

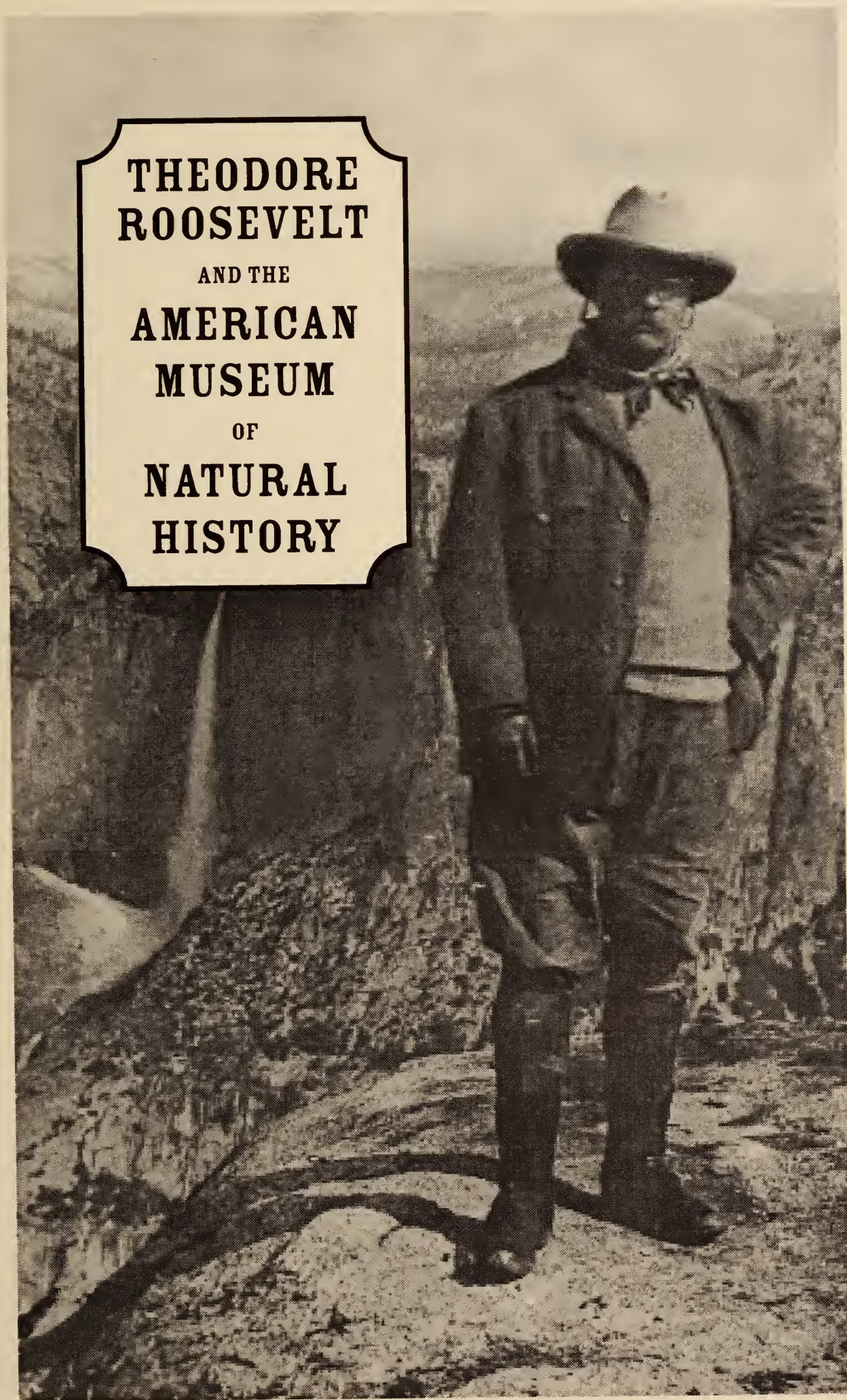
**THEODORE
ROOSEVELT**

AND THE

**AMERICAN
MUSEUM**

OF

**NATURAL
HISTORY**





THEODORE ROOSEVELT WAS connected with the American Museum of Natural History from his boyhood. The Museum's original charter was approved on April 8, 1869, in the parlor of the Roosevelt home in Manhattan, when the future president was 10 years old. Young TR was passionately devoted to the study of natural history, and his father once explained that he had worked to establish the Museum for those like his son who were interested in science. The 1871 accession records of the new museum list the donation of one bat, twelve mice, a turtle, the skull of a red squirrel, and four bird eggs by TR, then a teenager active in taxidermy and collecting. Many other Roosevelt specimens would find their way to the Museum in the next 50 years.

Throughout his life, TR continued to pursue his interest in natural history in addition to activities in politics and other fields. His 1914 expedition to the Brazilian jungles brought some 2,500 birds, 500 mammals, and many

fish, reptiles, insects, and amphibians back to the Museum. The majority of these animals were from areas previously unvisited by naturalists, and many species were entirely new to science. The expedition also permanently ruined TR's health, but, as he explained to a friend, "I had just one more chance to be a boy, and I took it!"

Gable, John A. 1982. "Theodore Roosevelt and the American Museum of Natural History." *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal*, Vol. 8 (3).

THEODORE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL HALL



TR died in 1919, and in 1924 the New York state legislature decided to honor him with a memorial at his beloved American Museum of Natural History. Construction of the building began in 1929, and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Hall was dedicated on January 19, 1936 by TR's fifth cousin, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On the parapet wall around the terrace and steps are carved inscriptions representing facets of TR's many-sided career: "Ranchman, Scholar, Explorer, Scientist, Conservationist, Naturalist, Statesman, Author, Historian, Humanitarian, Soldier, Patriot." In front of the building is a bronze equestrian statue of TR by James Earle Fraser.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ROTUNDA



The walls of the great vaulted interior of the Hall are decorated with carved quotations from TR on the subjects of nature, manhood, youth, and the state, and by three colorful murals, rich in historical and symbolic imagery, that celebrate some of the accomplishments of his career.



The West Mural is dedicated to TR's African expedition. He can be seen in the upper left of the central panel. His son Kermit is seen at the lower right of the central panel. TR donated two of the elephants in the world-famous display in the Akeley Hall of African Mammals, just off the Rotunda—the cow just to the right as you enter the hall, and her calf, donated by TR's son, Kermit.

The South Mural is dedicated to the Treaty of Portsmouth, signed in 1905, which ended the Russo-Japanese War. TR served as the mediator between Russia and Japan, for which he became the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize.



The North Mural is dedicated to the Panama Canal, one of the most important achievements of TR's Presidency. TR can be seen at the right in the central panel looking at the plans for the great canal.





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ROOSEVELT DIORAMAS AND DISPLAYS ON THE FIRST FLOOR



Underneath the great vaulted hall, on the first floor, are four striking dioramas and displays devoted to TR's life that include some of the specimens he collected around the world, and show:



New York City, then New Amsterdam, as it was when the Roosevelts immigrated from the Netherlands in the 17th century.



TR's Elkhorn Ranch in North Dakota where he was a cattleman in the 1880's.



A scene of one of the New York State forest preserves TR set aside when he was Governor of New York.



The Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay, Long Island, the oldest Audubon bird sanctuary in the nation, which forms a protective belt around the Young Memorial Cemetery where TR is buried.




Also on the first floor are four glass display cases that provide a more personal view of TR's life. Each is devoted to different aspects of his character and accomplishments:

- Lifelong public servant
- Avid traveler and internationalist
- Devoted family man and writer
- Committed conservationist

Candid photos and memorabilia, such as his signature eyeglasses, favorite books, and excerpts from his diaries, accompany the displays.

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