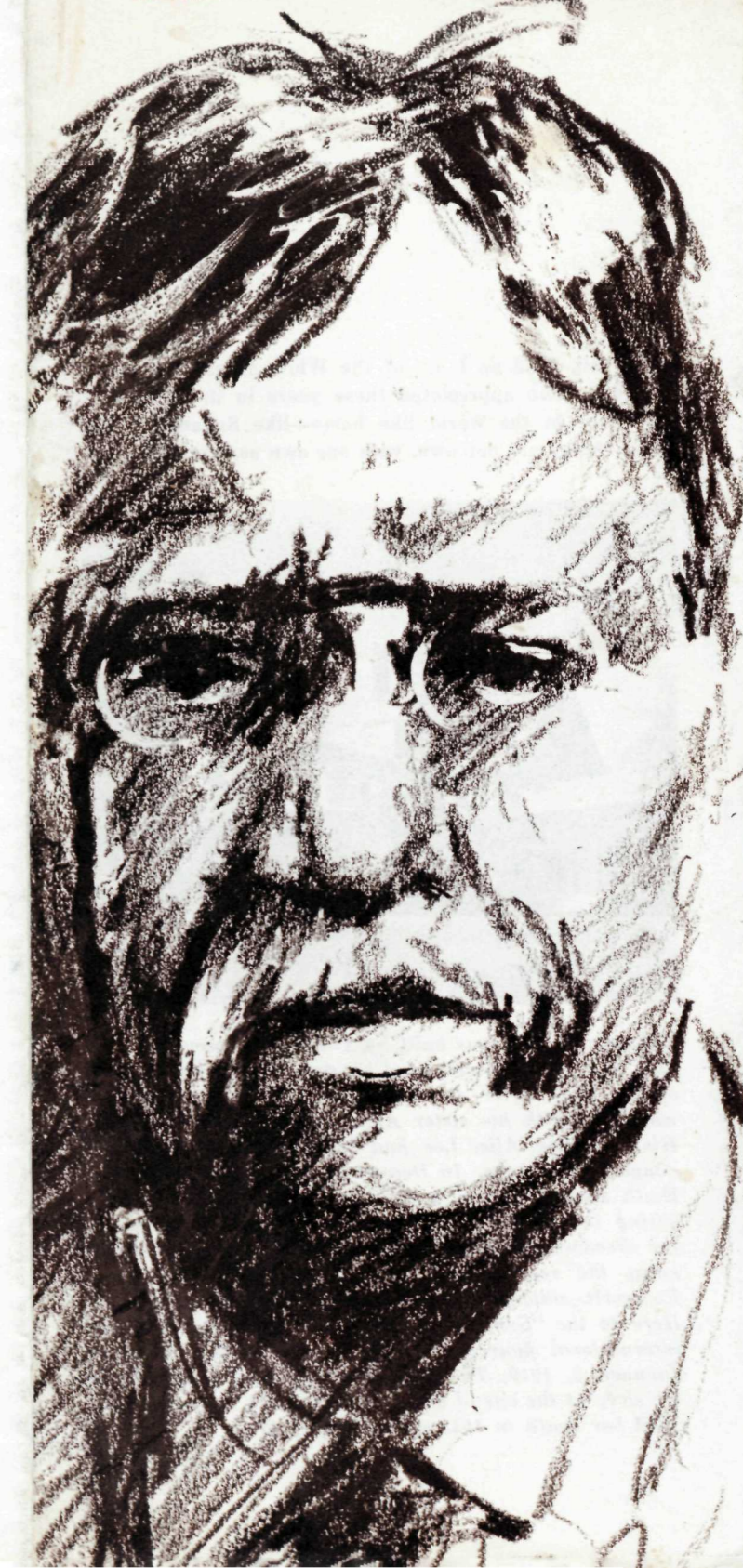


SAGAMORE HILL
National Historic Site Oyster Bay, Long Island, N.Y.



THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 26th president of the United States, was born into a wealthy New York City family of Dutch ancestry on October 27, 1858. As a child he was delicate, suffering from asthma and weak eyesight. Fighting to overcome his physical handicaps, Roosevelt became the ardent advocate of the "strenuous life." His strong personality was to make him one of the most colorful presidents since the Civil War. When catapulted into the Presidency at the age of 42 by the assassination of William McKinley, he was already a popular public figure by reason of a brief apprenticeship in the New York State legislature, his vigorous administration of the posts of New York City Police Commissioner and U.S. Civil Service Commissioner, a "reform" governorship of New York, and his lusty record during the Spanish-American War when he resigned as Assistant Secretary of the Navy to help organize the cavalry regiment, styled Rough Riders, that fought its way to fame at San Juan Hill.

Roosevelt came to the Presidency at a time when rapid business growth and industrial consolidation produced alarming extremes of poverty and wealth. In contrast to the standpat attitudes of his predecessors, T.R. stood for strong executive leadership to achieve a "square deal" for all, denounced the "malefactors of great wealth," and gained a reputation for "trustbusting" as a means of securing a more democratic economy.

In foreign affairs as in domestic, Roosevelt's attitude was firm and clear-cut. His slogan "speak softly, and carry a big stick" epitomized his style. Always an advocate of a strong military establishment, he dramatized United States power by sending the American fleet around the world (leaving Congress to pay the bill later), seizing the opportunity to build the Panama Canal by capitalizing on an insurrection, intervening personally to help settle big-power disputes, and implementing the Monroe Doctrine against European intervention in Latin American.

Roosevelt continued his vigorous ways after leaving the White House in 1909. Before taking up letters again, he hunted game in Africa, visited the German Kaiser, lectured at the Sorbonne and Oxford, and represented the United States at the end-of-an-era funeral of Edward VII. Nor were his political days over. Rallying reform forces in 1912 as leader of the Progressive Party, he went down to defeat as its presidential nominee. After an expedition to the dark jungles of Brazil in 1914, he returned to find Europe at war. Just 2 years before his death in 1919, despite the hindrances of age, accident, and disease, he besieged the White House for permission to raise a volunteer American division. "His career," wrote one historian, "had personalized the American recognition of a changing world."

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site is at the end of the Cove Neck Road, Oyster Bay, Long Island, N. Y., and can be reached by the Long Island Railroad from New York City's Pennsylvania Station at Seventh Avenue and 33d Street. Taxis meet all trains. By motor, the easiest route is over the Long Island Expressway to exit marked N.Y. 106 North. This road leads directly to Oyster Bay; upon arriving, turn right at the second traffic light and follow the signs to Sagamore Hill. Normal driving time from New York City is 90 minutes.

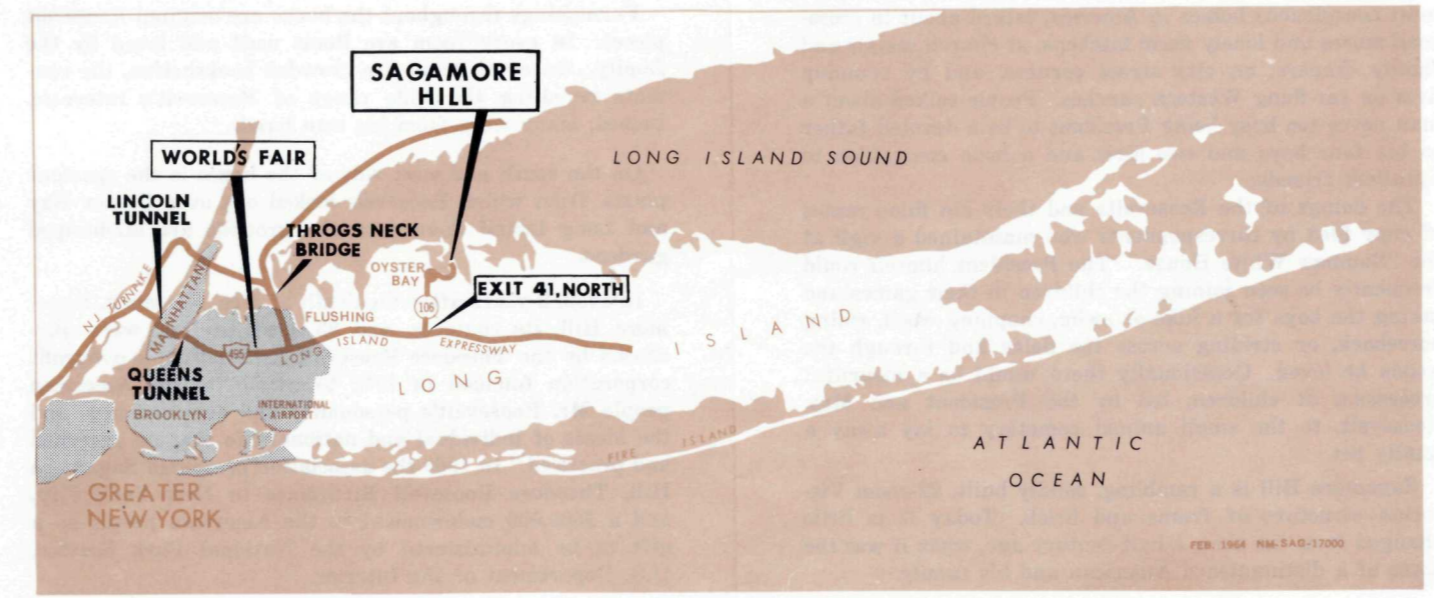
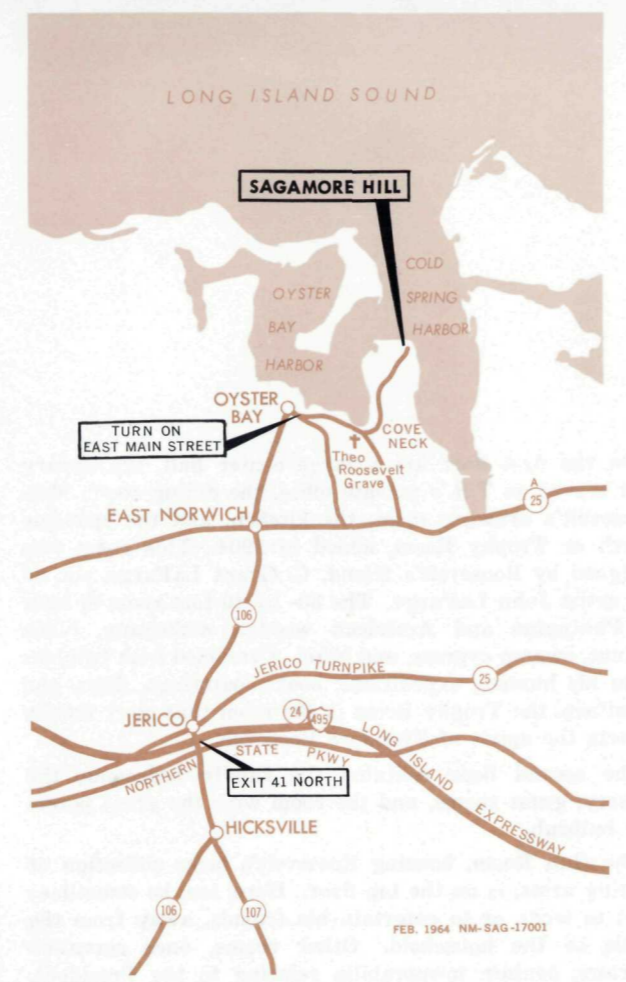
Sagamore Hill is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Tuesdays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

The 50-cent admission fee is waived for children under 12 and for elementary and high school student groups and accompanying adults responsible for their safety and conduct. Families (parents and children age 12 or over) are entitled to a group rate of \$1.50.

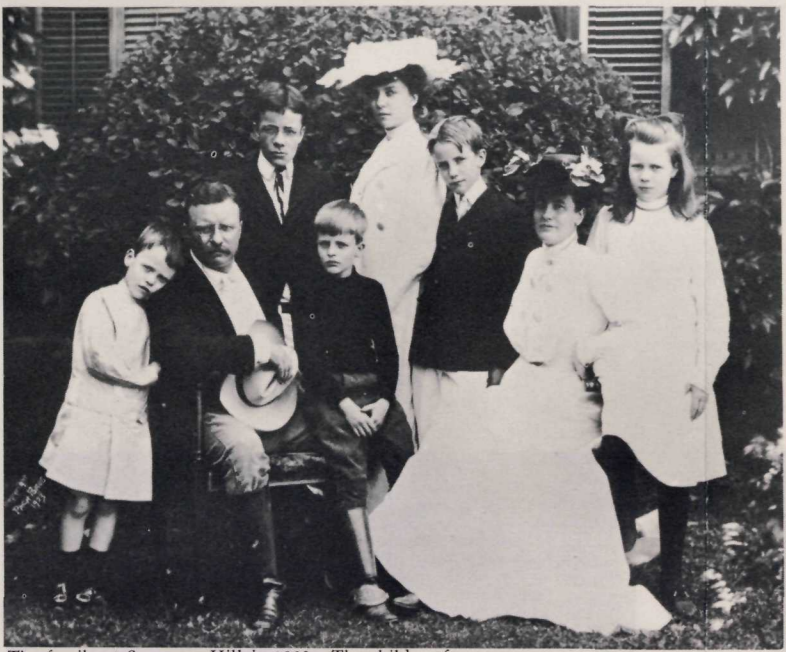
ADMINISTRATION

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, with the cooperation of the Theodore Roosevelt Association.

A management assistant, whose address is Oyster Bay, Long Island, N.Y., is in immediate charge of the site.



"Speaking from the somewhat detached point of view of the masculine parent, I should say there was just the proper mixture of freedom and control in the management of the children. They were never allowed to be disobedient or to shirk lessons or work; and they were encouraged to have all the fun possible. They often went barefoot, especially during the many hours passed in various enthralling pursuits along and in the waters of the bay. They swam, they tramped, they boated, they coasted and skated in winter, they were intimate friends with the cows, chickens, pigs, and other livestock. . . ."



The family at Sagamore Hill in 1903. The children from left to right: Quentin, Ted, Archie, Alice, Kermit and Ethel.



Roosevelt romping on the lawn with the children in 1894.

"There could be no healthier and pleasanter place in which to bring up children than in that nook of old-time America around Sagamore Hill. Certainly I never knew small people to have a better time or a better training for their work in afterlife than . . . at Sagamore Hill."



On horseback at Sagamore Hill in 1903.

"Nothing . . . can take the place of family life, and family life cannot be really happy unless it is based . . . on recognition of the great underlying laws of religion and morality . . . which if broken mean the dissolution of civilization."



Twilight days: T.R. at Sagamore Hill in 1916.



Quentin in a daisy field.

"After all, fond as I am of the White House and much though I have appreciated these years in it, there isn't any place in the world like home—like Sagamore Hill, where things are our own, with our own associations. . . ."



Sagamore Hill was built by Theodore Roosevelt during 1884 and 1885 and remained his permanent home the rest of his life. After its completion, the young Roosevelt moved in with his sister Anna and his daughter Alice. His first wife, Alice Lee, had died only hours after their daughter was born. In December 1886 Roosevelt married Edith Kermit Carow, a childhood friend. The following spring they arrived at Sagamore Hill, and here, except for absences imposed by his public career, the Roosevelts spent the rest of their lives. Here were born three Roosevelt children: Theodore, Jr., Kermit, and Ethel. Here to the "Summer White House" came national and international figures from every walk of life. Here on January 6, 1919, Theodore Roosevelt died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 60. And here Edith Roosevelt lived until her death in 1948 at the age of 87.

THE HOUSE ON COVE NECK

"At Sagamore Hill we loved a great many things—birds and trees, and books, and all things beautiful, and horses and rifles, and children and hard work and the joy of life."

When Theodore Roosevelt was 15, his father established the family's summer residence at Oyster Bay, and the boy spent his vacations exploring the fields and woodlands on Cove Neck. Six months after graduating from Harvard, young Roosevelt bought the hill on Cove Neck where his home now stands. A barn was the only building on the tree-barren hill. For this property he paid \$10,000 in cash and assumed a 20-year mortgage for the \$20,000 balance. Two other purchases brought the total area to 155 acres, of which he kept 95, selling the rest to an aunt and his older sister.

The New York architectural firm of Lamb and Rich drew up the plans for the home, but before the final agreement for its construction was signed, Theodore's wife and mother died—in the same house and on the same day. Determined to have a suitable home for his infant daughter, Roosevelt contracted with John A. Wood & Son of Lawrence, Long Island, to build for \$16,975 the house that was to become known as Sagamore Hill.

Roosevelt had originally planned to name the property "Leeholm," for his first wife. But within 2 years he had begun seeing Edith Kermit Carow, a friend from childhood. He soon called the estate "Sagamore Hill . . . from the old Sagamore Mohannis, who, as Chief of his little tribe, signed away his rights to the land."

HOME OF A GREAT AMERICAN

In 1889, after a short 2 years of writing and playing host to scores of visitors attracted to the young squire of Sagamore Hill, Roosevelt was named a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the first major step in a life of distinguished public service. Throughout his career—as President of the Police Commission of the City of New York, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, as lieutenant colonel of the famed Rough Riders, as Governor

of New York, as Vice President and Chief Executive—Sagamore Hill was the house to which he always returned. It was on the wide piazza of Sagamore Hill that Roosevelt was formally notified of his nomination as Governor of New York in 1898, as Vice President in 1900, and as President in 1904.

Not only was Sagamore Hill the center of the day-to-day administration of the country's affairs during the summers from 1901 to 1909, but it had an abundance of dramatic events of national and international importance. One occurred on the August day in 1905 when Roosevelt separately met the envoys of warring Russia and Japan in the library at Sagamore Hill, and then brought them face-to-face to inaugurate the conference that ended in the Treaty of Portsmouth, N.H., on September 5, 1905.

HOME OF A GREAT AMERICAN FAMILY

For more than 30 years Sagamore Hill was one of the most conspicuous homes in America, talked about in cross-road stores and lonely farm kitchens, at church socials and family dinners, on city street corners, and by roundup fires on far-flung Western ranches. People talked about a man never too busy being President to be a devoted father to his four boys and two girls and a boon companion to countless friends.

The doings of the Roosevelts and their kin filled reams of copy filed by correspondents who maintained a vigil at the "Summer White House." The President himself could frequently be seen joining the children in their games and taking the boys for a hike or swim, chopping wood, riding horseback, or striding across the fields and through the woods he loved. Occasionally there would be a mournful procession of children, led by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, to the small animal cemetery to lay away a family pet.

Sagamore Hill is a rambling, solidly built, 22-room Victorian structure of frame and brick. Today it is little changed from the time, a half-century ago, when it was the home of a distinguished American and his family.

On the first floor are a large center hall, the library that served as T.R.'s private office, the dining room, Mrs. Roosevelt's drawing room, the kitchen, and the spacious North or Trophy Room, added in 1904. This room was designed by Roosevelt's friend, C. Grant LaFarge, son of the artist John LaFarge. The 30- by 40-foot room is built of Philippine and American woods: mahogany, black walnut, swamp cypress, and hazel. Crammed with trophies from his hunting expeditions, books, paintings, flags, and furniture, the Trophy Room is the room that most vividly reflects the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt.

The second floor contains the family bedrooms, the nursery, guest rooms, and the room with the great porcelain bathtub.

The Gun Room, housing Roosevelt's large collection of hunting arms, is on the top floor. Here, too, he sometimes went to write or to entertain his friends, away from the bustle of the household. Other rooms, once servants' quarters, contain memorabilia relating to the President, his wife, and his children.

Furnishings throughout the house are original Roosevelt pieces. In every room are items used and loved by the family. On every hand are crowded bookshelves, the contents revealing the wide range of Roosevelt's interests. Indeed, many were from his own hand.

On the south and west side of the house is the spacious piazza from which Roosevelt looked out over Oyster Bay and Long Island Sound; on the grounds are landscaped gardens.

In 1950, 2 years after the death of Mrs. Roosevelt, Sagamore Hill, its contents, and 83 acres of land were purchased by the Theodore Roosevelt Association, a nonprofit corporation founded in 1919 to recall "to the American people Mr. Roosevelt's personality and achievements, and the ideals of individual and national life that he preached and practiced." In 1963 the association presented Sagamore Hill, Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace in New York City, and a \$500,000 endowment to the American people as a gift to be administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.



His book-lined study.

"I had perfectly definite views what I wished in inside matters, what I desired to live in and with; I arranged all this, so as to get what I desired in so far as my money permitted; [the architects] put on the outside cover with but little help from me. I wished a big piazza . . . where we could sit in rocking chairs and look at the sunset; a library with a shallow bay window looking south, the parlor or drawing room occupying all the western end of the lower floor . . . big fireplaces for logs . . . I had to live inside and not outside the house, and while I should have liked to 'express myself' in both, as I had to choose, I chose the former."



Trophies of a crowded life pack the North Room.



A 1905 view of the piazza.