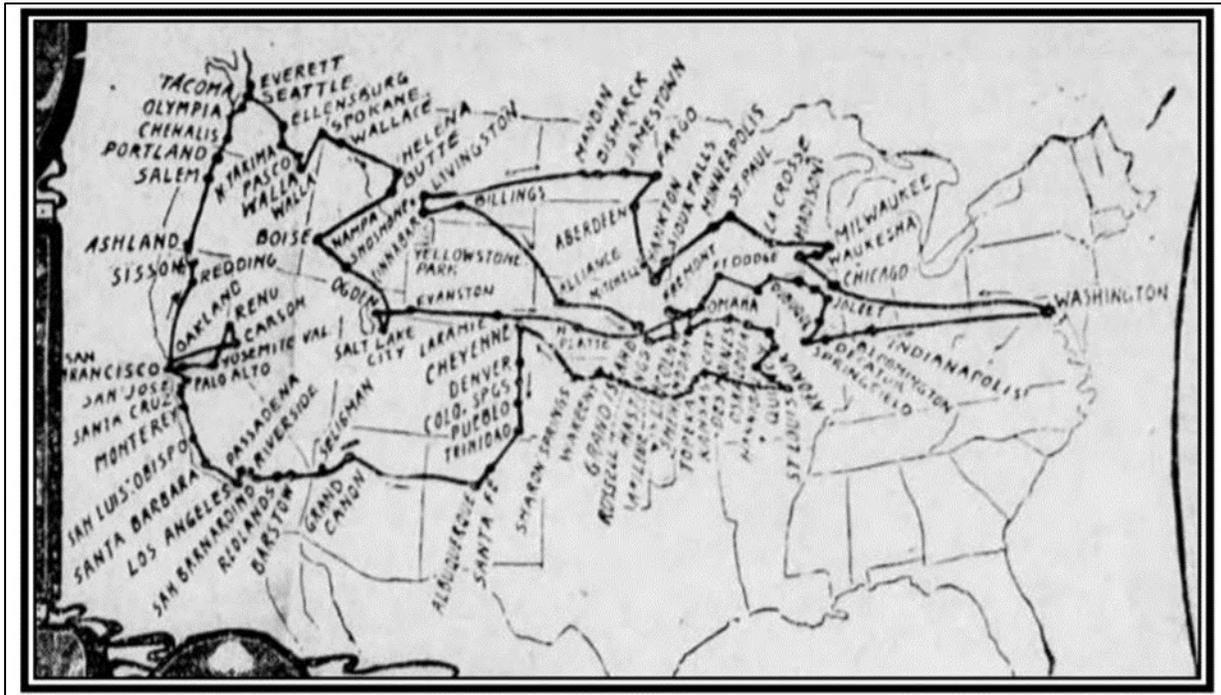


April 14, 2021

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the Legislative Session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

President Roosevelt Visits the Iowa Capitol

In April and May of 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt visited 25 states. His 14,000-mile route took nine weeks. President Roosevelt gave a total of 263 speeches, seven or eight per day on average. This spanned five and a half weeks of public appearances.



On April 1, 1903, the *Franklin Evening News* published a map of Roosevelt's planned route. (*Keep It for Your Children: Theodore Roosevelt's 1903 Western Trip* by James G. Blasé)

On April 28, 1903, President Roosevelt made stops in Shenandoah, Clarinda, Sharpsburg, Van Wert, Osceola, Des Moines, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa, and on April 29, he made a stop in Keokuk. During his stop in Des Moines, President Roosevelt spoke from the west steps of the Iowa Capitol.



**ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND SAW HIM**

*President Roosevelt Greeted in Des Moines
by a Cheering Multitude Which Lined
Miles of City Streets.*

HE TALKED OF "CIVIC VIRTUES"

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S STATE HOUSE SPEECH.

I believe in work and play. Play hard while you play and when you work, quit playing and work. Now, isn't that middling good common sense?

I congratulate Iowa on a good many things. I congratulate Iowa on her soil, her climate; I congratulate her on her crops, her produce; but I congratulate her especially upon the crop of children. They seem to be all right from both the standpoint of quality and quantity. And as I like the stock, I am glad it is not dying off.

There is but little I can say to you today, for I am glad to say that Iowa can teach, rather than learn, the lesson of good citizenship.

We can work out, and we will work out, all the problems, difficult though they be, which face us now, if we approach them in a spirit in which we shall combine courage, sanity and jealous regard for the rights of others, and the firm determination to permit no wrong on us or on anyone else.

If we draw distinctions other than those based upon the good conduct of any man, we are recreant to the principles of 1776, and of 1861 to 1865.

The decalogue and the golden rule are old, but they are good all the same.



Source: *The Register and Leader*, Des Moines;
Wednesday, April 29, 1903

President Roosevelt's Speech

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President Roosevelt's speech in full is as follows:

My Friends and Fellow Citizens: I have almost begun to think I have seen all of Iowa. (Applause.) I have enjoyed to the full, coming through your beautiful and great state and seeing this beautiful city. It is a great pleasure to come here, Mr. Mayor, and be presented in Des Moines. I have been traveling all day with my old and valued, personal and political friend, the governor of your great state. (Prolonged applause.) A man with whom I have been associated in many ways for a number of years; whom I have grown to prize and value, and it is a pleasure to have been with him today.

I wish also here in this city to bear testimony to the invaluable work of your congressman, Colonel Hull. (Applause.) For over a century, from the days of Washington, almost every president has been asking that we should have a good militia law and a proper organization of

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I wish also here in this city to bear testimony to the invaluable work of your congressman, Colonel Hull. (Applause.) For over a century, from the days of Washington, almost every president has been asking that we should have a good militia law and a proper organization of

the regular army, and now, thanks to your worthy congressman, Colonel Hull, we have them both.

In thanking all of you I wish to say a special word of greeting and acknowledgment to the men of the great war; to the men to whom we owe it that there is today a country or a president here, (Applause) and to the men who taught us not only what to do in war, but who taught us what to do in peace. The war once over, you turned to the tasks of peace with the same steadfast vigor you had displayed in dealing with an armed foe, and unworthy, indeed, would we be of you, if we failed now to try to do our best in solving the problems of our day.

And I want to thank, also, those of my escort who are my own comrades, our comrades in 1898 and immediately afterwards. You did not have the trouble we had. (Laughter.) With us, all that we could do was to try to show that at least we had inherited a portion of the spirit that made you victorious in the great contest. (Applause.) And I think I can say that we feel amply repaid, my comrades, if you of the big war think that we did show that spirit. (Cries of 'Yes,' 'Yes'.)

"And having turned from the veterans, from the men of great deeds of the past now just one word about the people of the future—the small folks. I am mighty glad to have seen all the children here today and I have one word to say to them, which, after all, with but slight changes I would say to their elders. I believe in work and I believe in play. Play hard while you play and when you work quit playing and work. (Laughter and applause). Now, isn't that middling good, common sense? (Voice: 'That's right.')

Yes, that is exactly right. And I will tell you I congratulate Iowa on a great many things; I congratulate Iowa on her soil, her climate; I congratulate her on her crops, her produce, but I congratulate her especially upon the crop of children. (Applause.) They seem to be all right from both the standpoint of quality and quantity. (Laughter.) And as I like the stock I am glad it is not dying off. (Applause.)

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"Now, my friends and fellow citizens, there is but little I can say to you today, for I am glad to say that Iowa can teach rather than learn the lesson of good citizenship.

At this point the president's attention was called to the fact that the members of the Fifty-first Iowa, at the back of the stage, wanted him to talk to them, whereupon he proceeded at once to the rear of the platform, where he continued his address.

An Address to Warriors.

Now, I have said a word to the men of the great war, to the veterans of the great war over there, let me say a word to my comrades of the lesser war, of the First Iowa. (Voice: "Fifty-first, Mr. President.") Fifty-first I should say. Quite a mistake. I knew you were all right, whether you were first of Fifty-first. Now, you and I of the younger generation did not have the tasks that they, the men of the great war had. All we had to do was to show that we were willing. I trust I may say anxious, if the opportunity arose, to show ourselves not wholly unworthy of the men of the days of 1861 to 1865. (Applause.)

And now, in peace, my comrades, I ask from you that you and I and our fellow citizens shall do our best to solve the great civic problems that confront us at the beginning of the twentieth century in the same spirit with which the men of the days of Lincoln and of Grant approached the mighty problems they had to solve. The problems are various; they assume protean shapes; different qualities are needed to solve them, and yet they must fundamentally be solved by the exercise of exactly the virtues that you brought to the support of Lincoln and of Grant.

Now, my friends and fellow citizens, there is but little I can say to you today, for I am glad to say that Iowa can teach rather than learn the lesson of good citizenship.

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We can work out, and we will work out all the problems, difficult though they be, which face us now, if we approach them in a spirit in which we shall combine courage, sanity and jealous regard for the rights of others and the firm determination to permit no wrong on us or on anyone else. If we draw distinctions other than those based upon the good conduct of any man we are recreant to the principles of 1776 and of 1861 and 1865. We cannot be pardoned if we show either one of two traits; either the trait of an arrogant looking down upon and disregard for those who are less well off; or, on the other hand, the equally mean and base trait of jealousy and rancorous hate for those who are better off because they are better off.

We must hold the scales of justice even. We must stand for each man on his merits; be neither for nor against him because he is rich or because he is poor. Stand for him if he is a decent man, and stand against him if he is not a straight man. (Applause.) Those are perfectly simple rules, but there are a lot of mighty good rules that are perfectly simple. The decalogue and the golden rule are quite old, but they are good all the same. And, as I say, we have to apply them according to the circumstances. But there is not a question of legislation or administration; there is not a question to be solved in connection with our complex industrial life, the life in which the wage worker, the farmer and the business man now play the three chief parts; there is not a question which we cannot solve aright if we will approach it in a spirit of sanity and with patience, with courage and with the firm determination to solve it in accordance with the immutable laws of righteousness and fair dealing as between man and man. (Applause.)

"You my friends, you of the great war, you of the civil war, you fought to maintain and perfect a government of order and liberty under the law, under which you should have a liberty, we should have a liberty, not license, but a liberty

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You my friends, you of the great war, you of the civil war, you fought to maintain and perfect a government of order and liberty under the law, under which you should have a liberty, we should have a liberty, not license, but a liberty

guaranteed by the law of the land, a liberty based upon the principle of treating each man on his merits as a man. Each one of you as you went into battle, what cared you in reference to the man on your right hand or your left? Did you care for the creed according to which he worshipped his Master? No. For his social position? Not to snap of your finger. For his wealth? Hardly. What you wanted to know was whether, when the time of stress came, he would stay put. That is what you wanted to know. (Applause.)

And that is what you want to know about any man with whom we deal in civil life now, and if we will remain true to that principle of judging each man on his worth as a man, we shall make a success of our government to a degree such as has before not been known in the history of the nations of mankind.

In his left hand the president held his hat and the right hand glove. The right hand was used freely, and pointed directly at his hearers in an effort to emphasize his utterances. At the conclusion of the address, which lasted just seventeen minutes—from 4:04 to 4:21—the audience cheered him. Then it began to break up, while the president shook hands with several gentlemen on the platform and hurriedly made his departure.

Slowly but surely a way was paved for the president through the dense crowd as he made his way to the carriage which had been kept waiting at the head of Locust street. The carriages were quickly filled and on their way.

During his presence at the state house and en route the president was closely guarded by Messrs. Tyree, Taylor, Connell and Stone, secret service men. The president seemed to disregard them except during the time he was passing through the crowds.

Some idea of the vast number who heard the president may be had when it is stated that parties who had walked from the state house to West Fourth street after the speech could look back and still see people coming down the state house steps.

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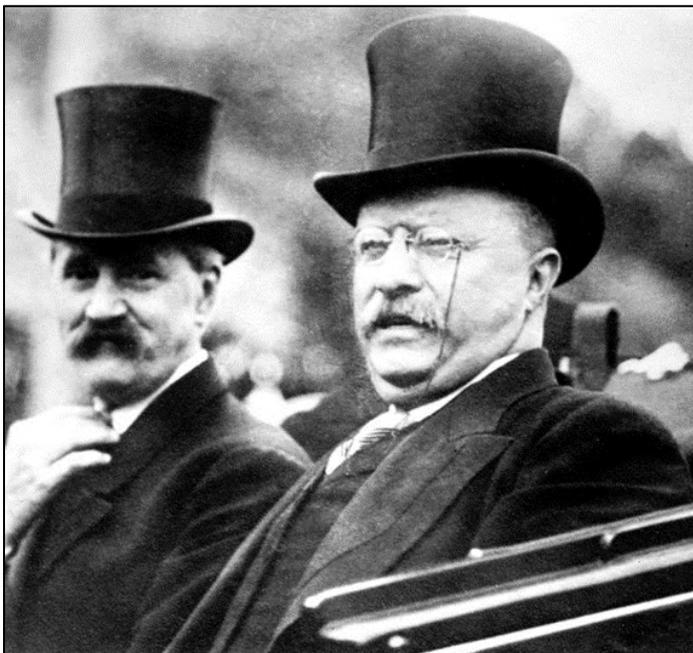
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Additional Photos



Theodore Roosevelt and
Governor Albert Cummins



"President Standing in Carriage" by T.F. Shannon, 1903