

Publisher's Note

This second edition of *Great Events from History: Modern Scandals* describes and analyzes some of the most important scandals of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Each essay focuses on a single event, or series of closely related events, deemed scandalous by media and society. While seeking to reconstruct the chronology and key figures of these events, the essays discuss both what happened to make the event scandalous and how it has influenced modern history.

The Concept of Scandal

The concept of scandal is more elusive than one might at first appreciate. The term is used here to define events that attract considerable media attention and public discussion but often remain poorly understood. Generally meaning some form of misbehavior or a wrongful act, scandals are not necessarily illegal, and illegal acts are not necessarily scandalous. The essence of scandal is the damage to reputation brought on by violations of codes of morality, propriety, or ethics to which the transgressors are normally expected to adhere. It is possible, therefore, that a given act committed by one person may be considered scandalous, while the same act committed by another person may not be.

Murder is generally regarded as a heinous criminal act but not scandalous. By contrast, when adultery committed by respected religious or community leaders is publicly admitted to, it is apt to be considered scandalous but not necessarily criminal. The essential difference is that criminals are expected to commit crimes, while others (religious and community leaders in this case) are not expected to live outside the bounds of their communities' moral and ethical standards. *Modern Scandals* contains many articles concerning murders, all considered scandalous more because of *who* is involved than because of the nature of the crimes themselves. Likewise, the work contains many articles on public figures whose sexual misconduct was considered scandalous because of the positions they held in the community.

Another dimension to the concept of scandal is reputation. Scandals tend to be very public affairs, involving shamed or damaged public reputations. Moreover, given the growing proclivity of the modern news media to exploit scandals involving public figures, minor incidents can

quickly grow into major scandals, as intense media attention uncovers broader patterns of misbehavior.

Modern Scandals encompasses virtually all types of scandals, including politics and government, business and finance, education, religion, science, sports, entertainment, literature, and the arts. Many essays cover high-profile events, including: the turn-of-the-twentieth century espionage case of the French army officer Alfred Dreyfus; the Teapot Dome oil lease scandal that plagued U.S. president Warren G. Harding's administration during the early 1920s; Alger Hiss's 1950 perjury trial; the sensational murder trial of former football star O. J. Simpson in the 1990s; corporate fraud of Enron in 2001; plagiarism of *New York Times* journalist Jayson Blair in 2003; Bernie Madoff's ponzi scheme in 2009; and the firing of Harvey Weinstein from his production company due to numerous accusations of sexual misconduct in 2017.

Other events in *Modern Scandals* may be less known but nevertheless deserve close study, including: the deaths of thirty-five Irish girls in an orphanage fire in 1943; the plagiarism cases of historians Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin; and the falsified scientific research of Stephen Breuning, Jan Hendrik Schön, Ranjit Kumar Chandra, and others. Regardless of the level of public notoriety of any individual topic, every subject covered in this work is significant for studies of history, society, and culture.

Scope of Coverage

Modern Scandals comprises essays whose range is broad enough to meet the needs of students at the high school and undergraduate levels. Geographically, the set focuses on North American topics, mostly concerning the U.S. However, the scope of *Modern Scandals* is worldwide and represents Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Canada, Latin America, Australia and the Pacific, and Africa.

Following the organization of other *Great Events* sets, *Modern Scandals* is arranged chronologically, from Booker T. Washington's dinner at the White House with President Roosevelt in 1901, to 2018 coverage of the dealings of President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Scandal is as old as history, but media and public attention to scandals has grown greatly in modern times, so it is not surprising that two-thirds of the topics cover

events that happened since 1970 and more than one-quarter explore events occurring since 2001. Despite emphasis on recent decades, however, every decade of the twentieth century is represented.

Format

With a few exceptions, essays in *Modern Scandals* are of a uniform length of about 1,600 words, or 3–4 pages. Longer essays, due to their importance and complexity, include the Teapot Dome scandal, Watergate, the Iran-Contra affair, the Roman Catholic priests sex-abuse scandal, and the collapse of the American financial markets.

All essays, as in other *Great Events* titles, include the following ready-reference top matter:

- *Date*, or date range, of the event;
- *Descriptive title*;
- *Summary paragraph* that quickly identifies the event and its historical significance;
- *Also-known-as* name for the event, as appropriate;
- *Locale* where the event occurred;
- *Subject categories* to which the event belongs;
- *Key figures* most significantly involved in the scandal, with their birth and death dates, brief descriptors, and regional dates or terms of office, as applicable.

The main text of every essay is divided into the following sections:

- *Summary of Event*, which provides a detailed chronological description of the facts of the event;
- *Impact*, an assessment of the event's historical, social, or cultural significance;
- *Further Reading*, an annotated list of sources for further study;
- *See also* cross-references to other related essays within *Modern Scandals*.

Sidebars accompany selected essays, which include extracts from primary source documents that help illuminate

the event. Also included are more than 250 *photographs*, including portraits and places where events occurred.

Appendices

- *Bibliography* that lists more general sources on scandals for further study;
- *Essays by Geography* lists essays by world regions and individual countries;
- *Essays by Category* lists essays under more than 50 subject headings.

Indexes

- *Key Figures Index* lists all Key Figure names and other important persons discussed in the essays;
- *Subject Index* includes persons, concepts, terms, works of literature, organizations, and other topics.

Usage Notes

The worldwide scope of the *Great Events from History* series often results in the inclusion of names from languages that do not use the Roman alphabet. Most transliterated words in this set follow American Library Association and Library of Congress (ALA-LC) transliteration forms. Pinyin transliterations are used for Chinese names. In the listing of Key Figures and in parenthetical material within the text, “r.” stands for “reigned,” “b.” for “born,” “d.” for “died,” and “fl.” for flourished. Date ranges, such as “1920–1997,” signify birth and death dates or, where the contexts indicate, terms of political office.

The Contributors

Salem Press extends its appreciation to contributors to this new edition of *Modern Scandals*. They include historians, political scientists, regional studies specialists, and other experts. A list of names and affiliations immediately follows this Publisher's Note. Special thanks go to Editor Thomas Tandy Lewis for his thoughtful updates and new content.

Most Southerners Believe that Booker T. Washington's Dinner at the White House Is Scandalous

October 16, 1901

Shortly after entering the White House, President Theodore Roosevelt invited African American educator Booker T. Washington to have dinner with him and his family. Most people in the southern states, and many in the north, were scandalized by the idea that the U.S. president would sit down at the same table to eat with a person of African ancestry. In this age of Jim Crow, southerners carefully avoided actions that implied that blacks were socially equal with whites. The reaction was so strong that no other black person was invited for dinner at the white house for the next thirty years.

LOCALE: White House in Washington D.C.

CATEGORIES: Civil rights and liberties; human rights; politics; racism

KEY FIGURES

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), African American educator, author, and founder of the Tuskegee Institute

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), president of the United States, 1901-1909

SUMMARY OF EVENT

In 1901, forty-five-year-old Booker T. Washington was the most well-known and respected African American in the country. He was founder and head of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, a school emphasizing industrial education for blacks. He impressed audiences with his speaking abilities, had been invited to have tea with Queen Victoria at Windsor Palace, and had written a best-selling autobiography, *Up From Slavery*. Some people called him the "Negro Moses," because they viewed him as a man who was prepared to lead his people into the twentieth century. In his 1895 speech, known as the "Atlanta Compromise," he said that blacks could progress through education and hard work, rather than by directly challenging the Jim Crow system; thus, he was implicitly willing to accept a continuation of political and social inequality, at least temporarily.

When Booker T. Washington had dinner with President Theodore Roosevelt, both men knew that this was an unusual event and they both probably suspected that it might create controversy, but neither man had any idea about the great fury that it would unleash. Black visitors had previously visited the president in the White House for governmental business, and such contacts had not aroused a great deal of attention. President John Adams, in fact, had dined with a Haitian diplomat and his wife in 1789, but this had been viewed as an official diplomatic affair, not a private social meeting.

Born in New York in 1858, Roosevelt almost worshiped President Lincoln, and he naturally had contempt for slavery and sympathized with the Union side during the Civil War. From his days in the American West and as a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was accustomed to casual interaction with a large variety of people. Although he apparently believed that some human races were superior to others, he respected individual people for their accomplishments. During the Spanish-American War of 1898, he had supported the use of black soldiers, and he recognized that many of them had fought bravely and had helped bring about the victory in the Cuban theater. When governor of New York, Roosevelt had hosted blacks for meals at the governor's mansion.

The controversial dinner in the White House took place as a result of a last-minute invitation without a great deal of forethought. Roosevelt did not make the invitation in order to make a symbolic statement about race relations. He simply had arranged for an evening meeting with Booker T. Washington in order to get his advice on appointments in the southern states. At the same time, he had made plans for a family dinner with one of his friends who was visiting. Realizing that the conversations with Washington might take a considerable amount of time, he decided that it would be more convenient to invite Washington to have a dinner with the family. Although he hesitated before extending the invitation to Washington,

he was an impulsive man, and decided to go ahead with the invitation.

The president viewed the dinner as regular family event, not an official occasion. Mrs. Roosevelt and three of the president's daughters were present. The White House had not expected that the dinner would cause a scandal, released a statement with the heading: "Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee, Alabama, dined with the President last evening."

In the southern states, politicians and the press soon responded with shock and angry denunciations. Senator James K. Vardeman of Mississippi protested that the White House was now "so saturated with the odor of nigger that the rats had taken refuge in the stable." Southern politicians were practically upset to learn that Washington had eaten at the same table as Mrs. Roosevelt and her children because they looked upon such contact as symbolizing social equality. Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina worried that the dinner would encourage African Americans to press for changes in the Jim Crow system. He said that "we shall have to kill a thousand niggers to get them back in their places."

Southern newspapers were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the dinner. The *Memphis Scimitar* proclaimed that this was "the most damnable outrage which has ever been perpetrated by any citizen of the United States. The *New Orleans Times Democrat* complained: "When Mr. Roosevelt sits down to dinner with a Negro he declares that the negro is the social equal of the white man." The *New Orleans Daily States* characterized the dinner as "a studied insult to the South." The *Richmond Times* found that the incident "means the President is willing that Negroes shall mingle freely with whites in the social circle.... It means that there is no racial reason why whites and blacks may not marry and intermarry, why the Anglo-Saxon may not mix Negro blood with his blood."

Responding to the criticisms, one spokesman for the White House at first claimed that the meal had not occurred and that Roosevelt's wife and daughter had not sat at the same table as a black man. Some White House personnel maintained that the meal had been a luncheon and not an evening dinner. A few days later, nevertheless, Roosevelt and Washington dined together again at Yale University. Thereafter, the president continued to consult



Booker T. Washington and Theodore Roosevelt at the Tuskegee Institute in 1905. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

with Washington about political policies affecting black Americans. Neither of the two men made any public comments about the matter at that time. A week after the dinner, however, Roosevelt wrote to Henry Cabot Lodge:

The Booker T. Washington incident was to me so much a matter of course that I regarded its sole importance as consisting in the view it gave one of the continued existence of that combination of Bourbon intellect and intolerant truculence of spirit, through much of the South, which brought on the Civil War. If these creatures had any sense they would understand that they can't bluff me. They can't ever make me abandon my policies of appointing decent men to office in their localities.

The majority of African Americans newspapers praised the event. The *Washington Bee*, for example, took pleasure in observing that Southern Democrats “are fuming with dire imprecations against him, and all because he took a meal of victuals with a coloured gentleman who had been entertained by the nobility of England, and the best people of America.” Many mainstream northern newspapers also were happy to learn about the interracial dinner. The *Boston Transcript* stated that “the hysterical and horror-stricken Southern Shriekers” were the victims of “old ingrained prejudice.”

The incident did not do any real damage to Roosevelt's political career. Since he was a Republican and all the southern states automatically voted for Democratic candidates at that time, Roosevelt did not have any reason to worry about losing their votes during the 1904 presidential election. He would not have received their votes in any case. The dinner was never a major issue for most people north of the Mason-Dixon line. Still, Roosevelt never again invited Washington or another African American to dine with his family at the White House.

IMPACT

Booker T. Washington's dinner at the White House did not have any immediate political impact. At this time, the Jim Crow system was well established in the southern states, and the forces calling for significant changes were relatively weak. A few years earlier, the Supreme Court had issued the decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which had upheld the constitutionality of laws mandating racial segregation in public facilities. Although the Court said that such facilities were supposed to be equal in quality,

this proved impossible to bring about in practice. In 1901, not many white citizens, even in the North, were strongly opposed to racial segregation and white supremacy. There was no significant opposition equipped to seriously challenge the status quo.

Within a few years, Washington's meal at the white house was forgotten. Several generations later, however, when the civil rights movement became a powerful force that could not be ignored, the incident became something of a symbol of the Jim Crow era. Ironically, whereas people in 1901 found it scandalous that a black man had eaten at the same table as the president's family, by the 1960s, a large percentage of Americans found it shocking that the event had been considered unacceptable at the turn of the century. The event, therefore, became a useful symbol for condemning racism and racial discrimination.

When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, Senator John McCain said in his concession speech: “A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt's invitation of Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House was taken as an outrage in many quarters,” said McCain. “America today is a world away from the cruel bigotry of that time. There is no better evidence of this than the election of an African-American to the presidency of the United States.”

—Thomas Tandy Lewis

FURTHER READING

- Davis, Deborah. *Guest of Honor: Booker T. Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, and the White House Dinner that Shocked a Nation*. New York: Atria, 2012. In addition to a detailed account of the dinner, this book summarizes the personalities and careers of the people involved.
- Frusciano, Thomas J. “Theodore Roosevelt and the Negro in the Age of Booker T. Washington, 1901-1921.” *Scholarly Works at the University of Montana*. B.A. Thesis, 1975. A compelling narrative based on impressive research with many good quotations.
- Moore, Jacqueline M. *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift*. Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2003. The story of the conflict between these two men over tactics: whereas Washington advocated gradualism and accommodationism, Du Bois insisted on a radical push for social and economic equality.
- Morris, Edmund. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Modern Library, 2001. This is widely recognized as the best book ever written about TR's two terms as president. Morris previously published *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (1979), a highly praised book about TR's life before he became president.

Smock, Raymond W. *Booker T. Washington: Black Leadership in the Age of Jim Crow*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009. Presents a favorable view of Washington as having a public face of a compromiser and a conciliator, but behind his public face he found ways to challenge Jim Crow and attack racial injustices.

SEE ALSO: "Scottsboro Boys" are Railroaded Through Rape Trials; Newspaper Breaks Story of Abuses in Tuskegee Syphilis Study; Senator Strom Thurmond's Biracial Daughter is Revealed; Shock Jock Don Imus Loses Radio Show over Inappropriate Remarks.

Theodore Roosevelt Is Accused of Accepting Corporate Funds

1904

Theodore Roosevelt was known as an opponent of corruption and corporate excess. During the 1904 presidential election campaign, his opponent, Democrat Alton B. Parker, called the president's reputation into question when he asserted that Roosevelt had received campaign donations from large corporations in return for promised favors. Several businesses admitted giving money to the president, leading Roosevelt to call for campaign finance reform after his election.

LOCALE: Washington, D.C.

CATEGORIES: Corruption; politics; banking and finance; government

KEY FIGURES

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), president of the United States, 1901-1909

Alton B. Parker (1852-1926), Democratic candidate for U.S. president in 1904

George B. Cortelyou (1862-1940), U.S. secretary of commerce and labor, 1903-1904, and chairman of the Republican National Committee, 1904-1907

SUMMARY OF EVENT

Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as president of the United States in September, 1901, following the assassination of President William McKinley. Roosevelt began to vigorously enforce antitrust laws, which McKinley had largely ignored, and established the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, with authority to collect information on the activities of large corporations. By 1904, when he was nominated by the Republican Party to run for another term, Roosevelt had gained a reputation as a trust-buster and had given the leaders of big business cause to hesitate before they decided that it was in their best interest to support him over his Democratic opponent, Alton B. Parker.

In September, 1904, Roosevelt handed over control of his presidential campaign to the Republican National Committee, which was chaired by his former secretary of commerce and labor, George B. Cortelyou. When reports surfaced that the campaign was receiving large contributions from corporations—a practice that was legal and was part of McKinley's two campaigns for the presidency in 1896 and 1900—the stage was set for the defining controversy of the 1904 campaign, a controversy over the influence of big business on politics.

Parker was a New York judge from the conservative wing of the Democratic Party who disassociated himself from the issue of silver backing for currency, an issue that had been the centerpiece of Democrat William Jennings Bryan's campaigns in 1896 and 1900. This left the Demo-

crats in search of a new issue, and for a time they tried to win over voters by criticizing Republican policies concerning the Philippines. The campaign proceeded rather uneventfully until October 1, when newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer, an ardent backer of Parker, printed an open letter to Roosevelt, asserting that the president had relaxed his crackdown on monopolies and in return was receiving contributions from corporate treasuries. Pulitzer had been apprised of these contributions by former secretary of war, Daniel Lamont, who three weeks later repeated his allegations to Parker. Lamont, a friend of Parker, added that the insurance industry was so certain that Roosevelt would win the election that his victory had already been underwritten. Appalled by this news, Parker, in an October 24 speech, attacked the Republicans for scandalously accepting corporate contributions. He argued that the contributions amounted to outright bribery and would give corporations four more years to harm the public through monopolies and high prices.

Press reaction to Parker's charges was at first tepid, but then a reporter wrote of seeing a check for \$100,000 from Standard Oil to the Roosevelt campaign. Roosevelt was particularly sensitive to the association this could create between himself and the Rockefeller-owned oil company, so he immediately directed Cortelyou to return the check, if it existed. Sensing that he had found an issue worth pursuing, Parker gave a series of speeches in late October and early November that made increasingly shrill attacks on

the Republicans for accepting corporate money and attacks on Roosevelt for not admitting or ending the practice. Parker also put the alleged scandal in a more conspiratorial framework, implying that some of the money donated to the Republicans had been funneled to the Socialist and Populist parties to draw away Democratic voters and, thus, help the Republican cause. Parker also suggested that a deliberate plan was behind the appointment of Cortelyou to head the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903: to shift him from head of this department to the Roosevelt campaign as head in 1904, which would provide the campaign more leverage in getting money from corporations.

Roosevelt harbored fears that he might somehow lose the election. He decided to strike back at Parker close to election day to prevent Parker from having time to offer a rebuttal. On November 4, Roosevelt issued a statement categorically denying any impropriety in accepting perfectly legal contributions from corporations. He then characterized Parker's charges as slanderous, unsupported assertion. Roosevelt also defended Cortelyou for his integrity; Cortelyou also had been reluctantly spared from the cabinet only after other equally qualified persons had turned down the position of party chair. Roosevelt vowed that he would go into his second term unhampered by promises or obligations beyond serving the best interests of the United States. On November 8, the voters went to the polls and gave Roosevelt one of the most decisive presidential victories in decades: Roosevelt beat Parker by more than 2.5 million votes.

Neither Roosevelt nor Parker, however, escaped from the 1904 election with an unblemished record on corporate contributions. Roosevelt received almost \$2.2 million in campaign contributions, 70 percent of which came from corporations. While this amount did not approach the scale of the corporate funding McKinley received in his presidential races, stories persisted for years of an alleged secret meeting at the White House in October, 1904, in which Roosevelt was said to have begged a group of business tycoons for contributions, promising to leave their respective businesses alone during his second term. Roosevelt denied these allegations, but in testimony in 1912 before a U.S. Senate subcommittee, he did concede that in 1904 he had asked railroad magnate E. H. Harriman to raise \$250,000 to help ensure a Republican victory in the New York gubernatorial election, an outcome related to Roosevelt's own prospects in carrying the state.



President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

Parker told the same Senate subcommittee that he did not know who contributed to his 1904 campaign nor did he know the breakdown of those contributions; the funds he received were substantial, however. Parker was apparently unaware that tobacco and transportation magnate Thomas Fortune Ryan had been reviled by William Jennings Bryan as the epitome of Wall Street influence on the Democratic Party and was a generous contributor to the 1904 Parker campaign.

IMPACT

Roosevelt was destined to win the 1904 presidential election, regardless of Parker's allegations. Indeed, this election, and its scandalous allegations of colluding with big business, would have received little more than a footnote in U.S. political history if it had not inspired campaign finance reform. After the issue became public knowledge, neither candidate would dare dismiss its significance. Parker took a hand in promoting reform in New York, and

although it took until 1907, New York lawmakers passed an act that placed their state in the forefront of states that prohibited corporations from making political contributions. Roosevelt made a call for federal campaign finance reform in his annual messages to the U.S. Congress in 1905 and 1906, and in 1907 his administration achieved success when the Tillman Act (named for its primary sponsor, Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina) became law. The act prohibited political contributions by any bank or corporation organized under the laws of Congress, and it began a long process of federal reform that eventually produced such milestone legislation as the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971.

—Larry Haapanen

FURTHER READING

- Corrado, Anthony, et al. *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005. Places in broad historical perspective the 1904 scandal over corporate contributions and its impact on campaign finance reform.
- Morris, Edmund. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House, 2001. Biography of Theodore Roosevelt that concentrates on his time as president. A wealth of detail provided on the dispute over corporate contributions in the 1904 election campaign.
- Stone, Irving. *They Also Ran: The Story of the Men Who Were Defeated for the Presidency*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. The chapter on Alton B. Parker provides a full sketch of his career and run for the presidency.

SEE ALSO: Senator Joseph R. Burton Is Convicted of Bribery; Boston Alderman Is Reelected While in Jail for Fraud; Richard Nixon Denies Taking Illegal Campaign Contributions; President Truman's Appointments Secretary Is Convicted of Tax Conspiracy; Watergate Break-in Leads to President Nixon's Resignation.