

America's Story

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Theodore Roosevelt



Clifford Berryman's cartoon of Roosevelt as a Rough Rider with a bear cub

Teddy Bears

Theodore Roosevelt was often called Teddy, and after one particular hunting trip this nickname took on a new meaning. Roosevelt was an outdoorsman and a hunter, but he also loved animals. On one occasion, he was hunting with some of his aides and a group of reporters. For several days, the newspapers reported that the president had failed to shoot any game. Finally, Roosevelt's aides found a bear, which they cornered and presented to him as a trophy. However, Roosevelt felt compassion for the bear and refused to shoot it. This drawing illustrates Roosevelt's kind attitude toward the bear. What do you think this incident inspired?

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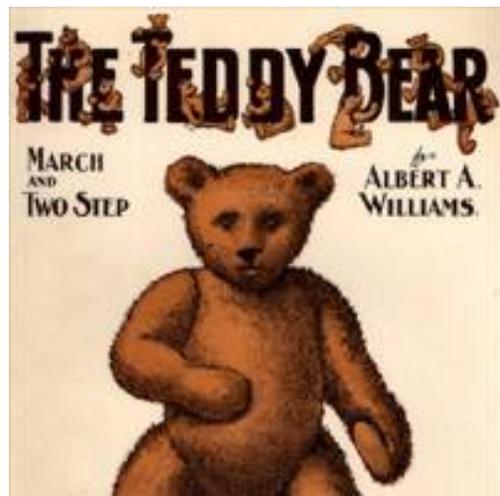
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U.S. Presidents ▶ Theodore Roosevelt



Teddy Bears

A Brooklyn store owner, Morris Michtom, saw the drawing of Roosevelt and the bear cub and was inspired to create a new toy. He created a little stuffed bear cub and put it in his shop window with a sign that read "Teddy's bear." The toys were an immediate success and Michtom founded the Ideal Novelty and Toy Co., which still exists today. Teddy bears have stood the test of time and are as popular today as ever. The teddy bear craze even inspired music. Here you see the cover of a song called *Teddy Bear March and Two Step* from 1907.

Sheet music cover for the *Teddy Bear March and Two Step*



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Theodore Roosevelt with John Burroughs and Billy Hofer at camp

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Teddy Bears

Roosevelt enjoyed spending time outdoors with his friends, such as fellow conservationist (a person who cares about protecting nature) John Muir. Here you can see him on a camping trip with his friend John Burroughs and some other men. Roosevelt wrote his son Archie a letter about another camping trip when Burroughs had difficulty sleeping because of a family of flying squirrels in the cabin.

"Mother and I do not mind them at all, ... but one night they waked up John Burroughs and he spent a misguided hour hunting for the nest ... caught two of the young squirrels and put them in a basket... The next day under Mother's direction I took them out, getting my fingers somewhat bitten in the process, and loosed them in our room..." It was just like this animal-loving man to set the creatures free, don't you think?



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