

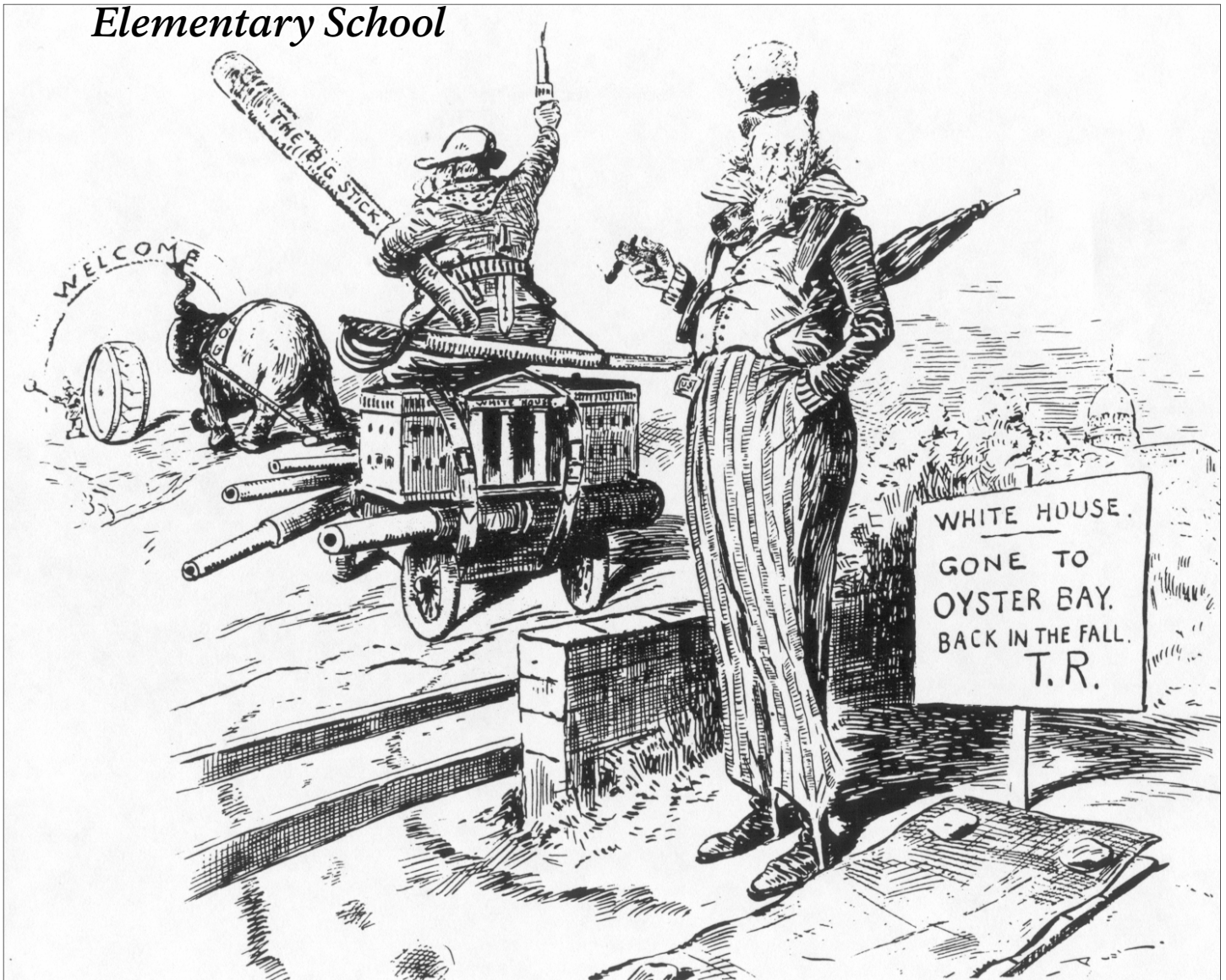
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site  
Oyster Bay, New York



# Theodore Roosevelt and His Sagamore Hill Home

## *Educational Materials for the Elementary School*



September 2002  
Revised August 2006  
Developed by the Interpretive Division

**Educational Materials for Sagamore Hill National Historic Site  
Home of Theodore Roosevelt, 26<sup>th</sup> US President  
Elementary Level**

**Introduction**

We are pleased that you will soon be visiting Sagamore Hill. The information and materials presented here are designed to help you to plan and prepare for your trip and to provide follow-up activities. We suggest that you review these materials carefully, and then use these activities to prepare for your trip.

Note that an understanding of the Ground Rules is mandatory for all groups prior to their visit here.

These materials may be used to create a curriculum-based trip for your students.

**A Visit to the Home of a President; Stepping Back in Time:  
Life at Sagamore Hill 100 Years Ago.  
Themes, Goals and Objectives**

Your visit to Sagamore Hill is based on the following three main themes are those that will be used as the basis for interpretation as well as the fifteen concepts that follow:

**Interpretive Themes**

**Sagamore Hill as Family Home: A Private Place for a Public Man**

*Interpretive Theme Statement*

Sagamore Hill was Theodore Roosevelt's primary residence and the place where he lived his married life and reared his children. The property was his personal center and reflects his way of life and great love for family and home.

*Content*

This theme interprets the constants in Roosevelt's life and the ideals that he tried to nurture and preserve as the world evolved around him. It discusses the tension between public and private facets of life at Sagamore Hill, and explores the ways that public figures and their families adjust to official responsibilities while providing their need for private time.

Sagamore Hill was first and foremost a home for Roosevelt's family and staff, nestled among the homes of his relatives, in a community comfortable with friends. In Roosevelt's own words it was the house "on the top of the hill, separated by fields and belts of woodland from all other houses"...looking "out over the bay and the Sound." Filled with tangible expressions of his interests—his collections and mementos—it is a reflection of his robust, enthusiastic, and adventurous life and this nation's exuberant confidence as they entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century together.

While the presidential years are significant in the exploration of this theme, it also interprets the many years when the Roosevelts lived at Sagamore Hill without official obligations. Sagamore Hill remained an influence in the Roosevelts' lives from its inception to their deaths, and Roosevelt himself used Sagamore Hill as a sanctuary for the work of literary expression.

As Roosevelt suggests, Sagamore Hill is much more than a single building and its contents. It is a property with gardens, fields and woods, beachfront and bay, wild and domestic animals, sunsets and thunderstorms. It is the progression of seasons—"the snows and bare woods of

winter; the rush of growing things and the blossom-spray of spring; the yellow grain, the ripening fruits and tasseled corn,...and the sharp fall winds that tear the brilliant banners with which the trees greet the dying year.” For Roosevelt and his family, Sagamore Hill, represents the “strenuous life,” —the activities that drew the family outside and entertained them inside.

Life at Sagamore Hill expressed Roosevelt’s character, rekindled his mind, re-centered his spirit and, in his own words, occupied his heart. “I wonder,” he asked his wife the day before he died, “if you will ever know how I love Sagamore Hill.”

## **The Presidency in a Changing World—Sagamore Hill as the Summer White House**

### *Interpretive Theme Statement*

During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), the world, the United States, and the community of Oyster Bay all changed rapidly, and life at Sagamore Hill, as the Roosevelt residence outside Washington, D.C., reflects how change affected society and how Roosevelt harnessed change to redefine the office of president.

### *Content*

This theme focuses on society and the presidency, and how both changed during Roosevelt’s time as president. Sagamore Hill becomes a lens through which change can be illustrated, studied, and placed into context.

It provides an introduction to stories of Roosevelt’s activist approach to the presidency and leadership. On an international level, it highlights events that preceded the emergence of the United States as a world power. On a local level, it traces the impact of a modern presidency superimposed on a small community. It explores the technologies that made a portable presidency possible complete with increased news coverage and media attention.

## **Theodore Roosevelt’s Legacy and Relevance—Sagamore Hill as Catalyst**

### *Interpretive Theme Statement*

Theodore Roosevelt’s leadership had far reaching impact on many facets of national and international life including government, diplomacy, conservation and literature and Sagamore Hill offers opportunities to focus on his career and his legacies, examining the meaning and relevance of his contributions over time.

### *Content*

This theme focuses on Roosevelt’s achievements and legacies. It examines the ways that he redefined the presidency and raised the stature of the United States and the impact that he had on national and international history. It dissects the myths that have emerged in search of a balanced view of his influence. It traces the evolution of public policies that he embraced (conservation and public welfare, for example) as well as those that he refused to champion (racial equality, for example). It examines his concept of citizenship and participation in the responsibility of civic duty.

To adequately interpret this theme, programming must encourage use of the park as a forum for the responsibility of civic duty as well as Roosevelt’s example of public leadership. It should invite public attention and dialogue on- and off-site.

**Fifteen important concepts regarding TR and Sagamore Hill.**

1. Sagamore Hill is protected by the National Park Service.
2. Theodore Roosevelt (TR) was 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.
3. TR was a dedicated husband and father.
4. TR was a native New Yorker and Long Islander.
5. Sagamore Hill is located on the North Shore of Long Island not far from NYC (local geography).
6. TR held many important jobs and he ascended the political ladder from the bottom.
7. TR was a conservationist (Father of the movement) and nature lover or naturalist.
8. TR was an adventurer (rancher/hunter, Rough Rider, world traveler, explorer).
9. TR considered the US involvement in the construction and completion of the Panama Canal as his most significant accomplishment.
10. TR was a world diplomat and peacemaker (Nobel Prize).
11. Edith was the First Lady and the “chief” at Sagamore Hill.
12. Sagamore Hill was a working farm.
13. Each Roosevelt child had his or her own personality and accomplishments.
14. The Roosevelt Home had very innovative technology for its day (comparison to today).
15. The Roosevelts kept a staff of servants, without whose work and dedication they could not have maintained their lifestyle (emphasis on cook, nanny, maids, farm workers)

**Goals:**

- Assist students in beginning to understand life at the turn of the 20th century as experienced by the Roosevelts; daily life of the family from the point of view of a visitor to the president’s home during a typical summer, while Theodore Roosevelt was president.
- Assist students in beginning to understand how Sagamore Hill served as the “Summer White House” (1902-1908) for President Theodore Roosevelt and his family during a time period of advancement in technologies utilized in the house and making it possible to move the seat of executive power from Washington DC to Oyster Bay.

**Objectives:**

At the end of the program, students will be able to:

- Identify when Theodore Roosevelt was president and when he lived at Sagamore Hill.
- Describe some typical daily activities of the president and his family at Sagamore Hill.
- Become familiar with the general setting of Sagamore Hill and what affect it had on the family’s lifestyle
- Examine some of the achievements TR made as President of the United States such as conservation and foreign policy, as relating to TR's work as conservationist, peacemaker, presidential innovator, builder of the Panama Canal, etc. Give several examples of TR’s accomplishments that affect our life today.
- Understand some of the technologies and inventions available and used by the Roosevelt family and made it possible to move the "White House" to Oyster Bay.

We have selected these topic areas in terms of being desirable themes and goals for students, important concepts documented and observable at the site, falling into a curriculum based activity, and capable of being tested or evaluated.

# Preparing for your visit:

## Overview

Why visit a site such as Sagamore Hill? We visit museums to see how people have lived and to have a basis for understanding who we are and how we live. We can learn about such things as inventions and technology, especially in communications and understand that there are certain things (regarding much of family life, for example) that are pretty much constant and have not changed much in one hundred years.

We gain a better knowledge of history by making a connection with the past through visiting historic sites. We understand people, daily life, and their actions as a result of seeing how they lived. And in the end, it is the "how they lived" that is fascinating to us since our life is based on similar experiences.

The focus of this teacher's guide is based on background information in preparation for the experience of visiting Sagamore Hill. The pre-visit preparation, the site visit and the post-visit activity are designed to focus on the above-cited themes.

## Discussion of Ground Rules

There is one pre-visit activity that is mandatory for all groups planning to come to Sagamore Hill and that is a basic understanding of the **Ground Rules** for visiting a site such as Sagamore Hill. It is very important that you go over these rules so that the students are fully prepared for their visit. The Tour Guide will review these prior to entering the historic site:

## Ground Rules

**No touching.** Please help preserve our national treasure by not touching any of the wood work, walls, or objects. Visitors may not lean or reach into rooms or sit on any furniture. Alarms will sound in many places if this rule is not followed. (Even freshly washed hands have oils that are damaging to the collections.)

**Follow directions of the Tour Guide, stay together as a group and pay attention.** Questions are permitted after the Guide has presented information regarding each area. Groups must stay together with the Tour Guide. Any disruptive individuals will be escorted out of Theodore Roosevelt's home.

**No photography is permitted inside the historic structures.**

**No food, beverage or chewing gum is permitted in the site.**

To sum up, No touching; Follow directions; No photography; No food, beverage or gum.

## Background Information on Theodore Roosevelt and Sagamore Hill

Theodore Roosevelt (TR) was a public servant for most of his life, and served largely as an elected or appointed official, including: New York State Assemblyman, New York City Police Commissioner, US Civil Service Commissioner, Governor of New York State, Assistant Secretary of the US Navy, an Officer in the United States Army, Vice President and President of the US. During this life-long period of service to our country he demonstrated many traits of a good citizen and attention to civic duty and encouraged others to do this as well.

### *Discussion:*

*Discuss with your students the concepts of good citizenship and civic duty. Name some examples of good citizenship; name examples of civic duty.*

TR came from Dutch ancestors who settled in New York City in the 1640's. The family became one of the wealthiest in New York City. Roosevelt chose life as public servant because he felt that he had a responsibility to do so and could make a difference in the life of those less fortunate.

Early on, he demonstrated concern for factions of society who, at that time, were held in low regard: These include women (he appointed the first woman to an administrative position in the New York City Police Department), African-Americans, (he invited Booker T. Washington to dine as his guest in the White House, the first black person to be entertained as a presidential guest; he appointed blacks as judges in the South). He championed a good life for all Americans, regardless of their social background or employment situation.

During his presidency, one of his chief accomplishments was his emphasis on conservation and preservation, particularly of natural resources. To that end he used the Antiquities Act, (1906) and other means to more than double the amount of land held for preservation and conservation by the federal government (as National Parks or Monuments, National Forests, wildlife preserves, and the preservation of archaeological sites throughout the land, especially in the Southwest). His record for conservation and preservation of public lands is practically unmatched by any other president before or since.

While working in these various capacities, and writing some thirty books, he was a devoted husband and father, who reared an energetic family of six children here at Sagamore Hill.

The construction of his home here in Oyster Bay, which he planned for his first wife (who died of complications of the birth of his first daughter, Alice), was put on hold when his mother died of typhoid on the same day in the same house. He later married his second wife, a childhood friend, and together they had five children who loved their rich and varied life here at Sagamore Hill.

The house was altered after he became president, with the addition of the North Room, where many momentos of his presidency and public life are displayed. TR used his library as his office and was the first president to move the seat of power from Washington, DC. This move of operations to Oyster Bay was made possible by the development of the telephone and improved transportation, enabling staff and secret service to travel and set up activities here.

While Sagamore Hill was one of the first homes in the area to have the telephone, it was not wired for electricity until 1918, so kerosene lamps and acetylene gas were used as lighting devices. There being no electricity, ice from the ice house was used for refrigeration, and the windmill pumped water from the well to the holding tank in the attic space of the house.

Sagamore Hill is unique for several reasons; not only is it the home of a president, with most of the house preserved and shown, as it was a century ago, but toilets, bathrooms, and showers are shown, as well as areas of food preparation and storage. The servants' rooms are shown on the third floor. For many years it was thought improper to show bathrooms and service areas such as kitchens, pantries and servants' quarters, but of course, these are areas that really show how people lived in days gone by.

### **Conservation of natural resources; preservation**

#### **Conservation, Preservation, Taxidermy, Hunting Trophies, (Dead Animal Parts on display in Sagamore Hill)**

TR is often held up as the first conservation president, and indeed his record of conservation and preservation is almost unmatched. But, how does one explain all the taxidermy on display in his house? It is one of the paradoxes about this complicated man that needs examination and explanation in order to come to an understanding.

First of all, it is a general rule of examining history, that we cannot use the standards of today to judge the standards of another time. Today we think of preservation and conservation in very rigid terms. The only thought of going on a safari in Africa today would be to collect photographs and film footage, but TR was hired by the Smithsonian and the American Museum of Natural History to collect samples for display in these museums. In TR's youth and even during his presidency there was a general feeling that the natural resources were almost inexhaustible.

During TR's youth, there was a huge wave of exploration and investigation of uncharted lands and the emphasis was on identification and documentation (maps, charts, etc.) and, by extension, the species of flora and fauna that lived there. The motivation of documentation required the collection of the life forms, so samples were taken for later classification. Plant samples were collected, pressed and dried, and animal species were killed and preserved in various ways for later cataloging and documentation.

TR had come from a well-to-do family who lived in bustling Manhattan. The earliest mention of his fascination of wildlife forms was after he visited a market where a dead seal (yes, seals used to live in the waters surrounding New York City) was displayed. The sight of this dead seal prompted a life-long curiosity, fascination with and study of natural history fauna life forms. Indeed he began collecting specimens as a youth which he displayed in a closet in his boyhood home and called the "Roosevelt Museum." We are not sure if this coincided with his father's founding of the American Museum of Natural History.

But TR, a sickly child troubled by asthma, who often suffered greatly as a result of its effects, was granted two rather unusual wishes as a youth: Boxing lessons (as a form of exercise suggested by his father to help build up his strength); and taxidermy lessons. TR began his collection, classification and display of taxidermy samples early in his life, and this collection continued throughout his life. Many of these (75 objects) are displayed at Sagamore Hill in various forms: Rugs, trophy mounts, three are fashioned into decorative or "useful" objects (elephant tusks, an elephant foot as waste receptacle and rhino foot as an ink well).

In addition it was very much the fashion to display and decorate with animal trophies. The curiosity that drove the exploration of strange lands was tangibly shown by using these trophies as decorative objects, and they were very much status symbols. In the same way we join certain organization or clubs, drive particular makes and models of cars, and wear certain shoes or garments, these items were a way of stating to all a certain status level.

*Discussion:*

*Discuss with your students what are the status symbols of today, what watches, shoes, jackets, cars or trips to far-off lands do we regard as marks of status?*

*How about collections? What items do the students collect? (Stamps, coins, sports or other trading cards, etc.)*

*Does anyone collect sea shells? Do the students realize that a shell is actually a dead animal part, that the shell was the outer protective covering of an animal.?*

*Note: Shells are a good way to bring collecting animal trophies into discussion. There are few people that have the same reaction to a shell collection as to animal trophies, yet for all of them the animal had to die to permit display of the item, whether head, skin antlers or shell. While shells may be collected at the shore where the animals presumably have died of natural causes, most serious collections result from collecting the live animal, so that the shell or shells are pristine and not buffed by the waves.*

*But how about leather shoes? How about fur coats? Animals die for these common items in our life today.*

## **Conservation, preservation and TR**

TR is often regarded as the first "conservation president" because he saw and began actions to conserve natural resources and preserve sites of archaeological significance, particularly in the Southwest.

Conservation is the term usually used for the act of preserving and saving natural resources, (forests, wildlife-preserves, lands, etc.). America had gone through a period of growth and development during which the use of these natural reserves, originally seen as inexhaustible, began to become depleted. The move to limit this usage and development was not at all popular because merchant developers saw this activity as a limitation of their income-producing ability. Forestry and logging for example, especially in the Northwest, threatened the destruction of the vast reserves of trees that had taken centuries to develop. The naturalists John Muir and Gifford Pinchot, though their individual goals differed considerably, were among those who encouraged Roosevelt to develop his conservation ethic as they saw these reserves being depleted. In addition to the conservation efforts of TR, the

development of the science of forestry by Pinchot (who endowed a Chair at Yale), and the establishment the Sierra Club, (Muir) and the Boone and Crockett Club were direct outgrowths of this conservation effort.

*Activity:*

*Report Topics: Gifford Pinchot; Forestry Service; John Muir; Sierra Club; Boone and Crockett Club*

Preservation is the term usually connected with saving sites of cultural importance. During the exploration and settlement of the Southwest many sites of antiquity and archaeology were discovered, the cities built by earlier indigenous peoples in the form of cliff dwellings or pueblos. The Antiquities Act passed by Congress in 1906 was designed specifically to save archaeology threatened by development.

Sagamore Hill is a good example of preservation. TR died in 1919; his widow lived on for almost thirty years and died in 1948. Upon her death the process of creating Sagamore Hill as an historic site began with the purchase of the property by the Theodore Roosevelt Association. The family removed personal momentos and the house was opened in 1953 as a museum and was given to the National Park Service in 1963. The house is filled with more than 90% of the original furnishings, including the souvenirs and memorabilia collected by TR as president. Seeing the house with its furnishings pretty much intact gives us a very good idea of how people lived then.

*Discussion:*

*Why do you think that Sagamore Hill was opened as a museum?*

*What do you think the attraction to this site might be?*

*If some one came to visit you and you were not home and they went to look in your room do you think they would be able to know something about you?*

*What do you think that person might find out looking around your house?*

*Or in your yard?*

*What do you think you might learn by visiting Sagamore Hill?*

### **Conservation quotes of Theodore Roosevelt**

"We have become great because of the lavish use of our resources and we have just reason to be proud of our growth. But the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil and the gas are exhausted, when the soils have still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the rivers, denuding the fields, and obstructing navigation. These questions do not relate only to the next century or to the next generation. It is time for us now as a nation to exercise the same reasonable foresight in dealing with our great natural resources that would be shown by any prudent man in conserving and widely using the property which contains the assurance of well-being for himself and his children." (Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources, Washington, May 13, 1908)-TRC

"There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country. Just as we must conserve our men, women and children, so we must conserve the resources of the land on which they live. We must conserve the soil so that our children shall have a land that is more and not less fertile than that our fathers dwelt in. We must conserve the forests, not by disuse but by use, making them more valuable at the same time that we use them. We must conserve the mines. Moreover, we must insure so far as possible for the use of certain types of great natural resources for the benefit of the people as a whole." Speech, Progressive National Convention, August 6, 1912--TRC

"Now there is a considerable body of public opinion in favor of keeping for our children's children, as a priceless heritage, all the delicate beauty of the lesser and all the burly majesty of the mightier forms of wild life. We are fast learning that trees must not be cut down more rapidly than they are replaced; we have taken forward steps in learning that wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people alive today, but the property of unborn generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander; and there are even faint signs of our growing to understand that wildflowers should be enjoyed unplucked where they grow, and that it is barbarism to ravage the woods and fields, rooting out the mayflower and breaking branches of dogwood as ornaments for automobiles filled with jovial but ignorant picnickers from cities." Outlook, January 20, 1915--TRC



## **The Antiquities Act of 1906**

The National Monuments Act was passed on June 8, 1906 in order to give the president the power to save by decree or proclamation such monuments and antiquities deemed to have scientific, prehistory and historical significance. The act was used by TR to establish the first eighteen National Monuments including Devil's Tower (1906), Muir Woods (1908), Grand Canyon (1908), Mount Olympus (1908).

## **Grand Canyon Quotation**

In the Grand Canyon, Arizona has a natural wonder which, so far as I know, is in kind absolutely unparalleled throughout the rest of the world. I want to ask you to do one thing in connection with it in your own interest and in the interest of the country--to keep this great wonder of nature as it now is. I was delighted to learn of the wisdom of the Santa Fe Railroad people in deciding not to build their hotel on the brink of the canyon. I hope you will not have a building of any kind to mar the wonderful grandeur, the sublimity, the great loneliness and beauty of the canyon. Leave it as it is. You can not improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it. What you can do is keep it for your children, your children's children, and for all who come after you, as one of the great sights which every American, if he can travel at all, should see. We have gotten past the stage, my fellow-citizens, when we are to be pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for two or three years for the use of the present generation, whether it is the forest, the water, the scenery. Whatever it is, handle it so that your children's children will get the benefit of it. --at the Grand Canyon, Arizona, May 6, 1903--  
Presidential Addresses and State Papers.

## **Invention and technology**

We are so surrounded by technology and inventions today that it is hard to realize what life must have been like without such marvels. And, it is hard to imagine that in what we regard today as the Roosevelt family era a very limited in technology was actually held in wonder and awe by the people of a century ago. The lesson is, that, for the most part, each generation has lived in a time of technical development and achievement far higher than the previous one.

The two developments in communications technology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the telegraph (1856) and the telephone (1872). Each of these made instantaneous and direct communication over great distances possible. While the telegraph required specialized equipment and training to send and receive messages in Morse Code, the telephone, as it was adopted and installed in the US, made it possible for anyone to communicate with anyone who shared access to the equipment.

*Report or discussion topics:*

*Telgraph, how to send and receive a telegraph; Samuel F. B. Morse; Morse Code; How to make a telephone call during TR's Summer White House Years*

## **Letter writing and the mail: Communication**

The customary method of communication with friends and family was the use of letters and the post office mail. People often sent notes of just a few lines or letters of many pages to their circle of family and friends. As the telephone was installed over wider areas it gradually replaced letter writing as the communication method of choice. But the prevalence of letter writing and exchange was an area that was more than simple communication and really entered into a leisure time activity to be enjoyed. For example, people took great pride in writing of their experiences when travelling, to share with family and friends. Descriptive letters so vivid that they were like movies were highly prized.

TR himself was a great letter writer leaving a record of some 150,000 missives, ranging from a few brief lines to many pages, some even illustrated with his drawings.

In fact, the mail was so important that most large cities had both morning and afternoon deliveries. While necessary communications, arrangements for appointments and dates, bills and invoices, formed the bulk of the mail,

letters describing travel and life events were shared with family and friends often as an evening's activity.

It has become harder for people to comprehend the importance of letter writing and the mail, but the emergence of email has made that immediate kind of gratification more understandable. And that kind of immediate expression a century ago--jotting down a quick note to send off was often rewarded by a similar quick reply.

Travel and transportation fostered much of this communication. Development of rail travel with frequent trains (based on the adoption of standard time) made the delivery of letters and packages to far and distant lands possible. There was a tremendous development of mail order from catalogs, such as Sears and Roebuck, perhaps rivaled only by today's mail order frenzy. These catalogs depicted the modern inventions and technology and made them available to practically anyone on a mail delivery route.

The Roosevelts would probably not have ordered much from catalogs, but their desire for and acquisition of the latest labor-saving devices and inventions is well documented. The windmill pumping water to the pressure tank in the house thus providing for flush toilets, the water heating coil on the kitchen stove, the shower for the "splash closet" were labor saving devices. The victrolas, or record players (North Room and Boys' Room) were as popular and modern and "in" as a CD player today.

### **Father and family man; family life: Strenuous Life and Leisure Time at Sagamore Hill**

Theodore Roosevelt was a devoted father and family man, but Mrs. Roosevelt, acting as "operations manager," ran Sagamore Hill as a working farm, providing many opportunities for participation by all in the "Strenuous Life." In addition to assisting in the regular chores of any farm there were plenty of opportunities for outdoor activity which, in addition to providing exercise, were also a lot of fun. Gardening and making hay were probably regarded as necessary chores. The animals, especially the riding and work horses, provided opportunities to learn and assume the responsibility of caring for them.

TR, himself, was enamored of the strenuous life and enjoyed participating in haying, cutting wood, riding and rowing. He was a good horseman who shared his love of riding frequently with family and friends. Riding jaunts were highly prized and were frequently done on Thanksgiving and Christmas mornings, perhaps to sharpen the appetite for the forthcoming family feast.

The tennis court was located below the main grounds and provided opportunities for exercise with family and friends. A hike from the main grounds to the beach provided opportunities for swimming and boating.

TR loved to read and loved literature; he also very much liked his "strenuous life" of outdoor activity and exercise. It is perhaps not surprising that one of his favored activities was to take his wife, Edith rowing. She would read aloud as he pulled the oars thus combining his favorite activities, reading and rowing.

#### *Discussion:*

*Ask students what outdoor activity they enjoy doing. Are there activities they enjoy in the company of friends or family?*

*Ask students if they have household chores or tasks that they must do.*

*Has any one had the responsibility of caring for a pet. What does this teach us about such responsibilities?*

### **Four o'clock appointment**

One of the most telling anecdotes about TR was his frequent four o'clock appointment. He cut off his business day and took leave of congressmen, ministers, and diplomats wherever he was to keep this important daily date. Many high officials were perhaps surprised to find that the appointment was with his children. The sight of the president playing football with his children might have shocked them but TR thought it was the high point of his day. On days that he was not with his family and traveling or far away, he would use that time to write letters (often illustrated with his drawings) to his children. Many of these have been collected in a book, (*Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children*), which reveal his family life.

*Discussion:*

*Ask students if they have a special time or special activity they share with parents or other family members.*

In addition to these outdoor activities, TR (himself a voracious reader, left about 5,000 books at Sagamore Hill) encouraged his children to read and to write letters. TR introduced reading to his family early on and quite liked the B'r'er Rabbit Stories of Joel Chandler Harris.

Reading and sharing conversations about books were very popular activities engaged by family and friends. Books on travel and exploration and magazine articles on the same topics were discussed by all.

*Discussion:*

*Ask students if they have talked about books, or movies, TV programs with their friends or families. What do the students think that discussing a common shared experience does for them. Do they have certain things they like to discuss with friends?*

### **Many Hats: Theodore Roosevelt's Roles**

Theodore Roosevelt performed many diverse jobs during his lifetime, (and he had a number of interesting hobbies.) His positions include: New York State Assemblyman, rancher/cowboy, Police Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Rough Rider (soldier), Governor of New York, Vice President and President of the US. Other appellations include: student (Harvard), naturalist, taxidermist, scientist, conservationist, outdoorsman, sportsman, hunter, author, reader, traveler, statesman, social reformer, canal builder, and Progressive.

*Activity*

*Assign students a research paper on one of the list of the topics. Some of these areas overlap, but each represents an interesting facet of Roosevelt's life and career. If possible, students may want to copy a photo or drawing of Roosevelt in the role they research.*

### **Presidential Legacy of Theodore Roosevelt**

We remember TR because he was a president, of course, and because he was the youngest president ever to have served, having been catapulted into the public arena as hero of the Spanish-American War to become William McKinley's Vice President. TR took office as president, upon the death of McKinley, who died as a result of a gunshot fired by a deranged anarchist, barely six months into his second term. TR served the remaining three and one half years, and was elected by a landslide victory for a full term following, for a total of seven and one half years. During that time he accomplished much as president and he is credited with strengthening the executive office. His additional achievements include the conservation of millions of acres of land for public use; establishing TR as the first "conservation" president; the US involvement in the construction and subsequent operation of the Panama Canal; and brokering the peace treaty to settle the Russo-Japanese War, (for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize).

But some background information is necessary to understand TR's achievements as public servant.

TR began life as a public servant with a career in politics just out of college elected as the youngest ever New York State Assemblyman when he was only twenty three. In addition to his assemblyman period, TR served as Civil Service Commissioner for the US, the New York City Police Commissioner, New York State Governor, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Colonel in the US Army, Vice President and President. He not only filled these positions, he left his mark or even changed the way the jobs were done. Many books have been written about TR's accomplishments and we can find many examples of his work surviving today.

For the purposes of a class visit, we are going to focus on some of the most important aspects of TR's accomplishments and life achievements which are documented in the home in some way by what students may see upon their visit.

## **TR's Rise: United States Navy; Spanish-American War;**

While TR enjoyed being New York City Police Commissioner, he missed the national attention he had received in Washington, DC as Civil Service Commissioner. When he was named Assistant Secretary of the Navy he was thrilled to be back in the national and international spotlight. The year of 1898 was filled with brewing world problems (much like today) and TR thought that a strong Navy, ready for any action was tremendously important. He felt that the navy was the "nation's best insurance policy."

He took the opportunity to give orders to have all the ships well fueled and well armed so that they could respond to any emergency. It was at this time that he realized the necessity of a way to get from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans without sailing all the way around South America thus planting the seeds for what eventually became the Panama Canal.

The trouble on the world horizon at that time was with colonies settled across the globe by Spain, in the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba. When the US battleship Maine blew up in February, 1898 in Havana harbor, everyone assumed that Spain had attacked the US, and the result was the beginning of what we know today as the Spanish-American War. TR was proud that he had readied the US fleet and the navy was able to respond immediately. This idea of naval readiness continues to this day, and TR is credited with setting that as a priority.

### *Discussion:*

*What examples do we see today of naval involvement? Do you think that a strong standing navy is as important today as it was a century ago? Where has the navy been recently to provide an American presence?*

## **Spanish-American War:**

### **TR as Colonel of the US 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Cavalry, the "Rough Riders"**

However, TR was not satisfied with having established naval readiness, and wanted to do more to fight the war and he had the idea to form a volunteer unit of cavalry raised across the land. TR had no military background but wanted to do something to help with the war effort and collaborated with General Leonard Wood, an army surgeon, to create the 1<sup>st</sup> US Volunteer Cavalry.

It was an odd collection of men; TR talked his east-coast classmates and society friends into signing up. TR wanted men who could already ride and shoot and had the idea of getting "cowboys" to join the effort. Many of the enlistees came from the southwest, and the unit soon became known as the "Rough Riders."

After their training, the unit was dispatched to Cuba from Florida. Unfortunately there was not space on the ships for the horses of the regular soldiers, so they were forced to leave them behind, thus rendering the mounted cavalry unit mere foot soldiers. The horses of the officers, however, were shipped.

Arriving in Cuba, the US soldiers began their attack fighting against the Spaniards. There was a bloody and terrible battle with TR as one of the important men leading the charge up San Juan Hill as a mounted officer, an easy target. Bullets whizzed by and one even grazed TR's uniform. He was seen as hero on that day; several officers were nominated for and eventually received our nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. TR, though nominated was not granted that award during his life time. (A century later the government finally acted to present the honor posthumously. The award was received by family members on TR's behalf.)

TR was regarded as a military hero, however, and his involvement in the Spanish-American War leading, his troops to victory, brought TR into the public eye in a dramatic way.

### *Activity:*

*What other presidents have served as military leaders?*

*George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, for example.*

## **Technology, wire services, the press, newspapers**

While the Spanish-American War today is not regarded as a major event, it was the first "modern war" and the first war covered and reported on a daily basis by reporters. Technology had improved so that almost every city had daily papers with the ability to receive articles and photos via "wire services" thus making these images available across the land in a way never before possible. A reporter was now able to send an article across the nation so that daily events could be reported immediately in many newspapers. As today, with our fascination for immediate reporting of world events via 24 hour-a-day TV news programs, the people of a century ago grabbed up the papers as soon as they hit the streets.

TR became aware of this media responsiveness during the war period and used this knowledge to his advantage through out the remainder of his career.

*Discussion:*

*Do you think that presidents and leaders of today understand the media response? What examples can you cite?*

## **The Nobel Peace Prize**

The Russo-Japanese War does not rank today as a major world event, but it was tremendously important to the people of that day. Probably one of the most meaningful things to come out of the war between Russia and Japan was TR's involvement as peacemaker. He was able as mediator to get representatives of both parties to meet on neutral ground and come to a peaceable settlement. TR received gifts from both the Czar of Russia and the Emperor of Japan in thanks for his efforts, and most notably, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It was the first time it was given to an American and it was official ratification that his work had been fruitful, perhaps the first time that a neutral world leader had interceded in such a manner. TR's work created an example for other presidents and world leaders to act as peacemakers. Today we often find world leaders, especially the US president, getting quarrelling nations to come to peaceful agreements or important realizations.

*What examples of world leaders interceding in quarrels and difficult situations can you name?*

*Reagan, Berlin wall; John Paul II, communism in Poland, for example; Clinton and Bush in trying to bring peace to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.*

## **The Modern Presidency: TR's legacy**

TR is often credited with changing the presidency, making the executive office stronger, more responsible and responsive to and certainly more involved with, day-to-day activity of the nation. Seen as the father of the "modern presidency," TR's "stewardship theory" of the office envisioned a powerful chief executive, "bound actively and affirmatively to do all that he could for the people. . ." the center of a strong national government.

TR officially named the executive mansion the White House, and he gave us the presidential residence we see today. The alterations by the Roosevelts were further refined by the Kennedys.

One very real example of TR's involvement with daily activity was the creation of the Summer White House in Oyster Bay. The nation's government has followed by custom, the agrarian lifestyle of the founding fathers: The government functioned during the fall and winter months and every one pretty much left Washington DC during the summers, except for the president.

In addition to this, communications had not been developed well enough to keep everyone informed of what was going on should the president move from Washington. The adoption of the telegraph (1856) and telephone (1872), as significant and available communication devices enabled everyday transactions of business to take place, thus making it possible to set up the "White House," the seat of executive power, wherever the president wished to go. The installation of a single telephone line at Sagamore Hill, frequent and regular train service, and of course, the responsiveness of the press, created the "Summer White House" at Sagamore Hill.

*Discussion:*

*Ask students what are the recent examples of the White House being moved? For example, to Crawford, Texas, where the current president has a home not unlike Sagamore Hill. What are some of the other examples of the White House being moved with the president?*

### **The Panama Canal: A Path Between the Seas**

TR was not the first person to wish for a "path between the seas," a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This glaring need became more apparent with the Spanish-American War. (Look at a world map for this discussion.) Indeed there were attempts to build this water route that would cut weeks off the journey from the east to the west coast of the USA. Several starts by the French were unsuccessful. TR analyzed their progress and realized that it was not technology that thwarted their efforts, but disease.

Technology in the form of giant earth moving equipment, and designs by the Army Corps of Engineers were unable to solve the problem of the tropical illness plaguing the workers. TR was successful in getting US doctors to work on the problem of yellow fever and malaria so that the workers could carry out the plans and use the equipment.

The Panama Canal is certainly one of the wonders of the modern world but it was the vision of TR of having this path between the seas and the management of tropical illness that made the completion and operation of the canal possible.

*Discussion:*

*What other major technological achievements have Americans accomplished as a result of presidential charge or direction?*

*Space program for example, under Kennedy; A-bomb under Franklin D. Roosevelt*

## **Preparing for your visit to Sagamore Hill**

Please go over Ground Rules with students.

Please review the procedures outline ( see below) with students.

We suggest that you use the following information as a charge or assignment for your students. These topics and themes are used in the background information above, and will be discussed and observed during the site visit and are the basis for the follow up activities below. We suggest that you distribute copies of this list and discuss prior to visit. After your visit, compare your expectations with what you found.

Depending on the age of the students, their developmental level and ability to pick up on these topics, you may wish to limit the presentation of some of these items for investigation.

### **Detective work: Coming to Sagamore Hill to See How They Lived**

We like to say it is rather like playing detective: The students have received information, topics and themes for investigation and have now come to the home of Theodore Roosevelt to see what they can find. We want to help stretch their observation and information gathering abilities.

You will find that some kids will gather information by sight and observation, some by the explanation offered by the tour guide. Some kids will have difficulty in trying to focus on the themes and topics presented, particularly those who have had limited exposure to homes very unlike their own.

While it is not practical for the students to make notes while visiting the site, you may want to suggest that when they return to the bus or their desk that they make note of their impressions.

The assignment follows: Print from here to similar symbol below to give to your students on the last class session before your trip to Sagamore Hill. The use this as the basis for your post-visit class discussion.

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**Topics and Themes for Student Observation and Investigation During Site Visit  
(Pick out several that you think should be topics worthy of discovery and discussion.)**

**Theodore Roosevelt as public servant; role model**

TR was known for his work as president, peacemaker, conservationist, and Spanish-American War Hero. What evidence can you find in the home relating to these specific areas?

TR is often referred to as the first "conservation" president. What are the artifacts, objects, or artworks in the home that remind us of this work in conservation and preservation in the US?

Sagamore Hill has been preserved as a national historic site as part of the National Park Service. What evidence did you find of conservation and preservation during your visit. How do you think visitation has impacted the site. How does the preservation effort found at Sagamore Hill compare with other historic sites you may have seen?

The Library and North Room on the main floor of the house were very special to TR. After seeing these rooms, what kind of a man do you think TR was? If you had the chance to sit down for a visit with TR which room would you choose? Why? Which room do you think TR would choose? Why? What item would you like to know more about?

After visiting Sagamore Hill, what is the strongest and most lasting impression you have?  
What kind of life do you think the Roosevelt children experienced at Sagamore Hill?  
Mrs. Roosevelt ran the household and the farm as operations manager. What do you think her life was like? How about the housekeeper? The cook?

What was your favorite thing at Sagamore Hill?

What did you have the biggest problem with?

**Family life:**

Your visit to Sagamore Hill will involve glimpses into the life of Theodore Roosevelt, a well-to-do gentleman farmer, who was the 26<sup>th</sup> US president, and his family.

Your assignment is to look for evidence of family life. Living space, food preparation and dining, recreation and leisure, communication, bedrooms, bathrooms, servants quarters are all apparent in the home.

Look for areas or items that are similar to those that you know, as well as areas that are quite different. Imagine what it might have been like to spend an evening in the home, be invited for a meal, or spend the night. What would it be like to get up in the morning and get ready for school? What if on a rainy Saturday you had to spend the time here indoors. What kind of activities would be available.

Remember that in addition to Mr. & Mrs. Roosevelt and the six children, there were four to six servants who lived in the home, an additional six to ten servants who worked the grounds, fields and gardens and took care of the animals, as well as secretaries, aides and advisors to the president and the Secret Service. Frequently there were guests in both of the guest rooms. The family, the guests, all of the help, and many of the staff people were fed at meal times. What kind of impact do you think having Sagamore Hill function as the Summer White House had on

the family? on the servants?

**Technology and inventions**

Sagamore Hill was used as the Summer White House from 1902 to 1908. Based on your knowledge of technology and communication, look for examples of such devices in the home.

Imagine that you have an urgent need to communicate with Washington DC on behalf of the president. How would you go about getting a message through. How many telephones do you find in Sagamore Hill, how many lines were available? How about letters and letter writing? What if you had to send an important document to Washington, signed by the president, how might you accomplish this?

Sagamore Hill utilized some technology and inventions that were not at all common for a house in the country a century ago. What are some of the technological devices available and used by the Roosevelt family at Sagamore Hill. Hint: lighting, heating, water pressure, hot water, flush toilets, bathrooms, food storage and preparation are all areas that we take for granted; how were these things accomplished at Sagamore Hill?

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**Follow up activities**

**Theodore Roosevelt and His Sagamore Hill Home: A Junior Ranger Activity**

is an excellent follow-up activity. Group leaders will receive enough copies to distribute to the members of the class. This Junior Ranger Activity can be done individually or as a class exercise. Remind the students that this will likely be the second of two Junior Ranger Activities and that if they return to Sagmore Hill and complete a third activity they will receive the special Junior Ranger Patch.

The questions below are designed as a follow-up for discussion, essay test or quiz. The goals and objectives are stated in **boldface type**, the questions or topics for discussion are listed below with answers provided in *italics*.

**Identify when Theodore Roosevelt was president and when he lived at Sagamore Hill.**

When was TR president of the US?

*1901-1909*

When did TR live at Sagamore Hill?

*Purchased land in 1880; built house and began living at Sagamore about 1885. Built as his home he lived here chiefly in the summers because of his work as elected official. Lived here year round after presidency from 1910 to his death in 1919.*

Describe typical daily activities of the president and his family at Sagamore Hill.

*Many activities, indoor and outdoor; see lists and answers above.*

**To become familiar with the general setting of Sagamore Hill and what affect it had on the family’s lifestyle.**

How would you describe the family lifestyle as lived at Sagamore Hill.

*Sagamore Hill provided many opportunities for experiencing "country life," as opposed to the city life of Manhattan where TR had been brought up. Farm animals, horses for riding, gardens and crops were important parts of the family life here. The Roosevelt brought up six children and operated complicated house and grounds with help of servants and staff.*



*"Summer White House" for summers of 1902-1908 when TR was president.*

**Examine some of the achievements TR made as President of the United States such as conservation and foreign policy, as relating to TR's work as conservationist, peacemaker, presidential innovator, builder of the Panama Canal, etc.**

Give several examples of TR's accomplishments that affect our life today. Describe how these are important today.

*TR is known as "first conservation president" setting aside about 230 million acres of land for public use as national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, etc.; sponsored the Antiquities Act of 1906 to preserve the archaeology of earlier cultures.*

*Peacemaker, in the settlement of the Russo-Japanese War, for which he won Nobel Peace Prize, and set an example for later presidents and world leaders to be arbiters in national problems rather than observers.*

*Saw the necessity for and was able to get America to construct and complete the Panama Canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.*

*Strengthened and enlarged scope and influence of the Executive Office. Caused the "Summer White House" to be set up in Oyster Bay, the first time the office had been operated outside Washington, DC.*

*Spanish American War hero, who became president and ultimately was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.*

*Established policy of a strong standing navy ready to respond either defensively or offensively. Naval readiness is today a standard and used recently in the Persian Gulf and in the War Against Terrorism going on right now*

In addition to the presidency, what other jobs or roles did TR perform during his life?

*Theodore Roosevelt performed many diverse jobs during his lifetime, (and he had a number of interesting hobbies.) His positions include: New York State Assemblyman, rancher/cowboy, Police Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Rough Rider (soldier), Governor of New York, Vice President and President of the US. Other possibilities include: student (Harvard), naturalist, taxidermist, scientist, conservationist, outdoorsman, sportsman, hunter, author, reader, traveler, statesman, social reformer, canal builder, and Progressive.*

**Understand some of the technologies and inventions available and used by the Roosevelt family.**

*Windmill for pumping water; pressure tank for water; hot water heater off the coal burning stove in kitchen; indoor flush toilets, showers and bath tub, telephone, gas lighting; central heating intercom to stable and lodge building;*

**To understand the technology that made it possible for TR to move the "White House" to Oyster Bay.**

Telegraph, (1856) telephone (1872) development of frequent and regular train travel as a result of railroad expansion and adoption of standard time.

### **Further questions for discussion or testing**

Based upon your visit to Sagamore Hill what outdoor activities did the Roosevelt children enjoy?

*Tennis, horseback riding, swimming and rowing, walking and hiking, obstacle races, caring for horses and pets, hide and go seek,*

Today we like to listen to cd's and play video games for entertainment, what did the Roosevelt children enjoy?

*Playing piano and mandolin (in North Room) playing records in North Room and on Victrola in boys' room, cards, (cribbage), chess, reading, acting out scenes and stories*

Today we keep in touch with email and telephone answering machines, what forms of communication were used by the Roosevelt children?

*Telephone, (messages posted on the rhino sculpture), letter writing*

We all have role models and heroes in our life. Name several heroes and role models depicted in TR's first floor office or library.

*TR's father, Washington, Lincoln,*

How is the Sagamore Hill kitchen different from your kitchen??

*No modern appliances*

Why did Ted Jr. say "Mealtimes at Sagamore Hill provided some of the best education I ever had"?

*TR encouraged the children to be apart of the conversations taking place at mealtime. They learned from the many guests visiting the President.*

Why did Roosevelt have a study on the third floor?

*To escape from busy everyday life and particularly from the activity of the children.*

Who lived on the third floor?

*Servants*

What were some of the jobs of the servants?

*Cook, housekeeper, maid, laundress, grooms (for horses), gardeners and grounds keepers*

Sagamore Hill made use of the technology and inventions available at the time. What are some of these?

*Windmill for pumping water; pressure tank for water; hot water heater off the coal burning stove in kitchen; in-door flush toilets, showers and bath tub, telephone, gas lighting; central heating intercom to stable and lodge building;*

All of us may enjoy some form of sport or activity. TR loved hunting, it represented his love not just for the sport, but for exploring, and science. Name an animal trophy that you saw in the house and tell where it came from?

*Entry hall, Cape buffalo, Africa; Drawing room, polar bear skin, the Arctic region; North Room, elephant tusks, Africa; bison heads, elk racks, North America,*

Name a gift given to TR located in any of the rooms? State the reason why he received that gift.

What did you learn most from Sagamore Hill?

Of all the objects in his house, what was his favorite? Why?

### **Other Suggested Activities for Preparation and Follow-up**

***The following activities are suitable for pre- and post-visit activities. You may find it benefi-***

*cial to do some of these prior to your visit, and then repeat the activity after. Keep notes and make lists to compare. See if your expectations were fulfilled.*

## **Setting the stage**

### **Locating the site: Map activity**

Using a map of Long Island, have the students find Oyster Bay and locate Sagamore Hill. Ask about geography of the area. What bodies of water surround Sagamore Hill? How would TR travel from Manhattan out to Oyster Bay?

### **Reading Analysis and Interpretation**

Selection 1: *The Roosevelt Family of Sagamore Hill*; Hermann Hagedorn P. 151-153

It did not seem strange to the children to be back at Sagamore with the horses and ponies and dogs, the run of the eighty acres, with all Long Island beyond, the barns and the hay, the bathing-house and the long dock over the swamp on Cold Spring Harbor---all the familiar joys, all theirs, as in the past—and to have guards at the entrance and the Secret Service men snooping around. They did not see the guards or the Secret Service men, really, not as what they were; as occasional, rather pleasant companions, yes; people to talk to and question and learn interesting things from, but as representatives of the majesty of the law, standing watch and ward over their father and mother and themselves, these burly keen-eyed man had no existence; they were not there.

To the children, Sagamore Hill meant freedom after the confinement of the city and of school, freedom from ushers and guards with restricted ideas of what the White House was for. It meant renewed fellowship with Cove Neck's assemblage of cousins, the infinite variety of the days' activities, tennis or riding or swimming or fishing or clamming or crabbing or target-shooting, or jumping your horse over the hurdles on the lawn, or roaming the woods with your particular pick among the cousins, or playing perilous tag up and down the slopes of the many-gables roof of the house, or, if you were old enough, camping with one of the cousins in the swamp on the Cold Spring Harbor side, waiting for day-break and the snipe that might come tripping up the beach.

But Sagamore Hill meant something beyond all of these things: it meant the companionship for hours at a stretch, sometimes for whole days, of a youthful and infinitely resourceful father who entered into your games with zest, and invented variations of his own that you yourself would have never dreamed of; a father, moreover, who did not make pets of his children but treated them as rational and responsible beings, his equals, having feelings that deserved the same consideration he might show any adult, great or obscure. The father was a busy man even at Sagamore. There were always tiresome people calling in on him—senators and cabinet members and such—but four in the afternoon was generally their deadline and, if they didn't know it, the President enlightened them.

What did Sagamore Hill mean to the children—why did they like it so much?

What were some of the outdoor activities of the family at Sagamore Hill?

Post visit activity: How were your expectations regarding Sagamore Hill different from your reading of the above passage.

Post: Do you get a feeling of family life and activity from visiting Sagamore Hill? Why?

### **Writing a Letter and Journal Keeping**

Letter writing during the turn of the century was one of the major forms of communication. Daily journals or diaries were also kept quite often. Theodore Roosevelt wrote thousands of letters, not only to politicians, but also to his children when he was traveling away from home. Many of TR's letters included hand-made drawings of animals and people. Today we use email in much the same capacity. We type messages to family and friends to keep in touch.

Discussion:

Why do you think the letters and journals of the Roosevelt family are important to us today?

Post-visit activity:

Have the students write a letter about their visit to Sagamore Hill. How was the house different from their own? What inspired them the most about Theodore Roosevelt? What drawing would they want to include in their letters?

### **Some Activities for Further Exploration**

#### **Historic structure search: What else is out there?**

Based on the information the students have learned from studying and visiting Sagamore Hill ask each student to find an historical building in their town or county. Learn why it is preserved, note the time period and try to determine what story is told.

Some topics to consider: What is the main theme? How did people live; what was their life-style? What technology was available for communication? Labor saving devices? How did they spend leisure time? Develop with students other topics for investigation.

If possible the student should visit the site to gather information first hand. Have the student write a report and/or prepare a presentation for the class based on the visit and the research.

Some good local examples are: Raynham Hall; Earle-Wightman House; Planting Fields Arboretum; Old Westbury Gardens; Vanderbilt Museum. There are many suitable sites appropriate for this project.

#### **Times have changed with generations: How did they live?**

Conduct an interview with the oldest living member in your family or a friend. Ask him/her what it was like growing up. Compare the life of the interviewee (from the times when he/she was a child) with life today.

Have the student prepare a list of topics or questions prior to the interview. It is a good idea to record this interview for later review.

Here are some topics to begin: Where did you grow up--what country state or region, what was the climate? Describe daily life--did you help with chores, shopping or food preparation or dishes? Describe transportation, how did you get to school, to work, travel on vacation, others? Describe communication, letters, telephone, email, cell phones? Leisure time activity, TV, video games, records, tapes, or CD's, games or puzzles, others?--outdoor activity, roller blading, skateboarding, tennis, volleyball, soccer, baseball, football, other? What was your most dreaded activity? What did you like to do most?

Have the student then prepare a report based on the investigation. This works very well when done by a group of students so that the results can be compared.

### **Political Cartoons or Drawings**

There is a long history of using drawings or "political cartoons" as a form of commentary on public figures, politicians, news events and as social commentary. Cartoons published in newspapers and magazines have a long history as a form of comment upon what is happening. In the best drawings the artist is able to bring all the major elements together to form a statement, usually readily apparent, and often biting and humorous and illuminating.

Exaggeration is one artistic element that is almost always present in a cartoon. Various elements may be made very large or very small in order to make a point.

There are shorthand symbols that are often used as "stock figures" to symbolize a group or party, for example. In America, the donkey symbolizes the Democratic Party, and the elephant the Republican Party.

Have the students examine the "White House. Gone to Oyster Bay" cartoon reproduced on the next page.



What is going on in this drawing?

What symbols do you see that represent something else?

Who do you think the figure with top hat and carrying an umbrella might be?

Do you find any examples of exaggeration?

Describe in your own words (or in a written statement) what this cartoon depicts for you.

Two other cartoons are provided for a point of reference. Each of these deals with the settling of the Russo-Japanese War by Roosevelt.



From the *North American*



From the *Brosszem Jankó* (Budapest)

Further activity

Using a political cartoon in the education packet as a model, have the students create a cartoon about Sagamore Hill. Like all political cartoons, the students should tell a story in the form of a picture. It can be clever and funny yet informative. Not only can the house be drawn, but also the various rooms the students saw on the tour. It may include a brief description. What exaggeration might you use to emphasize a point? They can present their works to class and explain how they arrived at and represented the personalities and points of view involved.

Post the cartoons created by the students in your classroom and have a contest to see who has the most original, --the funniest, --the one that tells the best story, --the most off-the-wall.

### **Further Research**

For further information regarding Theodore Roosevelt and His Sagamore Hill Home you may wish to consult some of the following websites:

TR at America's Story

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/roosevelt>

TR at the White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/presidents/theodoreroosevelt.html>

TR at Yahoooligans

[http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/reference/wak/presidents/roosevelt\\_theodore.html](http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/reference/wak/presidents/roosevelt_theodore.html)

TR at Time For Kids

<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/articles/0,6709,735134,00.html>

The Theodore Roosevelt Association

<http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org>

TR – “The Great New Yorker”

<http://www.trthegreatnewyorker.com>

White House Biography

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/tr26.html>

National Portrait Gallery Exhibit

<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/roosevelt>

<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/travpres/theorooos.htm>

Library of Congress Collections

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/trfhtml>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/trhtml/trhome.html>

TR from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art

<http://archivesofamericanart.si.edu/exhibits/presidents/rooseveltt.htm>

American Museum of Natural History – Permanent TR Exhibit

<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/other/roosevelt.html>

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