

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 4

“Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight”

Transcript

(Provided by listener Joseph M.)

[music: Fanfare]

On March 4th, 1897, William McKinley was sworn in as the 25th President of the United States. Some weeks later one of the Senators from the president's home state of Ohio asked for a meeting to discuss a consular position for a friend and supporter of the senator. When they met the President explained regretfully to the senator that he had looked into the matter and discovered there was only one consular position open at the moment and it wasn't a very good one. It was in a place called Manila, somewhere around on the other side of the world.

McKinley confessed he didn't know exactly where it was and what with all the responsibilities of his new office the president had not had time to look it up. Within a year, President McKinley as well as virtually every other American would come to know very well exactly where Manila was.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 4: Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight

In the previous episode we looked at the history of the Philippines up to the brink of the Spanish-American War. Today I'd like to review the run-up to the Spanish-American War from the US point of view. And that brings us to the United States of America. I feel like I should play the US national anthem at this point, but the fact is that the United States did not have an officially designated national anthem at the beginning of the 20th century. Of course Americans had a number of well known patriotic songs which they sang on appropriate occasions, and many of these songs Americans still know and sing today, like “America the Beautiful”, or “My Country 'Tis of Thee”, or “The Star Spangled Banner.” There are other patriotic songs of the period that have been completely forgotten, and then there's the middle case. There's one patriotic song that's seldom sung anymore, although I think most Americans would at least recognize the title or the tune, even if they can't actually sing the words.

[music: "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean"]

"Thy banners make tyranny tremble, when borne by the red, white and blue." That was "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean." Columbia is a poetic name for the United States, as in District of Columbia, and Columbia is often personified as a woman in flowing robes as in the logo of Columbia Pictures. Columbia Pictures by the way is currently a subsidiary of SONY, a Japanese corporation. If you recognize this song it may well be because you've seen "The Music Man'." It's the song that Mrs. Shin leads the townspeople in singing at the Independence Day celebration in River City.

The American part of this story begins with Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mahan was born in 1840 in West Point. That was because his father was an instructor at the United States Military Academy at West Point. And I have no doubt that Papa Mahan was devastated when Alfred went to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis. Daddy issues? Mahan served in the United States Navy during the Civil War. Eventually he rose to the rank of captain, and came to command his own vessel, and never, ever ran his ship ashore. No, never... well... hardly ever.

Eventually Mahan and the Navy came to a mutual understanding that his skills were better served in the classroom than on the high seas and he was appointed to the Naval War College in 1885. In 1890 Mahan published a book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. Now it's hard to overstate the influence of this book. In brief, Mahan surveyed centuries of world history and came to the conclusion that sea power was decisive in military confrontations. This may seem obvious today with the benefit of two world wars in our rear view mirror, but this thesis was startling in 1890. British, French, and Japanese policy makers studied this book carefully. Kaiser Wilhelm owned his own copy and it was known to be dog-eared and full of the Kaiser's handwritten notes. He also ordered a copy of it placed aboard every German Navy ship.

But it was the United States of course that Mahan was most interested in giving advice to. He published follow-up books and numerous articles in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine discussing theories and laying out what they implied for American policy. In short, Mahan argued for a large American navy, with a global reach, and the coaling stations necessary to support it. Ships of the day were coal-powered, which meant that navies needed pre-positioned stockpiles of coal in order to operate over long distances. This meant overseas possessions. Specifically, Mahan advocated the annexation of Hawaii, and also of Cuba as forward bases for the projection of American naval power into the Pacific and the Atlantic. Mahan also advocated for a canal across Central America. Although he was careful to warn that a canal without the naval assets to defend it could potentially become more of a liability than an asset to the United States.

Now in our day we take for granted the United States as a superpower with a navy that patrols every corner of the oceans of the world. But Alfred Thayer Mahan has a lot to do with how America came to be such a power. Americans in 1890 thought of America's rising power in terms of the frontier and westward expansion. The idea that America should model itself after

Britain, its former colonial mistress, seemed a little bit unpatriotic. Why should a country whose founding document states that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed have such an interest in projecting military power onto other continents? Why did the US Navy need to be anything more than a coastal defense force?

In Episode 2 I talked a little bit about empire and about the fear that the world of the twentieth century would see an ever smaller number of ever expanding empires. There were prominent Americans who considered this worldview and saw the traditional American isolationism that dated all the way back to George Washington's farewell address as not only obsolete, but potentially dangerous. America had no choice but to compete with the overseas empires on their own terms or else be swallowed up by them. And in the minds of these Americans, Mahan was doing the nation a great service as a prolific writer of books and articles laying out the case for a powerful and interventionist US Navy.

One such American was Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt strides like a colossus across this period of American history, so we best get to know him right away. He was smart, bold, boundlessly energetic, stubborn in his convictions. And he was, like Columbia, the personification of his country. If Theodore Roosevelt had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him. Or maybe that's exactly what happened.

Theodore Roosevelt Jr. was born in 1858 in New York City, to the family of a wealthy businessman. Young Theodore or Teedy, as he was known to the family, was a sickly, asthmatic child. But he loved books, and he had a family that could supply him with all the books he could read, and tutors to teach him out of them, and the boy flourished. In his teens his father told him that he had made for himself a good mind, but not a good body. With his characteristic zeal, Roosevelt began working out at the gym, and became a boxer, and a rower. His family brought him on trips to Europe, which broadened his education. And he developed an interest in the outdoors. When he was still a boy he learned taxidermy, collected and mounted his own specimens, and displayed them in what he called the "Roosevelt Museum of Natural History". He attended Harvard College, where Teedy, so far a loner, discovered to his amazement that he had good people skills and was becoming quite popular. His Harvard years were happy ones, apart from the untimely death of his father, with whom he was quite close.

After leaving Harvard he went on to Columbia Law School, back in New York City. And apparently the Ivy League wasn't giving him enough to do, and video games having not yet been invented, he spent his free time writing a book, about and entitled, *The Naval War of 1812*, which was published in 1882. The book was the first truly academic and unbiased study of its subject, and it was well received. *The New York Times* gave it a good review, although Roosevelt himself, who would go on to write some 40 more books and hundreds of magazine articles would later in life compare the experience of reading it to reading the dictionary.

Roosevelt married Alice Hathaway Lee in 1880 and dropped out of law school. He had taken an interest in electoral politics, which was unusual at the time for a member of an educated, well-to-do family like Roosevelt. The working class members of his local Republican club did not know what to make of this privileged young man in their midst. But he won them over the way he had at Harvard, and they put him up for the state assembly in 1882. He won that race in a Republican leaning district, and became the youngest member of the legislature at the age of 23.

Roosevelt quickly decided that the Democrats in the New York Legislature were 100% corrupt, and the Republicans were, well, let's say 80% corrupt. He aligned himself with reformers in the Republican Party and became a voice speaking out against corruption, which attracted a lot of favorable publicity from the New York newspapers. He easily won re-election in 1883 and became the minority leader while still the youngest member of the assembly. In 1884 Republicans took control of the assembly and Roosevelt put in a bid for Speaker, but was unsuccessful this time. That same year he lost his wife and mother on the same day, leaving him a single father, alone with an infant daughter, with no parents, at the age of 25.

Roosevelt left the legislature, invested half of his inheritance in cattle ranches in the Dakota Territory, and spent some time living the life of a cowboy. He admired the men of the west. They appealed to his deep seated sense of "machismo," not to mention the political benefit this cowboy image would reap for his political career back East.

He remarried in 1886 to his childhood friend Edith Kermit Carrow. They would have 5 children. In 1887 the now 29-year-old Roosevelt was invited to lecture about the War of 1812 at the Naval War College. There he met Captain Mahan. The two of them got on like a house on fire and Roosevelt became a firm disciple of Mahan's naval theories. Roosevelt campaigned for the Republican Presidential candidate Benjamin Harrison in 1888. After Harrison took office, he appointed Roosevelt to the Civil Service Commission, in recognition of Roosevelt's reputation as a staunch enemy of corruption and insider dealing. Harrison probably had no idea what he was getting himself into. Roosevelt approached the position with his usual over-the-top enthusiasm. He went after improprieties in the appointments of postmasters, making an enemy of Harrison's Postmaster General, Philadelphia department store magnate John Wanamaker. But his efforts again gave him favorable attention in the newspapers and you have to give President Harrison this much: he backed Roosevelt publicly, whatever private reservations he may have held.

Four years later, Harrison was unseated by Grover Cleveland. This new Democratic President asked Roosevelt to stay on at the Civil Service Commission, which he did until 1895, when he was offered a seat on the New York City Police Commission. You should know what to expect by now. Roosevelt turned the police department upside down. He raised standards, he eliminated political favoritism in hiring, he even began walking the streets of New York City in the small hours of the morning to check up on his police officers on the night shift to make sure they were on duty and where they were supposed to be. The press loved it, and so did the political

cartoonists, who drew pictures of this toothy, bespectacled, mustachioed figure, whose approach caused policemen to flee in terror.

But when Roosevelt tried to enforce the Sunday closing laws on New York City's saloons he ran afoul of his party's political machine. He left the police commission and worked for a while to mend fences with the state Republicans by campaigning in the 1896 Presidential election.

Roosevelt's own first choice for the nomination was House Speaker Thomas Reed. Reed was probably the smartest man in American politics at the time. He's one of these guys who says so many clever things that it's always tempting to quote him, and I'm not even going to try to resist. When a long-winded congressman once echoed in his floor speech Henry Clay's famous declaration that he'd rather be right than be President. Speaker Reed interrupted him to observe "The gentleman need not be concerned, he will never be either."

When Reed's interest in running for president came to the interest of the press they asked him whether he was a candidate. His reply was, the Republican Party could do worse and probably would." He was likely thinking about William McKinley, another contender for the nomination. McKinley and Reed had previously sat in Congress together. In fact they had run against each other for Speaker, a race Reed obviously won. And the Speaker had little good to say about his erstwhile opponent.

William McKinley was born in 1843 he served in the Army during the Civil War and fought at the battle of Antietam. Afterward he became a successful lawyer in his home state of Ohio, and served 14 years in the House of Representatives, until he was ousted after a Democratic gerrymander of his district in 1890. McKinley was also known to be interested in running for president in 1896, and he had the backing of one of his party's most powerful figures, Ohio Republican political boss Mark Hanna. Reed was more reform minded, which was why Roosevelt liked him, but Mark Hanna swung the nomination to McKinley.

The Democratic Party nominee that year was William Jennings Bryan, whom McKinley trounced, in spite of Bryan's having given the greatest speech a presidential candidate ever delivered to a nominating convention, the "Cross of Gold" speech. Bryan brought the house down, although it is said that John Altgeld, Governor of Illinois, turned to Clarence Darrow right after the applause had died down and said "What did he say anyhow?"

McKinley was one of those politicians who likes to split the difference. In contrast to Bryan, McKinley avoided making a strong statement in the gold versus silver debate of the age. He also declined to take a position on the revolt in Cuba that had broken out in 1895. Some people called him a "straddlebug." A popular joke from his presidency goes like this: "How is President McKinley's mind like his bed? He can't use it until someone makes it up for him". It was either Speaker Reed or perhaps Theodore Roosevelt who said of McKinley that the man had the backbone of a chocolate éclair.

When it came time for the new President to select his cabinet he offered one of his old friends from Congress, John Davis Long, who was also a retired governor of Massachusetts, his choice of Cabinet positions. Long, for some reason, asked to be Secretary of the Navy. It's not clear why; he himself admitted that he did not know the stem from the stern of a ship. But he got the job. But this appointment of the not notably accomplished John Davis Long to a post he was not especially qualified for, rankled many members of the Republican Party, particularly the more jingoistic variety. They saw war on the horizon, and they did not see Long as the right man for the Navy Department in the event of a war. So they pressed the new president to do something about the Assistant Secretary of the Navy position, put somebody more in tune with their thinking into that slot. These senators included the Senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge, Speaker Reed, and the new Vice President, Garret Hobart. They settled on Theodore Roosevelt as the man for that position. The Republican Party in New York also backed that appointment as it was a great opportunity for them to, how should I say this, put some distance between them and Theodore Roosevelt.

McKinley appointed Roosevelt, but it was a reluctant choice. McKinley was not a jingo himself, but he wanted to keep the pro-war wing of the party happy. As is often the case, the veteran of Antietam was much less enthusiastic about getting mixed up in another war than were the younger men who had never known combat themselves. Roosevelt himself confided to a friend about this time, "I should welcome any war, for I think this country needs one."

Last week I mentioned the revolt against Spanish rule in Cuba, and how the fighting there was attracting attention in the United States, not least because there was a substantial community of Cuban émigrés and exiles living in New York City. You may have heard the version of the story that the coming war between the United States and Spain was something cooked up in the American Press. There's a famous story about the artist Frederick Remington, who was hired by William Randolph Hearst, the publisher of the New York *Journal* to go to Cuba to provide illustrations of the fighting there to accompany the journal's war reporting. Remington is supposed to have found himself with nothing to do in Havana and accordingly cabling Hearst "Everything is quiet, there is no trouble, there will be no war, I wish to return." And Hearst reputedly cabling back "Please remain, you furnish the pictures, and I'll furnish the war."

The truth as usual is a little more complicated than that. It is true that the press in America, and especially the New York press, were covering events in Cuba very closely, sometimes sneaking reporters onto the island to follow the Cuban guerrillas and report on Spanish excesses. This was the era of what came to be called "yellow journalism" and it was practiced most ferociously in New York City in the competition between Hearst's New York *Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's paper, the *World*. But Americans everywhere were getting news of the violence in Cuba, mostly from the rebel perspective, and tended to see the Cuban revolt as a replay of the American Revolution and sympathized with the rebels, although the *World* did publish at least one piece from the Spanish point of view written by a young British Army officer who was serving as an

observer with the Spanish Army fighting the guerillas. He will also develop a cigar habit while in Cuba, a habit that will stay with him for the rest of his life. His name is Winston Churchill, and I have a feeling we'll be hearing more from him later.

There's quite a bit of irony in the Spanish Army facing a guerrilla conflict in Cuba, given that the Spanish invented guerrilla warfare back in the Napoleonic era. The very word guerrilla comes from the Spanish word *guerilla*, which literally means "little war". Although in time the term came to be applied not to the war itself, but to the fighters who fight it. Guerilla warfare is going to be a thing in the 20th century and the question of how to combat it is going to bedevil the regular armies of many different nations during this time. What we today call counter-insurgency.

Back in 1897 the Spanish idea of counter-insurgency was to send their general Valeriano Weyler to Cuba. Weyler was a Spanish general of German ancestry who had previously been Governor-General of the Philippines. And he had an idea of how to fight guerilla warfare, and this is his enduring contribution to world history. He invented the concentration camp. Although Weyler at first called them "reconcentration camps" the name got shortened later. The idea behind your concentration camp was that the guerilla fighters out in the rural areas of the country are getting support and cover from the local population. But if you round up all the civilians and put them in one place and surround them with barbed wire, another military innovation of this era, then they can't help the guerillas.

But you see the thing is, no government can afford to acknowledge that large segments of its own population are helping the guerillas who are attempting to overthrow it, so the cover story always is that the guerillas are oppressing the rural people and forcing them to help the guerillas, and that by putting them in the concentration camps we are protecting them; that the barbed wire is there to keep the guerillas out, not to keep the population in. And who knows, sometimes this may even be true. But, spoiler alert, as the twentieth century goes on, concentration camps are going to develop a bad reputation, so much so that militaries that employ them are going to have to think up new names for them.

One of the problems of concentration camps is that they're operated by a military. And militaries are usually more interested in going out and killing guerillas than they are in providing food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare to a civilian population. So the result is that a civilian population gets shortchanged in all of these things and you very quickly hear stories about malnutrition, and hunger, and elderly and children dying in concentration camps and it gets very ugly, very quickly.

In the United States in 1897, the Cuban concentration camps were already developing a bad name, and the New York press came to refer to General Weyler as "Butcher Weyler." Meanwhile back in Washington DC in the summer of 1897, the Secretary of the Navy, John Davis Long, left for his native Massachusetts to get away from the notorious Washington heat.

This left Theodore Roosevelt in charge of the Navy Department. He wasted no time. He pulled the Navy department's war plans for Spain, looked them over, found them to be unsatisfactory and set to work improving them.

Over the course of his vacation Long contacted Roosevelt and queried him about Long extending his vacation until the end of September. Roosevelt assured the Secretary that the Washington summer was indeed very hot, things were going swimmingly at the Navy Department and there was no need to hurry back.

It may have been Theodore Roosevelt who first saw that in the event of a war with Spain there was strategic value in attacking the Philippines. At this time the United States Navy had a squadron of cruisers assigned to the Far East, which was designated the "Asiatic Squadron." As luck would have it, the commander of the Asiatic Squadron was about to retire, so Roosevelt began thinking about who might be the right officer to command what might turn out to be a crucial unit if war should break out with Spain.

The man with the inside track to get this job was Commodore John Howell, commander of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Roosevelt consulted with Captain Mahan, and he had a different idea: Commodore George Dewey. Dewey was president of the Naval Board of Inspection and Survey and was known to have a hankering to get back out to sea. So the day before Secretary Long returned from his vacation Roosevelt arranged to put the appointment of Dewey onto President McKinley's desk. McKinley did not know there was another officer under consideration and approved it. Now, McKinley and Long were very annoyed when they learned about Roosevelt's little end-run, but they did not retract the appointment, although Long did withhold from Dewey the customary promotion to Admiral which should have gone with this assignment, so we still have Commodore Dewey.

President McKinley was still hoping to avoid a war, as were several other prominent Republicans in Washington. But they were in the minority in their own government. McKinley tried sending an envoy to Madrid to negotiate the situation in Cuba with the Spanish government. The obstinately old fashioned Spanish were still clinging tightly to traditional ideas of national pride and honor, doubtless because that was all they had left. Their King, Alfonso XIII, was only 12 years old, so his mother was acting as Queen Regent, and her biggest fear was that a show of weakness in front of the Americans would lead to the usurpation of her son's throne. But the Spanish government did go so far as to recall General Weyler, the Butcher, and ended the concentration camp program as a gesture of conciliation, knowing full well that Spain could not possibly win a war with the United States.

In January 1898, Commodore Dewey took command of the Asiatic Squadron at Tokyo. The Asiatic Squadron, as I said, was a handful of US Navy cruisers stationed in the Far East to protect American interests. Unlike the other major powers, the US did not have a base in the Far

East, so its military presence there was mostly token and America was dependent on the assistance of its friends and allies like Japan for basing rights for the Asiatic Squadron.

Meanwhile, also in January of 1898, the news of Weyler's recall and the end of the concentration camp program touched off right-wing riots in Havana. The American government responded by sending the battleship *Maine* to Havana out of fear that the rioters might begin attacking Americans. Happily, the flare-up of violence in Havana ended as quickly as it began, and when *Maine* was there, she had nothing to do. Over the next several weeks the Spanish authorities in Havana wined and dined the officers of *Maine*, working hard to keep relations with the Americans cordial.

For one brief moment it seemed that war had been averted and it would be possible to negotiate a way out of all of this. But two things went wrong. First of all, the Spanish ambassador in Washington wrote a private letter to a friend in Havana describing President McKinley sneeringly as a cheap politician and a weak leader, and went on to reassure his friend in Havana that whatever they were telling the Americans, not to worry, there was no way Spain was ever going to give up control of Cuba. The *New York Journal* got hold of the letter and published it on the front page. This forced the ambassador to resign, and the Spanish government to apologize.

Much, much worse, on the evening of February 15, a sudden explosion aboard *Maine* sank the ship in Havana harbor killing 262 American sailors. Immediately after the explosion, calls for war with Spain began rising again in America. President McKinley convened an inquiry into the cause of the explosion. The inquiry came back with the conclusion that *Maine* had been sunk by a mine, presumably Spanish. What really happened to *Maine*? To this day nobody knows. There have been several re-investigations of the explosion ever since 1898 and they continue to this day. But it remains a mystery.

Meanwhile, back at the Navy Department in Washington DC, Secretary Long took an afternoon off to visit his doctor. As soon as he was out the door, Roosevelt sent a cable to the new commander of the Asiatic Squadron instructing him to take his ships to Hong Kong, and in the event of war to attack the Spanish Navy at Manila. When Long came back to work the next morning and discovered what Roosevelt had done, he chewed out the Assistant Secretary, but again, he did not rescind the order.

McKinley, still trying to avoid a war, submitted to Congress a resolution authorizing neutral American intervention in Cuba, sort of a peace keeping force designed to end hostilities between the Cuban rebels and the Spanish. He hoped this would satisfy the jingoes long enough to give diplomacy more time.

Commodore Dewey collected his squadron at Hong Kong and prepared for war. The American consul in Manila, Oscar Williams—yes, this is the guy the senator from Ohio asked McKinley to

give a consular position to; as you can see he accepted it. He spied on the Spanish defenses, made contact with the Filipino rebels, passed every bit of information he learned on to Dewey, and appeared to be having the time of his life.

Back in Washington, the United States Senate was debating McKinley's resolution. They amended it heavily, and turned it into an outright demand for Cuban independence and authorizing American force to eject the Spanish Army from the island. Essentially a declaration of war. The Senate also added an amendment promising the US would not annex Cuba; the declaration was silent, however, on what America would do with any other territory it might seize from Spain. Now, this was the first, and still the only, time in American history that the Congress declared war on its own initiative, absent a request from the President.

Britain was a neutral country, so upon the outbreak of war the governor of Hong Kong was obligated to order the Asiatic Squadron out of the territory. Secretary Long ordered Dewey to attack the Philippines. As the squadron sailed for Manila, the band aboard Dewey's flagship USS *Olympia* played a song. You guessed it.

[Music: "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight"]

There Will Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight. Now, Manila Bay is large, and therefore a poor defensive location. Arguably the Spanish would have been better off taking their squadron of small, obsolete ships to a more defensible position. But they felt that Manila was too important an objective to leave undefended. So they stayed in Manila Bay, but they moved their ships to Cavite. This would keep Manila out of the line of fire, but it would also mean that Manila's shore defenses would not be available to cover the Spanish ships.

Dewey cut the cable linking Manila to Hong Kong to prevent the Spanish from communicating with Madrid. And the Asiatic Squadron entered Manila Bay early in the morning of May 1. By the light of dawn, Dewey spotted the Spanish fleet at Cavite. He ordered the Squadron in that direction, with *Olympia* at the head of the formation. He turned to her commander, Captain Charles Vernon Gridley, and said "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley." The Asiatic Squadron circled, firing at the Spanish ships again and again. By 12:30 that afternoon it was all over. Only one Spanish ship was still afloat; damage to the Asiatic Squadron was minimal. The guns at Manila continued to fire sporadically, until Dewey sent the Spanish a message warning them that he would begin firing on the city unless they stopped. The guns stopped.

With the cable cut it would take a week before an American ship could return to Hong Kong and inform the world of the American victory. But a US Army expedition was already on its way. Still unanswered was the question, what would they do when they arrived? Was the goal to annex the Philippines? Grant them independence? Or something in between?

We'll have to stop there for today. But as you can see, the story is all but over as far as the Philippines are concerned. You can't conquer a country with just a few cruisers. But you can see that the isolated and beleaguered Spanish garrison in Manila has no hope of resisting the American soldiers on their way as long as Dewey controls access to Manila Bay. What could go wrong? I mean it's not as if the Filipino rebels are suddenly going to convert themselves into a conventional army, lay siege to the Spanish garrison in Manila and threaten to capture the city before the Americans can.

I hope you'll join me next week on the *History of the Twentieth Century*, as the Filipino rebels suddenly convert themselves into a conventional army, lay siege to the Spanish garrison in Manila and threaten to capture the city before the Americans can. That's next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

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Oh, and one more thing. If you'll indulge me for a personal note here, when I studied American history in school, the story of the Spanish-American War, at least as far as the Philippines was concerned, ended when Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet. The next time we heard about the Philippines in American history was in December 1941. So everything that happens in next week's episode, I never heard about in school. I don't know, maybe they do a better job of teaching history nowadays. But this is part of the reason I began the *History of the Twentieth century*, to fill in the gaps. To tell the stories that weren't told to me when I was studying history.

I have a friend who is about 10 years younger than I am, and who I've known since he was a boy. He came to visit me once many years ago and we spent a day in Philadelphia. I took him to Penn's landing and we toured USS *Olympia*, which is now a museum ship there. And as we were touring Commodore Dewey's flagship my friend confessed to me that he had not been previously aware that there was such a thing as a war between the United States and Spain. The reason that this story gives me such a tickle is my friend is a graduate of the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.

[music: Closing Theme]