

Transcript of Lecture Delivered by
Jeff Heatley
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COL. Theodore Roosevelt, The Rough Riders & Camp Wikoff

On August 7th, 1898, the transport Miami, with Gen. Joseph Wheeler, Col. Theodore Roosevelt, the Rough Riders and members of the Third Cavalry on board, pulled away from the dock at Santiago, Cuba to begin its voyage north. Anxious that his men not miss the sights, Col. Roosevelt urged them to stay on deck. As the ship approached Morro Castle, the Third Cavalry band began to play John Howard Payne's "Home, Sweet Home". The American soldiers stationed at the castle cheered wildly as the homeward-bound troops passed by. The Gate City, the first transport to start north, had left Santiago two days earlier. Over the next five weeks, nearly forty ships would bring a total of 22,500 soldiers of Gen. Shafter's Fifth Army Corps from Santiago de Cuba to Montauk, where a 4,200-acre military encampment had been hastily prepared for their rest and recuperation.

The 2,000-mile, eight-day journey would prove a further test for the heroes of the Spanish-American War. Many suffered the ill effects of tropical diseases like malaria, typhoid, dysentery and, in a few cases, yellow fever. The ships were over-crowded and lacked adequate supplies for healthy men, let alone fever-stricken ones.

Both the Mobile and Allegheny transports were called "death ships" on arrival at Fort Pond Bay. Thirteen soldiers had died on board the Mobile and been buried at sea; fourteen on the Allegheny suffered the same fate. These were men who had embarked for Cuba in top physical condition only a few months before, men who had survived the Spanish Mausers and the hazards of war, but who had been weakened by scarce and poor army rations, by virulent tropical fevers, by the extreme conditions of the Cuban chapparel in mid-summer, then subjected to overcrowded, poorly equipped transports that were to take them home.

Many of those who survived the voyage were in frightful condition on arrival at Montauk. Exhausted, emaciated, unable to walk without assistance, they virtually staggered off the transports onto the railroad pier at Fort Pond Bay. Some were carried off by their "bunkies", others in litters, then transported by army ambulances to the quarantine camp. Those who had come to cheer the victorious troops were shocked by the debilitated condition of their heroes.

The Round Robin petition and Roosevelt letter, both published nationally on August 4th, had warned of these conditions. If not for the Round Robin protest, many of these soldiers would not have made it home. On August 3rd, a despatch from Secretary of War Alger ordered Gen. Shafter and his Fifth Army Corps to move twenty-five miles inland to a higher elevation. This order enraged the commanding generals at Santiago. They knew that order could not be executed without great hardship, and decided to protest the order from the Secretary of War. Gen. Leonard

Wood, Roosevelt's good friend and commander of the Rough Riders until his promotion, wrote the Round Robin protest, in which he stated that "the army must be moved at once or perish." Col. Roosevelt's accompanying letter was printed on the front page of William Randolph Hearst's "New York Evening Journal":

"Major-General Shafter:

". . . All of us are certain, as soon as the authorities at Washington fully appreciate the conditions of the army, to be sent home. If we are kept here, it will in all human possibility mean an appalling disaster, for the surgeons estimate that over half the army. . . will die. This is not only terrible from the standpoint of the individual lives lost, but it means ruin from the standpoint of the military efficiency of the flower of the American army, for the great bulk of the regulars are here with you. . .

"I write only because I cannot see our men, who have fought so bravely, and who have endured extreme hardship and danger so uncomplainingly, go to destruction without striving, so far as lies in me, to avert a doom as fearful as it is unnecessary and undeserved." (Bully, 13/14)

The Round Robin protest, unprecedented in U.S. military history, shocked President McKinley and Secretary of War Alger, who first read the documents in the Washington dailies. Secretary of War Alger quickly blamed Col. Roosevelt for the documents' release to the press and rebuked him publicly. The news, however, had been published, and the order for the immediate return of the entire Fifth Army Corps had to be issued. Americans were jubilant at the news: the victorious troops were coming home!

To the returning troops, the first sight of Long Island's profile on the horizon brought renewed hope of recovery. From the decks of the transports, Montauk was a green, undulating point of land with high bluffs rising from the sea. Its rolling hills, barren of trees, were dotted with hundreds of white army tents in well-ordered rows. Army wagons racing across the landscape and troops marching to camp could be seen in what appeared to be a healthy, vibrant military encampment. To the returning troops, Camp Wikoff, as the camp had been named, was to be Camp Paradise--or so it seemed.

A reporter for the "Brooklyn Daily Eagle" described the natural beauty of Montauk in these words:

"Everybody. . . who visits Montauk Point [says]. . .

'What air they get out here!' Of course, they do. Montauk is a mere spit of land running out into the Atlantic deeps, and the wind has to wriggle itself out of shape to get to the end of it without crossing open sea. . . The wind seems to be always blowing, and it comes with a tang of salt in it, yet strangely and deliciously blended with a wholesome country smell. Everything larger than a bush has been blown from the earth. There is not a tree on the hills. From the great rolling waves of earth you look out over miles of sea. You have the transports in view as they come up from the southwest, you follow their smoke as they turn the point where the

lighthouse lifts against the sky. . .

"It is in this wide viewing land of clear skies. . .of genial, not oppressive sunshine, of soft, life-giving air and of flowers and sand, that [the] men of the United States Army will come to rest. . ." (Bully, 83, 85)

Not only were the troops returning to a land of extraordinary natural beauty, but to a land of extraordinary people as well. on the night of August 25th, the Auxiliary Cruiser Prairie, with 520 soldiers on board, including members of the famed Seventh Infantry, ran aground off Napeague Beach. By next morning, news of the grounded steamer had reached Amagansett and hundreds of people came to offer their help. Surf boats carried the soldiers from the transport to shore, where the Long Islanders came to their rescue. The "New York Sun" described the scene in these words:

"There were about ten soldiers in the first boatload, and the biggest crowd that ever lined Napeague Beach was gathered on the shore to welcome them. There were even women and children, and as the boat approached they sent up cheer after cheer. When the boat was about twenty yards off shore, fully twenty men rushed into the surf. . .and one by one the sick men were lifted gently out of the boat and carried up to the soft sand, where blankets had been laid down for them...

The second boatload was unloaded in the same fashion. Even soldiers who were able to get ashore themselves were not allowed to walk. The Long Islanders just took them in their arms and carried them through the surf. They fought for the privilege, and in the rush two or three of them were knocked clear over in the water and drenched to the skin. . .This enthusiasm was of the greatest assistance to those in charge of landing the men. It made the trips shorter and made it unnecessary to take the boatloads of sick through the surf. . .

"The sight was certainly a strange one. Boatload after boatload of sick soldiers being brought ashore from a stranded war vessel to a strip of beach usually abandoned, but now crowded with people, who cheered and cheered each time a man was brought ashore. . ."

(Bully, 135/136).

On Monday, August 15th, under clear blue skies, hundreds of soldiers and citizens gathered near the railroad dock at Fort Pond Bay. They cheered as the transport Miami was being escorted by tug to the iron pier, where the soldiers were to disembark. Rough riders and the troops of the Third Cavalry lined the decks of the Miami and cheered wildly in return as the ship approached. John Hunt, editor of "The Sag Harbor Express", described the scene in these words:

"The foxes on Montauk must have thought Wyandank and his whooping braves were back again. . .in their ancient home!. . .There arose such a shout along the hills of Fort Pond Bay, cheer on cheer resounding, as has not been heard there since the Montaukets gathered to repel the Pequot invasion. The [Rough Riders] already here

came from Tampa and had never been within range of Spanish guns, but their disappointment only made them all the more eager to greet with royal welcome their returning comrades on whose tattered garments was the dust of heroic battle, and on their brows, the laurel of matchless victory. So waits a mighty nation to greet those who come back from the field of duty done, the shortest and swiftest war in the annals of the great States. . ." (Bully, 75).

The gallant Rough Riders, whose heroics in battle exceeded the wildest of expectations, were home from war. An officer on the pier shouted to Col. Roosevelt who stood on the ship's deck next to Gen. Wheeler:

"How are you, Col. Roosevelt?"

"I am feeling disgracefully well. . . I feel positively ashamed of my appearance when I see how badly off some of my brave fellows are--Oh, but we have had a bully fight!" ("New York Herald", Bully, 62).

Among the Rough Riders who followed Col. Roosevelt and Gen. Wheeler off the transport were Color Sergeant Albert Wright, the "goliath" of the regiment; Lt. John Greenway, the Yale football player; Privates Charlie Bull and Bob Wrenn, Harvard oarsman and quarterback, respectively; Bill Larned, the tennis champion; Knickerbocker Club members Craig Wadsworth, Reginal Ronalds and Woodbury Kane. Troop L, the last to debark the Miami, silenced the crowd, as those gathered on the shores of Fort Pond Bay remembered the two fallen heroes of Troop L, Capt. Allyn Capron and Sgt. Hamilton Fish.

Later that afternoon, Col. Roosevelt praised his men:

"Of course, I am proud of my regiment. There was never such another. In fifty days, it was raised, organized, equipped, armed, mounted, put into transports, caarried through two victorious fights. That's the record that I think will be hard to beat

. . .

"The groundwork of the regiment is the cowpuncher, the man who has herded cattle on the great plains for a living, and next to him comes the Rocky Mountain miner . . . then the professional hunter, the mining engineer and civil engineer, and the packer, and mixed with them the college athlete and the man who has always been fond of rough out-of-doors sport. They all go in together without a hitch. . ." ("New York Sun", Bully, 68/69).

Gen. Joseph Wheeler, known among the soldiers as "Fighting Joe" since his Civil War days as a Confederate General, had traveled back with Col. Roosevelt on the transport Miami and had this to say about the gallant Rough Rider:

"I had a good chance of observing Roosevelt during the week we were at sea from another point of view than that offered by the camp. He is a charming fellow. The thing that impressed me most about him is his absolute integrity. Some men have integrity about money, others about their personal conduct. Roosevelt has both; and, more than either, the official integrity that makes him the rare man he is.

"The people of New York want him for their Governor . . . The people of the United States will want him to govern them next, and they will have him for their President. I told him so on the ship and he laughed a good deal. . . Certainly, it would be hard for them to make a better choice. Roosevelt is able, energetic and most loyal.

"Whether in the camp or in the field, Roosevelt was to be depended on always. He is perfectly fearless, and his men follow him with absolute devotion. . ." (Bully, 79/80).

At the Long Island Railroad terminus in Montauk, next to the piers at Fort Pond Bay, a small village of buildings had been constructed in a matter of ten days. Montauk Station, as it was known, became the focus of activity of the military encampment. Seven thousand soldiers arrived by train from the southern camps; thousands of visitors arrived by train from points west; and virtually all of the 22,500 soldiers brought to Camp Wikoff by transport left by train. Roughly constructed buildings lined the main street alongside the railroad station, including a post office, express package building, general store, information bureau, telegraph office, printing facility, electric light and powerhouse, and two restaurants, one of which was just a shanty known as Hungry Joe's. Following the arrival of a train, four- and six-mule team wagons, loaded with passengers, fanned out across the 4,200-acre camp.

After debarking at Fort Pond Bay, the Rough Riders marched to the Detention Camp, located on Observatory Hill across from Montauk Station, where they were required to stay for four days in quarantine. The two-square-mile Detention Camp had its own hospital. Originally planned as a 250-bed facility, it had grown to accommodate 520 fever-stricken soldiers by the third week in August. The day after the Rough Riders returned to Montauk, one of their own, J. Knox Green, died of malaria. He was the first to die at Camp Wikoff of more than 350 soldiers of the Fifty Army Corp.

On the 18th of August, Col. Roosevelt received permission to stay at Third House, Montauk's only inn. The next day, Col. Roosevelt said that for the first time in a good many weeks, he had slept in a "civilized bed". Troops arrived by train and by ship faster than the camp could accommodate them. For a time, there were shortages of tents, cots, even army rations. The press published shocking reports about the soldiers' misfortunes after they reached camp. The people of Long Island, and elsewhere, came to their aid, personally delivering food delicacies to the troops. Ships arrived at Fort Pond Bay from Greenport and New Suffolk on the North Fork; Newport, Rhode Island; Old Stonington, Connecticut; and New York City. These ships brought thousands of pounds of fresh eggs, vegetables, fruits, cakes and pies, canned meats, jellies, preserves, chickens, soups, wine, champagne, brandy, mineral water and even reading materials.

Tragically, more and more soldiers arrived debilitated by tropical fevers. The General Hospital, designed as a 500-bed facility, had to be expanded to serve the

needs of 1,620 patients by the third week in August. More and more soldiers lost their individual battles with malaria, typhoid, dysentery, even yellow fever. Visitors to Camp Wikoff witnessed the appearance of "camp ghosts", men who were not ill enough to be admitted to the General Hospital but too ill to care for themselves. These "ghosts" wandered over the camp, collapsing when strength gave out. Devitalized by the hardships of war, by repeated bouts of fever, by poor nourishment, they did make it to the hospital again, but invariably to die. The cause of death was listed as exhaustion.

Five of Gen. Joseph Wheeler's sons and daughters offered their assistance at Camp Wikoff. Lt. Joseph Wheeler, Jr. and Naval Cadet Thomas H. Wheeler were aides-de-camp at their father's headquarters. Three daughters worked as nurses in the General Hospital one of whom, Annie Laurie Early Wheeler, had volunteered her services as a nurse for the Red Cross in Cuba. Interviewed shortly after her arrival at Montauk, she related her experiences in Cuba, words that applied as well to the work she did in the General Hospital at Camp Wikoff:

"When I [arrived], I found the men without any of the comforts which belong to the ill. Cots they had none; blankets had been long since cast aside and lost. There was nothing for them to eat, poor fellows, but the scantiest of army rations, hardtack and the like . . .

"In a few days, the Red Cross supplies began to come in and I got cots for my men. They were remarkably fine cots. Each cot had four pillow cases, sheets, rubber blankets, woolen blankets and mosquito netting. We also received many delicacies.

"I think the happiest hour of my life was when I got my patients off the floor and into these comfortable cots. You ought to (have seen) their eyes shine. Many a man alive today owes his life to the Red Cross . . .

"My boys were the private soldiers. I found the officers had servants to wait on them and plenty of attention. But the privates were alone and helpless and neglected. That was the sort I had come to help. And oh, they were so grateful, so uncomplaining, so heroic! It was beautiful to see the gratitude shining in their faces over the smallest things that I could do for them. They used to follow me with their eyes . . . (The World, Bully, 120).

Press accounts described Camp Wikoff as a "pest hole" with fever-stricken troops slowly starving to death. Public anger at their plight was directed at Secretary of War Alger, whom they accused of mismanagement. Editorials called for his resignation, but President McKinley refused to remove him from office or ask that he resign. Alarmed, however, by the press accounts of conditions at Camp Wikoff, President McKinley decided to tour the camp himself.

The Presidential Party arrived at Montauk Station on Saturday, September 3rd, after spending the night in five Pullman Palace cars on a sidetrack in Amagansett. Gen. Wheeler greeted the Presidential Party which included, besides McKinley,

Vice-President Hobart, Secretary of War Alger, Attorney General Griggs, and Senator Proctor of Vermont. As they prepared to leave the station in the Victoria carriages that Gen. Wheeler had brought to Montauk for the occasion, President McKinley spotted Col. Roosevelt a short distance away on horseback.

"Why, there's Col. Roosevelt! Colonel! I'm glad to see you.'

"The commander of the Rough Riders executed a remarkable maneuver. He forgot to make a formal dismount, but sort of fell off his animal in the way he does at the end of a race across the hills with a squad of his cowpunchers. At the same time, the President did a remarkable thing for a president to do. He stood up in his carriage, pushed open the door and, jumping out, started toward Col. Roosevelt, who was coming toward him as fast as he could. The President held out his hand; Col. Roosevelt struggled to pull off his right glove. He yanked at it desperately and finally inserted the ends of the fingers in his teeth and gave a mighty tug. Off came the glove and a beatific smile came over the Colonel's face as he grasped the President's hand. . .

"Col. Roosevelt, I'm glad to see you looking so well.'

"Thank you, Mr. President. There isn't a healthier man in camp than I am. I am delighted to see you down here, sir, and hope you will enjoy the trip. I do want you to see my boys while you're here.'

"Oh, I will, Colonel, I will.'" ("New York Sun", Bully, 235/236).

When the column of carriages reached a hilltop, the entire encampment spread out before the Presidential Party. McKinley remarked that he had never seen a handsomer camp.

The President was deeply moved by the sight of the fever-stricken soldiers in both the General and Detention Hospitals. He spoke to Sgt. John A. Alexander of the First Illinois Volunteers.

"Won't you tell me how you feel and whether there's anything I can do for you?'

"The President of the United States is talking to you,' said Gen. Wheeler to the soldier.

"It was like an electric shock to the man. He straightened up and by a superhuman effort raised his head up on his left hand and saluted with his right. Immediately he fell in a heap on his cot and, with tears in his eyes, said:

"I didn't know you, sir; I am very weak.'

"Yes, poor fellow. This is not the time for you to salute me. I'm here to see how you are and what I can do for you.'

"Thank you, but I only want my strength back so that I can go home again. I suppose

I'll have to wait for that.'

"I hope you won't have to wait long.'

"I want you to tell the President whether you have wanted for anything since you have been here,' [said Gen. Wheeler.]

"I have had every care and attention.'" ("New York Sun", Bully, 241.)

Following its inspection of the hospitals, the Presidential Party made its way to the Great Plain of Montauk where President McKinley addressed 5,000 cheering soldiers of the Fifth Army Corps for the first time since their triumphant return from Cuba.

"GEN. WHEELER, SOLDIERS OF CAMP WIKOFF, SOLDIERS OF THE FIFTH ARMY CORPS:

". . . I am honored to meet the brave men who stand before me today. I bring you the gratitude of the nation, to whose history you have added by your valor a new and glorious page. You have come home after two months of severe campaigning, which has embraced assault, siege and battle--so brilliant in achievement, so far-reaching in results as to earn the unstinted praise of all your countrymen.

"You had the brunt of the battle on land. You bore yourselves with supreme courage, and your personal bravery, never before excelled anywhere, has won the admiration of your fellow citizens and the genuine respect of all mankind, while your endurance under peculiar trial and suffering has given added meaning to American heroism. . ." ("New York Sun", Bully, 245).

Not everyone found President McKinley's visit to Camp Wikoff inspiring. E.S. Boughton, editor of "The East Hampton Star", expressed a dissenting opinion the following week:

"President McKinley's famous visit to the camp was a farce. While he shook hands with officers and was shown through the hospitals, men were dying out in the tents of the Regulars, without care and proper medical attention. The one person who succeeded in getting the ear of the President on behalf of the neglected soldiers in the camp was explained away as 'an hysterical woman'. If the women whom we saw rescue the neglected invalid soldier from his tent in the Third Regular Infantry care for him and administer restoratives to him during the journey from the camp to this village, take him to an improvised hospital, procure a nurse and physician for him and then anxiously watch his slow recovery are hysterical, we wish some of the heartless officials might become hysterical. . .

"If there is anyone who thinks the stories of the camp are overdrawn, we would say go there and do a little investigating on your own account. Do not ask questions of the officers, but go into the tents of the privates." (Bully, 304/305).

At Montauk Station, a young lieutenant was heard to remark to a visitor, "We have everything. We have life and we have death." The men President McKinley praised on the Great Plain that Saturday afternoon were in "disgracefully" good health. Camp regulations and confinement did not prevent them from having a rollicking good time in what, for them, was Uncle Sam's Seaside Park.

Regimental bands played on the hillsides and in the hollows throughout the camp. Visitors and soldiers were treated to enthused renditions of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, The Boys Are Marching," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Home, Sweet Home," "Marching Through Georgia," and "Yankee Doodle". Expert buglers and beginners practiced to perfect "Taps" and "Reveille" in an informal bugler school on a high bluff at Ditch Plains. One expert bugler, standing on the bluff at sunset, sent "the golden notes in peal on peal over the darkening ocean in a goodnight song to the setting sun." ("New York Sun", Bully, 320).

"'Whoopee! Hang on to him, Bud! All our dust's on yer. Kick the breeze, yer blankety son of a mule! Yer can't t'row him! Stick to him or we all go broke!'"

Roosevelt's Rough Riders vented their joy one afternoon during a bronco busting competition between Troop I and Troop H.

"We've got an old bronco over in our troop and there ain't a guy of yer that can straddle him. He's old and lame and as gentle as a lamb, but we've got tin that says not a guy of yer can throw his leg over him."

This contemptuous message from Troop I was delivered by The Nipper, so nicknamed because he had cut through three of the barbed-wire fences in front of Santiago. Bets were placed and Troop I's bronco was brought out and appeared to be as "peaceful as a lamb."

"But the bronco wasn't lame and he wasn't blind. . .As the sergeant of Troop H cautiously approached, the bronco watched him with a vicious look, then suddenly wheeled and kicked.

"Pick up yer dead!" exultantly yelled the troopers of Troop I.

"But they were almost as much surprised as the bronco. When he kicked, its champion dodged his hoofs, jumped at his bridle and, while the bronco's heels were still in the air, the sergeant was astride him.

"The bronco plunged, reared, pirouetted on one leg, humped himself, sprang into the air, landed with four hoofs together--[but] the sergeant stuck to his back like a plaster, while the opposing troopers yelled encouragement to man or horse.

"Suddenly, the bronco started across the sand dunes, bucking at every jump and disappeared in a little valley. In ten minutes, Troop H's sergeant rode him back, truly gentle as a lamb. . .

"If you've got a live bronco about you, bring him on," remarked the sergeant, as he swung out of the saddle." ("The World", Bully, 215-7).

All the Rough Riders were excellent horsemen, as well as marksmen, but those who excelled at Bronco Busting were A.C. Fletcher, Newton Stewart, C.T. Owens, Thomas Darnell, Alvin Ash and William Woods. Col. Roosevelt knew all the riders in the regiment, of course, and said that he had never seen a "bronco buster"

in the same class as William Woods of Ratone, New Mexico.

The camp of the Second Cavalry offered soldiers the only canteen and casino in camp. The canteen sold a "hoot" of draught beer at five cents a glass. Individual orders ran as high as fifteen glasses. For some, glasses just couldn't hold enough beer: tin pails, kettles, even a wash boiler, served the purpose. The casino, dubbed Montauk's Monte Carlo, regularly drew as boisterous a crowd as the canteen. Crap shooting and triple dice were the only games played. The crowd waited for a gambler to make a "run" on some number, then placed their bets, inevitably losing to the casino's bank. But they returned the next night to bet again.

The ocean waters were expected to "soak" fevers out of the convalescents' muscles and to drive rheumatism from their bones. As the men's health improved, more and more soldiers ventured to the "splendid" ocean beach; by the first week in September, nearly one thousand bathers could be seen enjoying the surf near the Ditch Plains Life Saving Station. Each afternoon, Col. Roosevelt would lead a charge of Rough Riders on horseback to the ocean beach for a quick plunge in the sea.

"There was a thunder of hoofs along the level behind Newspaper Row like the sound of a stampede. Everybody ran out and beheld Col. Roosevelt on his big horse tearing across the plain at top speed with a squad of Rough Riders in hot pursuit. . . He was leaning forward in his saddle, his hat jammed far down on his head, his stocky, supple body giving easily to every motion of the powerful animal he rode. He ploughed through a marsh, lifted his mount over a gully in a flying leap, sped over the weedy stretch beyond, plunged down five feet to the sand beach, and pulled up close to the water's edge with his men still behind him. Three minutes later the head of Col. Roosevelt could be seen bobbing just outside the line of breakers. . . Presently, a large and somewhat premature wave broke out beyond the line, caught the cavalry leader unawares, and he disappeared from the scene of action in a swirl of seething water, to reappear a second later a rod in spluttering and laughing.

"Phew! That makes a man feel alive," he said as he trotted out of the water. . . "A few minutes afterward, he was again leading his squad in a race across the landscape." ("New York Sun, Bully, 163).

The ocean held dangers, however, for accomplished and novice swimmers. One week after two Rough Riders were nearly swept out to sea, Gen. Wheeler's youngest son, Naval Cadet Thomas H. Wheeler, and his friend, Lt. Newton Kirkpatrick of the First Cavalry, drowned in the waters off Ditch Plains. No incidence of suffering or of death at Camp Wikoff caused greater heartache than the loss of Fighting Joe's youngest son. When Gen. Wheeler reached the spot where his son's body had been found, he knelt there and wept. He said that he wished both he and his son had been killed in Cuba then to have lost his son at Montauk. As time passed at Camp Wikoff, soldiers were more willing to recall their experiences in the recent war. One night in August, some Rough Riders gathered around the campfire.

"In the city, we all knew that Teddy had moral courage to burn, but since I've seen

him in action, I've found out the reason for his independence. I tell you, boys, the trouble with Teddy is that he hasn't got it in him to be afraid. I don't believe even the first bullet scared him,' [said Mac]. . .

"Whew! Wasn't he a wild Indian in that charge up the hill!" exclaimed the Spider. "I wouldn't have taken 20-to-1 on his chances of getting to the top alive. He was way ahead of the line all the time."

"Tell you what broke me up," remarked the gambler. "Just behind him, the boys faltered for a minute, and he turned around and said in that surprised, reproachful sort of way, 'Why, boys, you aren't going back on me?' Why, I felt as if my mother had accused me of striking her. There was a lump in my throat like a walnut, and if hell had yawned in front of me, I'd have made a jump to get across rather than not follow after that."

"An' that's the feller that we Western cowpunchers was sort o' dubious about. I'd like to find the man now that would call him a college-bred dude." ("New York Sun", Bully, 148/150).

On the afternoon of September 13th, the day mustering out of the famed regiment began, Col. Roosevelt was asked by a committee of officers to come with them to a flat near his tent, where 500 Rough Riders, 200 men of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries, and a great number of visitors had gathered. Speaking for the Rough Riders, Private Murphy presented Col. Roosevelt with Frederick Remington's Bronco Buster statute as an expression of the "admiration, love and esteem" that the Rough had for their fearless leader.

Surprised and visibly affected by this gift from his Rough Riders, Col. Roosevelt spoke to his regiment for the final time.

"It gives me extreme pleasure to look around among you and see men of every occupation, men of means and men who work with their hands for a livelihood, and at the same time know that I have you for friends. You are men of widely different pursuits, yet you stand here side-by-side, you fought shoulder-to-shoulder. No man asked quarter for himself, and each one went in to show that he was as good as his neighbor. That is the American spirit. You cannot imagine how proud I am of your friendship and regard.

"I have also a profound respect for you because you have fighting qualities, and because you had the qualities which enabled us to get you into the fight . . . I realized when I took charge of you that I was taking upon myself a great responsibility. I cared for you as individuals, but did not forget that at any moment it might be necessary to sacrifice the individual for the whole. You would have scorned a commander who would have hesitated to expose you to any risk. I was bound that no other regiment should get any nearer to the Spanish lines than you got, and I do not think any did.

"I want to say just a word more to some of the men I see standing around not of your number. I refer to the regiments, cavalry regiments, who occupied the right and left flanks of us at Las Guasimas, the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments. The Spaniards called them 'Smoked Yankess,' but we found them to be an excellent breed of Yankee. I am sure that I speak the sentiments of men and officials in the assemblage

when I say that between you and the other cavalry regiments there is a tie which we trust will never be broken." ("New York Sun", Bully, 324/326).

At 5 p.m. the next day, Col. Roosevelt, as the commanding officer of his regiment, was the first of the officers to be mustered out of service.

"This ends it, eh?" he remarked with emotion to Lt. Col. Brodie upon his discharge. The next morning, September 15th, he left Camp Wikoff by train with Lts. Greenway, McIlhenny, Ballard and Sayre, Jr., bound for Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay.

Within two weeks, he was nominated as the Republican Gubernatorial Candidate at the Republican State Convention in Saratoga. On November 8th, he was elected Governor of the State of New York, completing the transition from national war hero to political leader in less than two months.

On October 9th, Secretary of War Alger issued an order directing that the Seventh Infantry, still quartered at Camp Wikoff, proceed to Fort Wayne, thus bringing an end to the military encampment at Montauk.

Following a visit to Montauk later in the month, E.S. Boughton, editor of "The East Hampton Star", wrote the following:

"There is a weird gloominess about the place from which one cannot escape as he walks around and sees the buildings, which a month since were fairly alive with human beings, now boarded up and left as sad reminders of the scenes of pleasure, joy, delight, sadness, sorrow and misery, which were alternately presented there during the existence of Camp Wikoff

. . .

"Up on the camp ground, from the tops of the hills, one can look off on sea and sound and imagine Montauk to be what it was before its invasion by the army, but when the eye drops, brown and seared hilltops, gullied and muddy valleys, with hundreds of tall poles scattered far and near and standing as solemn sentinels, picture the transition from past to present.

"With the exception of the wooden hospital buildings which stand in a group over the hill, about a mile east of the station, all that remains of the military grandeur of Camp Wikoff is the little enclosed half-acre on the summit of Rocky Ridge where lie the fever-stricken heroes of the Cuban War." (Bully, 448).

Cowpuncher to college athlete, marksmen, horsemen, eleven hundred volunteers hailing from all parts of the country, the First United States Volunteer Cavalry, forever known as Roosevelt's Rough Riders, inspired the nation in the summer of 1898, one hundred years ago.

Much was expected of the Rough Riders that spring and they exceeded those expectations that summer. Just how good were the Rough Riders?

Shortly after his return to Montauk on August 31st, Gen. William Shafter, commanding general of the Fifth Army Corps, a man in a position to know, said this about the Rough Riders:

"Nobody need make any mistake about that being a good regiment. The Western men were as good as soldiers before they enlisted. . . The Eastern men were fellows

whose nerve and pride carried them along neck-and-neck with the cowboys. Yes, that's a splendid regiment." ("New York Sun", Bully, 327).

I would like to thank Tom Twomey and The East Hampton 350th Anniversary Committee, Dr. John Gable of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, the Montauk Historical Society, and the readers who gave dimension to his lecture.

Virgil and Elaine Conway as President and Mrs. McKinley

Jim Foote as Colonel Theodore Roosevelt

Pat Falci as Gen. "Fighting Joe" Wheeler

Anita Brown as Annie Laurie Early Wheeler

Bill Brown for reading "The East Hampton Star" and "Sag Harbor Express" editorials, as well as Roosevelt's charge to the sea

Russell Drumm for reading the descriptions of Montauk and the bronco-busting competition

Jonathan Peters for reading the account of the Prairie, Roosevelt's greeting of Pres. McKinley, and the cowboys in the bronco-busting competition and at the campfire

George Larson for reading the General Hospital narration and the bronco buster and, finally, Dick White, as the patient in the General Hospital.