

# B&C BOOKS

## The Hunting and Adventure Books of Theodore Roosevelt



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IT NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE me that two of the most prominent statesmen of the 20th century, Winston Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt, could find the time to write as extensively as they did. Both started writing early in life. In the case of Roosevelt, his heavily researched *Naval War of 1812* was published in 1882 when he was only 23 years old!

Theodore Roosevelt's literary background was prominent from an early age. Despite leading as active a life as he did, he was an avid reader. It was his habit to read every day, often taking some of the great classics of literature with him on his trips afield. In *A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open* (1916) he wrote an entire chapter listing and recommending his favorite titles.

In the early 1880s Roosevelt longed to see and experience the "wild west" and to hunt buffalo while they still existed.

This led to his trips to Little Missouri in the Dakota country and his acquisition of the Elkhorn and Maltese Cross ranches. His ranching experiences from a financial standpoint were a disaster and he took substantial losses on his investment in cattle. However, his love of the wilderness – riding, hunting, dealing with the hardened men of the west, had a profound influence on his life.

In 1884, Roosevelt's beloved first wife died a day after the birth of their daughter, Alice. His mother also died the same day in the same house. During the next few years he tried to drown much of his sorrow with long stays in the West. His experiences as a rancher, hunter and deputy sheriff provided the background for two of his next books, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885) and *Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail* (1888.) The first edition cover of the latter book illustrates this article. With its gilt and green embossed cover and Frederic Remington illustrations, it is a masterpiece of artistic book production

and commands a premium price in the antiquarian book market.

In 1886, Roosevelt married Edith Kermit Carow and the same year he signed the contract to build their home at Sagamore Hill, which was his retreat for the rest of his life. Located in what was then an unspoiled wild area of Long Island, it provided the foundation for the many outdoor adventures he shared with his sons.

Theodore Roosevelt wrote dozens of books, many of them historical such as *The Winning of the West* in four volumes (1889-1896.) It has been estimated that a complete list of his writings would number over five thousand items! It is the opinion of many critics, however, that he wrote best about his own experiences, hunting and in wilderness adventure, and these are the books listed here.

Theodore Roosevelt died a short time after his 60th birthday. He created an incomparable literary legacy during his short lifetime! ▲▲▲

### HUNTING AND ADVENTURE BOOKS BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

- Hunting Trips of a Ranchman (1885)
- Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail (1888)
- The Wilderness Hunter (1893)
- Big Game Hunting (1899)
- Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter (1905)
- Good Hunting (1907)
- African Game Trails (1910)
- Through the Brazilian Wilderness (1914)
- A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open (1916)

