

A Visit to Sagamore Hill

By Don Sutherland

At a time when the nation seems devoid of far-sighted leadership, it is retreating both from world affairs and environmental protection, there are historic sites not far from the Bronx that provide a vivid reminder that such circumstances have, at least so far, been uncommon in the nation's history. Whether today's political currents will endure and sweep the nation onto a new historical trajectory remains to be seen.

Approximately 32 miles from the Bronx lies one such historic site from which one can obtain a different perspective. Out in Oyster Bay is Sagamore Hill.

Sagamore Hill served as President Theodore Roosevelt's home from 1885 until his passing in 1919. During his Presidency, it also served as his "Summer White House."

Roosevelt was instrumental in bringing the United States into what would become its customary role following World War II, one characterized by diplomacy, power, and leadership on the world stage. That the United States is currently in the midst of a dramatic disengagement from world affairs may well be temporary if the Roosevelt example continues to provide historical definition for future generations of American political leaders.

Roosevelt introduced a sophisticated foreign policy based on the balance of power, interdependence, and deterrence. During his tenure, the United States played a leading diplomatic role. A crowning accomplishment of that diplomacy was the Treaty of Portsmouth that ended the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War. For his role in mediating the negotiations, Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

Roosevelt was also far ahead of his time in seeking to preserve the nation's wilderness and its open spaces. He established the United States Forest Service, 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, 4 national game preserves, 5 national parks, and 18 national monuments. All told, he extended federal protection to approximately 230 million acres.

If anything, conservation was at the heart of whom Roosevelt was. Conservation was a central part of the Roosevelt family's identity. Inscribed above one of the doorways to his Sagamore Hill home is the Latin phrase, "Qui Plantavit Curabit." That phrase, which was the Roosevelt family motto, means, "He who has planted will preserve."

Below are six photos from President Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill home.





