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### The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive

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The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive

by

Jonathan C. Maxwell

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts, The City University of New York

2014

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The manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## Abstract

The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive

by

Jonathan C. Maxwell

Advisor: Professor Matthew K. Gold

*The Jacob A. Riis- Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive* is a digital archive focused on the Progressive Era in US history, which lasted from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Progressive Era, reformers from the American middle class made significant strides in addressing social issues in urban areas and among the working and lower classes. These social issues included tenement housing, prostitution, and other forms of corruption. Some well-known reformers include Jacob Riis, the photographer and author of *How The Other Half Lives*, Upton Sinclair, author of *The Jungle*, and Jane Addams, founder of Hull House. The digital archive is specifically focused on Riis and former US president Theodore Roosevelt, the latter of whom was the founding member of the Progressive Party. This approach presents two different ways that Progressive Reform was brought about in late 19<sup>th</sup> century America: the reformer (Riis) directly worked with people afflicted by societal issues on a daily basis and knew exactly what they were going through, whereas the politician (Roosevelt) used political power and influence to encourage his colleagues and the masses to realize America's social injustices and to help quell them.

The scope of the digital archive focuses solely on the New York City area, which was one of the prime locations that experienced Progressive Reform in the United States. As such, the contents of the archive were derived from the New York Public Library and other academic

digital collections. *The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive* will make contributions to the discipline of history by making learning about a certain period of the past more interactive and resourceful for the average, tech-savvy 21<sup>st</sup> century student. In addition, visitors to the Digital Archive will get a better sense of how a digital archive operates by exploring its layout, which includes a section for collections and a section for exhibits.

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## The Jacob A. Riis- Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive

### **Narrative Description**

The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive is an online archive dedicated to two men who played pivotal roles in promoting Progressive reform in New York City. Riis is best known for writing *How the Other Half Lives* and for establishing the Jacob A. Riis Settlement House in New York. Aside from being a US president and a prominent conservationist, Roosevelt was at one point a founding member of the Progressive Party, which was nicknamed the Bull Moose Party. Riis and Roosevelt were actually good friends who shared mutual interest in delivering much needed social change to America. A good example of their friendship was the fact that Riis wrote a biography of Roosevelt in 1904, titled *Theodore Roosevelt, The Citizen*. In his book, Riis states that as New York City Police Commissioner, Roosevelt promoted Progressive Reform by encouraging his police officers to not be afraid of dealing with crimes of political corruption committed by Tammany Hall. Tammany Hall was a political organization that began as a New York fraternal society in 1789 but later became infamous for political corruption by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Naturally, according to Riis, this kind of encouragement was not well-received by the people of New York City, especially those who were directly affected by such crimes as extortion and racketeering and who lacked the ability to defend themselves from their oppressors. However, as time progressed, opinions on Roosevelt's policing methods significantly changed. The main goal of the Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive is to provide its visitors with visual evidence of Riis and Roosevelt's ties and contributions to the Progressive cause. By doing this, the archive will manage to convey how social reform in general has always resulted from social reformers and compassionate politicians working for the greater good.

The archive consists of digitized archival materials borrowed primarily from the digital



collections of the New York Public Library. The materials associated with Riis are digitized images of Riis' lecture notes and other documents and portraits of Riis, while the materials associated with Roosevelt are political cartoons of President Roosevelt in regards to his affiliation to the Progressive Party. The Riis-Roosevelt Archive also contains digitized images related to the Jacob Riis Settlement House and the people in New York City who benefitted from the organization; these images in particular are from Columbia University Libraries' Community Service Society Photographs Collection. In addition, a digitized image of Roosevelt's 1912 Presidential Campaign Flyer from the Duke University Libraries' Digital Collections and three digitized images of Roosevelt from the Harvard University Libraries' Theodore Roosevelt Collection can be found on the archive.

By including these sets of archival materials, the Jacob Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive will specifically concentrate on the works of two Progressives rather than on a cluster of reformers. This is of significance because many already-existing digital archives and digital collections related to the Progressive Era contain materials associated with Progressives in general. The Riis-Roosevelt Archive will be divided into three main exhibits: one for Riis and the other two for Roosevelt. The first exhibit will put on display Riis' lecture notes and images related to the Jacob Riis Settlement House and Progressive Era New York. The two main exhibits for Roosevelt will show the political cartoons. However, the first of the two exhibits will use the digitized images in order to give an overview of Roosevelt's political career before the Progressive Party, whereas the second exhibit will focus solely on the Presidential Campaign of 1912. By bringing Riis and Roosevelt together, visitors to the archive can see that the Progressive Era was defined by compassionate people coming together to bring social justice to America's impoverished and homeless masses, regardless of whether or not they had political power. It is important that Riis and Roosevelt are considered together because even though they

had contrasting careers, they still relied on and respected each other's strengths in order to bring Progressive Reform to late 19<sup>th</sup> century America.

### **Exhibit 1: The Inspirations Behind Jacob Riis' Writings**

Jacob Riis is considered to be one of the most influential figures of the Progressive Era. He championed rights for immigrants, the impoverished, women, and children who resided in urban areas in the Northeast in two ways. First, he established the Jacob A. Riis Settlement House in New York City, which offered direct assistance to the city's less fortunate populace. Second, he later documented the deplorable conditions of the surrounding slums by writing two books- *How the Other Half Lives* and *The Making of An American*- that managed to open the eyes of countless Americans to the suffering and plight these groups experienced on a daily basis. It should be recognized that Jacob Riis' writings were not only inspired by his experiences as a social reformer but also by his previous years as a foreign vagrant traveling across America for the sole purpose of finding work. The six documents found in the first section of this exhibit were composed by Riis himself. Four of the primary sources are lecture notes written at unknown dates during the Progressive Era. The last two documents are derived from two other pieces of literature written by Riis, including *The Making of an American*.

*The Inspirations Behind Jacob Riis' Writings* Exhibit is divided into two sections. The first section is titled *Jacob A. Riis Lecture Notes/Other Documents*. In these four following lecture notes, Riis argued for the social rights of children who lived in the city during the Progressive Era. According to Riis, the needs of urban children were long ignored by society as a whole. He stated that children needed their mothers and God-bearing homes most in order to grow into responsible, good-natured adults who would give back to society later on. This exhibit section also includes a page written by Riis in December 1900 as well as a page from *The*

*Making of an American*, one of Riis' landmark books.

On the first page of his lecture notes, Riis jotted down his argument in favor of the welfare of children who lived in American cities during the Progressive Era. He wrote down that the most important need for children among all are their mothers and used his words to praise mothers in general for their hard work and compassion in raising their own children. As a Progressive Reformer who worked directly with families and young children, Jacob Riis was fully aware of the significance of motherhood and the need to uphold traditional family values during the Progressive Era. On the second page of his lecture notes, Riis wrote down a point to make in his speech in which he commended Philadelphia's chapter of the Children Aid Society for being the first ones to bring about Progressive Reform that benefitted the city's children. This particular reform seemed to have significantly reduced the number of children who were in dire need of the organization's services over a five-year period.

The third page of Jacob Riis' lecture notes focused on the importance of the home. At the time he wrote down these notes, Riis argued that the home began to be safeguarded from squalor and decline by Americans whose social conscience was dormant for decades. However, protecting the home comes with great cost. Other notes that Riis jotted down included his belief that the best kind of home was one where life is worth living and that national life was imperiled by the plight of the home just as the home was imperiled in American cities in turn. In the fourth and final page of his lecture notes, Riis made note of the fact that a state would not be deemed safe even if city children were to live on a farm instead of in tenements. He mentioned that the reform that he and his fellow reformers worked towards served as a source of hope wherever they worked with and for children; it also was the image of God present in the same children

who the reformers yearned to give a chance. In addition, according to Riis, a child would have preferred to be bad instead of good because the care that the reformers provided was good, and his or her biggest need was a god-fearing home. Lastly, Riis concluded that the complaints that Progressive Era-adults heard of Progressive Era-children vastly differed from those that were made of the said adults when they themselves were younger.

*The Page for 1900 December* happens to be a two-page list of 21 American cities that Riis either already visited or planned to visit at the time he made the list in December 1900. It is not possible that he traveled to these cities as a tramp looking for work during his younger years since he only did this in the Northeast. Judging from its content and its page number, the page of *The Making of an American* could be assumed to be situated at the end of the book. Riis uses the concluding paragraph to reflect on his past journey as a Danish immigrant striving to become an American citizen. His journey entailed having to participate in tramp migrations throughout the United States during the 1870s and having to endure homelessness and starvation during his early years in New York City. There were even nights where the impoverished Riis had to sleep in police housing lodges. Yet the biggest challenge that he faced during his early years in America involved his cultural identity; "He began to see the city as a moral arena which defined *his* efforts, made at great cost, to integrate his European past and American future. His writings renewed paradoxes that were intensely personal yet that were acquiring a national durability" (Fried, 13). During his lifetime, there were many social trends happening throughout the United States that threatened long-held American traditions. These trends included criminality among members of the lower class, urban poverty, and Eastern European immigrants arriving to America by the thousands. In the end, Riis was able to overcome his personal dilemma and

through his writing was able to best address the aforementioned social issues America faced during the late 19th century.

The second section of *The Inspirations Behind Jacob Riis' Writings* is titled *Jacob Riis' Candid Photographs of Progressive Era New York*. Jacob Riis' career as a social reformer was greatly defined by his social work in Progressive Era New York. He founded the Jacob Riis Settlement House during the late 19th century and often took candid photographs of the people who benefitted from the services provided by his organization. Among the people photographed by Riis included immigrant families, Street Arabs, and members of the working class. Riis best utilized these pictures as photographic evidence for his books on the social ills that plagued late 19th century America.

“Street Arabs” was a Progressive Era slang term that referred to young boys who were impoverished and often orphaned. “Street Arabs” were very commonplace throughout Progressive Era New York. A younger Jacob Riis shared many similarities with these individuals. Both Riis and the “Street Arabs” lived on the streets, had very little to eat, and shifted between jobs. Photographs such as “Street Arabs at Night” were meant to be of a city fallen from Christian community into neglect and fratricide, rather than of the traditional iconography of Manhattan that advertised New York as a collection of objects and were invariably found in the New York City guide books of the time; “his photographs are a catalog of individuals crushed by narrow alleys, of people clustered tightly while working in dilapidated rooms, of individuals thrust into the darkness of tenements” (Fried, 41). What gradually emerged was a sense of the person, the family, the gang asserting whatever weak individuality could have survived those gruesome conditions. Basically, the human subject became the background.

In his book *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis argued that late 19th century New York City was in complete ruin and decay compared to how it was decades before. Riis used biblical references while making this particular argument; "history is the cycle of fratricide: Riis stating that 'the first tenement New York knew bore the mark of Cain from its birth, though a generation passed before the writing was deciphered' " (HOHL, 5) (Fried, 46). He was also quick to argue that the tenements were both a hidden city and the avenging consequences of a fallen moral order; "the darkness of alleys and rooms reveals, even jestingly, a universe torn between sunlight and shadow, between the powers that make for order and those that make for chaos, for 'the sun never shone into the alley from the day the devil planned and the man built it" (Fried, 47). Riis took on the role of the city elder in writing *How the Other Half Lives*, which happened to be appropriate since he had lived in the city for several years. He commented that during the winter, the tenements and its inhabitants were highly vulnerable to flooding caused by winter storms, and that in the tenements, the homogenous American community was replaced by a collective mass of heterogeneous elements. Riis noted that New York was a metropolis that consisted of a series of neighborhoods. He compared this to a city map that had many stripes and colors that represented various nationalities; "this patchwork cartography illustrated how insular and competitive ethnic groups were, making a shared, common culture almost impossible. Riis's most compelling sketches, therefore, remain studies of various, impoverished nationalities within the city whose progress towards acculturation he tried to measure" (Fried, 47).

*How the Other Half Lives* was a unique book at the time that it was published because unlike other books published during the same period, it was not centered around science or scientism. It can be seen as the last great 19th century sermon taking as its principle of

organization the decline of the harmonious community: from brotherhood to fratricide; "the book's central figures are debased people as Riis quickly sketched the history of the city declining from intimacy and order to exploitation to barbarism" (Fried, 45). The victory of literary realism, the description of people and environment as bare, separate data that do not reveal or implicate a transcendent principle, was an unusable triumph for Riis, for to him the modern city embodied man's estrangement from God. In Riis' eyes, God's will is the immanent principle of fraternity in the city, and his spirit is indwelling when the city makes real a humanizing state of affairs. *How the Other Half Lives* has a rhetoric that transforms the empirical data of urban development into moral values.

During the mid-19th century, many Americans were unaware of the large numbers of tramps who traveled throughout the country in search of migrant labor; however, "it would take a Wall Street crash in September 1873 and five subsequent years of bankruptcies, wage cuts, layoffs, strikes, and mass unemployment- the first international 'great depression'- to thrust the tramp army to the fore of public consciousness" (DePastino, 30). Of course, Riis was always aware of the large presence of tramps, given that he had firsthand experience as a migrant laborer. Once they became aware of the problem, newspaper editors, charity workers, and government officials across the nation began to wonder how to fix it. Unlike Riis' compassionate treatment towards the impoverished and less fortunate, American policy and opinion makers had bad intentions for dealing with the tramps. Instead of offering charity, they called for chain gangs, mass arrests, and workhouses. On July 12, 1877, the Chicago Tribune advised poisoning meat and other supplies with arsenic and strychnine as a warning to tramps to leave the neighborhoods; "another paper proposed flooding poorhouses with six feet of water so that

tramps would 'be compelled to bail' or drown" (DePastino, 31).

The Gilded Age, which preceded the Progressive Era, was partially defined by concerns about the new corporate industrial order that came to be after the Civil War. America's tramps happened to be at the center of the concerns; "Americans in these years saw the rise of large-scale manufacturing and mass production, the spread of railroads and continental markets, and the creation of strict workplace hierarchies based on a universal system of wage labor" (DePastino, 31). As the pace of industrialization gained more speed and economic power became concentrated in fewer hands, pitched battles erupted between capital and labor over not only the fruits of production, but the very destiny of industrial civilization itself. Tramps were both the victims and agents of the new economic system, and "because they seemed strange and placeless- 'here today and gone tomorrow'- tramps served as convenient screens onto which middle-class Americans projected their insecurities, anxieties, and fantasies about urban industrial life" (DePastino, 32).

Even though middle-class descriptions of tramp life hardly mentioned them, tramps wrestled with their own insecurities. Increasingly reliant upon wages and decreasingly secure in their jobs, working people the nation over face the threat of poverty, dislocation, and the breaking of their customary patterns of life. In response to these changes, some workers took to the road and, in doing so, collectively gave rise to a new modern problem of homelessness that would command the attention of public and private officials for generations to come. Overall, tramping was an expression of the new economic and social relationships that came to dominate American life during the Gilded Age. The alarm of the tramp crisis of the 1870s managed to spill over to the Progressive Era and then into the mid-20th century. When doing charity writing,



Jacob Riis used specific styles of description. He made ethnic and racial generalities, compared immigrant groups to one another, and invoked images of immigrant homelands, by way of contrast to the slums of New York. In addition, he supported and dressed his claims with anecdotes and statistics and recognized the limits of descriptive power in the face of extreme conditions (in particular, filth and wretchedness beyond description, and surroundings full of unspeakable horror). Riis began *How the Other Half Lives* with the claim that the "worst crime" of the tenements was that "they touch the family life with a deadly moral contagion". He ended his book by threatening his readers with a scene of social apocalypse; "in his study of the tenements, Riis is most of all concerned, like his predecessors, with moral disease and class violence" (Gandal, 31).

Another feature of *How the Other Half Lives* that makes it unique from other 19th century literature on urban poverty is that Riis exceeded its traditional subject matter and forms of judgment and at times violated its own logic. While Riis still talked about such themes as environmental design, crime, filth, and vice, he temporarily digressed by mentioning the everyday lives of Italian Americans who lived in New York, which included hanging out on the street and idling; "Riis shows not just how the other half sins and suffers, keeps house and works, but also how it speaks and flirts and passes time: to use his word, more fully how the other half *lives*" (Gandal, 32). When producing charitable writing, Jacob Riis expressed his interest in behaviors and objects that are not part of a moral or sanitary economy. Examples of these include ways of flirting and modes of dress; Riis went to the Jewish market on "bargain days" because it was the most advantageous time to study the ways of the Jews. He also introduced ethnographic terms in his account of the slums, terms that usually overturn traditional moral

explanations for behavior; “at points, instead of abiding by the usual moral categories of vice and virtue, he employs such terms as 'ways,' 'customs,' and 'fashions,' and he uses traditional ethical terms, such as 'habit,' in new ethnographic ways” (Gandal, 32). He challenged his readers to view the poor with a different set of categories that would produce a new, more understanding perception.

Through his ethnographic work, Riis found that tenement ways or fashions resulted in certain problematic slum habits, not individual evil or moral weakness. This was the case of the bad habit of slum dwellers' strong liking to have lavish, expensive funerals. The word "habit" is a central term in the conventional language of moral responsibility. "Habit," which once referred to the traditional Protestant set of "universal" and individual vices and virtues, was later applied self-consciously by Riis to a local, group behavior outside this set. Riis extended the classification of habit to include a complex ritual of an urban community. Unlike the moral habits of previous charity writing, the expensive funeral is exclusively a group habit. The use of the word "habit" in this case is in itself a Progressive notion: it suggests a direct relationship between the social environment and individual behavior.

Even though he judged the slum dwellers in conventional moral terms and judged them on sanitary criteria, Riis also assessed them on fresh ground, noting their appearances as well as their customs. The aesthetic contemplation of slum habits was something new. For instance, among the Italians' virtues of honesty and maternal devotion, is for Riis the fact that "their vivid and picturesque costumes lend a tinge of color to the otherwise dull monotony of the slums they inhabit" (Riis, 41); "their colorfulness is laid side by side with their probity. Riis is asserting a new type of virtue" (Gandal, 33). Riis did not turn the popularity of the street into another proof

that the buildings are uninhabitable; he did not turn the street scene back onto his ostensible theme, the tenement; "when the subject of the tenements arises, he flatly remarks: '[F]or once they do not make the foreground in a slum picture from the American metropolis. The interest centres not in them, but in the crowd" (Riis, 43) (Gandal, 44). Basically, the interest was in the sight, the behaviors, and the objects that were not attended to before, such as collective habits and the tendency to congregate in the street. Overall, Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* was urban travel literature that took its readers sightseeing, between its morally concerned introduction and its apocalyptic ending, even within its traditional sorts of passages on Protestant vices and social evils.

### **Exhibit 2: Theodore Roosevelt: The Progressive Politician**

Theodore Roosevelt is one of the most well-known presidents in American history and was one of the most significant American figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of his unique qualities was that he was a member of two political parties at the same time- the Progressive Party (aka the Bull Moose Party) and the Republican Party. Roosevelt's dual affiliation with two political parties received a mixture of praise and criticism, particularly from the political cartoonists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are a number of political cartoons that depict him and his ties to the Progressive Party. The only section in the second exhibit is titled *Theodore Roosevelt and the Bull Moose Party*.

Theodore Roosevelt is considered by some historians to have started the Progressive Party in the late 19th century. When he was a young and ambitious Republican politician in New York, he sought to promote reform to the New York City landscape when none of his peers had no interest in doing so. The origins of the Progressive Party began when Roosevelt and his political ally Henry Cabot Lodge refused to endorse James Blaine for president during the 1884

Presidential Election; "Blaine had long been tainted by accusations of receiving bribes when he served as Speaker of the House of Representatives, making his candidacy unpalatable to reformers like TR and Lodge. They instead backed the bland US Senator from Vermont, George Edmonds" (Ricard, 31). In the end, Roosevelt and Lodge had no other choice but to support Blaine once he received the nomination. However, after the same convention where Blaine received his nomination, Roosevelt received wide acclaim from New York City presses for his first speech to a national audience. The speech, which called for accountability among those present in the convention, motivated some Independent Republicans to endorse Democratic nominee Grover Cleveland. Even though he initially disagreed with the Republican Party's presidential nominee, at this time Roosevelt resolved to stay in the party. The Presidential Election of 1884 concluded with Blaine losing New York and the election altogether by fewer than 1,200 votes. He would have defeated Cleveland if only 600 Independent Republicans had his vote. This split in the New York Republican Party not only began the gradual birth of the Progressive Party, but also temporarily tarnished Roosevelt's reputation as a politician.

Throughout his many occupations during his adulthood, Theodore Roosevelt made many accomplishments related to reform. As New York City Police Commissioner, he singled out and punished certain police officers guilty of corruption and championed the administering of civil service examinations meant to fairly give employment to people. In addition, Roosevelt managed to shut down police lodging houses and to help "clean up" the streets of New York City with the help of Jacob Riis, who at the time was a police reporter who opened Roosevelt's eyes to specific areas of New York City life that needed to undergo reform. It was common for Roosevelt to go on nightly tours in order to see his officers at work. One night in particular, he went on a tour

with Riis, Hamlin Garland, and Dr. Alexander Lambert and came across an Italian man selling peanuts on Rivington Street. Roosevelt asked the man the point in selling peanuts at a time when there were hardly any customers; "the Italian beamed with sudden understanding. 'Nah!' he said, with a gesture eloquent of resentment and resignation in one: 'W'at I maka on de peanút I losa on de dam banán' " (Riis, 145). According to Riis, most of the officers who served under Roosevelt respected him for making them do their duty. During Roosevelt's tenure as police commissioner, officers often received promotions and accolades for risking their lives while serving in the line of duty; "for the first time in the history of the department every man had a show on his merits" (Riis, 146).

When he was asked to become the leader of the four-member Board of Police Commissioners, Roosevelt was excited about this position because it was a reform administration. However, Henry Cabot Lodge, a Republican politician who was Roosevelt's mentor, knew that he was destined for national politics. During the 1894 mid-term elections, the Republican Party regained control of the House of Representatives as well as national offices in 24 states. In other words, there was a good chance that Roosevelt would have received an appointment in Washington, D.C. in any new Republican administration. Roosevelt reassured Lodge that he will only serve on the board for only two years or less and then set his eyes on the Presidential Election of 1896. However, he shared his mentor's fears of the new position being too difficult for him to meet everyone's expectations and possibly ruining his political career. Unfortunately, Roosevelt was not received well by many New Yorkers because of his enforcement of the Sunday Excise Law, which banned the sale of alcohol on Sundays; "this was a state law that reflected the rural, upstate temperance vote, and had long simply been ignored in

the city" (Ricard, 38). Despite never being a prohibitionist and even believing the Sunday anti-liquor law to be a bad law, he still adhered to it since it was a law that needed to be enforced and since saloons were the most public and profitable of New York City's illicit ventures, with ties to both the police force and to political corruption. Roosevelt seemed to be working in the interest of the Republican Party because several saloonkeepers were also political bosses and saloons often doubled as unofficial Tammany headquarters.

When Roosevelt took office in early 1895, New York City had between 12,000 and 15,000 saloons. By Sunday, June 30, 1895, he had succeeded in closing 97% of the saloons in accordance with the law, stopping the regular flow of 3,000,000 glasses of beer. As a result of supporting the Sunday Excise Law, Roosevelt became the most unpopular man in New York, and he was attacked not only by Tammany Democrats but by German-Americans, who typically voted Republican and liked a traditional drink of beer on Sundays. When Tammany Democrat David Hill, a US senator from New York, attacked him for wasting police resources enforcing the Sunday Law at the cost of fighting crime, Roosevelt responded in a speech to German-Americans, who were the second-largest ethnic group in New York City behind the Irish. In his speech, Roosevelt made it clear that the law was meant to take action against the big Tammany Hall bosses who owned saloons, not the saloonkeepers who did not have ties to Tammany Hall. Even with the speech, Roosevelt was concerned about city Republicans distancing themselves away from him. Many people blamed him for the poor attendance among city Republicans during the 1895 Assembly elections, and party leaders refused to allow him to campaign for Republican candidates. Lodge again reassured Roosevelt by telling him that he might have been losing support in New York City, but he was gaining support statewide, maybe for the next run

for political office.

1896 was a difficult year for Roosevelt; "In January TR had fought to keep his job, in danger of being legislated out of existence by an Assembly bill engineered by Republican leaders. The following month he began a dispute with a fellow commissioner, Democrat Andrew D. Parker, which would color the rest of his time in New York" (Ricard, 40). In alliance with the new Chief of Police, Parker often placed obstacles in the path of Roosevelt's conduct of the commission, by holding up officer promotions and failing to attend commission meetings. In April TR testified in Albany in favor of a bill to break the commission's deadlock. He and Parker butted heads in their testimony, with Parker accusing Roosevelt of playing politics with the police promotions. In the end, the committee decided to not accept the bill, which was a disappointing defeat for TR. The following month, Roosevelt challenged the city comptroller to a duel with pistols because he lectured him about using taxpayers' money to pay off informants; "in June, unable to remove Parker without a trial, Mayor Strong had decided to bring him up on charges to prove 'neglected duty'. Essentially, Strong, using 'evidence' supplied by TR, accused Parker of missing many meetings and falling behind on paperwork." (Ricard, 40). Even though the testimony ended in July, the matter was never fully resolved. These unfortunate events that Roosevelt had to endure were the low points of his New York City career.

The climax of Teddy Roosevelt's tenure as police commissioner came in August 1896, as a deadly ten-day heat wave loomed over New York. A virtual monopoly on ice in the city by the Consolidated Ice Company priced the much-needed item out of reach of many impoverished New Yorkers. While Mayor William Strong and many other city officials failed to take action on the matter, Roosevelt was only a handful of New York officials who decided to do something

about the heat wave. He ordered that police wagons be pressed into service as ambulances and addressed the ice monopoly, asking that the city buy and distribute ice in the poorest districts. Not only did Roosevelt personally supervise the distribution from police precinct houses, he made a point of investigating how people made use of the ice. The events of the heat wave had a profound effect on him; "just as his intimate involvement with the poor of the city shaped his education as an urban progressive, his championing the city's distribution of free ice was his first experience as a trustbuster" (Ricard, 41).

Shortly after, Roosevelt made an effort to offer his services to aid William McKinley's presidential campaign. He did this because he wanted to guarantee himself a position in Washington, D.C. if McKinley were to win. Roosevelt's saloon-closing crusade made him a political outcast in New York, and the police commission was deadlocked by his feud with Parker. He managed to campaign for McKinley in Michigan, Minnesota, and North Dakota, three states that swung to McKinley on Election Day. By December, it was more unlikely that Roosevelt would get a position in Washington as the New York state legislature began proceedings to appoint a new United States Senator. There were only two serious candidates for Republican senator: Joseph Choate, Roosevelt's old family friend and political advisor, and Thomas Platt, the Easy Boss. Platt's seat in the Senate was assured since he was the boss of the Republican machine; "showing again his political savvy and ability to compromise, TR requested a meeting with Platt, and turned down requests to speak on Choate's behalf" (Ricard, 41). As he waited for months to hear back from President McKinley and his Vice-President Mark Hanna, discipline in the police ranks began to crumble, and the deadlock on the police commission persisted. TR finally learned in early April 1897 that he was selected for the position



of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Platt had obviously been convinced that Roosevelt would do less harm in Washington than in New York City. He would again come to this conclusion in 1900 as he considered placing Governor Roosevelt on the Republican national ticket.

### **Exhibit 3: Theodore Roosevelt and the Presidential Campaign of 1912**

By the time the Presidential Campaign of 1912 took place in the United States, Theodore Roosevelt was already an established political figure. He was known by the American masses as a Rough Rider, trustbuster, New York City Police Commissioner, and conservationist. Yet over time, Americans began to hold mixed views towards Roosevelt, mainly because of his dual ties with the Progressive Party and the Republican Party. These mixed views were best exemplified by political cartoonists who either characterized the president as an important hero or a disgraceful joke to American politics. The Presidential Campaign of 1912 was a time in American history where opinions on Roosevelt's ties to the Republican and Progressive Parties received the most attention. There is only one section in the third exhibit titled *Theodore Roosevelt: The Progressive*. This section of the exhibit includes materials that give a sense of how Americans felt about Roosevelt as a politician. Four of the materials shown depict him in an approving light, while three of the materials depict him in a critical manner.

#### **The Right Choice**

By the time the Presidential Election of 1912 occurred, Theodore Roosevelt was already an accomplished politician. He gained much acclaim for his work as New York City Police Commissioner, Governor of New York, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, trustbuster, and leader of the Rough Riders. His most significant role was the one where he was President of the United States for two terms. Roosevelt was not only determined to gain a third term, but he was still eager to bring much needed change to America, even if it meant starting a political party that promoted reform: the Progressive Party.

The Presidential Election of 1912 proved difficult for Roosevelt as he had to run against President Taft and his strong ties to the Republican Party with his newborn Progressive Party. One of the main objectives that both candidates had to meet was to acquire the Republican nomination on the first ballot by gaining 254 delegate seats before the Republican National Convention in mid-June 1912. However, there was controversy in which the Taft campaign allegedly gained more than enough seats to gain the nomination through the use of dishonest means. This serious matter eventually went to court as lawyers and witnesses from both sides passionately argued with each other. Even with the controversy looming, Taft was able to legitimately gain enough seats throughout the country, while Roosevelt, who felt that the Republican National Committee had an unjustified preference towards Taft, unfortunately received a small amount. There were some cases in which Roosevelt deserved the seats that he did not get due to political fraud that occurred during the state primaries and the National Committee's questionable decisions. In California, Roosevelt won more seats than Taft- 24 out of 26; "of the 254 seats, the National Committee finally awarded 235 to Taft and only 19 to Roosevelt" (Goodwin, 716).

Even after failing to get the nomination on the first ballot, Roosevelt still decided to go to Chicago anyway as a last ditch effort to clinch the victory he and his loyal supporters felt he deserved. His political opponents mocked his decision and viewed it as futile and desperate. However, once he and his wife arrived to the Windy City, he was well-received and praised by his local supporters. The streets of Chicago were flooded with people who skipped work just to see Roosevelt in person. Roosevelt traveled from La Salle Station to the Congress Hotel. As soon as he got to his hotel room, he went to a balcony facing Michigan Avenue and addressed the masses, reassuring them that he will defeat the people responsible for stealing and receiving his much-deserved seats, especially President Taft himself. The term "Bull Moose Party" actually

originated during Roosevelt's trip to Chicago. When a newspaper reporter inquired whether he was ready to face the trials and struggles that lay ahead on the campaign trail, Roosevelt stated that he felt like a bull moose. The fact that a bull moose has a supposed instinct to gore its enemies reflected Roosevelt's combative mood; "the bull moose icon captured the imagination of the American people. Images of the massive creature suddenly appeared on posters and placards all across the country, while button manufacturers desperately tried to keep up with the demand. The Teddy bear had been supplanted by a far more imposing and belligerent mascot." (Goodwin, 718).

Aside from stirring up excitement and anticipation within his numerous supporters, Theodore Roosevelt kept himself very busy as he prepared for his final speech of his nominating campaign; "he met with streams of supporters, interviewed Taft delegates who might be persuaded to change their minds, conferred with the seven governors, and talked with reporters, all the while continuing to draft the address he would deliver that evening to a mass audience" (Goodwin, 719). When the time came for him to deliver his much anticipated speech, he made remarks on the injustice that befell him prior to arriving to Chicago. Roosevelt declared to his audience that he intended on winning the election fair and square and that the Republican progressives would refuse to let the Republican conservatives discourage them from taking action against them. The audience who heard Roosevelt's speech gave a loud, welcoming applause once he was finished.

### **The Wrong Choice**

The Presidential Election of 1912 received a lot of attention from American voters for a couple of reasons. First, two of the candidates (Roosevelt and William Howard Taft) had already held office. Second, a new political party- the Progressive Party- gradually emerged as some Republicans desiring reform and change in America decided to risk leaving their established

party for a developing party. During the Republican National Convention of 1912, Roosevelt felt that the time was right for the National Progressive Party to present itself on the national stage. During the first two days of National Convention, the main focus was on the delegate confirmation process for the contested seats. On the first day, New York Senator Elihu Root, who was endorsed by Taft, received the nomination for chairman of the convention, beating Wisconsin Senator Francis McGovern, Roosevelt's choice for chairman. Missouri's Herbert Hadley, who was Roosevelt's floor leader, led the charge to replace seventy-two of the most fiercely contested Taft delegates, who were fraudulently included in the temporary roll by the National Committee, with rightfully elected Roosevelt delegates. Hadley was so effective as floor leader that at one point many people cheered for him to become the next president of the United States after reaching a compromise that pleased Republicans on both sides of the bitter divide. The compromise, which he reached with Taft spokesman and Indiana Senator James Watson, required Hadley to consent to refer the resolution of the Committee on Credentials, which was to be officially appointed later that same day. In response, a young attractive woman led a forty-two minute rally from the gallery to the floor that resulted in regained support of Roosevelt and the end of the possibility of becoming a compromise candidate.

Even with the compromise in place, Hadley and Root still did not see eye to eye. Hadley argued that the entire group of contested delegates should be barred from the makeup of the important Credentials Committee. Root, on the other hand, sticking to congressional parliamentary procedure, maintained that the rule did not disqualify any delegate whose name was on the roll from voting upon the contest of any other man's right, or participating in the ordinary business of convention as long as he holds his seat; "this pivotal ruling, which allowed all the contested delegates to participate in the makeup of the Credentials Committee, essentially delivered control of the convention to Taft" (Goodwin, 724). From there, things turned for the

worst for Roosevelt and his campaign. Committee members in favor of Taft outnumbered those in favor of Roosevelt 31 to 21, and Roosevelt's men realized that the Taft contingency had no intention of re-litigating the National Committee's seating decisions. In addition, it was clear that most of the contested delegates from the temporary roll would keep their seats, therefore giving Taft a clear majority. At this point, rebellious delegates and regular party members in favor of Roosevelt were faced with a dilemma: immediately flee back home or leave the Republican Party for a new party. At the middle of the night, Roosevelt met with his inner circle in his bedroom suite in order to initiate the birth of the National Progressive Party. This new party would receive financial support from two magnates: Frank Munsey and George Perkins. After meeting with his inner circle, Roosevelt read a short announcement to his delegates and supporters in the conference room, giving them the choice to either join him in bringing forth a new party or go home.

The birth of the Progressive Party caused the Credentials Committee to be unable to present a report to the convention the next day, thus causing the convention to be delayed twice that same day. Soon after, rumors began to spread among delegates and spectators in regards to what was actually going on behind closed doors. The fact that Roosevelt was determined to keep on fighting if the Credentials Committee refused to seat his delegates gradually came to light. The events happening inside the convention would catch the attention of the press as reporters and correspondents covered all aspects of the convention. In the end, Taft gained the nomination of the first ballot as all of his contested delegates attained seats. There were many people in the gallery who heckled as state by state voted to seat the Taft delegates. 344 Roosevelt delegates followed Roosevelt's advice to not vote on any matter before the National Convention since it was a complete fraud. Taft himself was glad that his victory prevented Roosevelt from gaining control over the Republican Party and was therefore confident about winning the November

election. He felt that during the campaign, Roosevelt proved himself to be a threat to America's conservative institutions with his "radical" ideas. Instead of choosing a progressive to run alongside him for vice president, Taft re-nominated conservative Vice President James Sherman.

Shortly after the finalization of Taft's nomination, the Roosevelt delegates regrouped at Chicago's Orchestra Hall nearby. One by one, delegates from such states as California, Ohio, and Texas were welcomed with applause. These same delegates unanimously nominated Roosevelt to represent the new Progressive Party while running for president. In response, Roosevelt wanted them to meet again at a large convention where they would nominate a "progressive candidate on a progressive platform" that would truly represent all the states in the country. Roosevelt also made note that he would be content and supportive if he was not nominated to become the party's presidential candidate. Meanwhile, Speaker Champ Clark and New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson were campaigning against each other to become the Democratic presidential nominee. Roosevelt actually wanted the former to win over the latter because Clark was a conservative while Wilson was a progressive.

A power struggle similar to the one that occurred during the Republican National Convention earlier in the month occurred again during the Democratic National Convention. However, in the end, Wilson gained the nomination, and soon after, Roosevelt's supporters decided to endorse Wilson for president instead. 2,000 of these new supporters were originally from the Republican Party. Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette openly supported Wilson and simultaneously wanted to vilify Roosevelt as a fraud who received financial backing from people associated with the Steel Trust and Harvester Trust that were known to oppress farmers and laborers throughout the country. Roosevelt was still motivated to win the election so that the Democrats could not be elected into Congress and into state governments. As the time for the National Progressive Party to reconvene in Chicago on August 5 was fast approaching, sixty-

three prominent Republicans from forty states signed the declaration of the new party. Unfortunately, many delegates who at first supported Roosevelt's cause decided not to take the risk of leaving the Republican Party for a new untested party that might have not been ready for the election in November. These people, one of whom was Herbert Hadley, instead decided to initiate reform within the Republican Party.

When he accepted his nomination at the Republican National Convention, Taft gave a speech in which he acknowledged the progressive reforms that had be enforced in recent years, such as workers' compensation and the establishment of the Children's Bureau, the first federal agency dedicated to the social welfare of children; "even as the Republican Party protected the traditions of the past, he argued, it must remain sensitive to the shifting views of the role of government" (Goodwin, 733). He basically wanted the country to move forward and protect it against the demagogic proposals of his political adversaries. Roosevelt found Taft's speech to be "fatuous, inadequate, conservative" and ignorant of all "the live issues". In the end, both Roosevelt and Taft were defeated by Wilson in the Presidential Election of 1912. After the election, both men never ran for president again.

Aside from presenting exhibits, the Riis-Roosevelt Archive will also put five collections on display, three focused on Riis and the other two centered on Roosevelt. The first collection devoted to Riis displays his lecture notes, the second shows images related to his work at his Settlement House and in the city where it was located (New York), and the third shows primary source portraits of the social reformer himself. One of the two collections focused on Roosevelt displays his portraits, while the other collection shows political cartoons of the former president as a Progressive in both a positive and negative light.

### **The Early Stages of the Riis-Roosevelt Archive**

The Riis-Roosevelt Digital Archive had its start as a final project for the Debates in Digital Humanities course that I took during the Fall 2012 semester with Dr. Matthew Gold. The project entailed devising a grant proposal that applied one of the DH methods learned during the course onto a topic of academic interest. In my case, I proposed to digitize physical archival materials related to the Progressive Era, a period of American History. After receiving encouragement from Dr. Gold to further develop the fictional grant proposal into an actual thesis project, I chose him to be my thesis advisor and at the same time took the Thesis Workshop course with Professor Shifra Sharlin. During the Fall 2013 semester, Matt and I had to deal with certain issues associated with building a digital archive from scratch. Among these issues were the facts that I lack archival materials and coding skills. Until recently, the lack of the former had prevented me from deciding on which aspect of the Progressive Era for my archive to concentrate on. In order to make up for the lack of archival materials, we decided that it would be best for me to ask permission to borrow digitized materials related to my thesis topic from New York City academic institutions such as the NYPL. It turns out that it is easy to gain permission to borrow digitized materials from the NYPL as long as reference is made to the institution's ownership of said materials. I decided on the topic of the digital archive due to the fact that the majority of the Progressive Era-related materials that I came across online are related to Jacob Riis and Teddy Roosevelt's careers as Progressive Reformers. Examples of these items include documents penned by Riis and political cartoons depicting Roosevelt's political career in the Progressive Party.

A second major obstacle I encountered during my thesis planning involved using coding to build the digital archive from scratch. From the beginning, I intended to use an Omeka platform as the foundation of my archive since my thesis project is supposed to be related to



digital humanities. Omeka is an open source DH tool built by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media that is used to build and display online museum exhibits, archives, and scholarly collections. A unique feature of Omeka is that users do not have to have programming skills in order to utilize Omeka's Web 2.0 technologies, thus allowing them to focus instead on presenting academic content and interpretation using the DH platform. Using Omeka to build museum exhibits is easy due to the Omeka plugins, help documentation, and Omeka forums. However, Omeka users with coding skills can design their own plugins to install on their exhibits. Professor Gold mentioned that my thesis could be more of a contribution to the field of DH if I were to create my own Omeka plugin. In the end, it was decided that I would not do this, but I still had to buy web hosting service and set up a server for my digital archive. Professor Gold asked me to set up a web hosting account and a name server. I chose to use a web hosting service known as WebHostingHub.com and a server provider known as Namecheap.com. I then chose to name the website where my digital archive can be found progressive50omeka.net and named the server progressiveeraarchive.com. Another important task that needed to be done before I started to build my archive on Omeka was to point my server to my web hosting space. This was made possible by relying on a site manager program known as Core FTP LE. Buying web hosting space, setting up my own server, and registering onto Core FTP LE were at first considered by me and my thesis advisor to be the three hardest steps of my thesis project. These steps are essential in building a digital archive that is not created on a hosted version of Omeka. However, weeks after these steps were completed, I began to experience sustainability issues with my Omeka platform.

One of the main sustainability issues involved my images. After completing the aforementioned vital steps, I later worked towards beginning to post images onto my Omeka site with little success. Whenever I tried to post an image to the site, a webpage saying that "Omeka

has encountered an error” appeared. The page then redirected to a webpage on the Omeka Forums titled “Retrieving Error Messages” that provided directions on how to resolve the issue. It turns out that the issue usually can be resolved by editing the .htaccess file on a text editor such as Notepad and TextEdit. Yet even after editing the .htaccess, I was still unable to get a sense of what the specific errors were. I had met with Professor Gold for his assistance on the matter and it turned out that I needed to upload the file to my server from my computer. Before getting to this task, I had to call my web hosting service provider for a new password to my server and FTP address and then download another Omeka 2.1.4 file folder in order to get a new .htaccess file. Even with both the new password and .htaccess file being functional, Professor Gold and I could not get my Omeka site to display the error messages. Therefore, with the spring semester thesis deposit deadline fast approaching, we agreed that it was in my best interest to focus instead on the digital archive that I began to build on Omeka.net rather than the one that I used to build with Omeka.org. It should be noted that back then, if there was more time available before the spring semester thesis deadline, I could have sought out the assistance of a Graduate Center staff member who is an expert on Omeka. Instead, I eventually resolved to instead focus on completing my thesis project on Omeka.net.

From the beginning, the Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive was meant to be more of a DH thesis project than a traditional typed thesis paper. During the months spent building my digital archive, I had made use of two Omeka websites: Omeka.net and Omeka.org. The Riis-Roosevelt Archive built on Omeka.net (<http://progressive50.omeka.net>) was initially meant to be a rough draft, while the other one ([progressive.50.omeka.net](http://progressive.50.omeka.net)) was meant to be the actual site of the archive. It should be noted that unlike Omeka sites built on Omeka.net, those that are associated with Omeka.org need to have web hosting service and a server in order to be fully operational websites; in other words, sites associated with Omeka.org are less dependent on

Omeka's services than those that are built on Omeka.net.

Working on my thesis project using Omeka.net has been somewhat simpler than working on it using Omeka.org. However, I had a slight problem with displaying the introduction of my archive on my homepage that I had typed months prior. I initially tried to solve the problem by going on the dashboard on Omeka.net, clicking on "Settings" on the top right hand corner, and ending up on a page titled "Edit General Settings". From there, I was able to see my introduction and then clicked on a box titled "Show Empty Elements", which, along with changing the theme of the archive, did not solve the issue. I then notified Professor Gold via email of the problem that I was having and he suggested that I do a Google search for any troubleshooting tips in relation to the technical problem that I was experiencing. I followed his advice and came across an Omeka.net Help Page titled "Managing Site Settings and Users". There was an instructional Vimeo video that explained that I had to go on the "Configure the (blank) Theme" page in order to add text to my homepage. Since this situation was resolved, I was able to continue adding digitized materials as well as collections with no problem.

During the Fall 2013 semester, I took the Thesis Workshop course, which was useful in helping me to brainstorm ideas for how to best approach my digital archive dedicated to the Progressive Era. Given that my thesis project differed from those of my classmates, every week I prepared writing samples that consisted either of accounts of how my thesis topic came to be or ideas for what to include in my digital archive (i.e. comparisons made between the social climate of New York City during the Progressive Era and that of the city today). During the course, I also received helpful feedback from my classmates as well as Professor Shifra Sharlin on how to make progress on my thesis. Even though in the end I did not make use of all of them in the project itself, the suggestions that I received from my classmates and Professor Sharlin managed to maintain my strong interest in completing my digital archive dedicated to the Progressive Era.

Another practice that worked best to realize project goals was performing tasks on my own and later getting in touch with my advisor either to seek assistance or give a progress report.

Whenever I heard back from Professor Gold, I received instructions that either helped me overcome obstacles associated with my thesis project or helped me take the next step in my thesis project.

### **Evaluation**

Initially, it seemed that the Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive would not include archival materials derived from the MCNY (Museum of the City of New York). I happened to request five materials from the MCNY related to the Jacob Riis Settlement House and heard back from a representative, who said that I could have them each for \$125. Months prior, Professor Gold and I agreed that I would not use digitized archival materials that would need to be purchased. The MCNY Collections Portal possesses numerous digitized archival materials associated with my thesis topic. Fortunately, I later found photographs of the Jacob A. Riis Settlement House and of the people and New York City locations that were assisted by the establishment's employees, as well as ephemera of President Roosevelt's political career during the Progressive Era. These digitized images were derived from the digital collections of Columbia University, Duke University, and Harvard University Libraries. In particular, Columbia University Libraries has a large digitized collection called the Community Service Society Photographs, which happens to include images related to Riis and his Settlement House contributed by the MCNY.

Initially, I envisioned my digital archive on the Progressive Era to be a sophisticated, multifaceted DH project. However, the limitations that occurred during the months spent working on my thesis caused me to resort to working only with the resources that were available to me. The limitations of my thesis project fortunately did not prevent me from producing an

adequate DH project. The Riis-Roosevelt Archive happens to have a specific focus and is divided into two comprehensive, organized parts.

### **Continuation of the Project**

After the thesis project is submitted to the GC Library, I will consider expanding it if I am to be accepted to a Ph.D. program in history at any graduate school in the fall of 2015. As a graduate student with a strong interest in the field of history, I would like to continue my graduate studies as a history Ph.D. student and to further broaden my knowledge of the Progressive Era, which happens to be my favorite area of American History. If I were to continue my work on the Riis-Roosevelt Archive, I would expand my search for New York City academic institutions from which to borrow archival materials aside from such institutions as the NYPL and the MCNY. In addition, I would make another attempt at trying to build my archive with Omeka.org and would seek the assistance of an Omeka expert in overcoming the issues that has resulted in me finishing the thesis on Omeka.net.

### **Long Term Impact**

The Jacob A. Riis-Theodore Roosevelt Digital Archive will most likely be incorporated into the research that I would hope to do as a history Ph.D student. I am certain that I would like to do research into the Progressive Era and will probably look into analyzing the impact Riis and Roosevelt's friendship had on furthering the Progressive Movement.

One of the items displayed in the Other Theodore Roosevelt Political Cartoons collection is a political drawing of Booker T. Washington and Theodore Roosevelt titled "Equality". Even though this particular drawing is associated with race relations in late 19<sup>th</sup> century-early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, it is still relatable to the theme of the digital archive in that racial equality was one of the goals of Progressive Reformers.

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