



Foundation Document Overview

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

New York



Contact Information

For more information about the *Sagamore Hill National Historic Site Foundation Document*, contact: sahi_superintendent@nps.gov or (516) 922-4788 or write to: Superintendent, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, 20 Sagamore Hill Rd, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

Purpose



The purpose of SAGAMORE HILL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to preserve and interpret the structures, landscape, collections, and other cultural resources associated with Theodore Roosevelt's home in Oyster Bay, New York, and to ensure that future generations understand and appreciate the life and legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, his family, and the significant events associated with him at Sagamore Hill.



Significance

Significance statements express why Sagamore Hill National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Theodore and Edith Roosevelt raised their family at Sagamore Hill, embodying the values of a strenuous lifestyle among the Oyster Bay community from 1885 to 1948.
- Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, New York, was Theodore Roosevelt's home and the first summer White House between 1902 and 1908. Here he welcomed people from all walks of life, including national and international political and cultural icons of the early 20th century.
- Sagamore Hill National Historic Site maintains cultural landscapes and historic properties used as a gentleman's farm by Theodore Roosevelt and his family. The historic site was donated to the National Park Service by the Theodore Roosevelt Association.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Theodore Roosevelt House and Associated Structures**
- **Sagamore Hill Cultural Landscape**
- **Museum and Archival Collections**
- **Archeological Resources Related to the Roosevelts**

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Historic Structures Associated with Old Orchard**
- **American Indian Archeological Resources**
- **Woodlands, Marshes, and Beaches**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Private Retreat for a Public Family.** The Roosevelt’s home, Sagamore Hill—their personal center and place for renewal—reflects the family’s lifelong curiosity, accomplishments, zest for life, active lifestyle, world view, and their commitment to “the strenuous life” and family values.
- **The American President and the First Family.** During Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency, the American public eagerly followed the activities of the Roosevelt family at Sagamore Hill and in the White House through the press. Edith Roosevelt maintained a close watch over what was published about the family, particularly the children, to protect the privacy and public image of the family.
- **The American President and United States Influence and Power.** From 1902 to 1908 Sagamore Hill was the “summer White House,” the epicenter of American and international politics. Theodore Roosevelt propelled the nation forward with the progressive tenets of the Square Deal and thrust the nation onto the world stage with the corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, negotiating the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the construction of the Panama Canal, and the voyage of the Great White Fleet around the world.
- **Legacy and Relevance.** Theodore Roosevelt’s leadership determined direction for the United States, provided international influence during his lifetime in government, diplomacy, conservation, and literature that continue to have impact and inspire future generations.

Description

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, the home of President Theodore Roosevelt, is in Oyster Bay, New York, on the north shore of Long Island in Nassau County. A native of Manhattan, Theodore Roosevelt first came to Oyster Bay on summer vacations with his family in the 1870s. The teenage boy grew to love the area's natural beauty and enjoyed the opportunities it afforded for such pastimes as hiking, rowing, swimming, and riding.

Roosevelt and his wife Edith took up full-time residency at Sagamore Hill in 1887. The couple would raise six children in the house, and, during the next 30 years, they would experience some of the most memorable and cherished moments of their lives there. The most significant events took place at Sagamore Hill during the seven summers it served as Theodore Roosevelt's summer White House, from 1902 until 1908. During that time, President Roosevelt used his home to host luminaries from around the country and the world.

Theodore Roosevelt died at Sagamore Hill on January 6, 1919, when he was 60 years old. Edith remained in the house following Theodore's death, giving Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., eldest son of the president, a few acres of land on the property on which to build a new house (eventually known as the Old Orchard). Despite extensive travels in her later years, Edith always returned Sagamore Hill. She died there in September 1948 at the age of 87.

The property is set in a terrain dominated by the coves and necks of Long Island Sound. The Roosevelt home is a large Queen Anne-style house, once surrounded by a working farm that included a garden, pasture, and agricultural fields providing fruits and vegetables for the family and hay and feed for the livestock. Today, Sagamore Hill continues to embody Theodore Roosevelt's ideals of home, country, family, and love of nature. It also reflects Roosevelt's efforts to blend his political and personal lives, the result of which was a more portable presidency that increasingly used emerging communication technologies.

