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HULME

commentary

from other pens...

Teddy breathes new life into house

After a century of hard use the White House Theodore Roosevelt surveyed in 1902 was dark, sagging and overstuffed with all the fringe-and-tassel exuberance of the Victorian age.

As a place to live and work, the mansion was an uncomfortable fit both for a large and lively family like Roosevelt's and for the transaction of a booming nation's business.

Charles F. McKim, an influential architect who championed the Neoclassic style, was given just five months to change all of that. McKim's mission: Restore George Washington's vision of the White House while making it an efficient workplace for 20th century presidents.

The architect stripped away the decorating efforts of presidents and first ladies dating to before the Civil War. He dismantled the glass conservatories that had piled up against the West Wall since the 1850s. He moved the president's staff from the cramped second-floor rooms they had long occupied and placed them in a new West Wing. He nearly doubled the size of the family quarters.

In short, McKim banished the scuffed and the florid, creating rooms that were newly bright, light and airy.

An enduring White House style and image was established. It survived even Harry Truman's replacement of the interior in the 1950s.

"The familiar White House was to be the wrapping for the new package; the relic was to be refined outside and improved within," writes historian William Seale in the current issue of "White House History," the journal of the White House Historical Association.

"Roosevelt's job was to convey to the American people the meaning of the new presidency, more powerful and evident than it had been since Washington's time," Seale said. "The White House was not the least element in what was to be a memorable performance."

Over the five months, McKim's sweep was as complete as possible. He failed to discard the carved bed purchased by Mary Lincoln but succeeded in removing the grand Tiffany stained-glass screen spread across the entrance hall by President Chester A. Arthur.

To produce the newly radiant East Room, McKim "scraped, chipped and burned away 84 years' accretion of fust and filigree, leaving nothing but the original walls."

The Red, Blue and Green rooms retained their original colors but gained a new and cooler simplicity.

Prompted by first lady Edith Kermit Roosevelt, the basement pipes, furnaces and boilers were hidden from view and the vaulted space made into a gallery for portraits of presidential wives. The new public space and a new east entrance streamlined the flow of White House guests.

Upstairs, the State Dining Room was enlarged, paneled, hung with tapestries and given a truly Roosevelt touch. The mounted heads of moose and deer now leaned out from the walls, inspiring a cartoonist to give them the president's bared and grinning teeth.

By mid-October 1902, with the president growing impatient, the work was hurried along in a fever of nail-banging and paint-slapping. On Nov. 4 the Roosevelt family moved back into what was almost a new house.

Roosevelt "stripped from the White House the scars and tracks of time, creating a pale reflection of the house that had been, and a strong new image that would endure," Seale writes in his history, "The President's House."

Although the president wrote a son that "the changes have improved it more than you can imagine," some vocal critics thought the mansion had been ennobled by history and should be left alone.

Roosevelt felt otherwise. As he prepared to leave the presidency six years later, he commended the American Institute of Architects for its help on the project and asked its members to keep a watchful and protective eye on the White House.

"It is now, without and within, literally the ideal house for the head of a great democratic republic," he said.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Lawrence L. Knutson has reported on Congress, the White House and Washington's history for 35 years.



Examining the virgin birth of Christ

Many find the story of the birth of Christ to Mary, a virgin, mystifying. Indeed, God's ways cannot be fully understood by mankind. In fact, the large numbers of unwanted pregnancies still occurring, when there is a dizzying array of birth control options, show that people are not able to control non-virgin births.

While we are unable to perform miracles ourselves, we can understand many things about God's miracles, including the birth of Christ. Some questions we can answer by reading the Bible are: Where did he come from? Did he exist before being in Mary's womb? Why was it necessary for him to come to earth?

John 1: 1-3 tells us, "In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. This one was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence."

Who was this "Word" who was god-like and through whom all things came into existence?

He is the one Proverbs 8:30 calls a "master worker" and John 1: 14 calls an only-begotten son.

The verse in John says, "So, the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of undeserved kindness and truth."

Jesus lived in heaven, was a spokesman for God and helped him to create the universe. How did he come to be on earth?

Luke chapter 1 tells us the angel Gabriel visited Mary to explain to her that she would become pregnant though she was not yet married and a virgin.

In verse 34, she asked the angel, "How is this to be, since I am having no intercourse with a man?"



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

Gabriel answered her in verse 35: "Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son."

Being overshadowed by holy spirit was an experience unique to Mary, and we can't imagine what that would be like. But, there was a very important reason for this to take place.

John 1:8 talks about John the Baptizer bearing witness about a "light" that was to come.

Verses 9 and 10 say, "The true light that gives light to every sort of man was about to come into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through him, but the world did not know him."

Jesus came to earth to teach mankind and allow some to get to know him personally. Their accounts have been preserved in the gospels for us to read today, so we can get to know him.

We also have access to accounts of many of the miracles he performed and the lessons he taught, some through parables. His Sermon on the Mount is famous and also teaches many lessons.

One of the lessons Jesus taught in a parable tells us not everyone will serve God faithfully and warns us about things that can keep us from serving God. In Luke 8: 4-8, Jesus tells a story about a sower sowing seeds in different kinds of soil; some of it

grew; some of it didn't.

Verses 11-15 say, "Now the illustration means this: The seed is the word of God. Those alongside the road are the ones that have heard, then the Devil comes and takes the word away from their hearts in order that they may not believe and be saved. Those upon the rock-mass are the ones who, when they hear it, receive the word with joy, but these have no root; they believe for a season, but in a season of testing they fall away. As for that which fell among the thorns, these are the ones that have heard, but, by being carried away by anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life, they are completely choked and bring nothing to perfection. As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones that, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance."

This and many other lessons Jesus taught are available to us in the Bible because the men who were close to Jesus wrote about them. His time on earth also allowed him to teach by example.

1 Peter 2: 21 says, "In fact, to this course you were called, because even the Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely."

Of course, Jesus also came to earth in order to die for mankind's sins.

Romans 5: 8 and 9 says, "But God recommends his own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, since we have been declared righteous now by his blood, shall we be saved through him from wrath."

While we cannot fully understand how a virgin birth occurs, the Bible tells us what we really need to know about Jesus — where he came from and why he came to earth.

Budget rhetoric less realistic as news gets worse

JUNCTION CITY — Taxes are important for Jason Gonzalez. The 19-year-old is more likely to vote for a gubernatorial candidate who pledges not to increase them.

He thinks taxes are too high — not so much because of what they take out of his paycheck from the A&W restaurant off of Interstate 70, but what customers pay on burgers, hot dogs and root beer floats.

"Even around here, say you pay for a meal, the tax is usually a lot," Gonzalez said.

So far, Democrat Kathleen Sebelius and Republican Tim Shallenburger have been trying to appeal to voters like Gonzalez who don't want to see higher taxes to solve the state's financial mess.

But they've made other promises to woo voters, most notably about education spending.

Many legislative leaders doubt whether Shallenburger and Sebelius can keep those promises and solve the problem of the state not having enough money to keep its services at current levels.

Those lawmakers had hoped that continuing bad news about state finances would push the candidates to be more realistic.

Instead, the candidates' rhetoric has moved closer to pure budget hooey.

"The reality check needs to hit soon for the gubernatorial candidates," said Senate Majority Leader Lana Oleen, R-Manhattan.

Shallenburger and Sebelius want to avoid increasing taxes. Both make keeping such a promise more difficult when they talk about education spending.

Shallenburger began the general election campaign with perhaps his most forthright statement. He told reporters the morning after the Aug. 6 primary that schools could withstand a cut of up to 3 percent — \$69 million — if the alternative were raising taxes.

He now says the statement was taken out of context and that he does not intend to cut education funding, even though aid to public schools is about 52 percent of the budget.

Sebelius hammered on the post-primary statement to woo moderate Republicans away from Shallenburger, a conservative.

Her message also is pitched at unaffiliated voters like 20-year-old Robin Diehl, who works at the Sapp Brothers convenience store in the same building as the A&W restaurant.

She and her husband plan to have children and,



john hanna

• ap news analysis

"That'll be one of my major concerns, the education they're getting."

But Sebelius went further. She now says her goal is increasing state aid by \$1,000 per pupil — at a cost of about \$576 million — over four years.

Shallenburger has said the state will need to cut about \$200 million from its budget, an average of 10 percent of everything outside of education, which he described as reasonable.

But the figure does not seem reasonable for individual agencies.

For example, the Department on Aging's budget is \$145.4 million, but 86 percent of the dollars — more than \$125 million — go to nursing homes caring for elderly Kansans.

"We'd find ourselves in a mess," said Assistant Aging Secretary Doug Farmer noted.

At the Department of Corrections about 60 percent of its \$212 million is spent directly in its prisons. A 10 percent cut would mean closing institutions and eliminating staff positions, spokesman Bill Miskell said.

"That doesn't mean the inmates would go away," he said. "We'd put additional bunks in a correctional facility, with no additional staff."

If such agencies are protected, other agencies and programs take a larger hit.

The higher education system, with a \$699 million budget, easily could be a target for cuts. This semester, tuition increased by 25 percent at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University in response to the state's budget problems.

"What upsets me the most is that these candidates are making statements that are putting them in a corner before they start working on the budget," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Steve Morris, R-Hugoton."

Both candidates insist that efficiencies in government can be found, if a new governor is determined to look.

Their ideas include combatting fraud in social services, going after tax deadbeats, wrangling more money out of the federal government, chipping away at waste and even, in Sebelius' case, ex-

panding legalized gambling.

But those ideas take time to execute and there's no guarantee they can produce any extra money or savings.

The point for voters like Gonzalez is that if they don't want higher taxes, they probably will have to accept reduced services.

Instead, Sebelius and Shallenburger seem to be trying to convince voters they can solve the state's financial problems without much pain.

And that's just hooey.

"THE issue is the budget," Oleen said. "At this point, there's not been a serious addressing of that issue."

AP Political Writer John Hanna has been covering politics and state government for the Associated Press since 1987.

berry's world

OOOPS! THERE GOES THE NEST EGG — JUST LIKE FOR SOME HUMANS, WHEN THE STOCK MARKET DROPPED SO LOW.



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