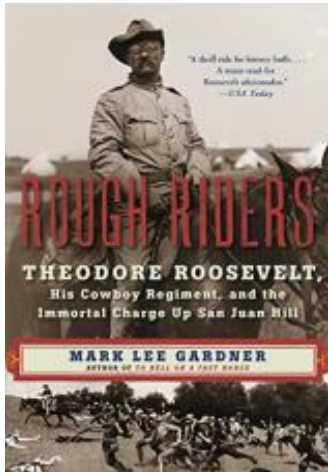


# Rough Riders: Theodore Roosevelt, His Cowboy Regiment, and the Immortal Charge Up San Juan Hill

by Mark Lee Gardner



## About the Book

Two months after the sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana Harbor in February 1898, Congress authorized President McKinley to recruit a volunteer army to drive the Spaniards from Cuba. From this army emerged the legendary "Rough Riders," a mounted regiment drawn from America's western territories and led by the indomitable Theodore Roosevelt. Its ranks included not only cowboys and other westerners, but several Ivy Leaguers and clubmen, many of them friends of "TR." Roosevelt and his men quickly came to symbolize American ruggedness, daring, and individualism. He led them to victory in the famed Battle at San Juan Hill, which made TR a national hero and cemented the Rough Riders' place in history.

Now, Mark Lee Gardner synthesizes previously unknown primary accounts as well as period newspaper articles, letters and diaries from public and private archives in Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Boston and Washington, DC, to produce this authoritative chronicle. He breathes fresh life into the Rough Riders and pays tribute to their daring feats and indomitable leader. Gardner also explores lesser-known aspects of the story, including their relationship with the African-American "Buffalo Soldiers, with whom they fought side by side at San Juan Hill.

Rich with action, violence, camaraderie, and courage, *ROUGH RIDERS* sheds new light on the Theodore Roosevelt saga --- and on one of the most thrilling chapters in American history.

## Discussion Guide

1. What, if anything, did you know about the Rough Riders before you read this book?

2. Discuss the Rough Riders, where they came from, and the origin of their name. What qualities were most important for these soldiers to possess?
3. Did you agree with Teddy Roosevelt's decision to resign from his civilian leadership job with the Navy and go to war as a Rough Rider?
4. Thinking about the Rough Riders' mission to go to Cuba, were the soldiers realistic about the hardships they would endure? If you compare their expectations to those of other volunteers going off to war, do you see any similarities? Differences?
5. Roosevelt was given the command, even though he had had very little experience as an officer. What did you think of this move, and what do you think were the qualities that made him a leader?
6. Discuss how Roosevelt was viewed by his men during the weeks they were together. Were there examples of how he interacted with the men that surprised you? Were there ones that made you see him as a hero?
7. Roosevelt angered the Secretary of War with his actions. Do you feel that that anger was justified? How do you think he should have handled the situation?
8. Looking at Roosevelt in 1898, would you have predicted his rise to power? How much was chance, and how much was his own temperament?
9. Is the picture you had of Roosevelt different from the portrait drawn here, and were you persuaded by this one? If you were to meet him, what would your reaction to him be?
10. Talk about the other famous men who traveled with the troops, like Frederic Remington, Stephen Crane and Hamilton Fish. How did they factor into the story of the Rough Riders?
11. Many Rough Riders were killed or wounded in the fighting and its aftermath. Does the author give the reader a realistic view of the hardships and intricacies of war?
12. Did the media overemphasize the Rough Riders' and specifically Roosevelt's role in victory when they returned to the U.S. in August 1898? Discuss wartime fame. Is hyperbole often part of the story?
13. How do you think that his role in the war aided Roosevelt when he succeeded President William McKinley following his sudden death in 1901?

## **Author Bio**

Mark Lee Gardner is the author of TO HELL ON A FAST HORSE and SHOT ALL TO HELL, which received multiple awards, including a Spur Award from Western Writers of America. An authority on the American West, Gardner has appeared on PBS's "American Experience," as well as on the History Channel, the Travel Channel and on NPR. He has written for the *Los Angeles Times*, *True West*, *Wild West*, *American Cowboy* and *New Mexico Magazine*. He lives with his family in Cascade, Colorado.

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Cowboy Regiment, and the Immortal  
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