



Marquette Fiction
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Novel Features Historical, But Relevant Libel Trial Involving Theodore Roosevelt

July 13, 2018—Award-winning author Tyler R. Tichelaar has released his nineteenth book, *When Teddy Came to Town*, a fascinating look at the Roosevelt libel trial of 1913—a story as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

On October 12, 1912, George Newett, the small town newspaper editor of the *Iron Ore*, in Ishpeming, Michigan, published an editorial after he witnessed Theodore Roosevelt give a campaign speech in nearby Marquette. Newett was unhappy both with Roosevelt’s speech and that the former president had broken with the Republican Party to form the Progressive “Bull Moose” Party. When Roosevelt learned of the editorial, he took offense to a particular statement he termed libelous: “Roosevelt lies and curses in the most disgusting way; he gets drunk, too, and that not infrequently, and all of his intimates know about it.”

Many other newspapers had already spread rumors about Roosevelt’s drinking, but Roosevelt chose to make an example of Newett by proving the statement untrue. The trial, held in Marquette County, Michigan, in May 1913, made national headlines and was one of the first times someone famous sued for spreading libel and what we would today call “false news.”

Now novelist Tyler R. Tichelaar, a longtime chronicler of the history of Marquette, Michigan, brings the trial back to life through his fictional treatment of it in *When Teddy Came to Town*. Not only does the novel chronicle what happened at the Roosevelt Trial, but it highlights the influence Roosevelt had upon the citizens of the small city, who were star struck by the famous politicians who came to testify on Roosevelt’s behalf.

Beyond the history, *When Teddy Came to Town* is a love story, featuring Matthew Newman, a reporter from New York who also happens to be a native of Marquette. Returning to his hometown to report on the trial, Matthew finds himself continually thrown together with George Shiras, the internationally famous wildlife photographer, with whom Roosevelt is staying. This situation is a bonus in terms of Matthew’s professional need to report on the trial, but awkward because he and Shiras had once been close friends—until Shiras married the woman Matthew loved.

When Teddy Came to Town recreates an era not much different than our own. Tichelaar states, “I wanted to chronicle this important trial which most Roosevelt biographers have ignored because I believe it caused newspapers to realize they could not get away with ‘yellow journalism,’ or ‘false news.’ The period’s concerns about sobriety, women’s rights, and journalistic integrity remain concerns today. This is a story that speaks to our time, and in it we may find solutions for dealing with our current crises.”

Tyler R. Tichelaar is a seventh generation Marquette resident. He is the author of nineteen books, including *Haunted Marquette*, *My Marquette*, and *The Best Place*. In 2011, he received the

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Outstanding Writer Award in the Marquette County Arts Awards, and the Barb H. Kelly Historic Preservation Award. His novel *Narrow Lives* won the 2008 Reader Views Historical Fiction Award. In 2014, his play *Willpower* was produced by the Marquette Regional History Center at Kaufman Auditorium with a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council.

Tichelaar will officially launch *When Teddy Came to Town* at the Outback Art Fair at Shiras Park in Marquette on July 28 and 29, Saturday, 10-6 and Sunday 10-5. In Marquette, it will be available at Snowbound, Michigan Fair, the Marquette Regional History Center, and other local stores.

When Teddy Came to Town (ISBN 978-0-9962400-5-5) is available in paperback and ebook editions at www.MarquetteFiction.com, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and through local and online bookstores. Publicity contact: tyler@marquettfiction.com. Review copies available upon request.

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