

This year the nation honors a great American and a wonderful father on the 100th anniversary of his birth.



Theodore and Edith Roosevelt with children (l to r), Quentin, Ethel, Kermit, Theodore, Jr., and Archibald in a 1907 photo at their Long Island home.

T. R. Talks to His Children

HONORING THEODORE ROOSEVELT on the centennial of his birth will be a big job for the United States. Twenty-sixth President, winner of the Nobel Peace prize, hero of San Juan Hill, driving force behind the Panama Canal, trustbuster, conservationist, hunter, cowboy—there were few things TR didn't try and didn't accomplish.

No glory or ambition, however, interfered with what he considered his most important role in life—head of the boisterous Roosevelt family of Sagamore Hill. His career often separated him from his wife, Edith, and their four sons and daughter, but "The Affectionate Tyrant"—as he called himself—kept in constant touch with them.

His letters reveal a full-time father, vitally interested in his children's simplest activities, "delighted" with their cute remarks, stern with their shortcomings, overjoyed by their triumphs.

No centennial speech will tell more about "Teddy" than these words from his letters:

To Quentin (the Roosevelts' "baby") while touring California, 1903:

"I loved your letter. I am very homesick for Mother and you children. Whenever I see a little boy brought up (to the Presidential train) by his father or mother, I think of you and Archie (third eldest son) and feel very homesick."

To his sister-in-law—from Sagamore Hill, 1903:

"I am disconcerted by the fact (the children) persist in regarding me as a playmate. This afternoon, for instance, was rainy and all of them came to me to play with them in the barn. I finally gave in, but upon my word, I hardly knew whether it was quite right for the President to be engaged in such wild romping as the next two hours saw. . . . However, it was fun!"

To Kermit (second oldest son), written from the White House, 1903:

