

MEMORIAL HALL DEDICATION ★ JUNE 3, 1903

Excerpts from local accounts of President Roosevelt's visit

For the first time in its 51 years of life, the city of Rockford has entertained an occupant of the presidential chair during his term of office. In the night hours on the eve of his visit, men tolled to put up the bunting and festoons and flags that were to wave welcome to the distinguished visitor and at daybreak there was a scene of beauty on every hand. At 8 o'clock the children of the city schools began to march from their several buildings to the riverfront close to the library building and the thousands of children made a pretty sight as they passed along the streets.

The parade formed at the courthouse and went to the Illinois Central depot with the various societies following... the Grand Army, the Sons of Veterans, the militia companies, the Spanish-American War Veterans and other organizations made up the column and stood at arms as the president's carriage passed them on South Main Street. The progress up South Main to the hall was marked by cheering and tumultuous applause to which the president responded with uplifted hat until he entered the east door of the building. The scene was "a remarkable one."

The president stepped from the doors of the Memorial building at 9:31 o'clock and his appearance was the signal for applause that started as a gentle wave among the occupants of the main platform and spread to the limits of the throng, swelling into a mighty torrent of enthusiastic outburst on its way. The president bowed his greetings to all parts of the assemblage. The value of the visitor's time was appreciated and the applause subsided even more quickly.



These sentiments combined in one great patriotic swell that brought together all the people to unite in a tribute to the soldiers and sailors, to the nation's chief and above all the country's glory.

President Roosevelt in his manner and speech showed no sign to his strenuous journey of 18,000 miles with its innumerable speeches. Health was depicted in every feature, and every action

spoke of full and ceaseless vigor. Throughout his discourse, President Roosevelt made himself heard to the limits of the crowd with little effort.

At the conclusion of his speech, the pent up enthusiasm of the people broke forth and the air was rent with cheers. The President turned to the rope which bound the flag and gave it several pulls. The banner unfolded slowly and the hurrahs doubled as it was caught by the breeze. Colonel

Lawler proposed, "Three cheers for the President!" and before the thousands had finished their ready compliance, Mr. Roosevelt had disappeared through the doors of the hall and was on his way. It was a great day for Memorial Hall, the city of Rockford and the county of Winnebago.

*Excerpt from the
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