

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



— THE —
BULLY PULPIT

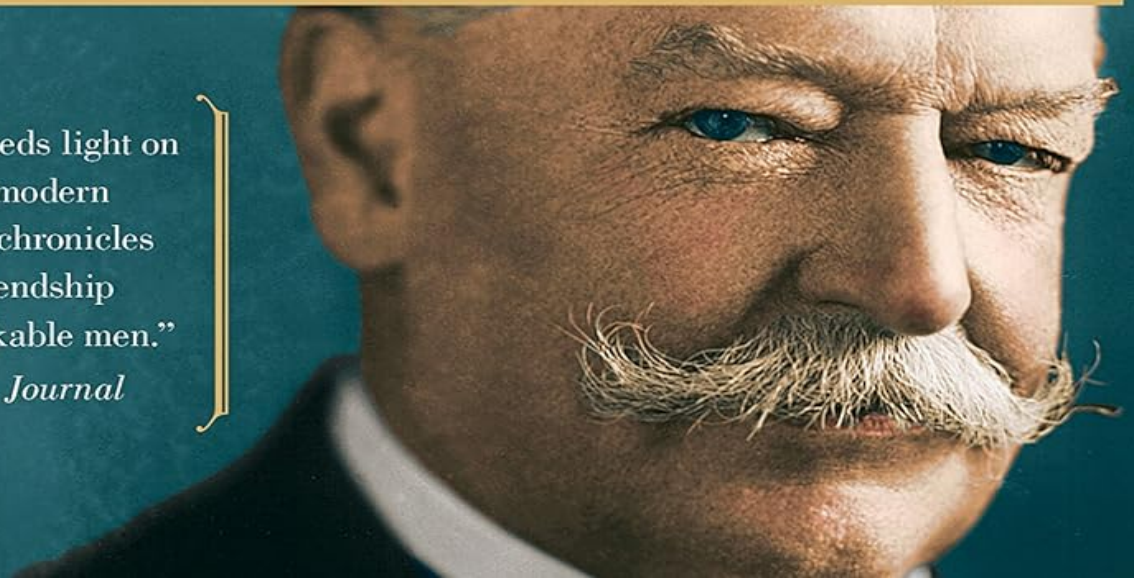
**THEODORE ROOSEVELT, WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT,
AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF JOURNALISM**

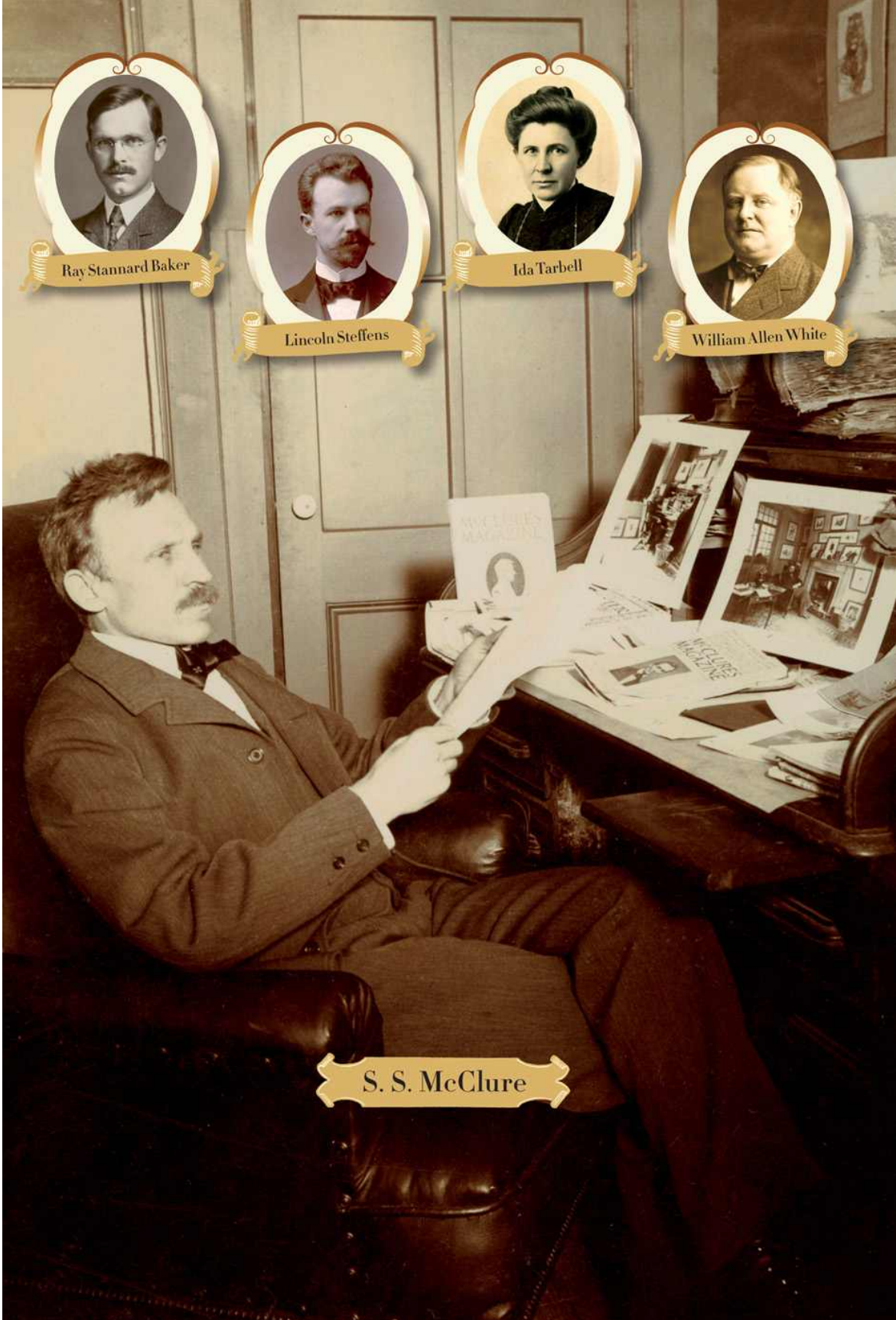
**DORIS KEARNS
GOODWIN**

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

“Goodwin not only sheds light on the birth of the modern political world but chronicles a remarkable friendship between two remarkable men.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*





Ray Stannard Baker

Lincoln Steffens

Ida Tarbell

William Allen White

S. S. McClure



On March 4, 1905, the day of Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration, the skies over the Capitol were sunny and clear; "Roosevelt luck" had brought "Roosevelt weather," Washingtonians remarked.

Thank you for downloading this Simon & Schuster eBook.

Join our mailing list and get updates on new releases, deals, bonus content and other great books from Simon & Schuster.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

or visit us online to sign up at
eBookNews.SimonandSchuster.com

Theodore Roosevelt,
William Howard Taft,
AND THE
Golden Age of Journalism

THE

**BULLY
PULPIT**

DORIS KEARNS
GOODWIN

SIMON & SCHUSTER

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY NEW DELHI

CONTENTS

Preface

1. The Hunter Returns
2. Will and Teedie
3. The Judge and the Politician
4. Nellie Herron Taft
5. Edith Carow Roosevelt
6. The Insider and the Outsider
7. The Invention of *McClure's*
8. "Like a Boy on Roller Skates"
9. Governor and Governor General
10. "That Damned Cowboy Is President"
11. "The Most Famous Woman in America"
12. "A Mission to Perform"
13. Toppling Old Bosses
14. "Thank Heaven You Are to Be with Me!"
15. "A Smile That Won't Come Off"
16. "Sitting on the Lid"
17. The American People Reach a Verdict
18. "Cast into Outer Darkness"
19. "To Cut Mr. Taft in Two!"
20. Taft Boom, Wall Street Bust
21. Kingmaker and King
22. "A Great Stricken Animal"
23. A Self-Inflicted Wound
24. St. George and the Dragon
25. "The Parting of the Ways"
26. "Like a War Horse"
27. "My Hat Is in the Ring"
28. "Bosom Friends, Bitter Enemies"

29. Armageddon

Epilogue

Photographs

Acknowledgments

About Doris Kearns Goodwin

Notes

Illustration Credits

Index

To Alice Mayhew and Linda Vandegrift

PREFACE

I BEGAN THIS BOOK SEVEN YEARS ago with the notion of writing about Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive era. This desire had been kindled nearly four decades earlier when I was a young professor teaching a seminar on the progressives. There are but a handful of times in the history of our country when there occurs a transformation so remarkable that a molt seems to take place, and an altered country begins to emerge. The turn of the twentieth century was such a time, and Theodore Roosevelt is counted among our greatest presidents, one of the few to attain that eminence without having surmounted some pronounced national crisis—revolution, war, widespread national depression.

To be sure, Roosevelt had faced a pernicious underlying crisis, one as pervasive as any military conflict or economic collapse. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, an immense gulf had opened between the rich and the poor; daily existence had become more difficult for ordinary people, and the middle class felt increasingly squeezed. Yet by the end of Roosevelt's tenure in the White House, a mood of reform had swept the country, creating a new kind of presidency and a new vision of the relationship between the government and the people. A series of anti-trust suits had been won and legislation passed to regulate railroads, strengthen labor rights, curb political corruption, end corporate campaign contributions, impose limits on the working day, protect consumers from unsafe food and drugs, and conserve vast swaths of natural resources for the American people. The question that most intrigued me was how Roosevelt had managed to rouse a Congress long wedded to the reigning concept of *laissez-faire*—a government interfering as little as possible in the economic and social life of the people—to pass such comprehensive measures.

The essence of Roosevelt's leadership, I soon became convinced, lay in his enterprising use of the "bully pulpit," a phrase he himself coined to

describe the national platform the presidency provides to shape public sentiment and mobilize action. Early in Roosevelt's tenure, Lyman Abbott, editor of *The Outlook*, joined a small group of friends in the president's library to offer advice and criticism on a draft of his upcoming message to Congress. "He had just finished a paragraph of a distinctly ethical character," Abbott recalled, "when he suddenly stopped, swung round in his swivel chair, and said, 'I suppose my critics will call that preaching, but I have got such a bully pulpit.'" From this bully pulpit, Roosevelt would focus the charge of a national movement to apply an ethical framework, through government action, to the untrammled growth of modern America.

Roosevelt understood from the outset that this task hinged upon the need to develop powerfully reciprocal relationships with members of the national press. He called them by their first names, invited them to meals, took questions during his midday shave, welcomed their company at day's end while he signed correspondence, and designated, for the first time, a special room for them in the West Wing. He brought them aboard his private railroad car during his regular swings around the country. At every village station, he reached the hearts of the gathered crowds with homespun language, aphorisms, and direct moral appeals. Accompanying reporters then extended the reach of Roosevelt's words in national publications. Such extraordinary rapport with the press did not stem from calculation alone. Long before and after he was president, Roosevelt was an author and historian. From an early age, he read as he breathed. He knew and revered writers, and his relationship with journalists was authentically collegial. In a sense, he was one of them.

While exploring Roosevelt's relationship with the press, I was especially drawn to the remarkably rich connections he developed with a team of journalists—including Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, Lincoln Steffens, and William Allen White—all working at *McClure's* magazine, the most influential contemporary progressive publication. The restless enthusiasm and manic energy of their publisher and editor, S. S. McClure, infused the magazine with "a spark of genius," even as he suffered from periodic nervous breakdowns. "The story is the thing," Sam McClure responded when asked to account for the methodology behind his publication. He wanted his writers to begin their research without preconceived notions, to carry their readers through their own process of discovery. As they educated

themselves about the social and economic inequities rampant in the wake of teeming industrialization, so they educated the entire country.

Together, these investigative journalists, who would later appropriate Roosevelt's derogatory term "muckraker" as "a badge of honor," produced a series of exposés that uncovered the invisible web of corruption linking politics to business. McClure's formula—giving his writers the time and resources they needed to produce extended, intensively researched articles—was soon adopted by rival magazines, creating what many considered a golden age of journalism. Collectively, this generation of gifted writers ushered in a new mode of investigative reporting that provided the necessary conditions to make a genuine bully pulpit of the American presidency. "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind," the historian Richard Hofstadter observed, "and that its characteristic contribution was that of the socially responsible reporter-reformer."



PERHAPS MOST SURPRISING TO ME in my own process of research was the discovery that Roosevelt's chosen successor in the White House, William Howard Taft, was a far more sympathetic, if flawed, figure than I had realized. Scholarship has long focused on the rift in the relations between the two men during the bitter 1912 election fight, ignoring their career-long, mutually beneficial friendship. Throughout the Roosevelt administration, Taft functioned, in Roosevelt's own estimation, as the central figure in his cabinet. Because it was seen as undignified for a sitting president to campaign on his own behalf, Taft served as the chief surrogate during Roosevelt's 1904 presidential race, the most demanded speaker on the circuit to explain and justify the president's positions. In an era when presidents routinely spent long periods away from Washington, crisscrossing the country on whistle-stop tours or simply vacationing, it was Taft, the secretary of war—not the secretary of state or the vice president—who was considered the "acting President." Asked how things would be managed in his absence, Roosevelt blithely replied: "Oh, things will be all right, I have left Taft sitting on the lid."

Long before Taft's 1908 election, Roosevelt had disclosed his passionate wish that Taft be his successor. There was no man in the country, he

believed, better suited to be president, no man he trusted more to carry out his legacy of active moral leadership and progressive reform. Yet, left alone at the helm when Roosevelt embarked on a yearlong African expedition, Taft questioned whether he was suited for the office. For all of Taft's admirable qualities and intentions to codify and expand upon Roosevelt's progressive legacy, he ultimately failed as a public leader, a failure that underscores the pivotal importance of the bully pulpit in presidential leadership.

From the start of his administration, Taft's relationship with journalists was uneasy. He was never able to seek the counsel they offered or harness the press corps to broadcast a coherent narrative concerning his legislative goals. As a former judge, he assumed that his decisions would speak for themselves. Eventually, he recognized the handicap of his inability to engage the press as his predecessor had done, conceding after he left office that he had been "derelict" in his use of the bully pulpit. He had failed to educate the country about his policies and programs. He was simply "not constituted as Roosevelt" to expound upon his thoughts and vent his feelings with the members of the press. It was, Taft came to realize, a matter of temperament.

Finally, my own process of discovery led me to the realization that the story I wanted to tell had three interwoven strands. One was the story of Theodore Roosevelt, whose crusade to expand the role of government in national life required the transformation of the presidency itself. The next strand was the story of William Howard Taft, whose talents and skills played a more significant role in the Roosevelt administration than is generally understood. When Taft attained the presidency, however, he found himself at sea, in large part because he was temperamentally unsuited to make use of the story's third strand—the bully pulpit that had provided the key to his predecessor's success.

As S. S. McClure well understood, the "vitality of democracy" depends on "popular knowledge of complex questions." At the height of *McClure's* success, observed the philosopher William James, the investigative journalists McClure had assembled and their counterparts in other leading magazines had embarked on nothing less than "the mission of raising the tone of democracy," exerting an elevating influence on public sentiment.

It is my greatest hope that the story that follows will guide readers through their own process of discovery toward a better understanding of

what it takes to summon the public to demand the actions necessary to bring our country closer to its ancient ideals. “There is no one left,” McClure exhorted his readers as he cast about for a remedy to America’s woes at the turn of the twentieth century, “none but all of us.”