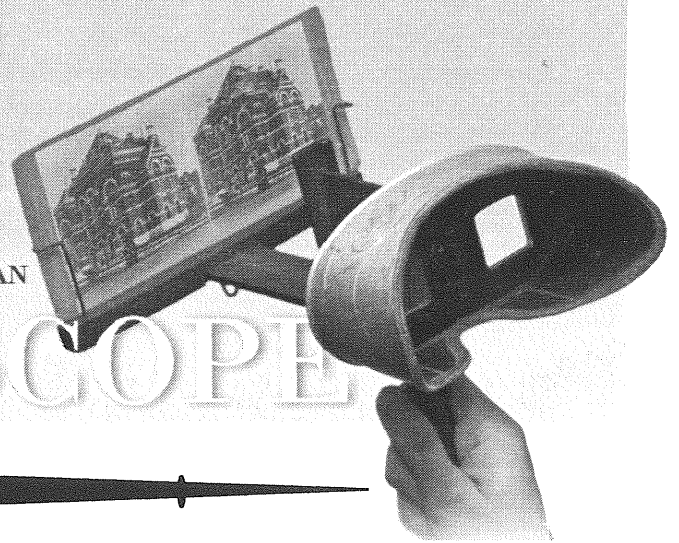


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THE JOURNAL OF
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OF THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

STEREOSCOPE



“The Greatest of All Lincoln Club Days”

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by Michael A. MacDonald

It is no small satisfaction to realize that the glory of the day will be imperishably bequeathed to future generations through the simple inscription which the cornerstone of the new federal building now bears. February 12, 1909.

Arthur H. Vandenberg, Editor of the *Grand Rapids Herald*

A federal courthouse gives a city a mark of status and success. At the birth of the twentieth century, only five Michigan cities could lay claim to that status: Detroit, Port Huron, Marquette, Kalamazoo, and Grand Rapids. And in 1909, only Grand Rapids could proudly point to the construction of a new federal courthouse. Such an occasion called for a celebration. The planning of that celebration fell to local attorney Benjamin S. Hanchett. Mr. Hanchett was general manager of the Grand Rapids Railway Company and president of the Grand Rapids Lincoln Club. His challenge was to plan a celebration for February 12, 1909, which would be equal to the accomplishments of his city and his political party. Adding to his challenge was the fact that the upcoming Lincoln Club Day celebration would also commemorate the centennial of President Lincoln's birth. To put together a successful celebration, he needed someone or something memorable.

In that time and place, the grandest of all Republicans was President Teddy Roosevelt. Unfortunately, the “old Rough Rider” was already spoken for at a planned ceremony at Lincoln's birthplace in Kentucky. So, with the

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assistance of United States Senator William Alden Smith, arrangements were made to secure the appearance of America's most famous celebrity, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Teddy Roosevelt's first-born daughter.

U.S. Senator William Alden Smith



William Alden Smith

"There is never any doubt as to where he stands on any public question. He is absolutely fearless in the statement of his convictions, and neither party caucuses, nor Senate traditions, nor autocratic chief executives embarrass or intimidate the expression of his honest views."

Wyn Craig Wade, biographer²

William Alden Smith was born in Dowagiac, Michigan, on May 12, 1859.³ He was 12 years old when his family relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan. Not long after his family moved to Grand Rapids, William Alden Smith's father died. At the age of 12 and as the oldest child, he became the principal source of income for his family. To make ends meet, the future U.S. senator sold popcorn as a street vendor, and was quite financially successful. At the age of 19, he received his first political appointment when he became a page to the Michigan legislature.⁴

Like President Lincoln, he was a largely self-taught lawyer; he was admitted to the practice of law in 1883.⁵ Early in his legal career, Smith practiced in the Grand Rapids law firm of Burch⁶ and Montgomery. After a period of solo practice, Smith entered into a partnership with local attorney Frederick W. Stevens. In 1885, William Alden Smith married Nana Osterhout of Grand Rapids, Michigan. A popular and effective politician, William A. Smith was first elected to Congress in 1894. He won six more congressional contests and continued to serve in that body until 1907. When Senator Russell A. Alger died in office, William Alden Smith won the election to complete Alger's senatorial term. He served in the United States Senate from March 3, 1907 to March 3, 1919, when he chose not to seek another term.

A successful businessman, William Alden Smith owned the Lowell-Hastings Railroad Company and served as chairman of the board for the Graham and Morton Steamship Company, a Great Lakes steamboat transit company. Senator Smith died in Grand Rapids on October 11, 1932 at the age of 73. It has been reported that the tiny village of Alden, Michigan, located on the eastern shore of Torch Lake, in Antrim County, was named after Senator Smith.⁷ Given his humble origins, his accomplishments are impressive by any standard.⁸

During his diverse career, William Alden Smith displayed a taste for the newspaper business. This interest appears to have originated when he was not successful in his first attempt to run for the United States Senate. Learning from his defeat,⁹ he acquired ownership of the *Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper in 1906. The next time he ran for the Senate, he used his newspaper to generate support for his candidacy. One of his key campaign organizers was the newly installed publisher of the *Grand Rapids Herald*, Arthur H. Vandenberg. In 1916, Senator William Alden Smith's name was "placed on the ballot" for the Michigan Republican presidential primary. Smith was beaten in that Michigan primary election by political neophyte Henry Ford, the Detroit automaker. Neither candidate succeeded in capturing the

title of Republican presidential nominee. Apparently both of the candidates became disenchanted with the political process. Within a year of this victory, Henry Ford withdrew from any further efforts at winning elective office. As for Senator Smith, he left the U.S. Senate in 1919 and devoted the remainder of his life to his family and business interests.

The Politics of the Cornerstone

The year 1909 marked the centenary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth. From his humble beginnings in Kentucky, Lincoln became a lawyer, an Illinois state representative, a United States congressman, and eventually the 16th president of the United States. Both Lincoln and the Republican Party had their roots in the Midwest. Lincoln was, of course, the first president to enter the White House as the leader of the Republican Party.

Grand Rapids was a decidedly republican town¹⁰ at the turn of the twentieth century, and February 12 was a decidedly republican day. After all, February 12 was President Lincoln's birthdate. And, given that the year 1909 was the centenary year of Lincoln's birth, a special celebration was planned. Since it was a tradition within the Michigan Republican Party to host a "Lincoln's Day Dinner" to celebrate the party's past successes and future accomplishments, it must have been a coup for local republican leaders to connect their annual party dinner to the construction of the new federal courthouse. In addition, local republican leaders had convinced the state Republican Party to hold its state nominating convention in Grand Rapids on the morning of February 12, 1909, before the courthouse ceremony.

Given the great remove of time from the Lincoln Day celebrations of 1909, I have included some representative newsworthy events from the various Grand Rapids newspapers. It is interesting to see that after 100 years, our community faced problems and challenges not unlike the ones facing us today.

"Indians Glad, Get Big Money"

The February 13, 1909 *Grand Rapids Daily News* carried this headline for a story about Michigan's Ottawa Indians. Through a series of treaties, the federal government had purchased large swaths of land from the various Indian communities who had resided in Michigan before the arrival of European settlers. According to the *Daily News*, the majority of the funds owed to the Indian tribes was held in trust, to be paid out as annual "apportionment" payments. As the newspaper story recounted:

In the course of time, the government overlooked the exact specifications of the agreement and even the interest on the amount due ceased. Finally, the Pottawattamies began to ask questions; then the Chippewas and Ottawas became interested. Competent lawyers took the matter in hand and it was found that a large sum of money still remained unpaid.

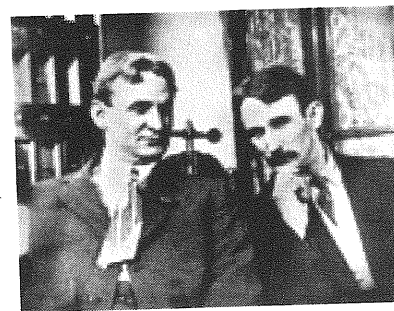
... Each member of the Ottawa tribe is to receive \$30. There are over 700 Ottawa Indians in Michigan, which makes a total of over \$21,000 to be paid to that tribe alone.

Grand Rapids Daily News, February 13, 1909

Domestic Terrorism: The Nitro Conspiracy

The February 15, 1909 edition of the *Grand Rapids Herald* broke the news

that the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Indiana had indicted 54 Iron Workers Union leaders on charges of conspiracy to dynamite private property. It was undisputed that over 80 business concerns across the United



The McNamara brothers

States had been intentionally blown up over a three-year time period. It strongly appeared that the explosions were the result of labor disputes. In the newspaper coverage, Mr. Herbert Hockin, the secretary for the union, was identified as the ringleader of the criminal conspiracy. Other Iron Worker leaders were arrested in Boston, Philadelphia, Peoria, Chicago, and Detroit. The criminal conspiracy was described in the *Herald* as "the most widespread and most closely organized system of crime that ever existed in this country." It was not until 1912 that the Herbert Hockin Nitro Conspiracy trial was concluded. Mr. Hockin was found guilty and later testified on behalf of the United States against other union leaders. In April 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt pardoned Herbert Hockin on the basis of his law-abiding nature since the time of his conviction.

The Nitro Conspiracy investigation also led to the prosecution of John and James McNamara, who blew up the offices and printing plant of the national newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*, on October 1, 1910. The owner of the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper, Harrison Gray Otis, was a well-known anti-union crusader. The McNamara case was

resolved in December 1911, in mid-trial, when both principal defendants entered guilty pleas. The litigation continued, however, when the Los Angeles district attorney charged the McNamara brothers' trial counsel, Clarence Darrow, with jury tampering.¹¹

In fact, Clarence Darrow was to face two separate jury-tampering trials in Los Angeles County, arising from the McNamara trial. In the first trial, which lasted three months, the prosecution relied on the testimony of Darrow's former "chief investigator," Ben Franklin, that a bribe was offered to a former policeman who served as a juror. In the first prosecution, the jury acquitted Darrow after only 34 minutes of deliberation. In the second jury-tampering trial, Darrow was accused of bribing an unemployed carpenter who had served as a juror in the McNamara brothers' trial. That trial ended in a hung jury. Allegedly, the Los Angeles County prosecutor struck a deal with Darrow that there would be no re-trial if Darrow promised never to practice law in California again. *Privileged Son, Otis Chandler and the Rise and Fall of the L.A. Times Dynasty*, by Dennis McDougal, pp. 62-63.

A Reception for Booker T

In whatever space was not used to describe the visit of Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the *Grand Rapids Evening Press* published an article concerning another famous visitor to Grand Rapids that same week. The Grand Rapids City Council officially hosted a reception for noted African American Booker T. Washington, as part of his first visit to this area. Mr. Washington was lauded as "the leader of his race in America." In describing the reception, the newspaper reported:

Mayor George E. Ellis introduced the guest as one whom he was proud to present because he stood entirely on his merits. The audience, which was composed of about half whites and half blacks, and which crowded the large meeting room to the doors, gave him one of the heartiest receptions ever tendered any man in this city.

The article concluded: "As the crowds filed out, all who cared to were given an opportunity to grasp the hand of the noted colored leader." Id.

"The Last Pine is Cut"

Grand Rapids Evening Press reporter Scott Woodward traveled to the Traverse City, Michigan area to witness the cutting down of what was reputed to be the last virgin white pine tree in northwestern Michigan. In those days, the trees were harvested in winter conditions to allow for easier trans-

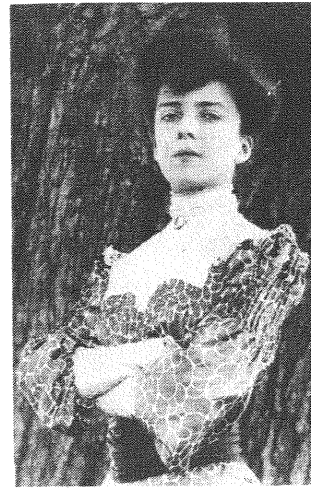
portation on sleighs drawn by horses over icy roads to the Manistee River. The cutting of the trees was accomplished by men using axes and saws, without the benefit of power tools. In the end, this final forest sentinel was found to be over 200 years old, based on its growth rings. The newspaper reported that an estimated 2,000,000 feet of lumber had been removed from the Traverse City region alone in 30 years' time.

Peace for John D. Rockefeller

Journalist Ida Tarbell, who was famous for her "muckraking" articles about the Standard Oil monopoly, also visited west Michigan in February 1909. She was the guest of Dr. J. H. Kellogg, who was renowned for his Battle Creek sanitarium, his American Medical Missionary College, and his breakfast cereals. According to press accounts, Ms. Tarbell stated that "she is positively through with writing about Standard Oil" and will now commence work on a series of stories about "health" and the Civil War "underground railway."

Alice Roosevelt Longworth—An American Princess

President Theodore Roosevelt's oldest daughter, Alice



Alice Roosevelt Longworth

Roosevelt, was one of America's first media celebrities. The early twentieth century press could not get enough of her. According to their reporting, her life was an endless series of escapades. She ate asparagus with gloved fingers during White House dinners. She played poker with "Uncle Joe" Cannon, who also happened to be the speaker of the House of Representatives. She was known to carry a revolver and on long train trips to shoot at telegraph poles for practice

and to fight boredom. On a trip to the Far East, she spent the night as an impromptu guest of the dowager empress of China. She routinely smoked cigarettes, danced the hula, and consumed alcohol. When confronted with these indelicate habits, she replied, "The trouble with reporters is that they expect me to wear a halo and I only wear a hat."¹²

The American public was equally fascinated with Ms. Roosevelt's life and eagerly followed her escapades. Dubbed "Princess Alice," savvy businessmen named colors for her and songs after her. It is not surprising that her nuptials received expansive media coverage. On February 17, 1906, she was



The press at the Roosevelt Longworth wedding.

married in a White House wedding ceremony¹³ to United States Congressman Nicholas Longworth, a Republican from Ohio. The wedding festivities reportedly wiped out the entire supply of flowers in the Washington, D.C., floral market.¹⁴

Not quite three years later, America's Princess Alice paid her first, and only, visit to Grand Rapids.¹⁵ Given the press coverage she generated, the citizens of Grand Rapids could not get enough of her. Her photograph appeared on the front page of the Grand Rapids daily newspapers. The purpose of her visit was to assist in laying the cornerstone for the new federal courthouse, which was under construction in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Even at a 100-year remove, Alice R. Longworth was certainly one of the most famous celebrities to visit Grand Rapids. Her arrival in Grand Rapids generated front-page news coverage for several days. The media coverage, however, varied with each newspaper, depending on the editor's apparent political leanings.

The *Grand Rapids Press* took something of a tongue-in-cheek approach in its coverage of the president's daughter's visit. According to the *Grand Rapids Press*, Mrs. Longworth arrived in the city accompanied by a "French maid" and "a mysterious satchel," which the newspapers claimed was constantly in her presence. While she did not disclose the contents of the satchel, the reporter speculated that it contained her jewelry for the Lincoln Club dinner.

The modern reader can also detect a hint of envy in the *Grand Rapids Press* article's observation that Alice Longworth had crossed America in a private railroad car, in the company of a United States senator and a railroad president. The reporter also accused Mrs. Longworth of rudely keeping local dignitaries waiting in their carriages while she idled her morning away. The same article poked fun at Mrs. Longworth's ceremonial role, noting that she had assisted in laying various other cornerstones, and "is just a little out of practice now." Perhaps most unkind was the accusation that

Mrs. Longworth was ungrateful toward her hosts, noting "Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth does not care for cats. She wouldn't accept one, even as a gift."¹⁶ It seems that when offered the gift of a locally raised and bred Angora cat, the president's daughter expressed a distinct preference for dogs.

According to news accounts, she had been accompanied on this trip by her French poodle.

By contrast, the *Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper displayed a distinctly more cordial tone toward Alice Roosevelt Longworth's arrival in Grand Rapids. The coverage of Mrs. Longworth's visit began almost a week before her arrival, when on February 9, 1909, the paper reported that "Princess Alice" would be attending the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new federal courthouse. The February 10, 1909 edition of the *Herald* published an article describing the upcoming Lincoln banquet as the "greatest birthday celebration in the history of Grand Rapids." The article also included a trip itinerary for Alice Roosevelt Longworth, which projected her arrival in Grand Rapids at 6 a.m. on February 12.

The February 12 *Herald* disclosed "Princess Alice's" schedule for her first day in Grand Rapids. She was to be taken by carriage from the Union train station to the Pantlind Hotel for breakfast. Later, she was to be given a tour of downtown Grand Rapids in the "Honolulu," Attorney Benjamin Hanchett's privately owned trolley car. This was to be followed by a visit to Mrs. Henry Dykhousé's famous "cattery" on Lake Avenue.¹⁷ According to the *Herald*, this was one of Mrs. Longworth's principal stated reasons for visiting Grand Rapids. At midday, 30 prominent citizens attended a private luncheon with Princess Alice, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin S. Hanchett, at the Kent Country Club. At the conclusion of the luncheon, Mrs. Longworth was taken by carriage to the cornerstone-laying ceremony. Following that public ceremony, Mrs. Longworth was to be taken to a private dinner hosted by Mrs. John W. Blodgett at her home on Cherry Street. Finally, the president's daughter was a prominent feature of the evening's Lincoln Club dinner.

Even Princess Alice's departure from Grand Rapids was considered newsworthy. In the February 13, 1909 edition of the *Grand Rapids Herald*, the reporter paraphrased Julius Caesar in describing the president's daughter's visit to Grand



Rapids: "Alice Roosevelt Longworth has come, has seen and has conquered." Mrs. Longworth was reported to have left Grand Rapids at approximately 6 a.m., in the company of her French poodle.

The Parade and Cornerstone Ceremony

Civic groups who wished to participate in the cornerstone ceremony at the new federal courthouse¹⁸ were encouraged to gather at the Masonic Temple at 1:30 p.m. on February 12, 1909. These groups included various Masonic lodges, the Knights Templar, the Maccabees, Woodmen, Odd Fellows, Commercial Travelers, U.S. Postal Service letter carriers, Grand Rapids city officials, and various trade unions. The parade was supervised through the efforts of a 24-man contingent from the Grand Rapids Police Department. Music for the parade, and later the ceremony, was provided by the Furniture City Band and a local military band. The visiting dignitaries and keynote speakers rode in carriages during the parade, while the other groups walked. The parade followed a route from the Masonic Temple, down Fulton Street to Division Street, up Division Street to Pearl Avenue, then down Pearl to Ionia Avenue and the partially constructed federal courthouse.

The ceremony was to be presided over by Herbert E. Montague, the grand master of the local Masonic Temple. Dignitaries attending the ceremony included United States Senator William A. "Airtight" Smith (R-Michigan),¹⁹ United States Congressmen Richard P. Hobson (R-Alabama), Duncan E. McKinlay (R-California), and of course, Nicholas Longworth (R-Ohio) and Alice Roosevelt Longworth.

In anticipation of the cornerstone-laying ceremony, a scaffolding was erected around the southwestern corner of the federal courthouse building. United States District Court Judge Loyal Knappen, described as "the most eminent federal official in the city," started the program by delivering an "address of invitation." According to the *Grand Rapids Daily News*, a crowd of "thousands" of citizens filled the streets and sidewalks surrounding the building. The cornerstone ceremony involved no fewer than three grand masons, who delivered a call to order, an invocation, the presentation of the "working tools," a finding of readiness and square condition, a finding of level siting and the receipt of rosters, petitions, and other documents. The Masonic rites were described by the *Grand Rapids Evening Press* as being handed down from "the ancient past when Solomon was King of Israel."²⁰

The cornerstone ceremony called for the placement of historic documents into a "hermetically sealed leaden box," which would then be placed inside a "granite block" near the cornerstone. The historic documents included the United

States District Court calendar and court rules; a list of the employees of the Grand Rapids post office; a list of the employees of the local United States weather bureau; a list of the erectors of the courthouse; pamphlets from the Grand Rapids Library; a manual from the Board of Education; multiple Masonic documents, rosters, and various documents from the Knights of Pythias, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, the Knights of Modern Maccabees, the International Order of Odd Fellows, the National Protective Legion, the United Commercial Travelers, the Grand Army of the Republic, the A.B. Watson post, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Kent Scientific Institute, the Y.M.C.A., the Ladies Literary Club, the St. Cecilia Society, the Republican state convention, copies of local newspapers, a Catholic newspaper, records from the Division Street Methodist Episcopal church, copies of newspapers announcing President Lincoln's assassination, a one-cent United States Postal Service stamp, and photographs of Grand Rapids pioneer settlers Louis Campau and his wife, Sophie DeMarsac Campau.

With the submission of the historical documents completed, the Masonic leaders proceeded to the ceremony of "placing" the cornerstone. It was during this part of the ceremony that Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth was given a silver commemorative trowel and asked to smooth the cement.²¹ Following Mrs. Longworth's labors, the Masonic grand masters "rapped the stone" three times, invoked a final blessing, and drank a glass of wine. A Masonic junior master then poured oil on the cornerstone and provided the final blessing of the day, "I pour oil as an emblem of peace, and may its blessing be with us continuously. May the Grand Master of heaven shelter and protect the widow and the orphan." Following the Masonic rites, Senator William Alden Smith delivered the keynote oration of the day.

The Lincoln Banquet

The seventh annual Lincoln Club Banquet was memorable for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it represented the first visit to west Michigan of Alice Roosevelt Longworth. This day was special for the president's daughter, as noted by visiting Congressman Hobson of Alabama, in that it was her 25th birthday, a fact reported on the front page of the local press.²² The dinner was also remarkable in that it was the first Lincoln Banquet held under electric lighting. The newspapers reported that "thousands" of electrical lights²³ were used to illuminate the gala affair. According to the *Grand Rapids Herald*, the electrical lighting work was performed by H. W. Hillman of the Grand Rapids-Muskegon Power Company. The dinner menu for the Lincoln Day celebration, which was held downtown in the Leonard Building, included oysters,

fried chicken, fried potatoes au gratin, sliced ham, sliced tongue, a salad, and ice cream with cake for dessert.²⁴

Attendance at the banquet was estimated at 1,500 “enthusiastic men of Michigan.” In what was probably a first, “prominent Grand Rapids women”²⁵ escorted the president’s daughter to the head table. The newspaper account speculated that the presence of the ladies “assured the absence of little unpleasantnesses which have tended to detract from banquets of the past,” suggesting that the Grand Rapids Lincoln Club was a lively group. As the guest of honor was seated, the lights were dimmed in her honor. As the electric lights blazed back on, an electric fountain “sprang into life” and was followed by a loud cheer from the crowd.

After a brief introduction by Lincoln Club President Benjamin S. Hanchett, an orchestra played the Star Spangled Banner. In a display of west Michigan creativity, electric lights were used to simulate an American flag during the playing of the national anthem. The flag was highlighted by the use of an indoor spotlight. To the delight of the audience, the red, white, and blue lights were then “manipulated” to simulate the waving motion of a flag in a breeze. The *Grand Rapids Herald* carried many details from the Lincoln Club dinner. In what was proclaimed a first for Grand Rapids, the waiters attending the Lincoln Club dinner were attired in “dress suits.” Additional entertainment was provided by Grand Rapids’ own Schubert Male Chorus.²⁶ The Schubert Male Chorus performed “Swanee River,” “My Old Kentucky Home,” and “Michigan, My Michigan.”

The Schubert Male Chorus also performed the song “Dixie” in honor of Congressman Richard P. Hobson of Alabama,²⁷ who was present as a guest of Senator William Alden Smith. Congressman Hobson, who served in the military during the Spanish-American War, recalled that it was during his time in the Spanish prison that he came to truly appreciate President Lincoln’s greatness as a president. Proving that few men are accurate prophets, Congressman Hobson, an ardent supporter of the United States Navy, predicted that America’s greatest menace was the likelihood of military attack by Japan. “War will come soon,” Congressman Hobson asserted, due to competition with Japan over commercial interests in China.²⁸

When called on to give a toast, Congressman Nicholas Longworth said, “I am a most unfortunate man, like my father, who always complained that he was known either as the son of his father, or the father of his son. I am known chiefly as the son-in-law of my father-in-law.” This was met with a toast by Senator Smith, who, in a tribute to “Princess Alice,” rejoined, “New York and Ohio have always been called pivotal states, but Mr. Longworth has not seen fit to rely upon one, but has amalgamated the two, and I like Mr. Longworth

for what he has done and what he has won.”

After the lengthy banquet, the assembled guests at the Lincoln Club dinner were treated to presentations by William Perry Rogers, dean of the Cincinnati Law School, and Dr. M. Woolsey Stryker, the dean of Hamilton College. As the Lincoln Club dinner concluded, Senator Smith called on all guests to rise and give “three cheers” for Alice Roosevelt Longworth. Consistent in its detailed coverage, the *Grand Rapids Herald* even reported Alice Roosevelt’s departure from Grand Rapids. The Sunday, February 14, 1909, edition of the paper noted that “Princess Alice” left Grand Rapids at 7:12 a.m. in the same private rail car that brought her to the greatest Lincoln Club Day ever.

Epilogue

The principal participants in the Greatest Lincoln Club Day prospered in the events after February 12, 1909. Mrs. Longworth became a cultural icon in Washington, D.C., and entertained influential politicians well into her nineties. Nicholas Longworth’s lengthy service in the United States Congress led him to eventually assume the leadership role of speaker of the House. William Alden Smith was to serve another 10 years in the United States Senate, after which he led a productive and profitable private life.²⁹ The editor of the *Grand Rapids Herald*, Arthur H. Vandenberg, also became a longstanding member of the United States Senate, representing Michigan.³⁰ Finally, Benjamin S. Hanchett, the president and chief organizer of the 1909 Lincoln Club Day dinner, continued his career as a prominent businessman, and in 1911 went on to become a trustee for the University of Michigan Board of Regents, serving in that capacity until 1929.³¹ As for the Grand Rapids Lincoln Club, the tradition continued at least into 1919, when Warren G. Harding was the featured speaker for the Grand Rapids gathering. It appears that the Lincoln Club was eventually replaced by Lincoln Day Dinners which are hosted by the Kent County Republican Party.

Endnotes

- 1 Taken from the *Grand Rapids Daily News* February 13, 1909, p. 1.
- 2 Wyn Craig Wade, *The Titanic: End of a Dream* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 129.
- 3 His parents’ names were George Richardson Smith and Leah Margaret Smith. According to the National Register of the Sons of the American Revolution, p. 589, Senator Smith could trace his lineage back to a James

Abercrombie, who served as a private in a Massachusetts Revolutionary War regiment.

- 4 In Senator Smith's obituary, the *Grand Rapids Herald* wrote that the young William Alden Smith walked on foot to Lansing to obtain the position of legislative page.
- 5 While a practicing attorney, William Alden Smith was appointed a state game warden during the years of 1887 to 1891. One suspects this was a political reward for services to the Republican Party. It would certainly be an odd pairing of occupations by today's standards. Some sources state that they believe that Smith was the first "paid" game warden in the United States.
- 6 Marsden C. Burch served as the United States attorney for the Western District of Michigan from 1877 to 1882. When a second judgeship was added to the Kent County Circuit Court in 1889, Marsden C. Burch was appointed by the governor and briefly occupied that seat. On January 23, 1891, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that Allen C. Adsit was the rightful second judge in Kent County due to an election held on November 4, 1890. See *People ex. rel. Attorney General v. Burch*, 84 Mich. 408 (1891). It then appears that Judge Burch went on to serve as a special assistant attorney general for the Justice Department and to become a United States attorney for the District of Montana. One might speculate that his appointments in Washington were, at least in part, a result of his connections with Senator Smith. Marsden C. Burch died on June 14, 1921.

William Alden Smith's other legal mentor, Robert M. Montgomery, was elected to the Michigan Supreme Court in 1891, serving from 1892 to 1906.

- 7 Smith was general counsel to the Chicago & West Michigan Railway, when it constructed a railroad line from Traverse City to Bay View, Michigan in 1892.
- 8 The following story is taken verbatim from the University of Michigan Alumni website: "The great Michigan football coach Fielding H. Yost had a theory for the nickname, which he wrote about in the *Michigan Quarterly* in 1944. Yost felt the reason for the nickname concerned the trading of wolverine pelts which occurred in Sault Ste. Marie for many years. The trading station served as an exchange between the Indians and other trappers and fur traders, who would eventually ship the products off to the Eastern United States. Because many of the furs were in fact wolverine pelts, traders may have referred to them as 'Michigan wolverines,' leading to the state nickname and ultimately to the University of Michigan representation.

Despite the wolverine's ferocity, Fielding Yost set out to find one in 1923, upon seeing Wisconsin carrying live badgers along with its football team. Yost's desire met with difficulty, as the coach had problems finding a dealer in live wolverines. After a letter to 68 trappers yielded no mascot for his team, Yost expanded his wish to any wolverine, alive or dead. Yost finally got word of a mounted wolverine belonging to Michigan Senator William Alden Smith, and made a deal to secure the wolverine for his team. However, Yost went to Smith's home only to find that the specimen was actually a coyote."

- 9 Before the ratification of the 17th Amendment, Senators were elected by their state legislature.
- 10 From 1875 to 1922, all of Michigan's U.S. senators were Republicans. This streak would have reached back as far as 1857, but for the election of Senator Thomas W. Ferry in 1871, who was listed as an Independent.
- 11 After his adventures in California, Clarence Darrow participated in a notable trial in the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan. The litigation involved the sinking of the passenger ship Eastland. On July 24, 1915, the Eastland was moored in the Chicago River, near Clark Street, in downtown Chicago. The boat had been booked to give an excursion for 2,500 employees of Western Electric. While still tied to the dock, the ship capsized and 835 passengers died, in what was one of the worst civilian maritime disasters in the United States. Chief Engineer Joseph Erickson was tried in 1916 in a criminal prosecution before United States District Judge Clarence Sessions of the Western District of Michigan.
- 12 *Alice Roosevelt Longworth*, by Carol Felsenthal, p. 68.
- 13 Consistent with the theory that Alice Roosevelt was a "celebrity," I located a picture that showed the "paparazzi" of 1906 covering her wedding.
- 14 <http://www.whitehouseweddings.com/americas.htm>.
- 15 Fame and history are fickle. I reviewed four biographies of Alice Roosevelt Longworth, and not one of them mentioned her trip to Grand Rapids.
- 16 *Grand Rapids Evening Press*, February 17, 1909, p. 2.
- 17 Yes, Grand Rapids is famous for having had a cattery. Mrs. H. G. Dykhouse of Grand Rapids is credited with helping to make the Siamese cat breed popular in America. See Siamese Breed Council webpage at <http://www.siamesebc.org/yearbookArticles/borenpart2.html>. In April 1909, Mrs. Dykhouse was one of the founding members of the Siamese Cat Society of America. Before 1900, Siamese cats were virtually unheard of in the

- United States. Thus, Alice Roosevelt Longworth's trip to Grand Rapids was memorable for her as providing her first viewing of a Siamese cat.
- 18 The construction of the new federal courthouse in Grand Rapids, Michigan, during 1909, was largely attributable to the advocacy of Senator William Alden Smith. While he was still a member of the House of Representatives, he sponsored H.R. bill #249, which proposed the construction of a "new public building" in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 - 19 Senator Smith was sometimes referred to as "Airtight" Smith. His nickname arose from his involvement in congressional hearings into the tragedy of the sinking of the passenger ship Titanic.
 - 20 *Grand Rapids Evening Press*, Feb 12, 1909, front page.
 - 21 On the day before the cornerstone ceremony, the Grand Rapids Bricklayers and Stone Masons Union voted Alice Roosevelt Longworth to become an honorary life member of the union local.
 - 22 The *Grand Rapids Daily News*, February 13, 1909, p. 1.
 - 23 Not content to rest on their accomplishments, the pioneering electrical engineers of Grand Rapids were also responsible for the first "regularly scheduled" nighttime baseball game, which was played between Grand Rapids and Zanesville of the Central Baseball League on July 8, 1909.
 - 24 The "Leonard Building" was located at the corner of East Fulton and Commerce Streets.
 - 25 The notable Grand Rapids wives included Mrs. John W. Blodgett, Mrs. Benjamin S. Hanchett, Mrs. William Judson, Mrs. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Mrs. Edmund W. Booth, Mrs. John W. Hunter, Mrs. Heber A. Knott, Mrs. George E. Ellis, Mrs. Alvah W. Brown, Mrs. Roy S. Barnhart, Mrs. Claude Hamilton, Mrs. Frank Jewell, Mrs. John A. Covode, and Mrs. Morris Cassard.
 - 26 Established in 1883, the Grand Rapids Schubert Male Chorus is the "longest continuously performing male chorus in America." The Chorus recently entertained the citizens of Grand Rapids at its 125th anniversary concert at the DeVos Center for Arts and Worship within Grand Rapids Christian High School. Your author was present for that concert out of a love for live musical performances and in honor of his son's participation as a member of the Catholic Central High School choir, which performed on stage with Grand Rapids' Schubert Male Chorus.
 - 27 Thirteen of Congressman Hobson's cousins and uncles died at the Battle of Gettysburg according to the *Grand Rapids Herald*.
 - 28 Congressman McKinlay of California also spoke about relations with China and Japan. The flood of immigrants from Asian countries was commonly, if inappropriately, referred to as the "yellow peril." McKinlay framed the issue as a matter of regulating immigration, as opposed to the threat of open warfare, noting that there were 800,000 Asian immigrants in 1908. He favored placing a limitation on the number of Asian immigrants. In a complaint familiar to modern readers, he noted that the Mexican border rendered immigration policy a suspect tool.
 - 29 Senator and Mrs. William A. Smith had only one child, William Alden Smith, Jr., born April 21, 1893. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan. He was also a military aviator during World War I. He died an untimely death in 1920 from complications arising from influenza. Over the years, Senator Smith made numerous charitable donations in honor of his son. One of those gifts was the building in 1928 of a dining lodge at Camp Shawandosee on Duck Lake, which served as the summer camp for the Grand Rapids Boy Scout Council, including future President Gerald R. Ford. Your author warmly remembers Camp Shawandosee and dining under those rustic timbers as an impressionable youth of 12 years, little knowing the history of the lodge.
 - 30 Arthur H. Vandenberg was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan on March 22, 1884. He was editor and publisher of the *Grand Rapids Herald* from 1906 to 1928. On March 31, 1928, he was appointed United States senator from Michigan to replace Senator Woodbridge N. Ferris, who had died in office. Senator Vandenberg won four more senatorial elections and remained in the Senate until his death on April 18, 1951.
 - 31 Mr. Hanchett also played a key role in the development of Ramona Park, which was located on Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1912, Mr. Hanchett sold the parcels of land necessary for the construction of the Blodgett Hospital in East Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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