

Theodore Roosevelt's Osawatimie Speech

ROBERT S. LA FORTE

ON AUGUST 31, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt delivered what was perhaps the most important speech ever given in Kansas. Surrounded by 30,000 enthusiastic listeners at Osawatimie, he developed a political creed which became a milestone along the road to the modern all-powerful state. This speech, later called the "New Nationalism Address," evoked a wide variety of responses. It was labeled "Communitistic," "Socialistic," and "Anarchistic" in various quarters; while others hailed it "the greatest oration ever given on American soil." What then were the circumstances surrounding the address? What was the Kansas role in the drama at Osawatimie? Why was that town chosen for such an auspicious moment in history? And why did an ex-President devise a comprehensive political program such as the "New Nationalism?"

The ostensible occasion for the speech was the two-day dedicatory ceremonies at the John Brown Memorial Park. The park, located at the southwestern edge of Osawatimie in the vicinity of a well-remembered skirmish between Proslavery forces and men led by Brown during the "Battle of Osawatimie," was a gift to the state from the G. A. R.'s feminine auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps. It was the brain child of Anna Heacock, Cora Deputy, and the property's former owner, Maj. John B. Remington. Remington, allegedly John Brown's nephew by marriage, had induced Deputy and Heacock to buy the land for their organization and then donate the 22½ acres to the state for the memorial. Not all the ladies supported the proposal as zealously as Commanders Heacock and Deputy. For example, Minnie D. Morgan objected to the way money was subscribed by the corps' leadership without formal approval from the W. R. C. She also argued against the project since the place had "never been owned by John Brown. He never lived on it. The John Brown cabin . . . [was] not there, and . . . while Brown and his men fired upon the gang of pro-slavery men from . . . [the] locality, no Free State men were injured and no blood was spilled" there.¹ But, these details did not deter Hea-

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1. *Journal of the Twenty-fifth Department Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps*, Department of Kansas, Ottawa, May 11-13, 1909, p. 108.

cock. Long before the \$1,800 was raised to purchase the site, she, with the help of Gov. Walter Roscoe Stubbs, had secured formal acceptance of the area from the legislature.²

Since ceremonies transferring the title to the state took place at the W. R. C.'s grand encampment in Ottawa on May 13, Osawatomie's sons and daughters were angered over the affair. Traditionally, publicity in connection with Brown was reserved by them as a major means of boosting their town. Twice before his Kansas activities had been lionized in well-attended ceremonies there. In 1877 John J. Ingalls and lesser state notables had dedicated a monument to Brown. On the 50th anniversary of the battle, the Vice-President of the United States, Charles W. Fairbanks, had spoken before a crowd of approximately 20,000.³ But an event as awesome as the establishment of a state park in memory of Osawatomie's hero demanded even more attention than it had received. Thus, in March, 1910, Dr. L. L. Uhls, superintendent of the state mental hospital and president of the town's commercial club, proposed a plan to give Osawatomie proper recognition. Aware that Col. Theodore Roosevelt had scheduled a Western trip for the late summer of 1910, Uhls decided the former "rough rider" should be willing to come to Kansas for so patriotic a cause as the dedication. On March 24 he asked Governor Stubbs to invite the ex-President, noting that "the citizens . . . in . . . this portion of the state, would be very glad if you could succeed in presenting this matter to Mr. Roosevelt in such way as to secure him for the purpose."⁴

At the time the colonel was slowly making his way out of the jungles of central Africa, where he had been on safari, and was enroute to Europe. His itinerary included a rest stop at Porto Maurizio, Italy, in early April. It was there that Stubbs' telegram reached him. Uncertain that his invitation alone would convince Roosevelt, Stubbs also sent an appeal to Gifford Pinchot, who waited at the Italian seaport to discuss his dismissal from the agricultural

2. Letters, Heacock to Stubbs, February 19, March 27, 29, May 5; Heacock to J. S. Dawson, April 1; Stubbs to Heacock, May 13; F. H. Stannard to Stubbs, May 14; C. M. Kimball to Stubbs, August 5; D. M. Bender to Stubbs, October, 1909, "Walter Roscoe Stubbs Gubernatorial Papers," state archives, Kansas State Historical Society. Although the legislature accepted the park without a fuss, when appropriations for maintenance of the area was before the 1911 legislature, J. W. Brown nearly succeeded in defeating it. "John Brown," said the other Brown, "was never in a proper sense a citizen of Kansas. . . . He never engaged in any legitimate business or employment while here. . . . With the instincts of an anarchist and the hand of an assassin, his career in Kansas was one of lawlessness and crime—the one indelible blot on the otherwise fair free-state record. No Kansan desires to appropriate money to perpetuate the name of a Booth, a Gable, or a Cato. Neither will I consent to exalt the name of the first anarchist and rebel this country produced."—*Topeka Daily Capital*, March 5, 1911.

3. Sam J. Shively, "History of John Brown Monument."—*Osawatomie Graphic*, August 11, 1910.

4. Letter, Uhls to Stubbs, March 24, 1910, "Stubbs Papers."

department with his former patron. Following Roosevelt's audience with Pinchot, he dispatched a one-word message back to Kansas—"Accept." He also wrote the governor that he "looked forward to visiting . . . [the state], and especially to seeing you and my old friends there."⁵ When Roosevelt was invited, he was still unsure of his future role in American politics and was attempting to appraise Republican party conditions in general.

Roosevelt's immense popularity made him an important force in a gathering storm within the G. O. P. Pres. William Howard Taft's actions in disputes over Cannonism, the tariff, and the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy, had led a small but vocal band of insurgent Republicans to revolt openly against his leadership. This feud complicated Roosevelt's position since the insurgents included his closest political associates. However, he had chosen Taft to be his successor and a majority of Republican leaders were standing resolutely by the President. Since both factions were asking his support, Roosevelt was faced with a dilemma. Privately, he held Taft responsible for defeating policies he had initiated as President, but he did not want an open break with the administration. Until 1912 he believed the Republican party was the only instrument available for progress in America and he did not want to see it disintegrate because of Taft's ineptitude. But, though he cherished the party machinery, he recognized that in the two years since leaving office it had become non-Rooseveltian. In fact, he thought his ideals were currently being championed by many insurgents. Precisely what course he should follow plagued him often in the months after April, 1910.

It was during this period, before the Osawatimie speech was written, that Roosevelt devised a scheme to meet the crisis. In July he was visited by three leading Kansas rebels—Sen. Joseph L. Bristow, Cong. Victor Murdock, and Rep. Edmund H. Madison. The press interpreted the visit as an indication that Roosevelt was supporting insurgency. Bristow believed the same thing. He wrote a colleague that he had found the colonel in a "very desirable mental temperament." "He seems," he told another friend, "to be more advanced and radical in his progressive ideas than . . . ever before."⁶ This was exactly the reaction Roosevelt wanted. As early as April, he had told Henry Cabot Lodge that he intended to

5. Telegrams, Stubbs to Roosevelt, April 9, Stubbs to Pinchot, April 9, Roosevelt to Stubbs, April 11, 1910; letter, Roosevelt to Stubbs, April 11, 1910, "Stubbs Papers." For a brief discussion of Pinchot's activities at Porto Maurizio, see George E. Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison, Wis., 1946), p. 125.

6. Topeka Daily Capital, July 3, 1910. Letters, Bristow to Jonathan Bourne, Jr., July, Bristow to Richard Lloyd-Jones, July 7, 1910, "Joseph L. Bristow Papers," Manuscripts division, K. S. H. S.

keep insurgency "out of the wrong kind of hands" so that he might be able to guide the movement. Three weeks before the Western tour he wrote William Allen White that he was endeavoring to keep the insurgents free of a position from which he could not extricate them.⁷ Roosevelt had convinced himself by this time that if he could appear as the ideological leader of the insurgents and then publicly endorse part of Taft's administration, he would close the Republican split. "The greatest service I can render Taft," he wrote Lodge in early July, ". . . is to try to help the Republican Party to win at the polls this Fall, and that I am trying to do." His Western tour would aid the cause, but he recognized that expressing his ideas and not appearing critical of Taft would be a difficult job. Nevertheless, he was willing to make the effort. After his Osawatomie speech boomeranged so drastically he pointedly told Lodge it was part of his program of party reunification.⁸ What Roosevelt did not say was that he had placed a high price on his services as conciliator. The cost he hoped to charge was the approval of the "New Nationalism" as the fundamental beliefs of Republicanism. "My proper task," he had written Fremont Older, "is clearly to announce myself on the vital questions of the day, to set the standards so that it can be seen, and take a position that cannot be misunderstood; then to cooperate with all others wherever they be who are striving for the same ends, and to cooperate not in a factional sense . . ."⁹

By reciting his policies in detail and then closing the chasm which separated Eastern and Western factions of the party, he thought it would be obvious that harmony was possible only because of Theodore Roosevelt and his ideals. In part, the Osawatomie speech was a comprehensive political program because it was meant to be the future platform of the Republican party. He chose Osawatomie as the site for its announcement, since he knew his ideas would be favorably received there due to his personal popularity. Roosevelt did not anticipate the violent reaction his speech precipitated elsewhere. He stressed neither traditional radicalism nor insurgency in the address, but it was interpreted in this manner. In general, the Eastern United States denounced him as a "communist agitator" while the West thought he was supporting their hostility towards

7. Letter, Roosevelt to Lodge, April 11, 1910, *Selections From the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918*, 2 vols., v. 2 (New York, 1925). Letter, Roosevelt to White, August 9, 1910, "William Allen White Papers," Library of Congress.

8. Letters, Roosevelt to Lodge, July 19, 1910, *Selections . . .* Lodge; Roosevelt to Lodge, August 18, September 12, 1910, "Theodore Roosevelt Collection," Library of Congress.

9. Letter, Roosevelt to Older, August 18, 1910, "Roosevelt Collection."

Taft. No matter how hard he tried to dispel these points of view in later activities, they continued to persist.¹⁰ Thus his plan, and in a sense the Osawatimie speech, were unsuccessful. Not only were his ideas too radical for some, but his purposes were misconstrued by others. Actually, Republicanism was split much too deeply to be solved by so simple a solution.¹¹

Since Roosevelt could not manipulate Republican affairs to the degree he desired, his failure is understandable. However, there is no logical explanation for his inability to manage phases of the proposal which he could have controlled. For example, Roosevelt did not write the Osawatimie speech, but allowed Gifford Pinchot to draft it. In early May he reached this decision. The address was not written until late July and early August. Then, Pinchot asked William Allen White to help him compose it. On August 17 Roosevelt accepted the Pinchot version, making a few changes but finding it "substantially satisfactory."¹² Pinchot, even more of an extremist than Roosevelt in upholding strong governmental control over individual activities, tinted the address with radicalism far in excess of what Roosevelt would probably have done alone. Writing in the September 3 issue of the *Outlook*, Roosevelt was much more lenient towards capitalism than he had been at Osawatimie. Explaining his position further, he said, "If we approach the work of reform in a spirit of vindictiveness—in a spirit of reckless disregard for the rights of others or of hatred for men because they are better off than ourselves—we are sure in the end to do not good but damage to all mankind. . . ." ¹³

What did William Allen White add to the speech? Possibly White was responsible for the many specific reforms which Roosevelt demanded in the message. By including these specific provisions, which superficially resembled those of the Kansas Republican platform, White could have been seeking to further his group's political prestige. He, Stubbs, and Bristow had written the Kansas platform

10. Mowry, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-153.

11. Three noteworthy discussions of Roosevelt's summer plans have been published. Henry F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt, A Biography* (New York, 1931), has a different explanation from that presented here. George Mowry, *op. cit.*, 142-147, was the first scholar to assign a harmony program to Roosevelt, but in overlooking the essential purpose of the Osawatimie speech he missed an important point in Roosevelt's strategems. Martin Fausold's *Gifford Pinchot, Bull Moose Progressive* (Syracuse, 1961), uses the "New Nationalism address" as the focal point for a penetrating discussion of Pinchot's contributions to modern liberalism. Fausold also has an interesting summary of other explanations advanced for T. R.'s summer activities.

12. Letters, Pinchot to Roosevelt, May 18, August 18, "Gifford Pinchot Papers," Library of Congress; Pinchot to White, July 14, "White Papers"; Roosevelt to Pinchot, August 17, 1910, "Roosevelt Collection." Also, a letter from Amos Pinchot to his mother, as cited in Fausold, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Pinchot also wrote T. R.'s anti-court speech at Denver. See letter, Pinchot to Roosevelt, August 19, 1910, "Pinchot Papers."

13. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Progressives, Past and Present," *The Outlook*, New York, v. 96, No. 1 (September 3, 1910), p. 24.

during August and had steamrolled it through the party council on August 30.¹⁴ After the speech, it was factional orthodoxy to stress how much Roosevelt had upheld state progressive Republicans in the address. White repeated this so often he eventually believed it. In his autobiography he writes, "He did get squarely on the Kansas Progressive platform, a position which shocked his friends in the East. . . ." ¹⁵ Of course, there was a big difference in Roosevelt's position and much of the state platform, since Roosevelt's program was national in scope while Kansas Republicans were primarily concerned with state reforms. The substance of the ideas though similar were to be enacted at different levels. Roosevelt had no interest in retaining the ideals of Jeffersonian "state's right" demagogues, as he called them. He was interested in a Hamiltonian concept of power which he described as the "New Nationalism."¹⁶

We can be certain White did accomplish one thing in the speech. His insistence that Roosevelt limit his remarks on John Brown seems insignificant now, but in 1910 it was vastly important. Oswald Garrison Villard, one of the leading critics of Osawatimie's hero, was afraid that Roosevelt in characteristic half-knowledge would describe the "old fanatic" in terms so favorable that Villard's interpretation would be set back about 30 years. Thus, he asked White to persuade Roosevelt to confine himself in his remarks about Brown. In the finished speech, Brown's name appeared just twice and then only incidentally. The editor of the *Osawatimie Graphic* commented on this slight, noting that since Roosevelt was asked to consecrate the John Brown park "one would naturally suppose this would necessitate . . . more than a mere cursory mention of . . . Brown." Two years later Ed Howe remembered the occasion as the time "Roosevelt dedicated a monument to John Brown without mentioning . . . Brown's name."¹⁷

The wording of the speech was only one way in which White intended to make profitable use of Roosevelt's presence. His great public friendship with the colonel prompted a number of organiza-

14. "We had a tremendous triumph in Kansas this week," rejoiced Bristow. "The progressive . . . put out a progressive platform. I wrote the national end of it. Stubbs and his friends the state, and Will White put on the literary touches."—Letter, Bristow to A. L. Miller, September 2, 1910, "Bristow Papers."

15. The *Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York, 1946), p. 438. At Osawatimie the crowd, sensing the covert relationship between the speech and the state platform, was reported to have chanted, "Either Roosevelt wrote the Kansas platform or William Allen White wrote Col. Roosevelt's speech."—*Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910.

16. A comparison of the speech and the state platform support this view. For the platform see the *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 31, 1910.

17. Letters, Villard to White, July 28, White to Roosevelt, August 4; Roosevelt to White, August 9; Villard to White, August 18, 1910.—"White Papers." *Osawatimie Graphic*, September 1, 1910. *Atchison Globe*, June 26, 1912.

JOHN BROWN CELEBRATION AT OSAWATOMIE KANSAS AUG. 30TH and 31ST, 1910

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30th.

OLD SOLDIERS' REUNION

Drills by United States Troops and Kansas National Guard.

CONCERTS BY U. S. MILITARY BAND.

Addresses by Prominent Speakers.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31st.

Drills, Band Concerts, Parade of all Troops, G. A. R., W. R. C., and Civic Societies.

Dedicatory Address by

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

SPEECHES BY GOV. STUBBS AND OTHER WELL KNOWN ORATORS.

FOR THIS OCCASION SPECIAL TRAINS WILL BE OPERATED

AS FOLLOWS, VIZ:



FROM PITTSBURG, AUGUST 31st.

Leave PITTSBURG	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.
" COFFEEVILLE	5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "
" WICHITA	5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "
" TOPEKA	5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "
" SALINA	6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "
" ST. LOUIS	6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "
" DETROIT	6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "

Returning: Special will leave Osawatomie 8:40 P. M., making all stops to Pittsburg.

FROM COFFEYVILLE, AUGUST 31st.

Leave COFFEYVILLE	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.
" WICHITA	5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "
" TOPEKA	5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "
" SALINA	5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "
" ST. LOUIS	6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "
" DETROIT	6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "
" PITTSBURG	6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "

Returning: Special will leave Osawatomie 8:50 P. M., making all stops to Coffeyville.

FROM WICHITA, AUGUST 31st.

Leave WICHITA	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.
" COFFEYVILLE	5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "
" TOPEKA	5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "
" SALINA	5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "
" ST. LOUIS	6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "
" DETROIT	6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "
" PITTSBURG	6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "

Returning: Special will leave Osawatomie 7:00 P. M., making all stops to Wichita.

FROM TOPEKA, AUGUST 31st.

Leave TOPEKA	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.
" COFFEYVILLE	5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "
" WICHITA	5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "
" SALINA	5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "
" ST. LOUIS	6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "
" DETROIT	6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "
" PITTSBURG	6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "

Returning: Special will leave Osawatomie 7:15 P. M., making all stops to Topeka.

FROM SALINA, AUGUST 31st.

Leave SALINA	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.	Leave 10:15 AM	5:00 A. M.
" COFFEYVILLE	5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "	" 10:30 "	" 5:15 "
" WICHITA	5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "	" 10:45 "	" 5:30 "
" TOPEKA	5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "	" 11:00 "	" 5:45 "
" ST. LOUIS	6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "	" 11:15 "	" 6:00 "
" DETROIT	6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "	" 11:30 "	" 6:15 "
" PITTSBURG	6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "	" 11:45 "	" 6:30 "

Special will leave Muscatine 8:00 A. M., Leavenworth 8:20 A. M., arrive Osawatomie City 8:10 A. M.

Returning: Special will leave Osawatomie 7:30 P. M., making all stops to Salina.

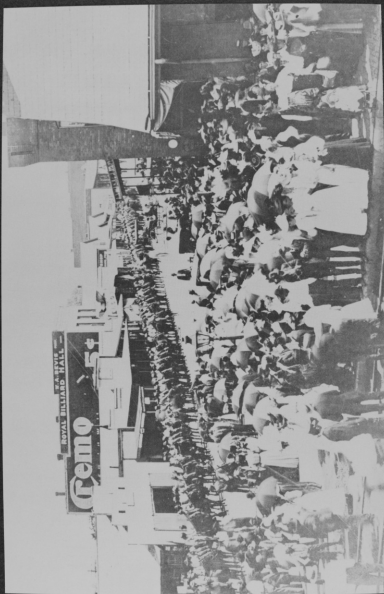
See Local Agents for Further Particulars or Address

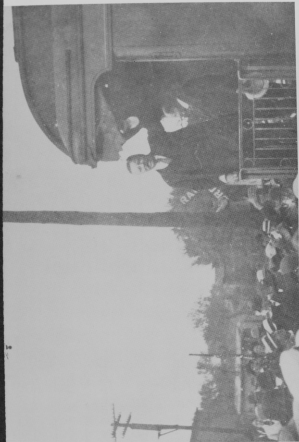
H. H. PRINE,
ST. LOUIS.

R. T. G. MATTHEWS,
KANSAS CITY.

C. H. HARTON, Agent,
OSAWATOMIE, MO.

Poster courtesy
H. D. Weaver
Through
F. W. Brinkerhoff.





Upper: Looking northeast on Main street, Osawatamie, from the Missouri Pacific railroad depot. The mounted troops were from Fort Riley. Photo courtesy Dike Dickerson.

Lower: Theodore Roosevelt at Osawatamie, August 31, 1910.



Official Program for Dedication

of
John Brown Park
Oswatimie, Kansas,
August 30-31, '10

PROGRAM

- TUESDAY, AUGUST 30.**
Morning
J. B. Remington, Presiding.
10:30 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
11:00 Drill by U. S. Troops and Kansas National Guards.
12:00 Dinner.
Afternoon
1:30 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
2:00 Invocation.
2:15 Address by Capt. Joseph G. Waters.
3:15 Music.
3:30 Address by Mrs. Anna Hancock.
3:40 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
4:00 Recitation—"John Brown,"—Miss Beattie Yeater.
4:15 Address by Hon. W. A. Caldwell.
5:15 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
Evening—Camp Fire
Bernard Kelley, Presiding.
7:30 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
8:00 Invocation.
8:10 Short Talks by Luke F. Parsons and other Survivors.
8:30 Address by Department Commander Nathan E. Harmon.

- 9:30 Vocal Solo—"The Flag With-
out A Star,"—Belle C. Har-
ris.
9:45 Address by Sarah C. Staplin,
President of W. R. C.
10:00 Music by Drum Corps.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31.

- Morning*
10:30 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
11:00 Drill by U. S. Troops and Kansas National Guards.
12:00 Dinner.
Afternoon
2:00 Parade by Soldiers, G. A. R., W. R. C., and Civic Societies.
J. B. Remington, Presiding.
3:00 Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
3:20 Invocation by Chaplain of Department G. A. R.
3:30 Vocal Solo, Miss Elizabeth Ubbel.
3:45 Address by Mrs. Clara M. Dep-
pey, President of the Board of Trustees.
4:00 Address by Governor Stubbs.
4:30 Dedictory Address by Theodore Roosevelt.
Concert by Thirteenth Regiment Band.
Evening
7:30 Theodore Roosevelt and party
Entertained by the Kansas
State Editorial Association.

tions to appeal for his help in persuading the ex-President to honor them. Two of the most politically potent bodies which enlisted White's aid were the Kansas Editorial Association and the Kansas Traveling Men's Association. Publicly White plugged for both of these bodies, sending Roosevelt formal invitations for them. However, at the same time "the Sage of Emporia" was placing more important demands on T. R.'s time. While writing these formal letters, White was telling the beleaguered statesman privately that he should spend the hours after the speech at Governor Stubbs' Lawrence mansion, where it would be "nice and quiet." Already, he and Stubbs had planned a huge dinner for Roosevelt for the evening of August 31 and intended to arrange things so that it would be politically beneficial to Stubbs and other progressive Republicans. Both men understood the value of publicity. In working out the invitation list, White stressed the need of having all the factional faithfuls present, as well as moderate Republicans. He urged the governor to have plenty of representatives from the press there. Furthermore, since Stubbs was planning a fight in the next session for a public utilities law, important state legislators had to be invited.¹⁸

There were some problems confronting the governor and his political associates. While they determined Roosevelt's itinerary after the speech, arrangements for the Osawatimie ceremonies were being made by the city's commercial club and the W. R. C., neither of whom were sympathetic to the higher demands of progressivism. Stubbs, after convincing Major Remington that for propriety's sake the governor should introduce an ex-President, replaced the major, who had scheduled himself for the honor. Both Stubbs and White had received formal invitations from Roosevelt to join his party before it reached the city. However, nothing had been done for other progressive leaders. Actually, Republican National Committeeman David Mulvane, a factional enemy of the progressives, was scheduled to accompany Roosevelt during his entire stay in the state. Since Mulvane was never mentioned in connection with the celebration, he apparently played no part. How this was accomplished is not altogether clear. Nevertheless, every progressive Republican except Vic Murdock, who was out of the state at the

18. Letters, Frank Harper to White, July 22; White to Roosevelt, August 4; W. B. Howland to H. C. Sticher, August 12; Sticher to Dave Leahy, August 14; White to Roosevelt, August 15; Howland to White, August 19; White to Stubbs, August 23; White to Pinchot, August 24, 1910; telegrams, C. C. Cleveland to Sticher, n. d. (August, 1910); Cleveland to Sticher, August 13, "White Papers." Letter, Sticher to Howland, August 14; telegram, Sticher to Harper, August 11, 1910, "Roosevelt Papers." White to Bristow, August 26, 1910, "Bristow Papers."

time, somehow became a part of Roosevelt's entourage and appeared prominently in connection with the dedication. They joined the ex-President's cavalcade as it crossed Kansas.¹⁹

Roosevelt's trip through the West received wide coverage in all major news media. From their beginnings his activities became the most important items reported in Kansas and across the United States. But it was in Kansas that he received his warmest reception. His special train entered the state on the mid-morning of August 30, along the Missouri Pacific mainline. Its first stop was in Tribune, where 300 people awaited him, but at Scott City the largest crowds had gathered. There, in a driving rain, western Kansans from all the surrounding towns, including two train loads from Garden City, were on hand to cheer his arrival. From the rear platform he spoke briefly, emphasizing the importance of the average man in government and the filial responsibilities of mankind. All along the route he repeated the performance, making approximately the same five minute remarks. After his train left La Crosse, he retired for the night and crowds of disappointed people waited in vain to see the person one country editor described as "the greatest man that has ever lived since the days of Napoleon," and whom another characterized "as the world's most popular citizen." The next morning when Roosevelt arrived at Ottawa, two thousand people stood in a drizzling rain to listen to him. A little earlier nearly a thousand people had done the same at Osage City. As his train left Ottawa some girls gathered at the southeastern edge of town were heard by a reporter to gush, "isn't he dear? . . . Yes! . . . I just love him. . . . He has the dearest face!"²⁰

But if Kansas were excited, Osawatimie was enthralled! Never had the city's fathers been so successful in making their town popular. Afraid they would not measure up to their tremendous responsibilities they kept the town newspapers hammering away on the immense significance of the affair. In June one booster wrote, "Is Osawatimie going to allow this celebration in August to be a

19. *Osage City Free-Press*, August 25, 1910. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910. *New York Times*, September 1, 1910. That everyone was not satisfied with the "progressive" way things were handled is obvious from the dispute between Stubbs and Dr. Uhl, which was aired in Roosevelt's presence. "We have been letting Governor Stubbs play house with us long enough," said Uhl, "and now we intend to stand put on our original plans."—*Kansas City (Mo.) Post*, August 31, 1910.

20. Not all of the towns along the Missouri Pacific mainline reported Roosevelt's passage through their counties. Those between La Crosse and Salina usually did not report the occasion. The following newspapers carried stories describing the scenes at the various cities: *Greeley County Republican*, Tribune, September 2; *Scott City News Chronicle*, August 26, September 2; *Garden City Impartial*, September 2; *Wichita Beacon*, August 31; *Hosington Dispatch*, September 1; *Council Grove Guard*, September 2; *La Crosse Republican*, September 1; *Allen Enterprise*, September 1; *Bison Bee*, September 2; *Salina Journal*, August 30, 31; *Osage City Free-Press*, September 1; *Ottawa Evening Herald*, August 31; *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910.

failure? . . . Can it be possible that Osawatomie has lost its enthusiasm? . . . We must not go back on the reputation we have already established."²¹ In the following weeks things came alive. Weeds were cut all over town; stinky ditches were filled; electricity and water were extended to the park; brush, trees, and debris were cleared from the area and suddenly the park took form. Other arrangements were also made. Bands were engaged and speakers of state-wide reputation were selected to start the oratorical fireworks on August 30. Over the multitude of little details, Major Remington, the ladies of the W. R. C. and the commercial club labored feverishly.²² In typical fashion numerous minor disagreements arose which had to be resolved, and each group claimed more credit than it deserved.²³ But a few days before the visit the town was ready. "We've put on our biled shirts," wrote the *Graphic's* editor, "brought the galluses out of their hiding place, had our better halves darn our socks, put on a smile, and thank you, we are ready for plutocrat and peasant, everybody from you and me to the dignitaries, who will be present . . . to honor the ground where John Brown made his decisive stand for freedom and where the things began to happen away back . . . which made . . . people . . . set up and take notice of Kansas . . . and [we've] . . . been noticed ever since."²⁴ Then on August 30 it began to rain! The street sprinkler imported from Paola to keep the dust down appeared to be an anachronism. The bunting spread along the route Roosevelt would follow began to droop, the unpaved streets grew muddier and muddier and then the electric lights began to fizzle on and off. Things looked dim! All through the 30th, when the festivities started, people poured into Osawatomie—"singly, . . . in pairs, by the dozens and scores." They came "on foot, bicycles, motors, buggies, wagons, trains and [in] every manner . . . possible." Even though it was raining, the *Graphic* reported, "they had on their sunshine disposition

21. *Osawatomie Graphic*, June 9, 1910.

22. *Ibid.*, June 16, 30, July 14, August 11, 18, 25, 1910. *Osawatomie Globe*, July 14, 21, 1910. Letters, D. D. Leaky to Cesa Deputy, May 26; Remington to Leaky, June 23; Leaky to Remington, July 1, 9; Frank Travis to Stubbs, August 8; Leaky to Stubbs, July 26, "Stubbs Papers." An interesting development in connection with the celebration was the idea of having the sole survivor of the "Battle of Osawatomie" present—purportedly Luke F. Parsons of Salina. However, on July 21, the *Osawatomie Globe* reported it looked like the plan would be scuttled because "the survivors of the battle of Osawatomie might be as numerous as the people who came over in the Mayflower." There were at least six "sole survivors."

23. The *Osawatomie Graphic's* editor, a member of the commercial club, having his share of trouble in helping to arrange the affair, wrote on August 25 that there was one satisfaction: "It has been announced that his [T. R.'s] most important speech will be made here and it probably will . . . If somebody, somewhere don't bust in and cause a change of plans."—*Osawatomie Graphic*, August 25, 1910.

24. *Ibid.*

. . . and were ready to hear "Teddy" speak." But as the great day dawned the rain diminished and then stopped. And, while acres of people, as one observer described them, waited at the Osawatomie station for his arrival, they sang Moody and Sankey hymns to keep their spirits dry. Then the colonel's train appeared. Pandemonium broke loose! The crowd shrieked, whistled, cheered, and cried "hello Teddy!" Roosevelt stepped out onto the rear platform and just smiled, bowed, and looked like he enjoyed it immensely. It was a *bully* occasion!²⁵

All the other political bigwigs joined him on the rear platform and each made brief speeches. When Gifford Pinchot talked about the political "idears" of the West, they literally howled. "Yes," reported the *Daily Capital*, "he says 'idears!'" More important, he insisted that "Kansas idears" would eventually dominate national politics.²⁶

Then the group returned to the coach, leaving it for lunch at the state mental hospital. There Roosevelt, apparently forgetting his grand strategy of healing Republicanism's split personality, took what progressives considered to be a slap at Taft. He later interpolated the same remarks into his prepared speech. "I believe," he said, ". . . in the political tenets of Kansas, which are that it is just as bad to lie on the stump as off the stump, and that a political promise must be redeemed exactly as an honest man will redeem his outstanding obligations. I came here to find Kansas slightly disturbed, but I have never visited Kansas when this was not true. Perhaps I might put it another way by saying that Kansas seems to be enjoying her usual good health."²⁷ At 2:15 P. M. Roosevelt was introduced by Stubbs to approximately 30,000 people in the park. Here is a man, Stubbs said, "whose name is synonymous for liberty, justice and righteousness in private and public life and whose power and influence for good is greater than any . . . ruler in the world today."²⁸

Then "Teddy" mounted the kitchen table which picturesquely served as his podium at Osawatomie. High above a surging throng which continually cheered, he spoke for one and one-half hours. The set up, reported in the *Daily Capital*, was much like a county

25. *Ibid.*, September 1, 1910.

26. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910.

27. *Osawatomie Globe*, September 1, 1910.

28. "Governor Stubbs' Introduction," a copy, "Stubbs Papers." There was wide variation reported on the size of the crowd, ranging from 20,000 to 40,000, but most observers thought it was in the neighborhood of 30,000. See *Osawatomie Graphic*, September 1; *Osawatomie Globe*, September 1; *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1; *Kansas City Post*, August 31; *New York Tribune*, September 1; *New York Times*, September 1; and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 1, 1910.

fair, with booths where sandwiches and drinks were being sold. All during the speech people continued to buy food at those stands and the vendors continued to hawk their wares. Not everyone could hear his high-falsettoed voice, but everybody cheered.²⁹

The essence of Roosevelt's speech has been discussed by numerous historians. It was, according to Prof. George E. Mowry, "the most radical speech ever given by an ex-President. . . . His concepts of the extent to which a powerful federal government could regulate and use private property in the interest of the whole, and his declarations about labor, when viewed [with] . . . the eyes of 1910, were nothing short of revolutionary."³⁰

Roosevelt stated:

The American people are right in demanding that new Nationalism without which we cannot hope to deal with new problems. The new Nationalism puts the National need before sectional or personal advantage. It is impatient of the utter confusion that results from local legislatures attempting to treat National issues as local issues. It is still more impatient of the impotence which springs from over-division of governmental powers, the impotence which makes it possible for local selfishness or for legal cunning, hired by wealthy special interests, to bring National activities to a deadlock. This new Nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of public welfare. It demands of the judiciary that it shall be interested primarily in human welfare rather than in property, just as it demands that the representative body shall represent all the people rather than any one class or section of the people. . . .

I believe in shaping the ends of government to protect property as well as human welfare. Normally . . . the ends are the same, but whenever the alternative must be faced I am for men and not for property. . . .

These ideas, plus a very clever comparison between the crisis which Brown and Lincoln faced in the 1850's and the crisis Roosevelt and the American people faced in 1910, constitute most of the speech. Taken with the 17 specific reforms Roosevelt discussed, they are the essentials of the address.³¹

According to Richard Henry Little of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, when Roosevelt ended his oration, Governor Stubbs leaped upon the table and shouted, "My friends, we have just heard one of the greatest pronouncements for human welfare ever made. This is one of the big moments in the history of the United States!"³² The cheers continued long after Roosevelt had left the park and boarded the special for Lawrence. "Not excepting even Lincoln at Gettysburg," wrote Henry Chamberlain in *The Voter*, Roosevelt's speech

29. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910.

30. Mowry, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

31. *Osawatomie Globe*, September 1, 1910.

32. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 1, 1910.

was "the greatest ever delivered by any ancient or modern."³³ That night, at Stubbs' home, progressives were jubilant over what they had heard at Osawatimie, but Stubbs' household was upset. Stubbs and White had invited twice as many guests as his mansion could accommodate! Roosevelt, caught in the enthusiasm he had helped create, smiled broadly as he was photographed eating "salt-rising bread"—a Stubbs campaign favorite.³⁴

The next day newspaper editors across the country reacted to the speech, while in the following weeks the mails were crammed with letters recording various sentiments about the Osawatimie address. The ideologically conservative New York *Evening Post* branded Roosevelt a "self-seeking, hypocritical, braggart," while its sister journal, the *Sun*, reported that "the third greatest crisis in the history of the nation has arrived, and warned every honest and patriotic citizen to prepare himself against this new Napoleon who deemed it his mission . . . to overthrow and destroy in the name of public opinion and . . . personal advancement." The New York *Tribune* called the speech "frankly socialistic." The socialists had other ideas. The *Appeal-to-Reason* at Girard did not bother to report the speech, but it did continue a running argument with correspondents on the question of whether Roosevelt was an insane maniac or simply ignorant. Its editor thought he was a bit of both!

The Kansas City *Star*, Chicago *Daily Tribune*, Topeka *Daily Capital*, and a host of lesser progressive journals agreed that Roosevelt had left no doubt about where he stood. "T. R. has become a progressive Republican," editorialized Harold Chase in the *Capital*. The principles are not new, said the *Star's* editor, but the speech "marks the progress of the leading progressive." It was with good judgment, he continued, that "he reserved his first formal political utterance . . . along the line of progressive government, for the state that has given him the most striking expression of faith in the policies that bear his name." He had not taken sides, he had been with them all along.

Most regular Republican journals in the state did not emphasize the temper of the speech. W. Y. Morgan's Hutchinson *News* noted that "Osawatimie will be more renowned as the place Teddy Roosevelt visited than as John Brown's former battleground," but failed to say why. Another regular journal, Charles F. Scott's *Iola Register*, lamented that "Teddy [is] a Rank Insurgent." B. J. Sheridan's Democratic Kansas City *Post* agreed. The Pittsburgh *Headlight*, controlled by the old-line Republican sachein "Doc" Moore, re-

33. "As T. R. Swings Around the Circle," *The Voter*, Chicago, No. 89 (September, 1910), p. 33.

34. Topeka *Daily Capital*, and Hutchinson *Daily Gazette*, September 1, 1910.

ported that Roosevelt spoke at Osawatimie but said that Capt. J. G. Water's eulogy of Brown on August 30 had been the highlight of the occasion.³⁵

Individual comments were equally divided. Congressional nominee Fred Jackson noted that he and Roosevelt were in perfect agreement. "I like to hear a man like Roosevelt talk," he said. "He stands for everything good. He has good, wholesome ideas in regard to public life. . . ." Ex-Democrat D. D. Leahy noted, "Roosevelt would make a good Kansan. He thinks like Kansans, acts like Kansans and talks like Kansans. . . ." To Sen. Jonathan Bourne, Jr., Bristow wrote, "Roosevelt in his Osawatimie speech got on the platform practically. [He] indorsed everything that we said. . . ." And Henry J. Allen jubilantly agreed, "Either Roosevelt wrote the Kansas platform or the Insurgents wrote the speech." But while some Kansans were happy, others were not. Wichita banker C. Q. Chandler, a former favorite of the defunct Long political machine, wrote Chester I. Long that it seemed clear that "Mr. T. R. has gone over 'bag and baggage' to the Insurgents, and is paving the way to be nominated for President of the United States next time. I had hoped . . . he would pursue a different course. . . ." William J. Barnes, Jr., the New York Republican committeeman against whom Roosevelt was contesting for leadership in the Empire state, announced that the speech "had startled all thoughtful men and impressed them with the frightful danger which lies in his political ascendancy." Taft, uncertain of Roosevelt's attitude all summer, thought his predecessor had chosen a "peculiar" way to support his administration. "I am bound to say," he wrote his brother Charles, "that his speeches are fuller of the ego now than they ever were, and he allows himself to fall into a style that makes one think he considers himself still the President of the United States."³⁶

It is fairly obvious why the Osawatimie speech generated such mixed emotions. Some people were fundamentally frightened by the tone of the address, a fear which continues to be expressed against "big government." Many agreed with Roosevelt's ideals of

35. *New York Evening Post*, as cited in *The Voter* (September, 1910), p. 35. *New York Sun*, as cited in Mowry, *op. cit.*, p. 145. *New York Tribune*, September 1; *Appeal to Reason*, August 30, September 3, 10, 17; *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1; *Wichita Eagle*, September 1; *Kansas City Star*, September 1; *Hutchinson News*, September 1; *Iola Register*, August 31; *Kansas City Post*, August 31; *Pittsburg Herald*, September 1, 8, 1910.

36. Jackson's and Leahy's comments were reported in the *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 3, 1910. Letter, Bristow to Bourne, September 2, 1910, "Bristow Papers." Henry J. Allen, "Roosevelt in Kansas," *Kansas Magazine*, v. 4 (September and October, 1910), p. 68. Letter, Chandler to Long, "Chester I. Long Papers." Manuscript division, K. S. H. S. Barnes' comment in *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 3, 1910. Letter, Taft to C. P. Taft, September 10, 1910, "Taft Papers," as cited in W. R. Gwinn, *Uncle Joe Cannon* (U. S. A., 1957), p. 233.

human welfare. Others reacted for purely personal reasons. If the speech helped them politically they applauded; if it hindered them, they were exasperated. It is impossible to know how the vast majority of Americans reacted. The crowd at Osawatomie was entranced by Roosevelt. Perhaps, F. A. Baker of Lane, Kan., summed up grass roots sentiments superlatively when he wrote Stubbs, "I think that was the *greatest* speech by the *greatest* man in the *greatest* country to a crowd of the *greatest* people under the Shining Sun."³⁷

In 1912 the Osawatomie speech became the basis of the National Progressive party platform. After the stunning defeat of the Republicans in 1910, Roosevelt issued the following statement: "So far as I am concerned, I have nothing whatever to add to or take away from the declaration of principles which I have made in the Osawatomie speech. . . . The fight for progressive popular government has merely begun, and will certainly go on to a triumphant conclusion in spite of initial checks and irrespective of the personal success or failure of individual leaders."³⁸

37. Letter, F. A. Baker to Stubbs, September 5, 1910, "Stubbs Papers."

38. Theodore Roosevelt, "Mr. Roosevelt's Position," *The Outlook*, v. 96, No. 12 (November 19, 1910), p. 607.