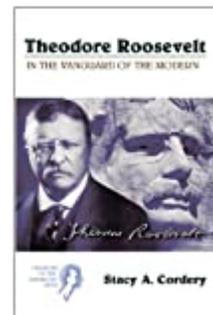




Stacy A. Cordery. *Theodore Roosevelt: In the Vanguard of the Modern.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003. xvii + 228 pp. No price listed (paper), ISBN 978-0-15-506610-6.



Reviewed by April R. Summitt (Department of History, Andrews University)

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Teddy Roosevelt and the American Mind

In this volume, Stacy Cordery has produced a valuable study-guide for students on both the subject of Theodore Roosevelt and the processes of researching and writing history. Rather than producing a comprehensive biography, Cordery sketches the highlights of Roosevelt's life and evaluates his contributions to the modern American mindset. According to the author, Theodore Roosevelt was the first truly modern president, and perhaps the first modern American.

The author sees Roosevelt's principle contribution to the development of the modern American mind as expanding the role and expectations of government. His major accomplishments include creating the first real conservation program for natural resources, the curbing and regulation of big business, the development of an active and interventionist foreign policy, building a modern navy, and expanding the role of the presidency. He was a true "Renaissance Man," forming opinions and policies on most of the important topics that would concern Americans throughout the rest of the Twentieth Century.

Cordery has not provided a new interpretation of Roosevelt. She has, however, managed to synthesize

most of the major scholarship on this subject, striking a balance between lauding Roosevelt for his innovations and analyzing the older ideologies he carried with him. While Roosevelt was one of the first presidents to discuss the value of women and supported their right to vote, own property, and obtain divorces, he still believed that women's primary responsibility was to raise many children for a strong future generation. Even though Roosevelt was a social Darwinist, he did depart from many of his contemporaries in his belief that any race could rise to the same nobility he believed his own race embodied. He was a product of his times, but he moved beyond them, anticipating changing views long before anyone else did.

This useful, abbreviated resource on Roosevelt's major contributions as president will serve primarily as a teaching tool for undergraduate history students. In addition to her own evaluation of Roosevelt's legacy, Cordery provides examples of primary and secondary sources and how they can be used to evaluate the past. She quotes long sections from historians and Roosevelt's autobiography, allowing the reader to compare and evaluate interpretations. In some ways, it is distracting to

switch from the author's voice to the long quotes and the font for quoted passages is quite small, but these drawbacks are probably unavoidable. Adding a chronology of Roosevelt's life and study questions at the end of each chapter adds further to the work's usefulness. I highly recommend it to teachers of both high school and college history students.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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