The Amazing Touch:
Theodore Roosevelt, Personality, Politics and the Press in the Election of 1912

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An honors thesis submitted to the History Department of Rutgers University, Written under the supervision of Professor Ann Fabian.

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The Roller Coaster: Acknowledgements

On the first day of our seminar, I remember Professor James Masschaele said the thesis writing process would be a “roller coaster,” filled with eureka moments of discovery and agonizing dead ends in research. I too remember laughing at the “roller coaster” description and in some sort of ill-fated internal dialogue thought: 50 pages on Theodore Roosevelt? This will be cake.

Let’s just say my thoughts have changed since September. Thesis writing, as it turns out, is not cake. It is arduous, labor intensive, hard grinding, demanding, challenging, exacting, pick whatever synonym you want. There are moments of euphoria (finding out that the archives of one of your most important sources Charles Willis Thompson are located in Princeton) and moments of despair (going to said archives and finding they have NOTHING useful for your thesis.) There are moments of accomplishment (handing in your first draft) and moments of despair (getting back the “blood sheet” and seeing all the edits on your first draft.) A roller coaster ride? Professor Masschaele, I hate to admit it but you were absolutely right.

Yet in the end, due to countless hours of research, writing, editing and, consequently lost sleep, this thesis was unquestionably a personal victory. I set out to challenge myself to write something longer and in a different style than my usual 500 or so word journalism stories filled with short, punchy, one-line paragraphs. Sixty-plus pages later, I can check that off as a success. I also hoped to add something new to the study of Theodore Roosevelt. While this paper probably won’t shake the foundations of history or revolutionize the world as we know it, I’d like to think that my argument adds a little something to the immense amounts of scholarship on the Bull Moose Party. I wouldn’t have said this on March 11 as I
frantically made edits to my first draft but I’m glad I decided to write this thesis. This project honed my research and writing skills, improved my critical thinking ability and opened my eyes to a potential career path in history. However, this couldn’t have been accomplished without a little help from my friends, family and some of the wonderful people around me.

First, thanks to Jim Axelrod, Maria Mercader and Matt Shelley at CBS News who were supportive of my project and always took the time out of their busy days to ask about my progress. A special thanks as well to Emily Rand and Mo Cashin at CBS News for their understanding, allowing me to take time off from my internship to work on this project. I am also grateful to the Aresty Research Center for their generous grant, which provided me with the wonderful opportunity to conduct research at the Theodore Roosevelt Library at Harvard University, Theodore Roosevelt Papers at the Library of Congress, Butler Library at Columbia University and Seeley G. Mudd Library in Princeton. Thank you as well to the staffs at each of these locations—in particular, Wallace Dailey at Harvard University—for their help and assistance during my visits.

I would also like to thank Professors David Andersen and David Greenberg for allowing me bounce some ideas off of them early on in the thesis process as well as Professor Jackson Lears, my second reader, whose helpful comments and stimulating questions during my defense helped improve my final draft. Professor James Masschaele, I am also grateful for your guidance throughout the “roller coaster” ride and for all you help along the way.

I would also be remise if I didn’t thank some of the great teachers I had at Spotswood High School. To Mrs. Mary Ann Cochran and Mr. Alan Cummings, thank you for showing me the joys of written word and through your (many) assignments helping me find and develop my unique writing voice. Your classes inspired me to enter the field of journalism.
To Mr. Michael Curto and Mr. Frank Yusko, you have given me an insatiable curiosity for our nation’s past through everything from lectures on the Battle of Bunker Hill to playing Chris “Bob Hope” Zawistowski at the annual USO show. You both have helped make me who I am today and for that I cannot thank you enough. And of course, thanks to my friends—specifically Terrence DeJesus and Erik Anderson—who helped me proofread this thesis, dealt with my random Roosevelt facts and 2 a.m. diner conversations about the Presidents (Will, it’s no question. TR was a WAY better president than Jackson.)

To Professor Ann Fabian, my ever-supportive advisor for this project: Thank you. Never did I feel alone in this process. You were always there for support, debate, conversation, and always able to lure me back from Roosevelt’s spell. When things got dark (still can’t believe that Thompson’s papers had NOTHING on 1912), you were there with an email or a helpful talk to pump up my spirits. Thanks to Professor Fabian, I learned so much more then I ever could have imagined writing this thesis. Professor Fabian, without your “amazing touch,” this thesis would be nothing.

Last but not least, a heartfelt thanks to my loving family. I remember our college visit to The University of Maryland when I had my revelation that History, not English, would be my second major in college. And how could it not be? From Yorktown to Jamestown and Fort William Henry to Fort San Cristobal, our family trips were always filed with historical excursions. I can still remember folding the flag at Fort McHenry in the rain and crying as a young kid after leaving the Air and Space Museum in Washington (for good reason I might add. Best. Museum. Ever.) My love for our nation’s history comes from you guys, who have always been there for me, not just in throughout this thesis process but throughout my entire
life. For that, I will say something I probably don’t say enough: Thank you. This paper this for you guys.

-CZ
To the Road

Crowds gathered in Blackfoot, Idaho on September 13, 1912 and cheered for Theodore Roosevelt as he prepared to deliver his speech. It was a typical day on the stump for Colonel Roosevelt that summer: men, women and children all flooding to the fairgrounds for a chance to hear the ex-President and Rough Rider speak. Roosevelt launched into one of his stock speeches, a litany of phrases he had uttered in similar situations dozens of times before and would utter hundreds of times after. It was standard Roosevelt fare: a smashing of the boss ridden Old Parties, sprinkled with a discussion of the Progressive platform. “This talk that I was a dictator came chiefly from Wall Street,” Roosevelt said, getting set to start another campaign tirade on social and industrial justice.

But then, New York Times writer Charles Willis Thompson reported a voice cried out from the crowd, stopping Roosevelt’s speech. “That’s where they need one,” the woman shouted. Accustomed to interruptions from fervent followers, Roosevelt agreed with the “plump and pretty woman” before continuing his address.

But the woman called out again.

“You don’t know me, Colonel, but I’m Otto Raphael’s sister,” she said. The name jogged the Colonel’s memory.

“You are?” he replied joyously, Thompson writes. “Then you’re the sister of one of the best policemen I ever put on the New York police force. Do you live here?”

“Yes,” said Raphael’s sister, who chaperoned about 500 school children to see Roosevelt at the fairgrounds. “I live at Idaho Falls.”

“Well that’s fine,” Roosevelt replied, and then explained to the crowd that when he was the Police Commissioner of New York, he read a story in the papers of a young man
named Otto Raphael, who rescued women and children from a burning building. Trying to get more good men on the force, Roosevelt was determined to find Raphael. He hunted him down and found him at the Bowery Branch of the Y.M.C.A.

“I found him a husky lad, but not as good looking as his sister,” Roosevelt said as Raphael’s sister blushed and the crowd cheered. “And he turned out to be a number one policeman.”

Raphael was so good, Roosevelt said, he was only once disappointed by him, right at the outset of the Spanish-American War.

“He wanted to join my regiment, but, fine policeman as he was, he did not know one end of a horse from the other,” the Colonel said. “I think he had the general idea that a horse didn’t have horns.” The crowd of Westerners, born and raised on horseback, roared with laughter. “Even the Indians relaxed a little,” Thompson wrote.¹

This was the Roosevelt campaign of 1912: policy splashed with personality, stump speeches combined with reminiscences with friends; work, it seemed, mixed with play. It was unlike anything the nation had ever seen. After losing the Republican “Steamroller” Convention to his old lieutenant William Howard Taft, Roosevelt and his followers formed a new third-party with the goal of creating a better, more efficient government that would be more representative of the people. The Progressives convened in a raucous, powerful convention at the Chicago Coliseum in September, just months after the Republican Convention in the same city. It was moving, crowds singing and chanting “Onward Christian Soldiers!” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and Roosevelt inspired. His “Confessions of

Faith” acceptance address gave the power to the people campaign its war cry that would define the Progressives in 1912 and throughout history: “We stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord.”

This launched the 1912 general election campaign, a campaign that historians remember for its four viable candidates: sitting President and Roosevelt’s former Secretary of War William Howard Taft, New Jersey Governor and former Princeton University President Woodrow Wilson, the Socialist leader Eugene Debs and the ex-President and leader of the Rough Riders Theodore Roosevelt. The United States was experiencing rapid change as Election Day approached, many scholars have said. The population continued to grow, mainly in urban areas which, for the first time in the nation’s history, would house a majority of citizens. The trusts like Carnegie’s US Steel and J.P. Morgan’s International Harvester too continued to grow in stature and influence. Controlling these trusts quickly became the most important issue in 1912. Each candidate articulated their ideas for solving the trust problem, Taft stressed the importance of the free market; Wilson advocated antitrust laws; Roosevelt desired regulation of the “bad trusts,” those that didn’t serve the public interest; Debs promoted a significant change in the American economic system. Candidates too grappled with the issue of the tariff, the last time it would be a major talking point in a Presidential election, historian Lewis Gould notes. Yet the end of the tariff as a major issue in presidential elections was not the only significant development of the campaign of 1912.

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The Progressives took their mission on the road, a step rarely taken in American politics. Presidents, who were to be “above” campaigning, had never gone on speaking tours, much to the dismay of Roosevelt who remarked during his 1904 re-election year, “I have continually wished that I could be on the stump myself…I have fretted at my inability to hit back, and to take the offensive.”\(^5\) Challengers too were hesitant to speak on their own behalf. It was only attempted a handful of times prior to 1912 with little success and never to the scope of what the Progressives planned that year: a two-part campaign that would encircle the United States. As such, on August 16, Roosevelt set out a tour that would ultimately decide who took the White House in 1912 and in the process transform presidential elections forever.

The Roosevelt party travelled the country in two railroad cars, the *Mayflower* and the *Sunbeam*. The *Mayflower* was the Progressive Party car, where Roosevelt and his assistants resided. Among the Progressive entourage was Roosevelt’s cousin George Roosevelt who served as the Colonel’s secretary and occasional spokesman; his two stenographers Elbert E. Martin and John W. McGrath; a personal doctor and throat specialist Dr. Scurry Terrell, who treated Roosevelt each night; and finally, Colonel Cecil Lyon, a friend of Roosevelt’s and a dual stage manager and bodyguard for Roosevelt.\(^6\)

The travelers were constantly in touch with three key party leaders back at the Progressives’ two main headquarters in New York City and Washington, D.C. George W. Perkins, a wealthy investor with ties to the House of Morgan trust, served as executive director of the Progressive Party and as a Roosevelt friend and the chief financer of the Party,

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held considerable power throughout the campaign. Joseph Dixon, a youthful Senator from Montana whom one newspaper declared was Roosevelt’s “greatest admirer” became the Progressive Party’s campaign manager. Finally there was the man who planned the campaign trip, the Progressive Party’s executive secretary and publicity manager who had been a Roosevelt man since they first met: former journalist Oscar King Davis.

Davis remembers meeting Roosevelt one day in 1898 as a desk man for the New York Sun. Davis went with a Sun correspondent to see Roosevelt in Washington and talked with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy about the impending War with Spain. Davis told the Colonel he hoped to cover the war for the Sun and asked Roosevelt to provide him a letter of introduction to a fleet commander. Roosevelt agreed and as soon as the Sun gave him clearance to cover the war, the Assistant Secretary was, Davis said, “as good as his word,” providing the writer with the letter. It was a trivial event, but still left a mark on Davis, especially when three years passed without contact and Roosevelt still remembered him. “By George! Of course I do,” Roosevelt told Davis after they saw each other on their way to an event. “You know, I wanted to go and see you last fall, in Binghamton, when you were sick, but they kept me occupied all that day and I couldn’t.” They chatted afterwards about the War and amazed by Roosevelt’s “astonishing memory,” Davis became a follower. Davis moved on to the New York Times where he covered Roosevelt’s presidency and became one of his trusted reporters. Thus, when the Battle of 1912 came, Davis, a loyal Roosevelt man joined the forces of Progressive Party.

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9 Davis, 26.
10 Davis, 123-124.
Roosevelt hoped the same charm that worked on Davis would work in 1912 with the residents aboard the *Sunbeam*: a travelling pack of journalists including *New York Times* writer Charles Willis Thompson. Thompson was a veteran reporter, starting out freelancing stories to magazines before moving up the career ladder, taking positions at the Brooklyn Edition of the *New York World*, the Brooklyn Edition of the *New York Times* and finally at the Washington Bureau of *The New York Times*, where he saw firsthand the power of Roosevelt and his personality.\(^1\) “Voluminously as he spoke and wrote, the power of his words was astonishing,” Thompson writes. “I mean their practical power, their power to do work.”\(^2\)

Roosevelt’s charm worked on reporters throughout his career as many scholars such as Steven Ponder have noted. This charm helped him to manage the press by approaching “the correspondents personally, rather than dealing with them at a distance or through a screen of secretaries.”\(^3\) In dealing personally with the reporters, Roosevelt was able to sway them into writing more favorable stories about his administration, his agenda and his personality. The same personality that charmed many reporters into what Ponder called “hero worship” then became the same personality that readers across the country read about the next day.\(^4\) Reporters consequently took an active role in constructing and propagating Roosevelt’s personality to the people of the United States.

The press continued to follow Roosevelt in his post-Presidential years, building up his personality through coverage of his African safari and journey through Europe in 1909-1910.

\(^1\) Biographical Sketch. Charles Willis Thompson Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
\(^2\) Thompson, 112.
\(^4\) Ponder, 24.
They too covered his return back to New York City, when thousands flocked to the streets to welcome him home. He was the most famous man in the world but in the Election of 1912, this would prove to be a major problem for Roosevelt and the Progressive Party.\textsuperscript{15} The Party was proclaimed to be bigger than one man, a party based on a movement that called for a more direct democracy and more emphasis on human rights. Yet the Progressive Party still needed publicity and Roosevelt, a master of press relations, could certainly provide it.

Roosevelt’s campaign was defined by a messaging balancing act, stressing issues at some points and Roosevelt at others. They tried desperately to keep policies at the forefront while still trying to appease the reporters, who had grown so used to their personality-based coverage of Roosevelt. Balancing these dichotomous goals became the challenge for Roosevelt on the stump in 1912. To succeed, it would take an “amazing touch.”

\textsuperscript{15} Edmund Morris, \textit{Colonel Roosevelt} (New York: Random House, 2010), 40.
The Amazing Touch

If charm alone won elections, Roosevelt would have taken back the White House in 1912. “Damned if I know how he does it,” said Colonel Lyon. “He doesn’t have to make a speech; in fact, half the time he doesn’t make one. He says, ‘Friends, I’m glad to see you,’ and they go off and vote for him.”16 This was Roosevelt’s greatest political asset in action, an ebullient personality that helped him connect with voters, politicians and, maybe most importantly in 1912, reporters on a personal level to win over their hearts and make them supporters for life. Lawrence Abbott, president of Outlook magazine and one of Roosevelt’s confidants, called it a “magnetic force of personality” that “surrounded him as a kind of nimbus, imperceptible but irresistibly drawing him everyone who came into his presence—even those who believed they were antagonistic or inimical to him.”17 Thompson called it “magic,” a spell cast on reporters through “a large, joyous and generous soul” that coaxed them into writing supportive stories about the Colonel.18 But for Barclay H. Farr, a classmate of Roosevelt’s son Kermit at Groton School, this Roosevelt personality trait could only go by one name: the “amazing touch.”19

Roosevelt understood the importance of making personal connections in politics and throughout his career used his “amazing touch” to forge the personal relationships that would help him drum up support for an item on his agenda or, in the case of 1912, take back the White House on Election Day. Though multifaceted, certain elements of the “amazing touch” proved to be the most effective in making these connections, elements that undoubtedly

16 Thompson, 173.
19 The Reminiscences of Barclay H. Farr (1953), 24, in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University, hereafter Farr, COHC.
influenced Dale Carnegie while writing *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Roosevelt had a tremendous ability to remember names and faces. “It seemed to me uncanny, the way he could do it,” Farr said.\(^{20}\) He remembers being aboard a yacht with the President, greeting the Great White Fleet as they returned to Norfolk, Virginia, after their trip around the globe in 1907. After having all the ships pass, each giving the 21 gun salute, Roosevelt climbed aboard the flagship to address the Admiral and his crew. With six to seven hundred sailors listening on “all looking like peas in a pod,” Roosevelt congratulated the group and spoke about what the circumnavigation meant to the country. Then halfway through the address, Roosevelt suddenly stopped speaking and summoned a sailor sitting aboard a turret of the ship quite a distance away.\(^{21}\) The sailor was shocked and unsure if he was the one being spoken to. Yet when Roosevelt continued to beckon him, his crewmates pushed him forward. The sailor climbed down the turret and towards Roosevelt, moving his cap into his hands:

> “Aren’t you the sailor who presented Mrs. Roosevelt and me with a loving cup when we went down to Panama several years ago?” Roosevelt asked.
> “Yes, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President,” the nervous sailor replied.
> “Haven’t you shaved off your mustache since that time?”
> “Yes, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President.”
> “I’m delighted to see you. Congratulations on the trip!”\(^{22}\)

For a politician, the importance of remembering a person’s name or face cannot be understated, Carnegie said in his seminal book. “One of the first lessons a politician learns is this: ‘To recall a voter’s name is statesmanship. To forget it is oblivion,’” he writes.\(^{23}\) Roosevelt, with his tremendous memory and “amazing touch” certainly embodied this lesson in 1912, and, as demonstrated in his Blackfoot speech, even took it a step further.

\(^{20}\) Farr, COHC, 24.
\(^{21}\) Farr, COHC, 22-23.
\(^{22}\) Farr, COHC, 23.
Though it was still certainly important for Roosevelt to remember voter names, connecting with a single potential voter when thousands were listening simply didn’t make sense. As such, Roosevelt worked to apply the power of remembering a person’s name to the macro level by tailoring his message and using anecdotes to relate to the many different crowds he spoke to. Roosevelt’s personalized message could be politically driven as in Spokane, Washington, where he gave two speeches to nearly five thousand women and stressed the issue of women’s suffrage. He gained hearty applause from the crowd by simply starting his address with the phrase “my fellow citizens.”

But more often then not, Roosevelt’s personality proved the most powerful weapon in connecting with the thousands who witnessed him on the stump in 1912, especially during his swing through the Western states. There his campaign speeches were filled with anecdotes from his days in the Badlands and frequent interruptions from the rowdy crowds. Roosevelt reminisced about his old cowhand Little George Myers in Miles City, Montana. In Laguna, New Mexico, Roosevelt spent time with the Pueblo Indians, showing off some of the sign language he had picked up when he lived among the Mandans and Sioux. And in Tennessee, he temporarily dropped his campaign, as the Washington Post wrote, and told the assembled crowd that “If there are any of the crowd I went bear hunting with here, I want to see them. I want them to come right up and talk about b’ars.” The hunters in the crowd obliged and Roosevelt spent an hour talking about his famous bear hunt in Tennessee when he was President.

25 Thompson, 177.
26 Thompson, 182-185.
Yet knowing he still had an election to win, Roosevelt always worked to mix in politics with his “amazing touch.” During a speech in Big Timber, Montana, Roosevelt explained to the crowd that the Progressive Party aimed to give everyone in the nation a “fair show,” though it knew that legislation could not make every American equally rich or successful. To drive the point home, Roosevelt tailored his message to the Montana crowd: “I know some men that you could give the best rifle in the world to, and after one of them got the rifle I could beat him with a club. At the same time you want to give a good man a good rifle.” The metaphor seemed to have worked for, as Thompson writes for, “the riflemen who heard it applauded stormily.”

This combination of politics and personality, national issues discussed with local flair became the backbone of Roosevelt’s Progressive Party campaign in 1912. Roosevelt’s stock speeches on the need for tariff reform or regulation of the trusts were strewn with hints of the “amazing touch:” a direct appeal to “you who wear the button” when the Colonel saw Civil War veterans in the crowd or even a word of warning to the children who got too close to his train for, as Roosevelt always noted, it might back up and “we can’t afford to lose any little Bull Mooses, you know.” Roosevelt’s political message in 1912 then was not directed at the masses that flocked to see him speak. It was rather a communication strategy that would influence Carnegie 14 years later and one that Roosevelt mastered in 1912: Relate to people, remember their names on the stump and what you say will take on a “special importance” to those listening. The “amazing touch,” mixed with politics, marked Roosevelt’s best chance at taking back the White House.

28 Thompson, 179.
29 Thompson, 144; “Cowboys Turn Out to Welcome Colonel,” New York Times, September 8, 1912.
30 Carnegie, 83.
Yet all of this was reinforced and aided by the fact that Roosevelt was Roosevelt, one of the most well-known men on the planet. Through his various positions of power (from state Assemblyman to President of the United States), his bevy of interests (from botany to poetry) and almost storybook life to date (from a sick child who doctors didn’t think would live past age four to a robust Rough Rider), by 1912 Roosevelt was the epitome of Warren Sussman’s twentieth-century personality. Roosevelt’s endless energy, advocacy of the strenuous life, use of the bully pulpit and even that famed Rooseveltian smile, the toothy grin, aggressive as well as friendly that the *New York Evening Sun* once said “almost literally beamed around the world” made him an indomitable personality at the turn of the century that captured the attention of the nation. Through his boundless knowledge and pursuits in so many different fields of life, Roosevelt was able to relate to seemingly anyone he spoke to and portray himself as someone who understood them and could help them. As Abbott writes:

> Among soldiers he was greeted as a soldier; among statesman, as a statesman among pioneers and woodsmen, as a hunter and naturalist; among scientists, as a scholar and explorer; among men of letters, as a writer and historian; among preachers, as a teacher of morals; among kings, as a man of royal prerogatives; among plain men and women, as a fellow citizen and democrat; and—last but far from least—among children, as a protector and sympathetic companion.

Roosevelt’s ability to use his “amazing touch” to appeal to large crowds on a personal basis made him wildly successful on the stump in 1912. Throngs crowded onto city streets, thousands packed into arenas, and hundreds lined the railways, cheering his every word. Many who witnessed him in action were likely converted into Bull Moose. However, even though Roosevelt traversed well over 11,000 miles during his campaign, becoming the first

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32 Abbott, 266.
Presidential candidate to encircle the United States, many cities and towns across the country remained “untouched” by his charismatic oratory. But the press, Roosevelt knew, could help.

33 “Roosevelt Returns Ready to Go Again,” New York Times, October 2, 1912.
The Charley Thompson Finger Club

Roosevelt was no stranger to reporters and reporters too were no strangers to Roosevelt, who could always be counted on for news. As a youthful New York state Assemblyman, biographer Edmund Morris writes that Roosevelt’s cyclonic energy and disregard for decorum—Roosevelt would lean over his desk and yell “Mister Spee-kar!” in his screechy voice and thick Harvard accent until recognized by the chair—intrigued the press, who realized that “the noticeable word ROOSEVELT, besprinkled over a column of otherwise dull copy, was a guarantee of readership.” Roosevelt too realized the power the press could have in garnering support for his initiatives. As police commissioner he befriended reporters, most notably Lincoln Steffans and Jacob Riis, who in turn covered some of his early midnight patrols and attempts to eliminate corruption in the department. Film cameras were rolling when the Rough Riders set off to Cuba and reporters like Richard Harding Davis wired back laudatory stories to the States about the unit’s heroics in battle. And as Governor of New York, Steven Ponder writes Roosevelt used “the carrot and the stick” of easily available news to gain coverage for his reform efforts, holding press briefings twice a day, once for the morning and once for the afternoon papers, to ensure reporters had a constant supply of news about his new proposals.

By the time he reached the White House in 1901, Roosevelt had developed a symbiotic relationship with reporters: he provided a constant supply of news, reporters provided him with coverage. There were, however, rules to follow. Roosevelt commonly

37 Ponder, 21.
talked off-the-record and frankly with reporters during his Presidency, floating policy ideas, bashing party officials or even just venting whatever was on his mind with the expectation that the information stay out of print. Reporters who kept this these chats out of print earned Roosevelt’s trust and, as such a spot in the “Paradise Club,” which ensured more access to the President and big news “scoops” whenever they came. For those reporters who broke his trust, the “Ananias Club,” named for the Biblical man who fell dead after lying about a gift to the church, awaited. “Ananias Club” members were mercilessly cut off from further access to news and, depending on the severity of the breech, the reporter’s paper or agency would be cut off from legitimate news as well. The threat of the “Ananias Club” was huge for a reporter, Roger Streitmatter writes. Roosevelt had transformed the White House into a key source of daily news and being cut off from the President’s stream of information would have devastating consequences for the reporter and his backing newspaper. As such, Streitmatter said, “most reporters buckled under the president’s intimidation tactics and wrote the favorable stories that he wanted.”

Certainly the same rules held true in 1912. But without the headline making power of the Presidency behind it, Roosevelt’s threat of the “Ananias Club” didn’t strike the same fear into reporters’ hearts. And given the uphill challenge Roosevelt and the Progressive Party faced in 1912—a third party formed in just a few months running against a well-financed, strong Democratic candidate in Wilson and an angry Republican Party that would do everything in its power to keep the Colonel from receiving a third term—Roosevelt needed to keep reporters in his corner, supplying positive publicity for the campaign.

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To do this then, Roosevelt looked to his “amazing touch” for help. Roosevelt understood the pressures of the trade and did what he could to make reporters’ jobs easier during the swing around the states. Campaign reporting at the turn of the century was taxing and stressful, Thompson recounts. Candidates used the same stock speeches stop after stop, pleasing to the audiences who hadn’t heard them before but monotonous to a reporter who was expected to find something new and “newsy” in the address. Reporters, Thompson writes, would “have to pile off the train at each stop, scramble into automobiles, buffet their way through the shouting crowds, gain a place of vantage near the speaker, weigh every word he says, rush for the telegraph office if he says anything new, make hurried arrangement for wires, rush for the train and typewrite furiously.” Repeated for each of the dozen or so speeches a candidate might give on any given day, the reporter’s work on the campaign trail was “hard grinding,” “strenuous,” and not all that rewarding.

Roosevelt then did what he could to eliminate some of the toil and hassle of the reporters’ hectic daily routine. He let reporters know what to expect before each speech. “Now the next stop will be at Blankville,” Roosevelt might say before a less than newsworthy speech, “You don’t have to bother about that; I’m going to get off the usual thing.” Conversely, when the big address came, Roosevelt made sure the reporters were ready: “At Dashtown, where we stop next, you’d better be on the job. I’ll have some new stuff there.” Roosevelt also gave reporters rough sketches and key lines to his stump speeches so that reporters would have something to send their editors for deadline. For more important addresses, Oscar King Davis and the Progressive Party’s publicity team took this a step further, sending prewritten speeches to press associations and other media so they could

40 Thompson, 142.
41 Thompson, 142.
be handled several days in advance of their delivery.\textsuperscript{42} All of this eased the burden of the reporters aboard the \textit{Sunbeam}. It allowed reporters to give their editors a better idea of what stories might be coming in when, and this, Thompson writes, not only “saved us useless physical and mental work, but economized our time and systemized our schedules.”\textsuperscript{43}

As he did with the big crowds that came to hear him speak, Roosevelt used his “amazing touch” on the reporters who followed him on the \textit{Sunbeam}. He worked to build relationships with the reporters. He learned their names, knew their career paths and demonstrated that he cared about them personally. Somewhere along the campaign trail, Thompson cut his finger opening a bottle of mucilage. Soon the finger became infected and gave Thompson “such serious trouble as to affect [his] general health.” The Colonel became deeply concerned and Thompson said he did something in Portland, Oregon, that he called remarkable but “highly Rooseveltian.” Thousands lined the streets of the city to greet Roosevelt as he made his way from his railcar to the Portland Hotel, where he was scheduled to have a dinner meeting with major political players from the state. Roosevelt paraded down the streets and into the hotel where more supporters filled the lobby, stairs and hallways leading to the main dining room. Roosevelt smiled and nodded at the onlookers until he caught a glimpse of Thompson standing with his fellow \textit{Sunbeam} writers along the hotel mezzanine. He suddenly stopped the procession to the consternation of the event planners and ran to the \textit{New York Times} writer. Roosevelt hadn’t seen Thompson all day and anxiously asked Thompson about his finger. “Don’t you think you’d better go back to New York?” Thompson remembers the Colonel asking. “I wouldn’t for anything have you risk

\textsuperscript{42} Davis, 358.
\textsuperscript{43} Thompson, 143.
your health, and it’s in pretty risky shape.” Reassured by Thompson that he was feeling all right, Roosevelt jumped back into the procession and headed to dinner.\textsuperscript{44}

This was an example of the “amazing touch” at its finest: an ex-President, a worldwide political celebrity with thousands of people cheering him on breaking from an important procession to check in to see how you were feeling. That Roosevelt—the Theodore Roosevelt—would take the time to worry about his infected finger left a lasting impact on Thompson and likely made him think twice when it came to writing something even a little negative about the Colonel. As such, the “amazing touch” had amazing results for Roosevelt in 1912, helping him to build a cadre of loyal reporters who could be counted on for positive coverage throughout the Progressive campaign.

But the “amazing touch” was not limited to these more grandiose examples; it was always in action in Roosevelt’s day to day dealings with the reporters. The scribes on the \textit{Sunbeam} and the Roosevelt men on the \textit{Mayflower} were all growing more and more tired with each mile travelled and each speech delivered. Even the vivacious Colonel lamented the jam-packed schedules and strain outdoor speeches took on his voice to his sister Corrine. “It has been a very interesting fight, and never was there a fight better worth making,” Roosevelt wrote. “But the exertion is tremendous, and I cannot begin to express how I look forward to Election Day and the end of the battle.”\textsuperscript{45}

The men on both the \textit{Sunbeam} and the \textit{Mayflower} did what they could to add some pleasure to hard work of the campaign swing. Every night a poker game was played in the confines of the press car and all in the \textit{Mayflower} knew about it, all that is except for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Thompson, 137-138.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Letter from TR to Corrine September 1, 1912. Theodore Roosevelt Collection. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
\end{itemize}
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Roosevelt. Lyon, Doctor Terrell and the rest of the Roosevelt men each night then had to come up with a clever excuse to make their way into the Sunbeam and leave the Colonel by himself back on the train. Thompson’s infected finger one night provided the perfect alibi. One by one the Roosevelt men made their way onto the Sunbeam, asking the Colonel if it was okay to check on Thompson. Roosevelt, so “worried about that boy,” allowed them all to go, asking all his men to hurry back with a prognosis. He went back to reading only to find himself sitting in the railcar alone after a short while. By this time, Roosevelt said he had become a bit sympathetic himself and decided he too should go back to see how Thompson was getting along.46

There he found them, all playing poker. Roosevelt jokingly dubbed them “The Charley Thompson Finger Club,” as he described it to John Leary, “a very exclusive organization devoted to the study of financial problems, psychology, and the relative and varying values of certain pieces of paper. In other words, it is a poker club.”47 For the rest of the trip he enjoyed the occasional trip back to the Sunbeam to joke with the “members” about their play or extend mock sympathy to those who joined the “meeting.” And Thompson writes the name stuck as “the flight of time did not dim his joy in it,” for he introduced Thompson three years later to his daughters-in-law as “the President of the Charley Thompson Finger Club.” Even in the years that followed the Battle of 1912, Roosevelt referred to the new generations of reporters that followed him as the “Charley Thompson Finger Club.”48

47 Leary, 16.
48 Thompson, 141.
Further, when Roosevelt wasn’t voraciously reading—Davis reports he took with him volumes on scientific subjects, two or three French or German works, a story or two of Dickens, a volume or two of poetry and some miscellaneous works with him on the campaign swing—the Colonel could often be found with the reporters telling jokes or even thin-skinned as he was indulging in a bit of self-deprecating humor.\textsuperscript{49} Reporters and Roosevelt men alike rejoiced when the Colonel informed them they wouldn’t have anything to worry about in the remaining speeches of the trip. They chanted, “We’re going home, we’re going home” and playfully recited the Roosevelt’s stock speeches complete with “exaggerated copy of the Colonel’s voice and manner.” Although they thought they were out of earshot, the Colonel heard. He emerged from his compartment on the train not to scold, however, but to join in. He marched around the cabin, wagging his finger in the face Col. Lyon and tearing through his paragraph on social and industrial justice in his highest falsetto to the delight of his listeners. “That was his peroration,” Thompson said. “It may not have been the greatest speech he ever made, but I’ll swear it was one of the most successful.”\textsuperscript{50}

By easing their pressures and using the “amazing touch” to connect personally with the scribes on the Sunbeam, Roosevelt was able to—as with those who heard him on the stump—make them generally supportive of the Progressive campaign. This was an extension of the press relations tactics he honed during his years in the White House, Streitmatter argues. As President he accommodated reporters with the first ever White House press room to indicate to them that they were not outsiders but insiders, filling a public function just like the other members of the president’s staff. Roosevelt then used his friendly demeanor and “amazing touch” to reinforce this feeling of being a part of the White House team. “His aim

\textsuperscript{49} Davis, 353.
\textsuperscript{50} Thompson, 145-146.
was to use his personality and his power to charm the reporters, to make them feel that he had taken them into his confidence and, therefore, had made them insiders at the White House and in the creation of national and international policy,” Streitmatter writes. “If the reporters thought of themselves as part of a presidential team that was shaping history, they would write favorably of their leader and his programs.” And it worked, J.J. Dickinson, a former White House correspondent wrote in 1907. White House reporters were wooed into writing glowing stories about the President and his policies in order to join the exclusive “cuckoo” club, named for the “journalistic bird that is permitted to make its principal roost close to the Executive chamber.”

The same ideas held true in 1912, where reporters were given their own mobile “press room” on the Sunbeam, connected to the Mayflower, so the “cuckoos” could still roost close to the Colonel. These reporters, like those who covered the Roosevelt White House, were also lured into the Roosevelt team with the notion they were part of a team that would shape history, a team that if elected, would codify the planks of the Progressive Party’s “Covenant with the People” and forever change the country for the better. And even if the enormous cheering crowds and religious zeal of the Progressive Party’s supporters didn’t inspire reporters covering the campaign to become “Bull Moosers,” there was still the “amazing touch.”

Using his “amazing touch” on the reporters also proved helpful for Roosevelt in circumventing the opinions of editors back in the newsroom, many of whom he suspected opposed the Progressive movement. A look at the New York Times coverage of Roosevelt and the Progressive Party in 1912 clearly demonstrates the differences between the views of

51 Streitmatter, 109-110.
52 Streitmatter, 109-110.
the reporters on the train and the editors in their offices, as well as the power of Roosevelt’s personality. By 1912, the *New York Times* stood as one of the nation’s most influential newspapers with a circulation of over 200,000 and soaring ad revenues that gave the paper the financial resources to get stories and scoops that other papers could not.\(^{53}\) Unfortunately for Roosevelt, the paper’s editorial board supported Woodrow Wilson, so much so that Wilson, upon winning the Democratic nomination, said he owed it all to an editorial written by the *Times*’ Charles Ransom Miller.\(^{54}\) Additionally, the editorial board denounced Roosevelt and the Progressives. Never a supporter of the Colonel, endorsing “the antithesis of Roosevelt in temperament and opinion,” Alton B. Parker in the 1904 election, the *Times* editorial pages inaccurately attacked Roosevelt and his followers in 1912, calling the Colonel “an avowed Socialist,” whose “followers and worshippers are quite without the perception of the moral defects and delinquencies of the dangerous temperamental aberrations of THEODORE ROOSEVELT.”\(^{55}\) And in endorsing Wilson and calling for President Taft to come in second, the paper wrote:

> It would be of ill-omen, it would be a quite disquieting indication of unsound popular judgment, of unsteadiness, and of want of sense and responsibility of the electorate, if so large a part of the people should yield to the appeals of Mr. Roosevelt as to put him second in the polling...It would be a cause not merely for chagrin but for apprehension if the larger part of the great party that has so long held power should now yield to the persuasions of a man whom in their wisdom and in their calmness they should reject.\(^{56}\)

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With the editorial pages of the *Times* and so many other newspapers fervently against him, Roosevelt needed to work his magic to get coverage friendly to the Progressive Party in the pages of the *Times*. For this, Roosevelt relied on his personal relationship with Thompson. In cultivating a friendship with the writer, both in the professional and personal sense, Roosevelt was able to get Thompson to ignore the political leanings of his editors and write stories favorable to the Bull Moose campaign. So on a day when the editorial pages of the *Times* accused Roosevelt of “pleading the gross delusion of ‘protection’” when it came to issue of Canadian reciprocity, Thompson’s account on the day’s campaign stops in Connecticut contained a detailed account on the Progressive Party’s tariff plan. And on a day when the editorial writers called the Bull Moose platform “so altogether incoherent in its professed purposes, that only a centipede could stand on it,” Thompson’s page one story on Roosevelt’s Denver speech featured quotes from the Colonel that hammered Wilson’s proposals for trust regulation as “a proposal only of the schoolroom; that it’s a proposal put forward by and appealing to only men whose knowledge is gained through books, not through life.” In short, on a day when the editorials in the *Times* were hitting hard, Roosevelt could count on Thompson to help him punch back in the news columns.

Yet as good as he was in using his “amazing touch” with individual reporters to help bypass the leanings of a newspaper’s editorial board, Roosevelt benefited greatly from the work of an editor he likely never had an opportunity to charm. And knowing the somewhat icy personality of Carr Van Anda, it probably wouldn’t have worked.

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All the News That’s Fit to Print

It is impossible to understand the appeal of Theodore Roosevelt without looking at the reporters who covered him, reporters like Thompson who used the power of the press to spread his personality to all corners of the country. But to understand how these journalists were able to do so, one must look at the major shift towards journalistic objectivity at the start of the 20th century, spurred on by the rise of The New York Times and its legendary editor Carr Van Anda.

Many scholars including Michael Schudson in his book Discovering the News link the revolution of the Penny Press in the 1830s with the development of objectivity in journalism. Cheaper newspapers meant larger circulations and with it, more profitable advertising, which freed the papers from the subsidies and influence of political parties. The papers too discovered the importance of the news and hired reporters and correspondents to seek out stories and get exclusive scoops that would help boost circulation and with it, advertising rates. As a result, Schudson argues news began to triumph over the editorial and facts over opinion, which would in time lead to journalism’s allegiance to objectivity. 59

Yet it wasn’t until Van Anda’s tenure at the Times that the divide between news and editorial became clear and the ideals of objectivity truly came to fruition. Van Anda had journalism in his blood. Growing up in the small town of Wapakoneta, Ohio, Van Anda started his first “newspaper” at age six, composed of clippings from available newspapers and magazines pasted on foolscap sized paper and sold to relatives at a rate of ten cents a copy. At age ten he started his own press bureau and a short time later, launched his own publication The Boy’s Gazette, printed on a homemade press that biographer Barnett Fine

writes was “hardly more than a pair of hinged boards and a wooden frame that held the worn type salvaged from the discarded outfits of one of the village newspapers.” He kept it for years, using the proceeds to fund his second passion for science and experimentation, folding only when Van Anda entered Ohio University at age 16. But while The Boy’s Gazette was dead, Van Anda’s career was just beginning.  

After two years of college, Van Anda decided he had enough of formal education and found a job back in Wapankoneta as a “foreman” at the The Auglaize Republican, one of three weeklies serving the town. From there, the road to New York City—his dream city to work in—began. Van Anda jumped from The Auglaize Republican to the The Cleveland Herald as a typesetter then editor, to an editor position at Cleveland’s The Evening Argus, to the night editor spot The Baltimore Sun and finally to the position of night editor for “the newspaper man’s newspaper,” Charles Dana’s The New York Sun.  

It was here that Van Anda received, as Fine put it “priceless lessons in The Sun’s ‘school of journalism,’” lessons that would shape his views of journalism and, years later, journalism itself. At the Sun, the “story” thrived. Certainly articles needed to have all the facts and report them accurately, but as author George Douglas writes in The Golden Age of Newspapers, if that was all it had, it would not receive praise from the editor’s desk. “[Dana] wanted the newspaper writer to write, to use imagination, wit, instinct, education, and then to create an ambience, a world perhaps, for every story,” Douglass writes.  

Reporters, to Dana, needed to be the eyes, the ears, the emotion of the reader. Details like facial expressions, the weather, the crowd, the scenery all made their way into the stories of the Sun, transforming

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60 Fine, 21-22.
the newspaper into less a journal of record and more a work of literature. But as beautiful as a “story” may have been, it still needed to be news—something new, something fresh, compelling, unique and interesting that a reader could understand and relate to. As the *Sun* city editor John Bogart said in a quote that is still repeated by journalists today: “When a dog bites a man that is not news. But when a man bites a dog, that’s news.”62

While Van Anda was certainly influenced by Dana and the *Sun*’s definitions of newsworthiness and push for big scoops and breaking stories, he could seemingly care less about the “story.” As David Halberstram writes, Van Anda was not interested in a flowing narrative or beautiful writing style. He simply wanted the facts and the news, “the greyer it was,” Halberstram writes, “the better.”63 This made him the perfect man to implement *New York Times* owner Adolph Ochs vision of a nonpartisan, objective newspaper on a daily basis. Ochs purchased the struggling *Times* in 1896 and unveiled his new dream for the newspaper in a business statement on August 19:

> It will be my earnest aim that THE NEW YORK TIMES give the news, all the news, in concise and attractive form, in language that is parliamentary in good society, and give it as early, if not earlier, than can be learned through any reliable medium; to give the news impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of party, sect, or interests involved; to make the columns of THE NEW YORK TIMES a forum for consideration of all questions of public importance, and to that end to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of public opinion.  

It was an almost revolutionary ideal at a time when sensationalism, partisanship and, with William Randolph Hearst now at the helm of the *Morning Journal*, flat out fabrication dominated the New York newspaper market. “Not a penny would a single newspaper man of

62 Douglas, 73.
that day have given for Mr. Och’s chances to win,” Fine writes. Yet almost immediately, Och’s formula began to work. Yet new journalistic heights were to still to be reached for in 1904 as the Sun began to set after the death of Charles Dana, Carr Van Anda became the managing editor of the New York Times.

Immediately, Van Anda made his presence known. Guided by the principle “the more news that you could give your readers, the greater appreciation you get in return,” as Fine writes, Van Anda expanded the newsgathering operations and the size of the paper grew rapidly. Reporters too were given free reign by Ochs and Van Anda to report the news, given only one requirement, Thompson said: “to comport themselves like honorable men.” So long as a piece was newsworthy, the managing editor would run it, Davis said of Van Anda:

He knows the news, and how to get it, and how to print it. And he will print it as it comes, whether the ‘after-breakfast’ men, who write the editorials, like it or not. They can say what they please in their editorial columns. But editorial news and editorial views keep out of the news columns under his jurisdiction.

This was modern journalism coming of age: facts trumping editorial biases, independence and objectivity before all else. It would provide the perfect environment for Roosevelt to work his “amazing touch” on reporters like Thompson and make headlines for the Progressive Party in 1912.

Required only to behave like an “honorable man,” Thompson was left susceptible to Roosevelt’s charm. He was separated both physically and journalistically from the editorial board back in New York that despised the Colonel and the Progressive Party. Roosevelt then

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65 Fine, 37.
66 Douglas, 124-125.
67 Fine, 40.
68 Thompson, 197.
69 Davis, 32-33.
could work his magic on Thompson—check on his finger to show he cared, make a few jokes here and there with the reporter—and garner through the “amazing touch” generally favorable news coverage in one of the nation’s most influential newspapers. The New York Times and Van Anda’s philosophy on journalism gave Thompson the chance to be objective in his coverage of the Progressive Party. Roosevelt, thanks to his “amazing touch,” gave Thompson a reason to forsake it and support, consciously or not, the Progressive cause in his stories.

All the Progressive Party then needed to do was make news, which with Roosevelt leading the party, they easily did. If “news is any event which varies from the reader’s picture of the normal and accustomed world” as journalist Will Irwin defined it in Propaganda and the News, the Progressive Party certainly fit the mold. In simply being a third party, the Progressive Party was something new and newsworthy for Americans. Prior to 1912, third parties had rarely been relevant in presidential elections: former President Millard Fillmore earned 22 percent of the popular vote as the Whig/Know Nothing Party in 1856 though carrying only one state; John C. Breckridge of the Southern Democratic Party and John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party received 72 and 39 electoral votes respectively in 1860; Populist James B. Weaver won 22 electoral votes in the Election of 1892. Yet the Progressive Party was different. They were fairly well funded, spending $596,405.04 in 1912 thanks to in part to major contributions from George W. Perkins and publisher Frank Munsey totaling $265,000.\(^70\) They had popular support too as Progressive Party clubs quickly sprang up around the nation to rally voters on the local level. But most importantly, they had Roosevelt, an ex-President, war hero and one of the most well-known men on the face of the

Earth leading the Progressive Party. He knew how to make headlines and assured editors and reporters alike that the Bull Moose Party would be newsworthy.

If this wasn’t newsworthy enough, Roosevelt and the Progressives took their new party on the road to spread his message directly to the people on a nationwide campaign. The notion of campaigning itself fit Irwin’s definition of news. Gradual steps were being made towards modern campaigning with each race for the White House: the Elections of 1800 and 1828 introduced negative campaigning to races, William Henry Harrison’s campaign in 1840 gave rise to slogans, songs and the “selling” of a candidate to the people, and in 1880 James Garfield hired a publicist, writer Horatio Alger, Jr. to help promote his “rags to riches” story.71 William McKinley’s campaign in 1896, masterminded by Mark Hanna, too deserves credit for developing the concept of a ground level proto-grassroots style of campaigning, as well as a communications style that foreshadowed the “amazing touch” of 1912. During his famed “front porch campaign,” communications scholar William Harpine writes that McKinley constantly sought to connect with his listeners, working to “convey to the audience with great immediacy a feeling that he knew the working people and understood them, that he cared about them, that he earnestly desired to be their friend.”72 These interactions were then, like the “amazing touch” sixteen years later, included in press reports, spreading the personal warmth of the front porch campaign to people around the country. Yet influential as the McKinley campaign was, it was still stationary, leaving only a few candidates—most

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72 William D. Harpine, From the Front Porch to the Front Page: McKinley and Bryan in the 1896 Presidential Campaign (College Station,TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 51.
notably Horace Greeley in 1872, James Blaine in 1884 and William Jennings Bryan in 1896—as the only candidates to take stump on their own behalf in election history.\textsuperscript{73}

The genius of the Progressive Party campaign thus lies in Roosevelt and the Bull Moosers’ ability to synthesize and expand upon these practices to create the first modern presidential campaign, a campaign that would help generate news. Like Harrison, Roosevelt had his own publicist/secretary, Oscar King Davis, stationed in the New York Headquarters to help manage the press and plan his campaign itinerary. But he also added the legendary journalist William Allen White to help garner publicity for the campaign as well spokesperson George Roosevelt, who at different times on the campaign trail talked to the press on behalf of his cousin.\textsuperscript{74} He also had a speaker’s bureau, headed by Henry Cochems in Chicago that helped schedule the Party’s biggest elocutionists, including Senator Albert Beveridge, Gifford Pinchot, Jane Addams and brilliant Brooklyn lawyer Bainbridge Colby. Colby’s trip through Wilson’s home state of New Jersey in mid September conjured up headlines for the Bull Moose Party in the \textit{Newark Sunday Call, East Brunswick Daily Home News} and \textit{Montclair Times}. That paper called Colby a “clear forceful speaker” and was obviously impressed by nearly 2,000 that came to hear him speak:

If the crowd which gathered at Montclair Centre Saturday night to witness the unfurling of the Progressive banner is any criterion of the strength of the movement here [it] will make the two old parties sit up and take notice on election day. It is said by those who follow political events that the meeting was the largest held here in years, if we except those when President Taft and Colonel Roosevelt were here in the spring.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73} Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies, "Modern Campaigning Origins," Grand Valley State University, \url{http://www.gvsu.edu/hauenstein/modern-campaigning-origins-452.htm} (accessed March 12, 2011).

\textsuperscript{74} Davis, 352-353; “1912 Lost Book Riles T.R., Plans Upset,” \textit{Morning Oregonian}, September 12, 1912.

\textsuperscript{75} “Progressives Have a Banner Raising,” \textit{Montclair Herald}, September 26, 1912.
With Roosevelt limited in just how many cities he could visit and party committees he could greet, Cochem’s group of speakers, along with the Progressive Party’s vice-presidential candidate Hiram Johnson, proved extremely important in building up voter support at the local level.

Still, the prime focus of the Bull Moose leaders was on Roosevelt who used the early part of the campaign to spread awareness about the party’s platform, one that certainly varied “the reader’s picture of the normal and accustomed world.” The Progressive Party platform was radical and comprehensive in its cry for reform. It included planks for a minimum wage, a proto-workman’s compensation plan, the creation of a Department of Labor, an inheritance tax and income tax amendment, a “single national health service,” an end to boss rule and equal suffrage, ideas that wouldn’t be realized until years and decades after 1912. But most important for the Progressive Party, considering their constant need for publicity, the platform was newsworthy. It was exactly the kind of new, fresh material that Van Anda pushed his reporters to cover and, combined with the fact that it was being discussed during the first nationwide presidential campaign by the Theodore Roosevelt, it was newsworthy to say the least.

The issue of the judicial recall clearly demonstrates the headline-grabbing blend of a radical platform, groundbreaking campaign swing and prominent newsworthy candidate in Theodore Roosevelt that helped garner media coverage, both positive and negative, for the Progressive Party. “An independent and upright judiciary, which fearlessly stands for the right, even against popular clamor, but which also understands and sympathizes with popular

76 Payne, 304-305.
needs, is a great asset of popular government,” Roosevelt told his Columbus supporters on a wintery day in February 1912. He added:

Our aim is to get the type of Judge that I have described, to keep him on the bench as long as possible, and to keep off the bench and, if necessary, take off the bench the wrong type of Judge. The question of applying the recall in any shape is one of expediency merely. Each community has a right to try the experiment for itself in whatever shape it pleases.77

He was not yet a candidate for President—it wouldn’t be until a few hours later that Roosevelt declared “my hat is in the ring” at a Cleveland train station—but the statement was news.78 It was an attack on one of the country’s most revered institutions, the independent court system, and, though later in the speech he added that recall should only be used when a “constitutional question” was involved and only as “a last resort,” the damage was done. Leaving the question of judicial recall somewhat open-ended, Roosevelt allowed newspapers to do the same in their headlines the next day. “ROOSEVELT INDORSES THE RECALL OF JUDGES” read a headline in the Times. “FAVORS RECALL OF UNSATISFACTORY COURT DECISION,” the Washington Post added on one of its sub-headlines. And in the Chicago Day Book, readers found “ROOSEVELT THROWS LOT WITH MOST RADICAL OF PROGRESSIVES; ATTACKS TAFT” splashed across an inside page.79

The issue of judicial recall followed Roosevelt. Though he remained mum on the subject for most of the early goings of the campaign, news columns and editorial writers hammered the Bull Moose and his party on the recall issue. Former Secretary of the Navy and Roosevelt’s old boss John Long was quoted in one New York Times piece as saying: “I cannot vote for him because I believe he is striking at the foundations of our Constitutional

78 “‘My Hat is in the Ring’==TR,” Washington Post, February 22, 1912.
79 “Roosevelt Throws Lot with Most Radical of Progressives; Attacks Taft,” Chicago Day Book, February 21, 1912.
Government by his theory of the recall of judicial officers by popular vote, thus making our courts subservient to popular caprice."

Roosevelt stoked the fire during a speech in Denver by stating he would be willing to extend the recall to the Presidency, a comment that earned him a spot on the front page of newspapers across the nation. Again, as with his Columbus comments on the recall, he did what he could to clarify his position. He told listeners that it was only a personal feeling and that as President he only felt power when the people were behind him and his policies. If he were President and lost the faith of the people, well, Roosevelt would “prefer to leave the Presidency” unless he won the people back. But the reporters already seized on the story. And Roosevelt only reiterated this controversial recall stance in Phoenix a few days later when he said “I should like to have the recall applied to everybody, including the President.”

Certainly not all of the media coverage on Roosevelt’s notion of recall was positive. To many, the recall seemed less a mainstream progressive proposal and more an idea from the “lunatic fringe.” Even Thompson seemed a little unnerved by the proposal and took a rare jab at the Colonel in his story about the Denver speech. “Roosevelt tonight exceeded the speed limit in radicalism,” he wrote. “He went further in his speech at the Denver Auditorium than he has ever gone before, by declaring his willingness to have the recall extended to the Presidency.”

But with the ideas of nonpartisanship and objectivity permeating throughout the media, the coverage of the issue was by and large fair. On the recall, on the “third term” issue, on his campaign finances, newspapers gave Roosevelt ample

space in news columns to explain his positions. Many newspaper articles, including Thompson’s story on the Denver address, quoted Roosevelt’s speeches at length, providing the facts from the source so the readers could make their own judgments. The editorial pages were still harshly critical of the Bull Moose. *The New York Sun* slammed Roosevelt’s recall notion, calling it “the craziest proposal that ever emanated either from himself or from any other statesman.”  

But in the newspaper columns, thanks to Van Anda’s influence, he could count on receiving a “square deal.”

Still Roosevelt needed to make news. The novelty of the third party, the nationwide campaign and the Progressive platform only took him so far. Reporters wanted to hear from the colorful confrontational Roosevelt, the man who had called playwright George Bernard Shaw “a blue-rumped ape,” who had claimed President McKinley had the backbone of a “chocolate éclair,” and had denounced Taft in the primaries as a “fathead” and a “puzzlewit.” But Roosevelt disappointed them in the early goings of the campaign. Roosevelt stuck mainly to stock phrases, uplifting but also repetitive rhetoric with some detailed ideas on the key issues of the tariff and the trusts. There were some barbs directed towards the Old Party bosses and some occasional shots at the Democratic Party platform. But, as Davis explains, there just wasn’t any fire. “Before this trip was half through, we began to receive word from some of our newspaper friends that the Colonel was going stale, and was rehearsing old stuff to such an extent that there was difficulty in getting away news stories that the papers would carry,” he writes. And so somewhat reluctantly, the

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86 Davis, 353.
Progressives shifted their campaign messaging to fit Irwin’s second definition of news:

“News is a report on the conflict of opposing forces.”\footnote{Will Irwin, \textit{Propaganda and the News or What Makes You Think So?} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1936), 49.}
The Battle for the Lord

It wasn’t looking good for the Progressive Party midway through the campaign swing. Roosevelt was tired and fatigue was beginning to show in his public appearances. In Portland, a city that greeted him with a flower carpet of 17,500 roses, he skipped a parade and speaking events, became irate when his copy of The Second Roman Republic by Hermit Paul went missing at the Hotel Oregon and gave a speech that the Oregonian said “seemed to lack the fire and enthusiasm in his delivery that has characterized his former appearances here.”

“People think that speechmaking is like drawing water from a faucet,” Roosevelt told the Oregonian. “If you want a quart, you draw a quart; if a gallon, you draw a gallon, but the analogy does not work out. You cannot say anything worth while in five minutes; it takes time to work out a speech and make it right.” And these speeches, sometimes numbering up to 30 a day and repeated day after day made the trip, Roosevelt told his sister Corrine, “inconceivably wearing.”

Newspaper straw polls reported that Roosevelt was fading. Unscientific and inconclusive as they were, they were nearly universal in their prediction that Wilson would take the White House and in some cases by overwhelming numbers. “Reports from the West indicate that the Roosevelt tide has passed the flood and is receding,” a Times editorial wrote about one straw poll. “The only way the Colonel can keep things going his way is for him to stay in the field, to be everywhere at once.”

He couldn’t. Roosevelt still needed the press to spread the “amazing touch” to all corners of the country. But the press needed news to do this

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and at the midpoint of the campaign, Roosevelt simply wasn’t providing it. This changed on September 14.

The San Francisco Coliseum was packed to the brim. Thousands waited in line for hours for the chance to get inside. Between 10,000 and 15,000 made it inside; thousands of others were turned away when “the Coliseum could hold no more.”91 Once inside, the assembled Bull Moosers sang and cheered while a band played. And when Roosevelt took the platform at 9 p.m., they greeted him with a reception that San Francisco Call reporter George A. Van Smith said, “Could not fail to gratify any man.”92 The crowd waved red bandanas, threw hats into the air and cheered so loud that the Washington Times reported the “blaring band could not be heard above the din.”93 For fourteen minutes the crowd roared, until finally quieting enough for Roosevelt to begin his speech, a speech that The New York Times called the most important since the Progressive Party convention.94 It would set the tone for the remainder of the campaign.

In his San Francisco speech, Roosevelt attacked Wilson for the first time. Roosevelt had criticized Wilson before his San Francisco speech but with nothing like the fire or conviction he managed that night. In St. Louis, he had condemned Wilson’s trust busting ability, telling the Progressive State Convention that “Mr. Wilson’s plan as far as I can gather is merely to continue the present futile system, adding fresh and empty protestations of hostility to the trusts, but giving no hint as to the any method by which these protestations

93 “Thousands at Coliseum Give Evidence of Their Faith in Head Mooser,” The San Francisco Call, September 15, 1912.
can become more than protestations.”  

And in a speech at Grand Forks, North Dakota, on September 6, Roosevelt had questioned Wilson and the Democrats tariff planks, stating, “Now Mr. Wilson’s party—the democratic—in their platform has declared that the entire tariff is unconstitutional. Either they mean that or they don’t. If they don’t mean it, then we can’t trust them in anything.” Yet the pre-San Francisco “attacks” seemed quite gentle by Rooseveltian standards, especially considering the barbs Wilson was throwing at the Progressives. In a particularly hard-hitting speech to laborers in Buffalo, Wilson accused Roosevelt of trying to “play Providence” and referred to the Colonel as “a self-appointed divinity.”

But San Francisco was different. Five days prior, Wilson was quoted in newspapers around the nation as saying, “Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of the government. The history of liberty is a history of resistance. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it.” Wilson’s quote became the backbone of Roosevelt’s address at the Coliseum. Roosevelt told the audience, “This is a bit of outworn academic doctrine which was kept in the schoolroom and the professorial study for a generation after it had been abandoned by all who had experience of actual life.” Wilson’s theories were of the “laissez-faire doctrine of the English political economists three-quarters of a century ago,” Roosevelt said, and “to apply it now in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, with its highly organized industries, with its railways, telegraphs and telephones, means literally and absolutely to refuse to make a single effort to better any one of our social or industrial

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But Roosevelt did more than attack Wilson in his speech. Like his many other speeches on the stump, Roosevelt described the problems facing American society such as child labor, the trusts and the tariff. And he also laid out and promoted his party’s promises including a workman’s compensation law, an eight-hour work day for women and the “Abyssinian Treatment” for the big businesses that put profits above the people.

It was the combining of these tactics, a promotion of the Progressive Party and a strong offensive against Wilson that made the San Francisco speech important. As the New York Times story covering the speech correctly notes, it drew the battle lines that would define the final three months of the campaign. “It was a declaration of war between two systems of government, that of limitation and that of extension,” the Times wrote. “It was a challenge on the part of those who believe in uplifting the people by the strengthening of government to those who believe that government to be best which governs least.”

Yet the battle lines extended beyond these ideological differences between the Progressives and the Democrats: it extended to the candidates as well. By working to frame Wilson as a sort of reclusive academic whose old, tired theories had been and would be discredited in the real world, Roosevelt tacitly framed himself as the antithesis: a proven, vibrant leader whose progressive principles would rectify the country’s social and industrial problems. Because of Roosevelt’s attacks on Wilson, disparities between the two candidates’ proposals on how to deal with the trusts became disparities in leadership styles and abilities. Quarrels over the tariff too became quarrels over whose character would best tackle the challenges facing the country. In short, because of Roosevelt’s San Francisco speech, in the 1912 Presidential

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Election, differences in policy between Governor Wilson and Colonel Roosevelt became differences in personality.

This was the Roosevelt the reporters were expecting and hoping for since the campaign started. Throughout his career, reporters relied on Roosevelt’s personality to help frame their stories and even make news itself. As President, Roosevelt’s daily life became news, Streitmatter writes, as the *New York Times* wrote about Roosevelt horse riding skills and the *Washington Post* began one front page story with the lede “President Roosevelt passed a quiet Sunday with his family at his Sagamore Hill home.”101 And after he left the White House in 1908, still wildly popular and without the policy-making power of political office behind him, news coverage became almost entirely personality based. Reporters covered Roosevelt’s African Safari, though with limited access due to his press ban, for as Edmund Morris points out, “no story could be more surefire than that of Colonel Roosevelt risking death in Africa!”102 They covered his journeys during the European trip, his welcome home parade in Manhattan and still, despite his proclaimed desire for privacy—he told the *New York Times* he wanted to “close up like a native oyster” —they covered his every move at Sagamore Hill. “ROOSEVELT ON A PICNIC” read one headline.103 “ROOSEVELT TACKLES HIS MAIL” read another.104 He did of course make truly newsworthy news in the years between his Presidency and 1912 through his 1910 speaking tour and support of Henry Stimson for New York Governor. But substance didn’t matter. For 25 years, Morris writes, the reporters were drawn in by “his ‘Teddy-bear’ caricaturability, perpetual motion, heroic

101 Streitmatter, 100-101.
102 Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*, 17.
103 “Roosevelt on a Picnic; He and His Family Have Their Annual Outing at Lloyd’s Neck,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1910.
glamour, machine-gun quotes and ricochet denials” and used their power of the press to spread this personality to the people. They weren’t about to stop now.

But in 1912, Theodore Roosevelt was trying to distance himself from the very thing that made him Theodore Roosevelt: his personality. Because the Progressive Party was supposed to a party bigger than Roosevelt, the Colonel, so conscious of his image throughout his career, tried to temper his personality in the early goings of the 1912 campaign.105 Providing the press with material that would only enhance and craft his personality in 1912 as he did during his seven-year presidency would only contradict the mass appeal idea of the party. Further, it would only fuel his critics who saw the Progressive Party as Progressive in name only; at its core it was The Roosevelt Party, created only to serve his personal ambition to take back the White House.106 The Progressives did what they could to refute this charge. William Allen White wrote letters to editors and correspondences that stressed that the Progressive Party was much more than Roosevelt. To one New York City resident White wrote, “Change the environment of men in these conditions so that environment may not react and cause chronic poverty, that is an idea bigger than Theodore Roosevelt, bigger than the tariff and bigger than any little two by four scheme of reform that ever has struck any party.”107

In his early speeches of the campaign, Roosevelt did what he could too in his rhetoric to put party over person. In the concluding paragraphs of his “Confessions of Faith,” Roosevelt emphasized that he was “not under the slightest delusion as to any power that

105 Strietmatter, 102-103.  
during my political career I have at any time possessed.”\(^{108}\) In his first campaign stop in Providence, the Colonel assured his audience that the Progressive movement was “real” and said that “the only part that I have had in it is that I have brought it on two or three years earlier than it might have come anyhow.”\(^{109}\) And, up until San Francisco, he stressed the issues above all else, which, though helpful in countering detractors left reporters wondering by mid-September: where’s the news?

Of course, the “amazing touch” on the stump ensured that some stories about Roosevelt’s personality, the kind of news that reporters sought, would still fill the pages of newspapers around the country. There were the crowd interactions, like Roosevelt’s chat with Otto Raphael’s sister in Blackfoot and the little quips about not losing any little Bull Mooses, which reporters like Thompson jumped on. There were sort of pseudo-events that exhibited Roosevelt’s personality along the campaign trail, most notably on the trip from Helena, Montana, to Spokane, Washington, where Roosevelt jumped into the engine and operated the train for about an hour. The engineer gave him a half hour lesson, the \textit{Washington Post} writes and then stood at the Colonel’s side as he worked the levers, tooted the whistle and proclaimed: “By George, this is bully!”\(^{110}\) But still, these glimmers of personality were clearly secondary to the politics and, while newsworthy, were not \textit{Roosevelt} newsworthy.

The San Francisco speech was. Papers across the nation picked up on the story, many publishing the tightly-worded speech in full. In subscribing to Irwin’s “conflict” definition of journalism, Roosevelt’s digs at Wilson made the Coliseum address a news making triumph.

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\(^{108}\) Payne, 280.


The political insults were exactly what the reporters hoped for and were waiting for since the start of the campaign. But it also rekindled arguments about the Progressive “One-Man” Party. The next day’s *Times* editorial said:

The Federal Government of his present fancy is to interfere in all industrial matters, to hamper commerce, to restrain personal liberty, to impede justice, to establish, indeed, a many-headed despotism which, however humanely conceived, would inevitably develop into an unbearable affliction, so destructive to progress that its violent overthrow would be only a question of time. Closely associated with, indeed inseparable from this ideal of the Progressive candidate is the transfigured and illumined Personality—the one of foreordained leader. It may be fairly said that he now has no idea of government, liberty or justice inseparable from himself.\footnote{111} Thus, the Progressives faced a crucial question, the answer to which would shape the rest of the Bull Moose campaign: Should they stick with the positive, but less than newsworthy, messaging or start making news by smashing Wilson, but risk fueling Roosevelt’s detractors? The Progressives decided to declare war on Wilson and hoped the “amazing touch” would help quell the critics.\footnote{112}

Make Wilson break became the new focus of the Progressive campaign, Davis writes. The Progressives thought constant attacks would “drive Wilson into one of his characteristic explosions, with result that could only be detrimental to his campaign” and hopefully provide Roosevelt with an opening to take back the White House.\footnote{113} Setting aside the issue of whether or not Wilson was actually prone to “characteristic explosions,” the new strategy made sense to the Progressives. Wilson, though improving was still not the relatively surefooted orator Roosevelt had become. As the “limitation of governmental power” comment demonstrated, Wilson was still prone to slipups on the stump and, with a bit of

\footnote{111}{“Two Doctines,” *New York Times*, September 16, 1912.}
\footnote{112}{Davis, 360-361.}
\footnote{113}{Davis, 360-361.}
prodding from the Progressives, could maybe be induced into even more flubs, flubs that Roosevelt could seize on to help pull off miracle on Election Day.

Believing he had nothing to lose and news to gain, Roosevelt began attacking Wilson immediately. In Pueblo, Colorado, just five days later, Roosevelt charged that Wilson’s trust platform was “a proposal only for the schoolroom” and that “he doesn’t know what workingmen need and how they actually live.”114 In Topeka, Kansas, he claimed Wilson said he supported labor and regulating the trusts but was against measures that would actually do both of these things. He was, Roosevelt concluded, “the Buchanan of the present industrial situation in the United States.”115

And this was only the start. For his second campaign swing, the Progressive leaders telegraphed Wilson’s speeches daily to the Mayflower and provided Roosevelt with a review of the Democrat’s record.116 It was a nearly 80,000 word long document that tracked Wilson’s political thought and actions on topics ranging from the tariffs and trusts to his praises of English government and relationship with President Cleveland.117 The record was comprehensive, featuring everything from a North American Review story in which Wilson called the party machine “necessary” to Wilson’s very own A History of the American People in which he called the immigrants of Southern Europe “…men of the lowest classes and men of the meaner sort, men out of ranks where there was neither skill nor energy, nor any initiative of quick intelligence.”118 Roosevelt and his men studied this report and Wilson’s speeches, which were now sent daily to the Mayflower by telegraph. They talked about him

114 Gould, Bull Moose on the Stump, 118.
115 Gould, Bull Moose on the Stump, 125.
116 Davis, 356-357.
117 Wilson Record, 2. Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
all the time; Davis remarked, “It was Wilson, Wilson, Wilson, all the time in the private car, and nothing but Wilson and his record in the Colonel’s talks.” And they used the information in the report, hammering Wilson harder with every speech with only one topic off-limits: Wilson’s infidelity. Though even this, Davis writes, could have been used if they had “complete documentary proof” and not just circumstantial evidence.\textsuperscript{119}

While the plan to attack Wilson may have made sense at the time, it is unclear if it actually helped the Progressive Party win over voters. At the very least, the new plan to attack did seem to help Roosevelt though, Davis said. “I had never seen him so well, so vigorous, or so interested,” he said. “And the longer we kept it up, the better it became.”\textsuperscript{120}

For the first time, Roosevelt could be himself and engage in the rhetorical battles that made him famous and newsworthy. Clearly benefiting from the voluminous record, Roosevelt harangued against Wilson in Houghton, Michigan, attacking his immigration stance. He read to the crowd from magazine articles where Governor Wilson stated “our own temperate blood…is receiving constant confusion and yearly experiencing a partial corruption of foreign blood.”\textsuperscript{121} In Saginaw, Michigan, he harangued against Wilson for saying he was “interested” and “encouraged” to see the Democratic and Republican parties substantially the same in recent years, a quote he used to bash the two old parties as reactionary.\textsuperscript{122} And in Chicago, Roosevelt unleashed his most vicious attacks yet: smashing Wilson for presiding over New Jersey as it developed into the “trust State” and charging him with dishonesty on

\textsuperscript{119} Davis, 360.
\textsuperscript{120} Davis, 356-357.
\textsuperscript{121} Davis, 360.
the stump. Wilson, Roosevelt concluded in a statement that was picked up in newspapers from coast to coast, was thus “unfit to occupy any position of trust in Government.”

But as predicted when Roosevelt cranked up the viciousness of his rhetoric, so did his opponents. Wilson continued his strong assault against the Bull Moose, adroitly handling Roosevelt’s jabs while still striking back. And just as Wilson’s record supplied ample material for Roosevelt, Roosevelt’s thirty-year career in politics made the Bull Moose a punching bag for the Governor. Wilson went after Roosevelt for calling the trusts “natural growths” and told the people in Colorado that “Mr. Roosevelt is trying to teach the trusts to sing.” Wilson by contrast was a relative political neophyte and his record was far less a liability than Roosevelt’s. Wilson too knew that the split in the Republican Party likely secured his victory and adopted what political communication analysts Judith Trent and Robert Friedenberg call the challenger style of communication: attack the record of opponents, take the offensive on issues, call for change without getting into details, remain optimistic and appear to represent the philosophical center of the political party. Wilson then was able to deflect Roosevelt’s calls for more specificity about his campaign promises, which could have lead to the Progressives desired “characteristic explosion.”

Further, with each speech Wilson seemed to be growing more and more confident on the stump and maybe even started to pick up a little bit of Roosevelt’s “amazing touch.” Like the Colonel, he drove a train across a part of Kansas, taking it up to a mile a minute at some points, and when asked how he enjoyed the experience, he replied with one of Roosevelt’s

most oft-used words: “Bully!“127 He too began to grow comfortable in front of increasingly large crowds. Wilson toyed with a huge throng in Pennsylvania split between him on either side saying “I’m glad to report I am not double-faced” and “You know I’m not beautiful and I don’t know which side I’m the best looking on,” two flashes of personality that the New York Times and other papers included in their stories. Wilson also began to realize the importance of personal dealings with the press. He was not Roosevelt, to whom press relations seemed to come so naturally, but he was quickly learning. Thompson, who also spent time in 1912 covering the New Jersey Governor said, “We all liked Wilson and were anxious to have the country like and understand him.” The reporters told him the significance of making himself clear and gave him a few pointers on communication technique, advice that really moved Wilson, Thompson said. “I appreciate this more than I can tell you,” Thompson remembers Wilson saying with “warm impetuosity.”129 This story might not have the same allure as the tales of the “Finger Club” or even Roosevelt’s self-mockery during the final days of the first campaign swing, but the effect was the same. It showed the veteran reporters like Thompson that Wilson really cared about them and, combined with a few jokes and personal chats with some of reporters, made them care about how they portrayed Wilson in their stories.

Even if Roosevelt did make headway against Wilson, the Governor was not the only person going after him in 1912. Returning the favor from sixteen years before, William Jennings Bryan made a tour for Wilson, going after Roosevelt’s trust busting credentials and ego-driven pursuit of a third-term. One of Roosevelt’s bitter political rivals, Wisconsin

129 Thompson, 274.
Senator Robert La Follette went after the Colonel too for co-opting the Progressive movement for “personal ambitions.” Like Bryan, La Follette also went on a speaking tour to attack the Bull Moose. “Old Guard” Republicans in Congress were also going after the Colonel, investigating what Roosevelt’s biographer Edmund Morris calls phony charges of campaign finance improprieties from his 1904 campaign. The Socialist candidate Eugene Debs also took aim at Roosevelt for stealing socialist planks in his platform while still claiming the Colonel was controlled by the evils of capitalism. And of course, there was still that “rat in the corner” that Roosevelt proclaimed a “dead issue,” President William Howard Taft, to deal with as well. Knowing full well he had no chance to take back the White House, Taft took parting shots at his old boss and the Progressive Party. During his campaign, he said the Progressive Party was formed “merely to gratify personal ambition and vengeance.” He added that its followers were “hero-worshipping, superficially-minded and non-thinking persons.”

Reporters loved the rhetoric. It was all news, some of the most important and influential figures of the era trading barbs and entering into a war of words. With each attack by his opponents, Roosevelt too shot back, which meant even more newsworthy material for the scribes. Taft calls Roosevelt egotistical; Roosevelt accuses him of stealing the Republican nomination. Bryan accuses Roosevelt of stealing the Democratic platform; Roosevelt said the Progressives “would not have it as a gift.” Wilson smashes Roosevelt’s stance on the tariff; Roosevelt shoots back that, “Probably Mr. Wilson has no clear idea of what he does

intend to do." It was the Roosevelt that reporters hoped and expected to cover in 1912 and, so long as they quoted him accurately and stated the facts, just the type of Roosevelt that Van Anda and editors around the nation were more than happy to depict in their papers.

However, combined with the daily tirades from many editorials across the nation and condemnations of orators from the three candidates’ speaker’s bureaus, the attacks were too much for even the “amazing touch” and loyal Roosevelt reporters to handle. To be sure Roosevelt and the party got off some punches. The Progressives pounced on Wilson for saying he knew of only one word to describe Roosevelt’s trust regulation policy: “Rats.” Roosevelt and the Progressives used the comments as an opportunity to call attention to Wilson’s ambiguous trust plank, writing in their publication The Progressive Bulletin that “If Governor Wilson has anything of a constructive nature to suggest, now is the time for him to do it. This is no time for evasion.” Papers too picked up on the flub, with the New York Sun writing:

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\text{Does this truthfully reflect [Governor Wilson’s] own knowledge of these subjects? Is this a true index of the mental attitude he would bring to the office he seeks? We sincerely trust that none of these questions is to be answered in the affirmative. We prefer to think that easy conquest of the gaping crowd threw the speaker for a moment off his balance.}\]

But this was not the campaign-breaking comment the Progressives were hoping for from Wilson. It was a step onto offense for the Bull Moose Party but with daily attacks coming from three different directions, Roosevelt still spent most of his time on defense.

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And with the attacks coming from candidates, speakers and editorial boards hundreds or even thousands of miles away, there was little the “amazing touch” could do. The “amazing touch” worked best in person: Roosevelt somehow spoke to you, he connected with you and, for many, it changed you. As such, when it came to hecklers in the crowd during his stump speeches, Roosevelt’s “amazing touch” could be counted on to work its magic. In Houghton, Michigan, a man interrupted the Colonel during his speech, yelling “That is not true!” The crowd went into frenzy, but Roosevelt knew what to do. After the crowd quieted down enough for him to speak, Roosevelt said, “I don’t know who you are but I am told you represent the Coal Trust. It is perfectly natural that you should object to hearing the truth about your side of the campaign.” It was the perfect comeback and the man was shut down. The Colonel continued his speech and the incident made great copy for the Sunbeam reporters.137

But it was a challenge for Roosevelt to translate this personal style of campaigning with everything being “mediated” by the press. While Roosevelt could use his “amazing touch” to silence a heckler in person, it became more difficult to quiet candidates, speakers and editorial boards. The dialogue between Roosevelt and Wilson and Roosevelt and his other opponents played out in the papers, where rebuttal times lagged and the policy-based messaging for the Progressives made for boring reading for those looking for newsworthy verbal fireworks. It was Roosevelt’s personality, personified by his insults and mudslinging that reporters and even the public wanted from the Bull Moose in 1912. It was Roosevelt’s personality, after the Progressives decided to go on the attack of the San Francisco address that then became the only emphasis in the press.

Knowing how damaging this would be for the Party’s image, the Progressive leaders did what they could to balance Roosevelt-centered with party-centered messaging. The party’s *Progressive Bulletin* provides a perfect example. As the official publication of the party, the *Bulletin* demonstrates idealized publicity for Roosevelt and the Progressives. The first issue features stories on both policy, a pro-Progressive comparison of the three party’s platforms, and personality, a story on Roosevelt and his running mate Hiram Johnson, whom the article described as “The Men We’ve Picked to Execute Our Contract with the People.” These pieces were then coupled with a rebuttal by author and diplomat Richard Washburn Child, which countered the “trivial, malicious” and “stupidly untrue” attacks against the Colonel. He took on the critics who called Roosevelt an “Egotist” and the Progressives a party all about Roosevelt by stating, “Good; let the nation congratulate him. No man had been great without faith in his ability to lead and serve well.”

This mixture of politics, personality and a bit of defense became the formula for the *Progressive Bulletin*, with attacks on Wilson added to future issues. Editorials were reprinted from Progressive-leaning newspapers that described Wilson’s poor record on battling trusts and criticized his stance on immigration, all in an effort to “allow for every voter, no matter how busy he may be, to gather the real salient facts of this epoch-making campaign in clear, interesting prepared digests of the many valuable sources of information.”

But even the Progressives could not resist the allure of Roosevelt’s personality, using other celebrities to promote their own celebrity at the top of the ticket. Roosevelt received support from the likes of William Gillette, an actor famous for his portrayal “Sherlock

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Holmes,” who agreed to go on a speaking tour for Roosevelt. Lillian Russell, one of the most famous singers and actresses of the time was photographed buying Bull Moose buttons at a rally in New York. Thomas Edison too endorsed Roosevelt and the Progressives. In an interview for the *Progressive Bulletin*, Edison said: “We’re coming to a new era. We’ve got to transform everything. And we’ve got to have a big, strong, honest man at the head. Teddy’s that man. I go the whole way with him.” The interview, as well as a subsequent address to reporters, got great press for the Progressives as the famous inventor declared he was “a natural born Bull Mooser.”

Some of the era’s preeminent writers too backed the Colonel, donating their time to write stories for a unique “high-brow” syndicate of Bull Moose writers. Headed by famed journalist, Will Irwin, who volunteered for two weeks to get the project started, the syndicate included the likes of war correspondent Fredrick Palmer, novelist Richard Harding Davis, muckraker C.P. Connolly, author Walter Weyl, playwright Louis Evan Shipman, cartoonist J.T. McCutcheon, writer and artist Wallace Irwin and of course, William Allen White, who seemed on board with the project until he was asked by Davis to write a follow-up to his famous “What’s the Matter with Kansas?” “When I got Davis’s letter asking me to write an article on “What’s the Matter with America,” White wrote to Irwin, “I simply cut a notch

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140 Gable, 121.
on my gun and agreed to kill him when I saw him.” (He later agreed to write a different article at the conclusion of the campaign under a different name.)

But most importantly, the Progressive Party worked to promote its own political celebrity in Theodore Roosevelt by helping those who couldn’t see and hear him speak, well, see and hear him speak. Morris writes that Roosevelt cut five 78 rpm shellac discs, distributed and sold by the Victor Talking Machine Company, featuring excerpts from his “Confessions of Faith” speech at the Progressive Party nomination and his March “The Right of People to Rule” address at Carnegie Hall.

Photogenic during his Presidency, Roosevelt didn’t shy away from the camera in 1912 either. Richard J. Cummins or “Movie” as Roosevelt affectionately dubbed him, followed Roosevelt during the campaign swing, filming Roosevelt speaking on the stump, reminiscing with his Old Rough Rider troops and visiting the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico. For Roosevelt, it was a blast. After his “shoot” with the Rough Riders, during which he frenetically talked to the men on subjects from politics to battles to Alice in Wonderland eliciting laughter from the travelling scribes, he said “By George! I haven’t had so much fun in a week.” Many of the movies were produced by the French firm Pathé Frères as news film, while for others the film credits remain unknown. The General Film Publicity and Sales Co. in New York helped distribute the films for the Party, releasing about 2,000 feet in early October. Profits were sent back to the Progressive Party in New York, making it, as Davis wrote, “of the greatest importance in Campaign to have widest possible exhibitions of these

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146 Thompson, 129-130, 182.
films for publicity purposes wherever you can give them a boost through local theatre or exchange” since it would be advantageous “first by the publicity and second by the help that we hope it will give to the campaign fund.” H.A. Spanuth, the President of General Films, further wired to White that, “One cannot help but become a Progressive after viewing this film, because it shows thousands and thousands of people enthused over Roosevelt.” But at $200, the cost was too much for White who was already nearly $2,000 in debt from the campaign.

Along with the celebrity endorsement, these movies and sound recordings all worked to make Roosevelt’s personality the central focus of 1912 Presidential Election. These efforts undermined the Progressives’ desire to place the issues at the forefront of the campaign and worst of all, it didn’t seem to be making a dent in Wilson’s perceived lead. Davis believed they were making progress and that Wilson’s “explosion” was imminent. But, as the historian Lewis Gould notes, the momentum was still going for the Democrats. Roosevelt was still on defense, dedicating most of his Chicago speech on October 12 to refuting Wilson’s claim that he was too friendly with the trusts. Wilson’s own strenuous campaign had made him popular around the nation to the point where he was attracting crowds that equaled Roosevelt’s in size and energy. Sixty-thousand people flooded the streets of Lincoln, Nebraska, to catch a glimpse of the Democratic candidate. By the time the Bull

150 Davis, 361
151 Gould, Four Hats in the Ring, 170
152 “Wilson Won Votes on Roosevelt’s Trail,” New York Times, October 13, 1912
Moose caravan reached Milwaukee on October 14, Roosevelt had lost his voice, unable to speak above a whisper. His critics though, could not be silenced. The Party’s decision to go on the attack backfired: It launched a personality-based campaign that relegated the issues to the background and only fueled his detractors. It was the “Roosevelt” Party and it would take a miracle to win on Election Day.

A bullet almost changed everything. Possessed by the fact that Roosevelt was campaigning for a third term and driven by a dream where former President William McKinley told him that Roosevelt was his murderer, the deranged John Schrank shot Roosevelt in Milwaukee. Schrank thought a bullet would keep the Bull Moose from getting back to the White House. Yet his bullet almost did the opposite. Schrank’s bullet didn’t kill Roosevelt; it merely wounded him. Roosevelt was saved by the pages of his prepared fifty-page page speech and a spectacle case. He bled. It undoubtedly hurt. But Roosevelt knew what was at stake, telling the doctors who wanted him to go to the hospital: “I will deliver this speech or die, one or the other.” As many historians have pointed out, this was his big chance to prove this party, his candidacy was not about personal ambition or revenge. It was about a set of principles that he was ready to die for. It was his chance to gain some momentum, get back on offense and, maybe, once and for all silence his critics. This was an opportunity Roosevelt wasn’t going to let pass.

He seized the moment. He opened with a line that both shocked and awed: “Friends, I shall have to ask you to be as quiet as possible. I do not know whether you fully understand

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154 Chace, 231.
that I have been shot, but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose.” Roosevelt showed them the bloody shirt. The crowd gasped then cheered in sympathy. The moment was all his.

The wounded Bull Moose’s speech, compared to the “Confessions of Faith” or his San Francisco address, was nothing brilliant. Davis said he was in shock, realizing the magnitude of what just happened when he pulled the bullet-holed speech out of his pocket. Then he “finally understood how narrowly he had escaped,” and the realization caused him to stumble both physically and verbally. Davis writes, “It was the only time I ever saw anything seem to stagger Colonel Roosevelt, but he rallied instantly, and began to read the speech.” The speech rambled on for 80 minutes though Davis said he still struck all the right notes. Roosevelt told the crowd and unfurling his bloody shirt, at least the reports say, showed the crowd that this was not a Party about him. It was about the Progressive movement, which “is making life a little easier for all our people; a movement to try and take the burdens off the men and especially the women and children of this country.”

He blasted his opponents and the newspapers for their “awful mendacity and abuse” that he said could influence a feeble mind like Schrank’s to violent action. And he laid out his platform, the only one he said you can vote for and “still be true to the cause of progress throughout this Union.” With that he left the stage. The crowd roaring and threw away the last page of his speech. Then he turned to his doctors and said: “Now I am ready to go with you and do what you want.” The Roosevelt Party rushed to the hospital. The White House suddenly didn’t seem so far away.

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156 Davis, 382.
159 Davis, 385.
Armageddon

The “amazing touch” was back on display at Milwaukee Hospital where, James Chace writes, X-Rays found the bullet had fractured and lodged along the fifth rib, less than an inch away from his heart.\textsuperscript{160} Roosevelt joked and talked politics with his doctors, telling them “I do not want to fall into the hands of too many doctors and have the same experience that McKinley and Garfield had.”\textsuperscript{161} He was sent to Chicago, the bullet that nearly killed him still in him, as doctors decided only to remove it if he developed an infection. His wife, Edith Roosevelt, met him in Chicago to ensure he rested, for Roosevelt was already getting anxious to return to the stump. She quickly became his “Boss,” Thompson reports, driving away visitors that he sent for and sorting through his calling cards. But even she could not stop the “amazing touch,” as the “Boss” finally relented and allowed Roosevelt to chat with his favorite reporters about the shooting and his medical condition. He lamented to them that he might not be able to greet his admirers on his way back to New York. “You know that I honestly can’t get up and talk to them much as I’d like to,” he told the assembled “Charley Thompson Finger Club.” “They’re good fellows, but lots of our good American folks don’t seem to realize that a man with a bullet in him can’t do everything he’d like to.”\textsuperscript{162} With that, Edith stuck her head in the door, shook her head and the club’s meeting was over.

Roosevelt recovered quickly, spending six days in the hospital before heading to Oyster Bay to rest. The Progressives had all the momentum on their side. Oddsmakers, who once rated Roosevelt’s chances of winning at 4 to 1, now improved his chances to almost two

\textsuperscript{160} Chace, 232.
\textsuperscript{161} Chace, 232.
Wilson suspended his campaign until Roosevelt was well again and when he did restart he did not touch on the third-party in his addresses. Telegrams of sympathy and support arrived from his rivals, Taft, Wilson, Bryan and LaFollette, from European dignitaries, and from ordinary people like a 10 year-old boy Vincent Curtis Baldwin of Chicago. Baldwin wrote to the Colonel, “I hope you are getting on nicely. For I want you to be our president. If I was a man I would help you, and work hard for you, and tell the people how good you are, but I am only ten years old.” He enclosed a donation of ten dollars. The letter was reprinted in the *Progressive Bulletin* and was picked up by many papers around the country.

Roosevelt’s critics in the press were silenced. Editorial boards for and against him almost universally called his deeds heroic and wished him well. “Col. Roosevelt’s conduct in the face of the danger that confronted him that and his cool pursuit of his evening’s work afterward will redound to his credit as a man and as a fighter,” *The Washington Post* wrote. “Not only the people of the United States but the people of world wish him a speedy recovery.” Munsey’s less than objective *Evening Mail* took it a step further writing, “Certainly the cause shall not fail. Its supporters will be aroused by this shameful result of the campaign of calamity against its leader to a new and grandeur effort. And the effort will be crowned with a victory.” Stories slowed down to pieces about his recovery and electoral predictions. Wilson, it seems was still favored, but Roosevelt wasn’t too far behind.

Yet while Schrank’s bullet may have temporarily silenced Roosevelt’s opponents, media coverage remained squarely focused on Roosevelt’s personality. Articles and

163 Chace, 233.
editorials over the few next days focused on his health, his escape from death and his bravery. From coast to coast, newspapers spread accounts of Roosevelt’s heroism, each as laudatory as the next. The *Tacoma Times* ran an editorial over its page one masthead that stated “IN HOUR OF GREAT PERIL COL. ROOSEVELT PROVES A MAN” and concluded:

Roosevelt saw the flash of the madman’s gun calmly, without fear; viewing his own blood from a wound no one knew how serious, he spoke to a vast and excited audience bravely, without a show of the melodramatic, boldly, yet without malice, without complaint, but with caution, with sincerity, and with love. Here’s to you, Theodore Roosevelt. You are a man. ¹⁶⁷

The *New York Times* and many newspapers did run the speech in full along with their coverage, but it was clearly not as important to the reporters as the tumult and action of the actual event. This was, in some sense, a dream story for the newsmen and the new standards of journalism. Theodore Roosevelt shot and wounded by the bullet of a madman, yet still mustering enough of his legendary energy to go on and give the speech. Nothing the Colonel said in the Milwaukee speech would top this scoop. The issues then, as they had throughout the entire campaign, remained secondary to Roosevelt’s personality.

Still, the Progressives felt the tide was turning in their favor. “The enemy are demoralized and do not know which way to turn and are just looking for a chance to get into the game again,” Perkins wrote to Roosevelt. “…The drift is unquestionably our way.” ¹⁶⁸ They kept Roosevelt mum while he recovered at Sagamore Hill, leaving all further campaigning in the hands of Johnson and Beveridge. Any statement made from Sagamore Hill, Perkins concluded, “…would not at the best make any votes, and the ones it might make

¹⁶⁷ “In Hour of Great Peril Roosevelt Proves a Man,” *Tacoma Times*, October 16, 1912.
would probably be few in proportion to the ones it might lose if we disturbed the generally favorable atmospheric conditions.”

One last speech was planned on October 30th at Madison Square Garden, one last chance to bring the issues back to the forefront of the Progressive Party campaign. The speech, Perkins wrote Roosevelt, should be “along very broad and humane lines, free from all criticism and rancor or anything bordering on a belligerent attitude.” He added:

Begin it and end it with the atmosphere of charity for all and malice toward none, from the point of view of a man who had almost slipped out of this world and had a vision, a renewed inspiration of the needs of his fellow-countrymen in the opening years of a new century, a man who had not thought for self and wanted to give all that he had, including his life, to bringing about a better understanding between the various conflicting interests in this country to the end that more equitable “human rights” might obtain and prevail.

Following these guidelines, Perkins and the Progressives thought this speech would be a return to the basics and the humanitarian message of reform that defined the beginning of the campaign. It would be the speech that finally struck the delicate balance between personality and politics. It would be the speech that won Roosevelt the election.

On October 30, Roosevelt stood on stage for 42 minutes before he could say a word. The crowd roared, chanting “We Want Teddy! We Want Teddy!” Every attempt to quiet the crowd only led to louder cheering from the 16,000 in the arena. Finally, the audience grew quiet enough for Roosevelt to start his address, one that the New York Times said was unlike any of his other speeches in 1912. It was, the Times wrote, almost a “farewell address,” delivered not with the “old violence” and “old sarcasm” but with “as serious and grave a

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strain as it were he last speech.” His words were idealistic, rhetorical, focusing on the long-term impact of the Progressive Party campaign. Roosevelt brushed aside the arguments of those who seek the repetition of tired principles of “state’s rights” and thought the “history of liberty” was “the history of the limitation of governmental power,” a jab at Wilson. He countered, telling the crowd that the Progressives were for “human rights and intent to work for them in efficient fashion.” Roosevelt’s address didn’t hit the “high note,” the Times wrote, but it did crescendo to an inspiring resolution:

I believe we shall win, but win or lose I am glad beyond measure that I am one of the many who in this fight have stood ready to spend and be spent, pledge to fight while life lasts the great fight of righteousness and for brotherhood and for the welfare of mankind.

It was exactly the kind of speech that Perkins had hoped for, yet it was missing one key ingredient: the “amazing touch.” Roosevelt’s Garden speech was devoid of the personal connections, energy and warmth that permeated throughout Roosevelt other speeches in 1912 and his political career, probably due to the fact that he was still in pain. Multiple newspaper accounts, including the New York Times, report Roosevelt was “not well” that morning and could not lift his right arm. He spoke with passion and deserved admiration for even giving the speech at all considering he had just two weeks ago been shot, the Times story, likely written by Thompson, said. But still it was a different and it was a “new Roosevelt” on display that night. And like the old Roosevelt, the “new Roosevelt” and not the issues of contained in the speech became the focus of almost all the next day’s news stories.

Roosevelt gave one last speech at Madison Square Garden two days later during a rally for Oscar Straus, the Progressives’ candidate for New York Governor. The *Times* reports “he was in much better form physically than he had been in his last appearance in the Garden” but still it wasn’t enough.\(^{175}\) Despite three months of toil stumping the country and one bullet to the chest, Roosevelt lost. Given how quickly the Party was put together, he had a good showing earning 4,122,721 votes compared to Wilson’s 6,296,284, Taft’s 3,486,242 and Debs’s remarkable 901,551, the most for a Socialist candidate in United States history. Electorally, the picture was a little bleaker. Roosevelt lost to Wilson 435 to 88 and Taft, with only two electoral votes, the worst result for a sitting president in history. Several historians like Sidney Milkis though have been quick to point out Roosevelt won in key states like California and Pennsylvania and ran in a close second in many others.\(^{176}\) It was, as Roosevelt wrote to many of his friends, “a good fight.”\(^{177}\)

But he still lost, a fact that so many scholars have chalked up to the split in the Republican Party. Had Taft not been in the race, Roosevelt would have taken back the White House, many argue. Yet this simple analysis, while entirely plausible, takes many leaps of faiths and leaves some questions unanswered. If Roosevelt ran under the Republican banner, would he still have put forth a Progressive platform, one that, considering a Socialist candidate earned close to a million votes, was likely necessary to win? If he did turn out a progressive platform, would the Old Guard Republicans and conservative wing of the Party support him? And would Roosevelt have been able to beat Wilson—if that’s who the Democrats still put up in response—if he became a “tamed” Bull Moose? There is more to


\(^{176}\) Milkis, 252-253.

\(^{177}\) Donald, 254.
the story of 1912 then the Republican split, and it comes in the form of Roosevelt’s greatest political asset that Barclay Farr called his “amazing touch.”

This was Roosevelt’s political trump card and a personality trait that would influence major Presidential candidates and presidential elections throughout the 20th century. John F. Kennedy had “charisma,” the historian David Pietrusza notes, “a hypnotic magnetism in transcending issues.” And just as the power of Roosevelt’s “amazing touch” astounded Col. Lyon, Kennedy’s “charisma” left his Senate campaign manager Mark Dalton in awe. “Isn’t it possible,” he marveled, “that there is something in Jack’s chemistry and personality that makes people transfer their own views to him?” Commentators like James Reston said that Reagan similarly possessed a sort of “magic,” who used his personality to convey to the American public a sense of reassurance. “He was the good-looking, easy-talking type out of Hollywood every mother warned her daughter to avoid-irresponsible but irresistible,” Reston said. “We didn’t really elect him but fell in love with him…Nothing broke the spell.”

Clinton too was not without his version of “amazing touch,” using what the New York Times called his “charm” during his 1996 campaign to relate with voters, listening to the problems and offering help. “Mr. Clinton’s aides,” a Times story declares, “have long joked that their boss believes he would win in a landslide if he could only shake the hand and look into the eyes of every voter.”

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179 Pietrusza, 45.
Roosevelt very well may have thought the same. On the stump he was lively, energetic and engaging as in St. Paul, Minnesota, where, with crowds of up to 25,000 standing all around him, he ran “like a squirrel” across the stage shouting “Square Deal!” when he left one side of the crowd to speak to another.\(^\text{182}\) Combined with the “amazing touch” and its ability to recall names and connect with voters, Roosevelt could seemingly turn any opponent into a follower. Rumor has it that Albany political boss William Barnes, an “Old Guard” Republican and Taft supporter saw Roosevelt talk in 1912 and told a friend: “Why, I was on my feet before I knew it. Roosevelt, confound him, has a kind of magnetism that you cannot resist when you are in his presence.”\(^\text{183}\)

Yet unable to reach every city in America, Roosevelt used reporters like Thompson, freed of editorial biases through journalistic objectivity, to spread the “amazing touch” to the people around the country. It worked. Stories of Roosevelt chatting about his time in the West with a sheriff in Rosebud or visiting his mother’s house in the South helped him prove Lawrence Abbott’s view that different people viewed Roosevelt in different ways and further reinforced the supposedly universal appeal of the Progressive Party.\(^\text{184}\) However, compounded by the later campaign attacks against Wilson, the Party’s movies and sound recordings of Roosevelt and the reporters’ desire for more “Rooseveltian” news, the “amazing touch” and Roosevelt’s personality soon became the only focus of the Progressive campaign. He tried hard to bring the issues back to the forefront but reporters, under Roosevelt’s spell themselves, covered the Colonel’s personality as much, if not more, than the issues. Roosevelt’s 1912 campaign, filled with such tumult and rhetorical battles between


\(^{183}\) Abbott, 85.

four presidential candidates, could not change that. Voting on Election Day then, journalist Mark Sullivan said, was based on solely on Roosevelt’s personality:

Only to a comparatively slight extent did the average man think of the conflict in terms of principle at all; he saw it mainly as a duel between personalities...The average man in mass, the whole of the America of that day, was divided—mainly by temperament, by differing responsiveness to certain appeals—into two groups: those whose eyes became rapt in the thrill of singing “Onward Christian Soldiers” behind the banner of Roosevelt, and those who were indifferent to Roosevelt or were moved to acute distaste by his actions and utterances.185

Roosevelt may have been the most recognized man in the world but personality alone could not bring the Bull Moose back into the White House on November 5, 1912.

He stood at Armageddon. He Battled for the Lord. He lost. Even though Roosevelt said he didn’t expect to win, to have the arduous fight end with no tangible results clearly pained him. “I feel horribly at not being President,” the Colonel wrote.186 Combined with the defeat of his handpicked candidate Henry Stimson in the 1910 New York Gubernatorial Election and getting “steam-rolled” at the Republican Convention by his former subordinate in Taft, Roosevelt had to doubt his political prowess. He had received a hard lesson in the limits of personality-based campaigns, one that would define presidential races throughout the 20th century. “Charisma,” “magic” and “charm,” could win elections, as Kennedy, Reagan and Clinton would prove. But personality could lose them as well as Roosevelt discovered.187 The right personality needs the right time to win elections, and for Theodore Roosevelt, 1912, it seems, was not that time.

Roosevelt retreated from public life after the election, returning to Sagamore Hill to work on his autobiography. The “Charley Thompson Finger Club” followed. No matter that

185 Sullivan, 533-534.
186 Donald, 254.
he wasn’t President. The reporters like Thompson, as one biographer put it, “hung around him at Oyster Bay, even in his days of defeat, like a guard of honor.” The Election was lost but the reporters were still under the magic of Roosevelt’s spell. They knew, with the “amazing touch,” news would never be hard to find.

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