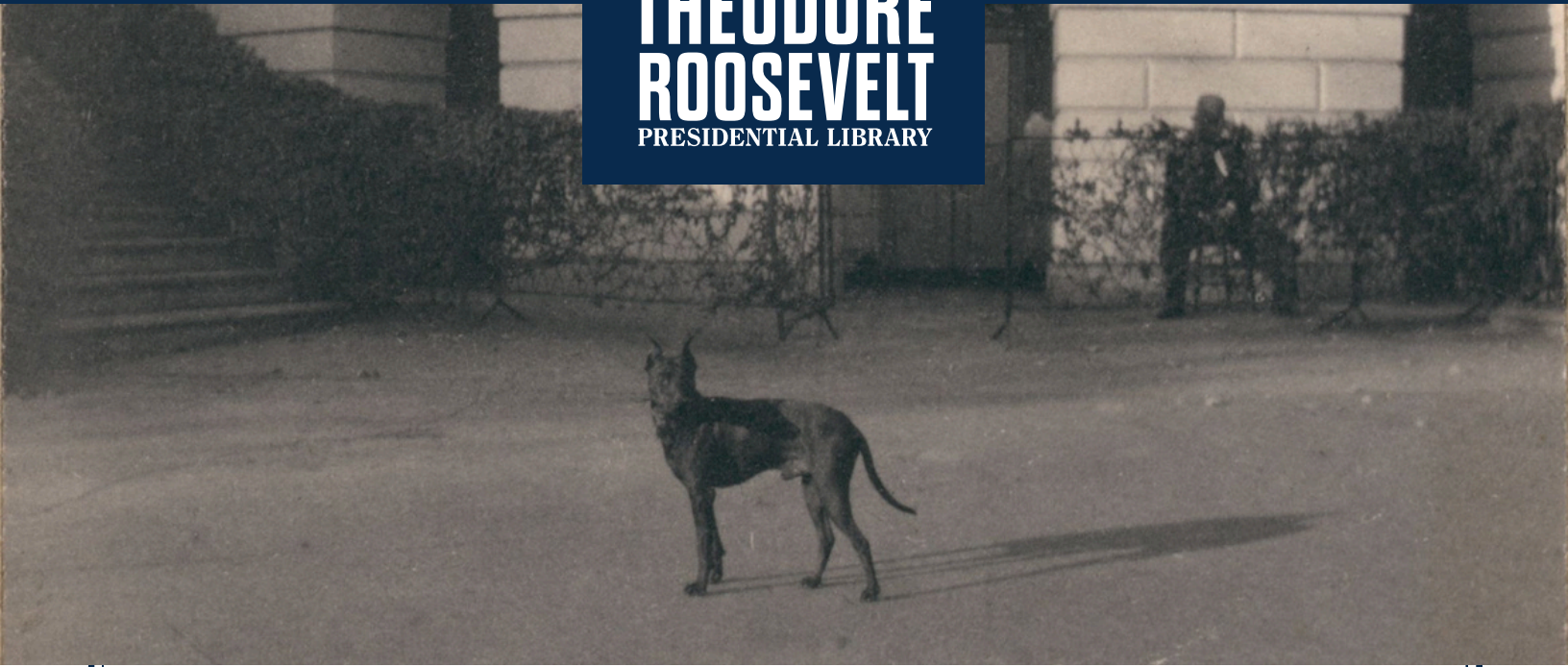


THEODORE ROOSEVELT

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

Resource Packet

WHITE HOUSE PETS



WHITE HOUSE PETS

When Theodore Roosevelt became president on September 14, 1901, he brought a large family with him to the White House. They were the first large family to reside there since James Garfield's presidency in 1881. Roosevelt did his best to protect his six children—Alice, Theodore Jr., Kermit, Ethel, Archibald, and Quentin—from the press. But their antics in the White House still managed to reach reporters and capture the hearts of the American public, most notably thanks to their many pets. The Roosevelt menagerie included a variety of animals, from dogs and cats to guinea pigs and ponies—there were more than 50! Here are just a few examples of the many Roosevelt animals (and this isn't a complete list!):

- 12 horses
- 11 dogs (Manchu, a Pekingese; Pete, a bull terrier; Skip, a rat terrier; Sailor Boy, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever; Rollo, a Saint Bernard; and Blackjack—Jack for short—a Manchester terrier; Susan, a male yellow dog; Diamond, an English pup; Scamp; Mike; and Ace)
- 5 guinea pigs (Bishop Doane, Dr. Johnson, Father G. Grady, Fighting Bob Evans, and Admiral Dewey)
- 3 snakes (including one king snake)
- 2 Shetland ponies (Algonquin and General Grant)
- 2 cats (Tom Quartz and Slippers, a six-toed tabby cat)
- 2 kangaroo rats
- 2 white rabbits with pink eyes
- 1 mouse who was a pet for 48 hours (Nibble)
- 1 hen (Baron Spreckle)
- 1 pig (Maude)
- 1 bear (Jonathan Edwards)
- 1 lizard (Bill the Lizard)
- 1 badger (Josiah)
- 1 macaw (Eli Yale)
- 1 piebald rat (Jonathan)
- 1 garter snake (Emily Spinach)
- 1 rabbit (Peter Rabbit)
- 1 one-legged rooster (Fierce)
- 1 flying squirrel
- 1 barn owl
- 1 hyena
- 1 goat

Resource Packet: White House Pets

Primary sources pertaining to the many pets Theodore Roosevelt, his family, and his friends had are available in collections across the country. Students and teachers can find over 15 pages of primary sources in the [Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library](#) related exclusively to pets. **This resource packet includes 18 primary sources related to Theodore Roosevelt and his family pets.**

1 Theodore Roosevelt's children



[Download](#)



Source 1 is a photograph of Theodore Roosevelt's six children—Alice, Theodore Jr. "Ted," Kermit, Ethel, Archibald "Archie," and Quentin. Three of the six children hold pets: Alice and Ted with dogs in their laps and Kermit with a guinea pig. Encourage students to think about family pictures they have been in. Were they allowed to bring their pets like Roosevelt's children?

DATE: 1899-1901 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

2 Theodore Roosevelt and dog



[Download](#)



Source 2 is a photograph of Theodore Roosevelt with the family's St. Bernard—Rollo—in front of the White House. Encourage the students to carefully look at the interaction between Roosevelt and Rollo. Does he seem like a dog person?

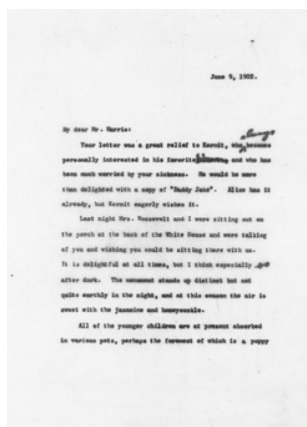
DATE: c. 1901-1909 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

Courtesy of Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

3 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Joel Chandler Harris



[Download](#)



Source 3 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Joel Chandler Harris, the American folklorist who wrote the Uncle Remus stories. In it, Roosevelt discusses the current occupation of the younger children toward their pets, mentioning several dogs; Eli the macaw; Jonathan the piebald rat; the flying squirrel; two kangaroo rats; and Algonquin, Archie's pony. Encourage students to carefully consider how Roosevelt describes the various pets. Which one does he dislike the most?

DATE: 1902-06-09 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

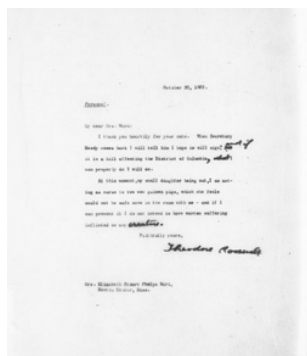
Courtesy of Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

Resource Packet: White House Pets

4 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward



[Download](#)



Source 4 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, an American feminist author, in which Roosevelt describes caring for two guinea pigs since his daughter Ethel is out. Encourage students to examine the words Roosevelt uses to describe the guinea pigs. What attitude does Roosevelt seem to have toward animals?

DATE: 1902-10-20 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

5 Jack the dog



[Download](#)



Source 5 is a photograph of Theodore Roosevelt Jr.'s dog, Jack (or Blackjack) in front of the White House. Encourage students to think about what it would be like to be a dog at the White House. What can they learn from this picture of Jack?

DATE: 1902 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

6 Alice Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 6 is a photograph of Alice Roosevelt at the White House with her dog, a long-haired chihuahua named Leo. Encourage students to carefully examine the photograph. What can they learn about Alice, Theodore Roosevelt's eldest daughter, and her relationship toward her dog?

DATE: 1902 **CREATED BY:** Frances Benjamin Johnston

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

Resource Packet: White House Pets

7 Quentin Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 7 is a photograph of Quentin Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt's youngest son, riding Algonquin at the White House. At the time of the photograph, Quentin was around four years old. Look at the photograph carefully. What can students learn about Quentin's ability to handle the pony at such a young age?

DATE: 1902

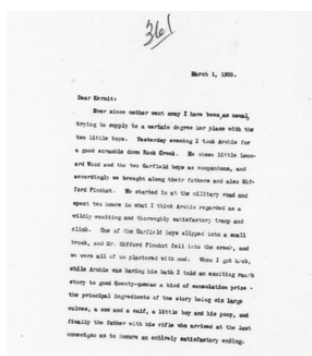
CREATED BY: Unknown

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

8 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 8 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to his son Kermit in which he relays that two additional macaws like Eli have arrived at the White House for Ted and Kermit—one red and the other green. Eli was a blue macaw. What color macaw would you want—blue, red, or green? And what would you name your macaw?

DATE: 1903-03-01

CREATED BY: Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

9 Recent events of local interest as sketched by a local artist



[Download](#)



Source 9 is a cartoon illustration of the pets at the White House. The children and the animals seem to be a bit chaotic. Encourage students to think about this depiction of the White House pets and Theodore Roosevelt's children. Do they think it is an accurate portrayal?

DATE: 1903-10-10

CREATED BY: Unknown

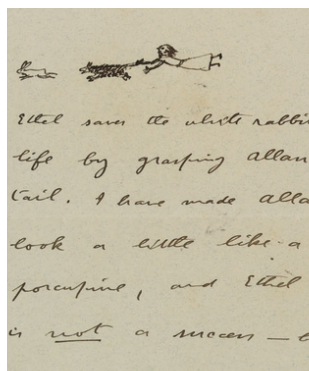
Courtesy of Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

Resource Packet: White House Pets

10 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 10 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to his son Kermit discussing life at the White House, accompanied by sketches of the experiences. One of them is a picture of Ethel chasing a dog named Allan, who is chasing a white rabbit. What do you think of the illustration? Do you think Allan looks like a dog or more like a “porcupine” like Roosevelt thought?

DATE: 1903-10-27 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1541 (62), Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

11 Archibald B. Roosevelt with pet badger



[Download](#)



Source 11 is a photograph of Theodore Roosevelt's son Archibald “Archie” with his pet badger, Josiah, which Roosevelt brought back from a trip out west. Archie liked to hold Josiah by the middle, as seen in this photograph. Do you think Archie is brave to hold a badger? Would you want a pet badger?

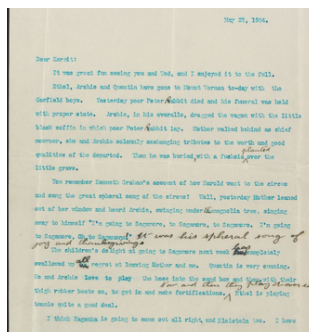
DATE: 1903-1905 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

12 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 12 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to his son Kermit in which he discusses the funeral for one of their rabbits, aptly named Peter Rabbit. What do you make of the discussion of the funeral? Would you hold a funeral for your animals?

DATE: 1904-05-28 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

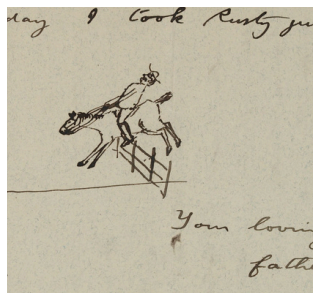
Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1541 (79), Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

Resource Packet: White House Pets

13 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt



[Download](#)



Source 13 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to his son Kermit, which includes a sketch of him taking his horse, Rusty, jumping. What do you think of the illustration? Do you think Roosevelt was a good horseman?

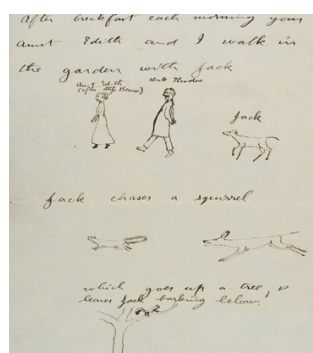
DATE: 1904-06-12 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1541 (81), Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

14 Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to William Sheffield Cowles



[Download](#)



Source 14 is a letter from Theodore Roosevelt to William Sheffield Cowles, his nephew, in which he describes a walk he and Aunt Edith took with their dog Jack in the garden. Jack ultimately ended up chasing a squirrel up a tree. What do you think of Roosevelt's drawings of the squirrel and the dog? Do you think they are accurate?

DATE: 1905-03-29 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Harvard College Library, Theodore Roosevelt Collection, MS Am 1834 (784), Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

15 Here Kitty Kitty – Photo 2



[Download](#)



Source 15 is an illustration of Theodore Roosevelt stumbling across the family's six-toed cat, Slippers, while walking along the Cross Hall in the White House during a state dinner. What do you notice about the illustration? Does there seem to be anything unique about the cat?

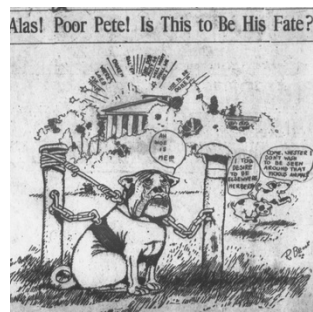
DATE: c. 1906 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

Courtesy of White House Historical Association, Internet Archive/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

16 Alas! Poor Pete! Is this to be his fate?



[Download](#)



Source 16 is a cartoon depicting one of the Roosevelt's family dogs, Pete the bulldog, outside of the White House. Pete bit the legs of several visitors to the White House, including foreign dignitaries, so he was sent to Sagamore Hill to avoid intimidating guests. What would you have done if your dog kept biting visitors?

DATE: 1907-07-30 **CREATED BY:** Robert E. Brook

Courtesy of Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

Resource Packet: White House Pets

17

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt with children and dog, some seated, others standing, outdoors



[Download](#)



Source 17 is a photograph of the Roosevelt family (excluding Alice, since she had gotten married in 1906). Why do you think Theodore Roosevelt and his wife, Edith, allowed their son Archibald “Archie” to hold a dog in this formal picture?

DATE: 1907-08-24 **CREATED BY:** Pach Brothers

Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

18

Theodore Roosevelt’s pet one-legged rooster



[Download](#)



Source 18 is a photograph of the Roosevelt’s one-legged rooster named Fierce. Why do you think the Roosevelt children wanted a one-legged rooster for a pet?

DATE: c. 1910-1920 **CREATED BY:** Unknown

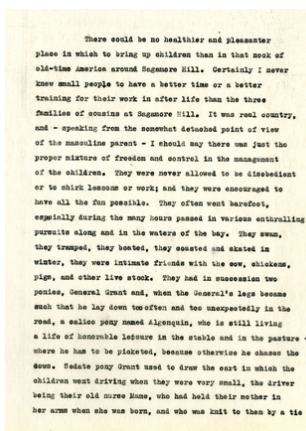
Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

19

Manuscript regarding children and pets



[Download](#)



Source 19 is a typed excerpt from Theodore Roosevelt’s *Autobiography* in which he discusses his children and their pets. One of the sentences reads: “As for the dogs, of course there were many, and during their lives they were intimate and valued family friends, and their deaths were household tragedies.” What do you think about the Roosevelt children’s relationships with their pets? If you have a pet, what relationship do you have with them?

DATE: 1913 **CREATED BY:** Theodore Roosevelt

Courtesy of Dickinson State University, 1958 Theodore Roosevelt Centennial Symposium, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

IMPORTANT DATES

- **September 14, 1901:** Theodore Roosevelt becomes the youngest president
- **1902:** Theodore Roosevelt's family moved into the White House

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

- Hansen, Grace. *Unusual Pets of Presidents*. Abdo Kids Junior, 2022.
- McGill, Erin. *If You Want a Friend in Washington*. Schwartz & Wade, 2020.
- Moberg, Julia. *Presidential Pets*. Charlesbridge, 2016.

Articles

- Roberts, Amy, et. al. "All the Presidents' Pets: An Illustrated Guide." CNN Politics. Last modified December 20, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2021/02/politics/white-house-pets/>.
- "The Roosevelt Pets." National Park Service. Last modified September 28, 2024. <https://www.nps.gov/thrb/learn/historyculture/the-roosevelt-pets.htm>.
- Wood, Jennifer M. "21 of Theodore Roosevelt's Most Memorable Pets." Mental Floss. Last modified March 10, 2023. <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/610385/theodore-roosevelt-pets>.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Research more about one of Theodore Roosevelt's pets: Use the Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library to find as much as you can about one of Theodore Roosevelt's pets and write a short report on that pet.

Think about your favorite pets: Which of Theodore Roosevelt's pets would you most want to have yourself? Draw a picture of it.