

intriguing characters, as well as its business history, of interest. Non-specialists will find large parts of the book overly detailed and tough reading though.

Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena, edited by Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. xxiv, 234 pp. Illustrations, photographs, index. \$24.95 paperback.

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Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena is a book about small things. This is good. In the immense scholarship of Theodore Roosevelt (over a thousand books and counting), the small things have often been overlooked. Editors Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson have done fine work knitting together a compendium of these small things—chance acquaintances, wildlife encounters, and political collaborations—which brings to mind Bruce Springsteen’s song “From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come).” It is good for us today that these small things resulted in something big: the protection of our natural and wildlife treasures and efforts to educate the nation about them. It is the small things that remind us that the grand arc of history is not pre-ordained. Sometimes history turns on the small things.

This is not a scholarly book, which is not a criticism. It is a collection of easily consumed essays casting a light on the origins and maturation of Theodore Roosevelt’s conservationist ideals, as well as those men and women he befriended and who consequently shaped his (and their own) thinking over a period of four decades. It is also a study of political power, personal relationships, and the impact of intellectual idealism. It reveals how small things like chance encounters and youthful enthusiasms led to the resultant big things of protecting over 200 million acres of national treasure.

The essays reveal interesting insights, many worth deeper studies. For example, in their piece on Roosevelt’s writing about his experiences in North Dakota, contributors Thomas Cullen Bailey and Katherine Joslin observe that with his unique blend of narrative and field naturalist expertise, TR “worked to create a literary genre almost of his own making” (24). Ian Tyrrell, a professor at the University of New South Wales, contributes a provocative piece on the mutual shaping of European conservation

efforts and TR's evolving globalism. These contributions whet an appetite to know more and reveal fresh areas for Roosevelt scholarship.

There are also quirky anecdotes. Melanie Choukas-Bradley tells us that the President lost a gold ring at Rock Creek Park in 1902 and placed an ad hoping for its recovery in a D.C. newspaper (72). Clay Jenkinson writes of William T. Hornaday, the famous taxidermist, placing a note in small box under the American Bison display at the Smithsonian pleading future generations to preserve these specimens as they were the "last of their kind" (157). Of course, Hornaday was wrong. His efforts, along with those of TR and others, as Jenkinson regales, prevented the extinction of these majestic animals. Duane Jundt writes that birds were among TR's lifelong loves equaling his passion for politics and family. Once again, from small interests and encounters, big projects can come.

There is nothing to criticize in this book. It is tightly written, interesting, and historically sound. If there is a minor quibble, it would be that the essays sometimes repeat similar tales and facts. Yet, when it comes to those big things such as the number of preserves, parks, and wildlife refuges TR created, it is worth repeating.

There are remarkable men and women in this book: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, William Hornaday, John Burroughs, and Mary Pinchot. The latter was Gifford Pinchot's mother. In his essay, Char Miller relates that Pinchot did not want TR's vibrancy to overshadow her son's important legacy. Yet, for all their singular achievements, none shine brighter than TR. This book reinforces what Theodore Roosevelt's friend, William Hard, said about him: "He was the prism through which the light of day took on more colors than could be seen in anybody else's company" (Hard, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Tribute*, 1919).

Clay Jenkinson writes of TR's indifference to being memorialized in statues. Nevertheless, one statue is on Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, D.C. Another is in McHose Park in Boone, Iowa. The Iowa sculpture was created by Italian American Sculptor Vincenzo Miserendino (See Gregory A. Wynn, "The Little Known TR Sculptor Vincenzo Miserendino," *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* XXXIII, No. 4 [Fall 2012]). It is magnificent and one of the few such fine art sculptures of TR in the nation. Despite its artistic gravitas, the beauty of the open public space it resides in outshines the statue. Just as, in this book, the reader is ultimately reminded that the open wild spaces Theodore Roosevelt so adored outshone even him.

Plagued by Fire: The Dreams and Furies of Frank Lloyd Wright, by Paul Hendrickson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019. x, 600 pp. Illustrations, essay on sources, bibliography, index, notes. \$35.00 hardcover.

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Had today's we-are-the-truth media been around to assess Frank Lloyd Wright's situation in 1910, there may never have been Taliesin, the Imperial Hotel, Fallingwater, the Usonian houses, Johnson Wax, Price Tower or the Guggenheim Museum. It is a fashion now to find heroism in the common person, and this is as it should be. But the associated need to tear down the extraordinary genius of earlier years is truly unfortunate.

Nevertheless, to reduce "a haughty man" is what Paul Hendrickson wants to do. In *Plagued by Fire*, he tells stories about Wright—stories that he assures us are "the real story." The real story, he says, "is grainer, ruder" (19) than the same story as we have so often heard it told. The real story "has about it the drip-drip-drip of reducing a haughty man to his near-nakedness" (19). In earlier books, Hendrickson investigated Marion Post Walcott, Robert McNamara, and Earnest Hemingway. In this book, he tells the real story of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The book's dust jacket hyperbole bills *Plagued by Fire* as "a breathtaking biography that will change the way we understand the life, mind, and work of the premier American architect." The story has little to do with architecture. Hendrickson focuses not on Wright's successes but on the tragedies in his life: infidelities, ugly divorces, devastating fires, inconceivable murders and deaths. His concern is with the low points of a valiant, exuberating life, and on nearly every page he speculates about Wright's psychological make-up. His mission, in his own words, is the "historical-cum-imaginative reconstruction of what it must have been like" (19).

What was it like for Wright as the child of bickering parents in Richland Center? What was it like when Wright sought his first job in Chicago? When he married and fathered six children? When later his lover was killed by a mad servant who then burned Wright's house down? When his daughter and son-in-law were killed in a strange automobile accident?

What was it like? Hendrickson speculates, suggesting to his reader that his guess is far more informed, sympathetic, and knowing than the reader's guess could ever be. His facts are carefully selected to prove his point. "What would it have been like for the kids in those two