

# Sagamore Hill

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



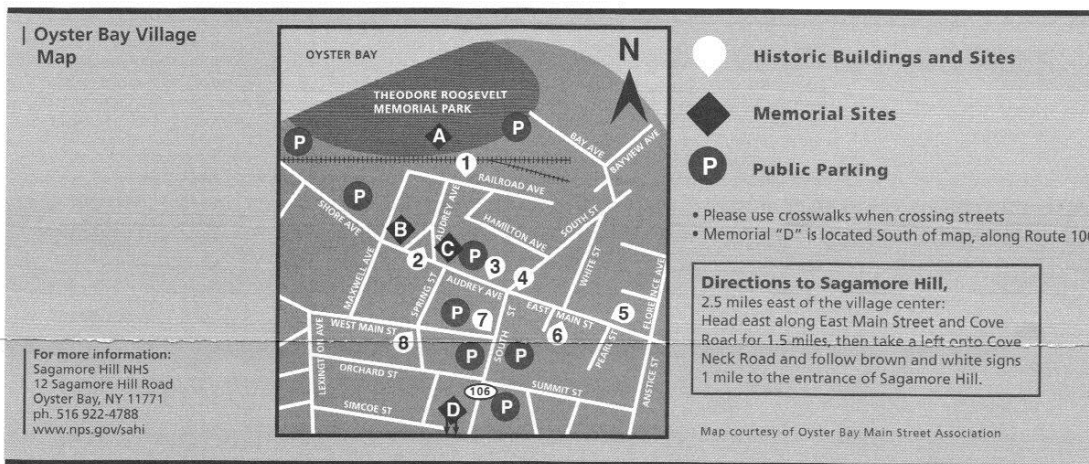
Sagamore Hill  
National Historic Site

## Theodore Roosevelt's Oyster Bay



Since its settlement in 1653, Oyster Bay has had a rich history as a colonial settlement, ship building center and a hub of spy activity while under British control during the Revolutionary War. In the 1800s, Oyster Bay became a popular summer destination for wealthy New York City families. In 1902, Oyster Bay was brought to national prominence when the 26th US President Theodore Roosevelt, created the first "Summer White House" and moved the executive office and staff here from Washington, DC, for the summers of 1902-08.

Roosevelts have lived in Oyster Bay since the 1860s. As a child, Theodore Roosevelt and family summered in the area. In 1885 he built his home, Sagamore Hill, two and a half miles east of the village center, which he and his family frequented for goods, services, transportation and business. This brochure highlights the major sites and buildings in the village connected to Theodore Roosevelt, as well as the memorials erected in tribute to Oyster Bay's most beloved and famous resident. We encourage you to take a trip back in time and stroll the historic village to learn more about Theodore Roosevelt's Oyster Bay.



### 1 | Oyster Bay Long Island Railroad Station Foot of Audrey Avenue

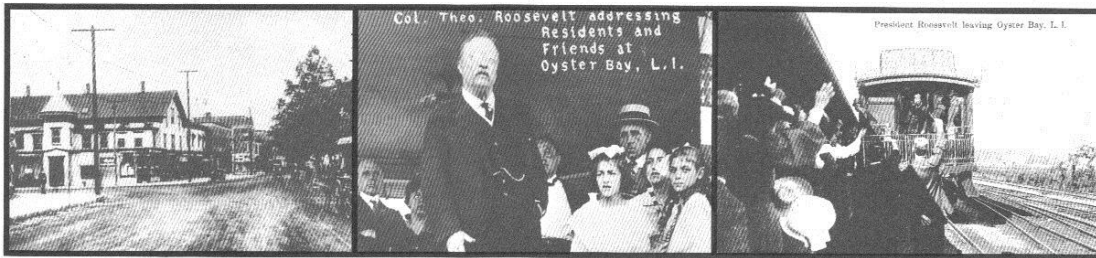
The historic railroad station was built by the Long Island Railroad in 1889 and actively served the town until 1999. As New York City Police Commissioner between 1895 and 1897, Roosevelt regularly commuted from Oyster Bay into the city. Later, President Roosevelt would often travel to and from Washington by rail using this very train station.

The station has been designated a Town of Oyster Bay Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Efforts are underway to preserve and rehabilitate the station as a museum. In the interim, you can visit the "Preview Center" for the future Oyster Bay Railroad Museum at 102 Audrey Avenue. (check daily hours)

### 2 | Derby-Hall Bandstand Shore & Audrey Avenue

Located in a small triangle between the Oyster Bay Town Hall and the US Post Office, it is here that Roosevelt often addressed the people of Oyster Bay, most notably during Independence Day celebrations. Time and weather took their toll on the original structure: it fell into disrepair and was razed. As a memorial to Ethel Roosevelt Derby, her godson,

retired Congressman Leonard Hall, raised funds for this reconstruction, dedicated in 1981. Hall died during the construction, thus the name was changed to honor both Mrs. Derby and Congressman Hall. It is flanked by three Civil War-era cannons, one of which was presented by the Navy to the town and unveiled by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.



Snouder's Drug Store

Roosevelt at Bandstand

Roosevelt leaving Oyster Bay Train Station

**3 | Oyster Bay Bank**  
20 Audrey Avenue

Built in 1891, this 3 1/2 story building was the first bank built to serve the hamlet. The second floor of the building served as Roosevelt's Oyster Bay office while Governor of New York. In the summer of 1902, it served the same function for his White House staff during his first year as President. Between the 1890s and 1924, the third floor was used as the Matinecock Lodge (#806) by the local chapter of the Masons. In January, 1901, TR was inducted as a

member of the lodge and attended meetings here throughout his life. In 1924, the lodge moved to the former Townsend Inn at 14 West Main Street. Roosevelt's son, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., was active with the Masons at this location after his father's death. Unfortunately the historic Townsend Inn building burned in 2003. A similar style building was reconstructed on the site and it continues to serve as a Masonic Lodge.

**4 | The Moore Building**  
1 East Main Street

Built in 1891 by grocer James Moore, it is one of the most prominent commercial buildings in the village. In 1902 it was expanded and the Queen Anne turret was added. In the summer of 1903, Presidential Secretary William Loeb, noted its modern fixtures and its prominence at the commercial crossroads of Oyster Bay and chose to rent office space here, moving from the Oyster Bay Bank Building. The offices were the "base of operations" for the

"Summer White House" while TR was in town. Sagamore Hill was connected to the Moore Building by telegraph and phone service. The building was also known as the "gate" because those interested in visiting the President needed to obtain permission through Secret Service Agents who operated from there. The Moore Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Town of Oyster Bay Landmark.

**5 | Christ Church**  
61 East Main Street

Roosevelt was brought up in the Dutch Reformed Church, but after marrying his second wife, Edith Kermit Carow, an Episcopalian, he and his family attended this church regularly throughout their lives and the Roosevelt family pew is preserved inside. When originally built in 1878 it was a wood building; the structure was encased in stone for its present appearance in 1925. Only a few miles from

Sagamore Hill, Roosevelt once said, "The walk back from Church is almost as pleasant as the sermon itself." He sometimes rowed Edith from the family beach around the tip of Cove Neck to attend this church. When Theodore Roosevelt died on January 6, 1919, his funeral was held at Christ Church with the procession heading east on East Main Street to Youngs Cemetery one mile from the church.

**6 | The First Presbyterian Church**  
60 East Main Street

As a youth, Roosevelt attended this church with his family when his father rented a summer home in Oyster Bay. Theodore Roosevelt's father was an Elder at the Presbyterian Church at the time of his death in

1878. The Carpenter Gothic-style church was built in 1873 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**7 | Snouder's Drug Store**  
108 South Street

Built in 1855 and expanded in 1890, this building has housed Snouder's Drug Store since 1884. For many years, Snouder's had the only telephone and switchboard in the village (beginning in 1887). Mr. Snouder would send staff members out on bicycle to deliver messages to the village households, including Sagamore Hill. In 1902, after becoming President,

TR reluctantly allowed a telephone to be installed in the Roosevelt Home; the number was "OB 67". The Roosevelt children often rode their ponies into Oyster Bay to visit the soda fountain at Snouder's and get ice cream. This building is a Town of Oyster Bay Landmark.

**8 | Octagon Hotel**  
67 West Main Street

Built in 1854 as part of a mid-century movement to construct eight-sided structures that were said to be more conducive to healthy living because of increased, light, ventilation and enhanced space, it was the only known "octagon" hotel at the time of its construction. The building was a popular gathering place for the upper class in Oyster Bay into the early 20th century. Over the years, Theodore Roosevelt

was one of the hotel's esteemed guests, visiting for business, political and social events. During his Presidential years, visitors to the Summer White House often stayed here. The building served as a hotel until 1922. In subsequent years, its primary use was as a car dealership and automotive repair shop. In 2009 a private developer plans to rehabilitate the building as a mixed use development.

**Theodore Roosevelt Memorials in the Village**

**A Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park** : Established by the Theodore Roosevelt Association, the park was opened to the public in 1928 and donated by the association to the Town of Oyster Bay in 1942. The Theodore Roosevelt Monument Assemblage, an installation of 24 commemorative stones from important places associated with Roosevelt's life, was dedicated in the park in 1947.

**B Oyster Bay Post Office**, 1 Shore Avenue : Opened in 1936, this Works Progress Administration (WPA) building has murals in its lobby that commemorate both Oyster Bay History and Theodore Roosevelt. One of the murals, painted by artist Ernest Peixotto, depicts the Roosevelt children with their father at Sagamore Hill. A bust of Roosevelt by artist Leo Lentelli is also located in the lobby. The post office is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Works Progress Administration (1935-43) was an agency established during the Great Depression which provided millions of Americans with jobs on a variety of public works and welfare projects.)

**C Town Hall Lawn**, 74 Audrey Avenue : A portrait bust of Theodore Roosevelt by sculptor Gregg Glasson is next to the Oyster Bay Honor Roll which commemorates Oyster Bay citizens who died serving their country. Three of TR's four sons are listed on the memorial : Lt. Quentin Roosevelt, who died in WWI, Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Maj. Kermit Roosevelt, who died in WWII.

**D Theodore Roosevelt-Rough Rider Sculpture**, Berry Hill and Pine Hollow Roads : Created by noted sculptor A. Phimister Proctor in 1922, the statue was commissioned by Dr. Henry Waldo Cox, whom Roosevelt had met and became friends while in North Dakota, the original statue is installed in Portland, Oregon. The Oyster Bay statue was cast from the original 1922 mold and dedicated October 29, 2005.



For more in-depth information about many of the sites listed in this bulletin, visitors are welcome to take the Oyster Bay History Walk. The History walk is a self-guided audio walking tour of 30 historic sites in Oyster Bay. Listening devices may be picked up at the Bakery Café at 124 South Street. The tour is a project of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association. For an interactive version of the tour and more information about Oyster Bay, visit [www.oysterbaymainstreet.org](http://www.oysterbaymainstreet.org).