

Benjamin Harrison And The American Century

An Unforgettable Night At The Columbia Club

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Harrison And The American Century

Welcome, and thank you for attending

Introductions

Our set-up...



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What make a **person** who they are?

What makes a **group** what it is?

And sitting here today, what makes **this Club** what it is?

Real stories are an important part of what this Club is...

...and today we'll explore one of those stories



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It's the night of Wednesday, December 27, 1899

300 people have packed into the Club's newly opened second building

Electric lights fill the space

Table tops feature flowers, ferns, china, crystal, and silver

Seven formal toasts are given...



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Who are we on that night?

Concluding the first external war – and what to do next

On edge: mass immigration, relocation to cities, urban problems, inventions, regional issues

In the midst of a Golden Age

A different sense of change

Who are we on this day in 2024?



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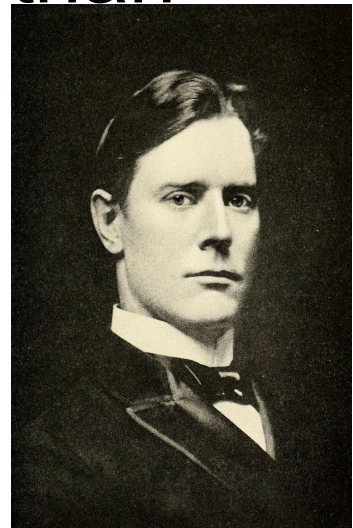
Albert Beveridge stands up to deliver Toast #8...

37 years old, sharply-cut face, those eyes

He's been serving in the US Senate for less than a year

Several Club members had opposed his candidacy

He combines imperialism and progressivism



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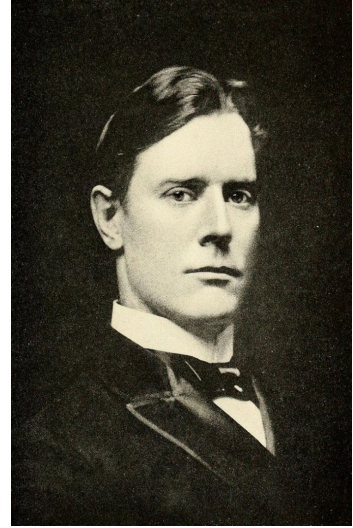
His Toast: To The American Century

America is the newest Great Power

America is part of a divine plan

America has the right to do what the other Great Powers are doing

America is in the Western Hemisphere, is now in Asia, and will soon be in Africa



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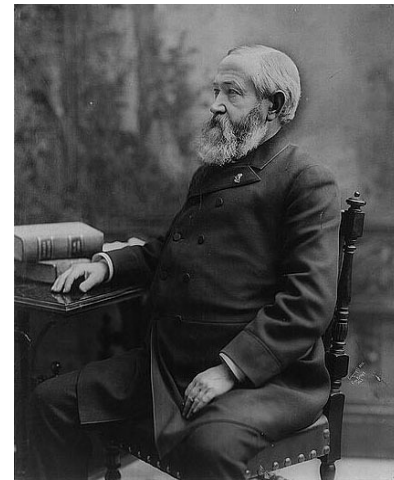
Benjamin Harrison stands up to deliver Toast #9...

66 years old, stout, graying, a veteran

Former POTUS for six years – active in state and local affairs as well as international arbitration

The founding spirit of the Club

He has a single burning experience that has defined his life



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We are indeed the newest Great Power

Be wary of the supposed benefits of imperialism and war

America can lead if America offers respect, mutual gain, and true partnership

This is the way to illustrate leadership to the world

The Club is organized not to control or take spoils but to share principles and goodwill



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Why is this story so important?

It has national and global implications

Harrison's toast represents an "Alternative American Future"

It fundamentally changes the American reality of World War I (1914-1918), which affects post-war

It offers a model to consider for the next phase of American involvement now

Thoughts, Reactions, Questions

Thank You!

