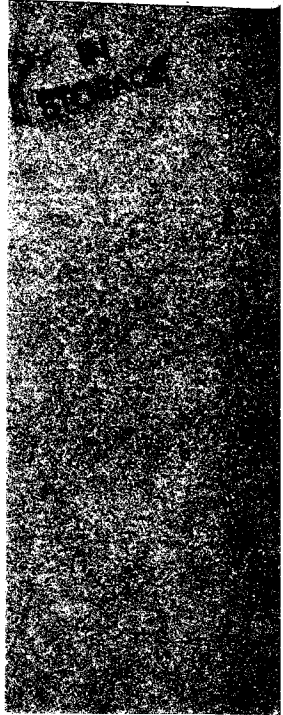


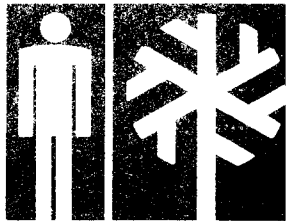
# interpretive prospectus

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## THEODORE ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL



NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / NEW YORK

**RECOMMENDED**

**John W. Bright / Chief, Office of Environmental Planning and Design, August 26, 1970**

**APPROVED**

**George A. Palmer / Acting Director, Northeast Region, August 26, 1970**

# interpretive prospectus

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# THEODORE ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / NEW YORK

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Authorization**

The Ansley Wilcox House National Historic Site was authorized by Public Law 89-708, approved November 2, 1966. This act provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall acquire the Ansley Wilcox House property. It further provides for operation and maintenance, by a local group and at no expense to the United States, as a national historic site for the inspiration and benefit of the people. It authorizes the appropriation of not more than \$250,000 for acquisition and not more than \$50,000 for restoration. The Secretary shall not obligate any funds nor establish the property as a national historic site in Federal ownership unless, and until, he has obtained commitments for donation of funds or services which he judges to be sufficient to complete restoration of the property and to operate and maintain it. The Secretary shall determine at the beginning of each fiscal year whether donations of funds or services will be forthcoming for this purpose. If he finds that sufficient donated funds or services will not be available to carry on or complete restoration and to operate the property, he shall dispose of the property for not less than its fair market value. Proceeds from such a disposal would be credited to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

### **Cooperative Agreement**

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation was formed on March 17, 1967, replacing the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Committee, to undertake the cooperative work with the National Park Service in restoration and operation of the Ansley Wilcox House. The Master Plan was completed on September 18, 1967, and the Cooperative Agreement between the National Park Service and the Foundation was signed on May 23, 1969.

The Agreement provides that the Foundation shall provide funds to finance studies, investigations, and plans for the restoration of the property; make commitments of funds for the estimated costs of restoration, repair, and rehabilitation of the property, and the continuing expenses of operation and maintenance; will exert its best efforts to preserve, protect, operate, and maintain the property in accordance with National Park Service standards; provide staff; make no alterations or major repairs to the property without approval; provide insurance, interpretive services, maintain records, provide tentative budgets. It may not discriminate because of race, creed, color, sex or national origin in employment practices or facilities or services offered to the general public. The Foundation is permitted to sublet portions of the property.

The Park Service shall undertake the preparation and completion of studies in accordance with the Master Plan and estimate; these include an historic structures report, interpretive prospectus, exhibit plan, plans and estimates for restoration and rehabilitation, and an estimate of annual cost of operation; it shall acquire the property on behalf of the United States and commence and complete the restoration, repair and rehabilitation of the property; and it shall make the property available to the Foundation at no rental charge for a period of ten years, renewable for successive ten year periods. The Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society will perform managerial functions under an agreement with the Foundation and has the option of preparing the professional studies named above, subject to National Park Service review and approval.

The name of the site was officially established as the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site on June 18, 1970. The proposed use of the structure will be to preserve the Ansley Wilcox House and interpret the Inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt as President of the United States in this house on September 14, 1901; the meaning of the event to the Nation; and the historic development of the site. The front part of the house on the first floor will be developed as an historic house museum, partially furnished and partially used as a visitor reception and exhibit space. The remainder of the house will be available for lease to private organizations for activities compatible with the primary "historic site" purpose.

#### **History of Occupancy**

The house is on land owned by the Holland Land Company, surveyed by their agent, and sold to Ebenezer Walden, the first licensed lawyer in western New York. He leased the land in 1837 to the Federal Government which built the Pointsett Barracks, of which the house is the only remaining structure. Dr. Wood, a surgeon, with his wife, daughter of Zachary Taylor, and their family resided on one side of the double house; Captain Casey lived in the other half. In 1845 the Pointsett Barracks was abandoned.

Walden sold the land to Alanson Palmer in 1835, who held it for a short time and sold it to Benjamin Rathbun, proprietor of the Eagle Tavern and a financial giant of the area. He went bankrupt in the Panic of 1837 and the property was made available to satisfy his creditors.

In 1847 Walden sold the site to Joseph G. Masten, former Mayor of the City, and he sold the land ten years later to Oliver Lee and the Company Bank of Buffalo, which was sold at auction to Gilbert L. Wilson. At the time of his death the property passed to his son. The parcel on which the house stands was sold to Albert P. Laning, a lawyer who had succeeded to the practice of Joseph G. Masten. At the time of Laning's death his widow sold the property to Frederick A. Bell who was active in the coal, lumber, and grain elevating business. In 1883 Alfred Bell of Rochester, New York, purchased the property and the next day it was sold to Dexter P. Rumsey. Rumsey bequeathed the property to his daughter, Mrs. Mary Rumsey Wilcox, for her lifetime use. She was the wife of Ansley Wilcox, a Buffalo attorney, distinguished for his contributions to social work and civil service at all levels of government. Ansley Wilcox died in 1930, and his wife three years later.

from most. Without some introduction to the meaning of the event, the library would be but one more cluttered Victorian room of which many can be seen in local historical societies across the country.

Visitors will include school groups from area public and parochial systems, both in formal classroom groups and history clubs; members of civic organizations, women's groups, senior citizen groups, fraternal and veterans organizations; federally sponsored programs for underprivileged youth; local historical societies' members; family groups; convention visitors as well as domestic and foreign tourists to the Niagara Frontier with an especially heavy traffic during the summer period. These visitors will be of all ages, all nationalities, male and female, with a wide range of formal education, cultural interest, and scope of historical background. Their average length of stay will be about a half-hour.

### **House and Grounds**

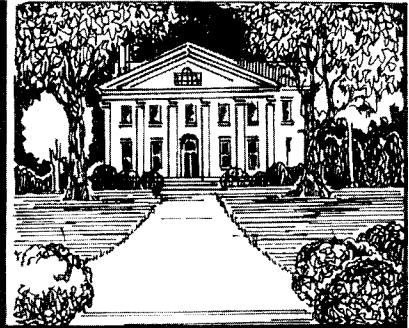
The grounds, 1.026 acres, as shown on the sketch plan are, bounded on the west by Delaware Avenue, on the east by Franklin Street, and on the north and south by commercial properties, a parking lot and a school. The house stands on a rise, and is set well back from Delaware Avenue. The intervening space has trees, shrubs, and lawn. A blacktop drive along the north boundary provides a passage from Delaware Avenue to the rear of the property. The grounds to the rear are dotted with elms, but are entirely paved and in use for parking. Along the south boundary, a passage leads to a drive-in teller's window of the Liberty National Bank & Trust Co. and, via a ramp, to the rear of the property and Franklin Street.

The two and one-half story house with basement is of brick, painted white, and has composition roll roofing. From Delaware Avenue, stone steps and a walk lead to the front entrance under a two-story Tuscan colonnaded portico across the front, with a Palladian window in the pediment. There is also a side entrance from the north driveway. On the south a wide wood terrace, dating from the restaurant period, extends out from another side entrance. The exterior is in sound condition with the exception of one section of deteriorated brickwork and deteriorated woodwork here and there.

The basement is dry, and is accessible from both outside and within the house. Basement floors are partly cement and partly unfinished, walls are stone and brick, and the ceiling is formed of exposed construction. The basement has one bathroom and contains an oil-fired boiler, two oil tanks, a panelboard, and other equipment both active and abandoned.

The first floor rooms have wooden floors, plaster walls, and plaster and brick walls, and wood ceilings. Several first floor rooms retain substantial elements of original

ANSLEY  
WILCOX  
HOUSE



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Oliver M. and Kathryn Lawrence, as tenants of the Rumsey estate, purchased the house and operated a restaurant which closed in 1957, at which time it was sold to 641 Delaware Avenue Corporation who took possession. In 1959 the Liberty National Bank leased part of the land, and in 1964 the Benderson Development Corporation purchased the building to make a parking lot. The Liberty National Bank & Trust Company then purchased the property to hold it until funds and legislation could be obtained to ensure its permanent protection.

Having accomplished the first two objectives, the actual viewing of the room in which the event took place will take on greater meaning. Considerable emphasis will be placed on the orderly transfer of government at a time of national crisis. The event took place with little fanfare and was witnessed by few persons.

The clutter and opulence of the room itself will achieve an additional objective, to give the visitor a greater appreciation of the different tastes at the turn of the century. The contrast between the clutter of the library as it was the day of the inauguration and the antiseptic cleanliness of the modern home will give an insight to changing tastes and attitudes.

The story of the site is not that of a common man, but of men who led the community over a long period of time, either militarily, politically, economically or socially. As the home of one of the local leaders, it was chosen as the headquarters for Theodore Roosevelt and as a result became the site of the inauguration. The history of this house and its condition during that event should aid in understanding the people who took part.

As a sub-theme, the story of saving the house from destruction and its subsequent restoration will provide the visitor with an insight into the entire historic preservation movement.

Questions that will be answered by the interpretive program:

- Why did the inauguration take place in the Wilcox House and at this time?
- How was the transfer of national government handled?
- What kind of personality did McKinley have and how did Roosevelt appear in contrast?
- Why was the Wilcox House situated where it is?
- How was it preserved?

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**

The objective of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is three-fold. First, to relate the importance of the inauguration in the sweep of American history, second to relate the history of the site and house, and third to give an insight into the general temper of America at the turn of the century.

The first goal, to be achieved primarily through the audiovisual presentation, is to relate to the visitor the state of the Nation before the inauguration of Roosevelt: the conception of the limited authority of the President and the limited role which America should play in world affairs, and the limited role of the Federal Government in internal affairs. The personal attitudes of McKinley, the attitudes of Congress and the attitudes of the people and the press will be in focus.

In contrast, the attitudes of the new administration under Roosevelt will be portrayed. The sharp reversal of American policy toward the world and the Federal Government's policy toward internal affairs, especially conservation of natural resources and consumer protection.

The second objective, to relate the history of the site and the house to give the reason for the event taking place here, will be briefly introduced in the audiovisual presentation, but will primarily be handled by the three-dimensional exhibits and interpretive publications. The fact that the Wilcox House was a center of social and political leadership in the Buffalo area and the relationship of Theodore Roosevelt to Ansley Wilcox will be developed. The subsequent history of the house will also be related.

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## **FACTORS INFLUENCING SELECTION OF INTERPRETIVE MEANS**

### **The Visitors**

Some adult visitors will come to the site with some basic ideas about Theodore Roosevelt and life in the early twentieth century. Many adults and children, however, will have little, if any, background. To introduce both classes of visitors to the restored library without thorough orientation would result in a negative reaction

decor, such as the walls, ceilings, and fireplaces of the library and the morning room. The remaining first floor rooms have undergone various degrees of alteration and deterioration. There is one toilet facility near the north entrance.

Two sets of stairs provide access to the second floor. This floor contains one large room in the front, five other rooms, a hall, two bathrooms and a restroom. Floor coverings vary; some are asphalt tile, some wood. The hall is carpeted, and one room has exposed subfloor. Walls and ceilings are either papered or painted plaster.

Unlike the other two floors, the third floor has low ceilings (about seven feet) owing to the gable arrangement. There are a number of naturally lighted rooms and one bath. Finishes are similar to those of the second floor. The third floor is accessible by a single stair.

The house is now vacant and devoid of furniture, but is heated. Its interior has undergone neglect and some vandalism. The total space available for the interpretive program is: the porch, the library where the inauguration took place, the north parlor to be used as an exhibit area, the morning room to be used for general orientation, the north entry hall and adjacent toilet areas to be used for sales desk and reception area, and the servants' rooms to be used for restrooms and access hallway. The remainder of the house is available for leasing.

Because of the limited space available at the front of the house and the location of the parking lot to the rear, it is desirable for the visitors to enter at the north side or carriage entrance. The interpretation will begin when the visitor leaves his automobile at the rear of the building. Moving through the landscaped area, he sees an appropriate sign designating the location of the carriage house. The drive will be restored.

To obtain the best traffic flow through the house, visitors will be directed at the sales-reception desk in the entry hall to enter the orientation room (morning room) to view a brief audiovisual presentation describing events surrounding the house's historic significance; from there to the center hallway to view through the doorways and a "see-through" wall the interior restoration of the library where the inauguration took place; then to the north parlor (exhibit area) where exhibits of artifacts, manuscripts and paintings will serve to highlight the importance of the site.

### **Parking Facilities and Urban Environment**

The grounds to the rear of the mansion will be used for parking and to provide a well-designed, landscaped open space. The Liberty Bank has access to this area from Delaware Avenue through its drive-in window and ramp; and a minimum of 15 parking spaces plus an access through to Franklin Street must be provided for its use. In

addition, 15 parking spaces should be provided for users of adaptive space (tenants) in the Wilcox House and 15 more for visitors. All 45 spaces will be available on weekends when the heaviest (non-school) attendance is expected. Plantings along both property lines will screen adjacent uses from view. The remaining grounds will be landscaped to provide an attractive setting for the rear of the mansion as viewed from the parking areas, and to provide attractive open space into which the parking and access drive are blended. Bus parking will be provided on Delaware Avenue through agreement with the city. The placement of visitor parking at the rear of the mansion dictates use of the side (north) entrance, rather than the Delaware Avenue entrance.

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is a dignified and attractive mansion in a vicinity which is changing from residential to modern commercial use, and which has already lost several of the mansions which gave it its original character.

The urban environment is Delaware Avenue with its Victorian homes once shielded from the street by triple rows of elms. In 1901 it was Buffalo's finest residential street. Indeed, it was one of the finest residential streets in the United States. Franklin Street in the vicinity of the site was perhaps less impressive, but it is still a very pleasant residential street.

With the income tax, World War I, and the depression, many of the older houses along Delaware Avenue were converted to institutional use, became multi-family residences, or were replaced by modern commercial buildings. The area surrounding the site is now a melange of Victorian mansions, many now in use as nursing homes, parking lots, modern office buildings, hotels, motels and restaurants, and older commercial structures. The trend from residential to institutional and commercial use continues, with an increased emphasis on building modern offices and motels rather than adapting older structures to office use. Almost all surrounding lands are privately owned.

Establishment of the national historic site will preserve the house as a community landmark. Development of the grounds will help to stabilize use, particularly the residential and professional office use along the east side of Franklin Street, by providing an attractive open green space where there is now a blacktop parking field. While the site will attract visitors to downtown Buffalo, its major contribution to the regional use pattern will be as a tie with the neighborhood's past, and as an esthetically pleasing structure in a well-landscaped setting.

### **The Interpretive Problem**

The basic problem in the interpretive plan is to build up visitor interest to the point that the restored library becomes a significant moment in our national history.

Considerable attention must be given to visitor orientation if the exposure to the restored library is to have its full meaning. The time the visitor will actually spend inside the site will be less than one hour. Because the message must be transmitted in a relatively small area, the program must be intensive and take full advantage of all available media. The out-of-town visitor will have many other places on his itinerary, and retaining the interest of the visitor for a period of more than half an hour will require considerable ingenuity.

These reasons point up the need for extreme care in the presentation offered in the orientation centered in the morning room. In this room all visitors will be captive; in the other rooms casual adult visitors may be released to travel at their own pace.

Orientation will be provided in the morning room using an audiovisual presentation. This room in which Roosevelt issued a proclamation on the death of President McKinley, his first official act after taking the oath of office, is a particularly appropriate place in which to present the significance of Theodore Roosevelt and his administration. It is also at this point that the complex story of American internal and foreign affairs can be told most effectively. The main aspect of the program will be the visit to the restored library itself, followed by later exposure to the north parlor which will contain exhibits relating the history of the site and house.

The problem to be solved through grounds development is that of providing an attractive and effective setting for the mansion while, at the same time, providing access, parking, and walks for visitor circulation, and doing so within a rather limited area.

Grounds to the front and sides of the mansion will be treated so as to recreate the historic setting insofar as possible. To this end, such minor adjustments in plantings, step and walk surfaces, railings, and so forth should be made, the carriage drive restored, and the outline of the carriage house marked. Screen planting should be provided along the north property line to at least partially obscure the adjacent Prudential Insurance building. Screen planting, window shades, and draperies should also be used to obscure the Liberty Bank as viewed through the windows of the library and morning room.

### **Weather**

The climate of Buffalo is typical of the eastern Great Lakes region. Summers are warm, with a mean daily maximum temperature of 81.9° in July. Winters are cold, with a mean daily minimum temperature of 17.1° in February. Record low of minus 21° occurred in February 1934.

Precipitation averages 32 inches a year, and is evenly distributed throughout the year. Maximum rainfall recorded in a 24-hour period was 4.26 inches in August 1893. Maximum snowfall for a like period was 24.3 inches in December 1945. Mean annual snowfalls total 75.4 inches.

Prevailing winds are from the south and southwest, with a mean hourly speed of 14.5 miles per hour. Maximum velocity of 91 miles per hour occurred in January 1950. Despite Buffalo's reputation for severe winters, few if any days are such that traffic cannot move at a reasonable pace in the city. Because the major share of the interpretation will be conducted indoors, the outside climate will affect only the ability of the visitor to reach the site.

The period of heaviest (non-school) visitation will be during the summer months when the touring motorist will make up a steady stream of traffic. During this period, the Buffalo summer climate is almost resort-like in nature. A few warm, humid days may affect the comfort of the visitor indoors. During the early spring and late fall, Sunday visitation will be considerable, and the number of persons in the building might create some discomfort on specific days. However, the limited number of days during which these conditions exist does not make air-conditioning economical. Adequate ventilation should be provided however.

#### **Expected Visitation**

It is difficult to estimate potential use. The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society is used by approximately 110,000 people annually, of whom 30,000 are school children. Since the Ansley Wilcox House is in the downtown area, potential use will be less. It is readily accessible from the interstate system and by public transportation. An annual visitation of 20,000 to 30,000 seems a reasonable estimate.

#### **Secret Service Review**

The exhibits in the North Parlor relating to President McKinley's assassination will be subdued in design and construction. Some of the artifacts relating to the assassination will be exhibited.

As the agency charged with the protection of the President of the United States, the United States Secret Service is concerned with anything which might trigger a psychopathic personality. Therefore, any interpretive material on the assassination of President McKinley should be cleared with the Chief of the Bureau.

#### **Limited Visitor Reception Space**

The North Entry Hall is small. A maximum of 12 to 15 visitors can be there at any one time. There is little room for large groups to browse through gift and publica-

tion items at the reception desk, or to obtain tickets, and no room for coatroom facilities. Therefore visitors will be encouraged to enter the morning room (orientation room) where they may sit on folding chairs or period settees along the walls to view the projection screen. The restrooms will be accessible through the same room and will be used by both the tenants and the visitors. School children in groups will leave their coats on the folding chairs in the morning room; adults will usually elect to wear or carry their coats through the remainder of the tour.

#### **Availability of Objects**

The collections of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society will be available for use in the site. These collections dating back to 1862, will be a rich source of related (and similar) items to illustrate the story.

At the present time a systematic search is being conducted for furniture and other accessories used in the Wilcox House. Some items have been collected which either have been used in the site, according to the donors, or are similar to those pictured in the photographs of the room. These donations are being made to the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society which will loan them to the site.

The Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society also has an extensive collection of photographs and other pictorial material from which exhibit material may be drawn. Manuscripts and printed sources will serve to provide information for the creation of additional artwork as needed.

The Historical Society has ample data available for the interpretation of the site. The staff of the Historical Society will be actively engaged in the research and planning of the exhibits and audiovisual interpretation.

Some objects will be obtained on loan from other Theodore Roosevelt memorials which have ample collections in storage.

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## **FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO INTERPRETIVE METHODS AND MEDIA**

#### **Purpose**

In summary, the purpose of the interpretive program should be to present: the significance of the inauguration in terms of the United States of 1901, before and after, with some attention to the general programs and policies of William McKinley, the Pan-American Exposition held in Buffalo in 1901, and the assassination of

McKinley on the grounds of the Exposition, and the business of government carried on in Buffalo the week following. The program will also discuss the significance of the inauguration including: the reason for Theodore Roosevelt being in Buffalo, the orderly transfer of the business of government, and the national and international implications of the new administration. Also covered will be the history of the house, the Pointsett Barracks, owners prior to Ansley Wilcox, its use by the Ansley Wilcox Family, and subsequent owners. The general temper of America at the turn of the century will be summarized and the process of restoring the site will be described.

The interpretive challenge should be met by fully restoring and refurnishing the library and making this room the focus of the interpretation of the inauguration itself. The porch, the main hall, and the morning room, all of which played a part in the events of the day, should be partially restored and some representative furnishings replaced. The morning room will be used for a general orientation through an audiovisual presentation. The north parlor will provide space for "high-lighting" interpretation of the inauguration, the history of the house and its occupants and the restoration.

## **Analysis**

### ■ North Entry and Hallway

The North Entry opens into a hallway where the visitor will find on his left a sales and reception counter where gift items, pamphlets, books, and other descriptive literature will be sold and/or distributed without charge. Tickets will be sold by the receptionist who will also operate the audiovisual presentation in the morning room, the tape for the library viewers and the exhibit room tape materials.

### ■ The Morning Room

The morning room will be used for orientation of groups and individual visitors. The message, a "stage-setter" for visitor viewing of the restored library, will cover primarily the objectives one and three of the interpretive outline. It will contain about 40 folding chairs, arranged for general viewing of the projection screen and period furnishings along the walls. The essential architectural characteristics of the period will be maintained.

### ■ Restrooms

Two restrooms will be constructed in the servants' rooms for the use of the visitors. An entry hall from the morning room will be constructed to the restrooms.



#### ■ Center Hallway and Library

Following the brief orientation in the morning room, visitors will enter the center hallway which will serve as a viewing gallery for the restored library through the open doors and a specially constructed "see-through" wall. Period furnishings, draperies and floor covering will be installed to restore this room to the way it looked on September 14, 1901. No manikins will be used, but back lighting, spot lighting of individual items and markings will serve to orient the visitor to the important aspects of the scene they are witnessing. Both descriptive label and audio presentation may be used.

The hallway will have one settee for several persons to be seated; others will stand near the library wall. The front entrance will not normally be used for entrance or exit by visitors, but through the windows they may see porch furnishings as shown in 1901 photographs, i.e., rockers, planters, flag. These areas will be concerned primarily with the inauguration.

#### ■ North Parlor

From the center hallway visitors will enter the north parlor to view exhibits pertaining to the events that led up to the assassination, the Pan-American Exposition, the history of the house and its several occupants, and the plans and events that led to the restoration of the house.

From the exhibit area, visitors will again find themselves in the north entry hall opposite the sales-reception counter. They will exit through this doorway and retrace their steps to Delaware Avenue or to the parking lot located in the rear of the property. If possible the visitor will have the option of leaving via the front door on Delaware Avenue.

#### ■ Guided Tours

Guided tours of the house would begin at the north entry. Volunteer and paid guides, some in 1901 costume, would greet the groups near the reception-sales counter, arrange for tickets for each member of the group, and direct them to the morning room for the general audiovisual presentation. Following this brief orientation the guide will permit the group members to leave their outer garments on the folding chairs while touring the other rooms. The guide will escort the group to the center hallway and will briefly describe the event that took place inside the library which can be viewed through the open doorways and the specially constructed "see-through" wall. The guide will describe the significance of the event in line with the age, special interests and other factors of the group, and will answer questions. The guide will then escort the group to the north parlor to view

the exhibits, and will briefly cover the history of the house and its occupants, the Pan-American Exposition, the assassination, the orderly transfer of government, and the policies and life of Theodore Roosevelt. The guide will return the group to their coats in the orientation room via the north entry hallway.

During the spring, summer, and early autumn months when the tours may be spaced closer together, and when outer clothing need not be left in the orientation room, Tour A may proceed to view the library from the center hallway, while Tour B is entering the north entry hallway and the orientation room. Tour B may observe the library while Tour A is viewing the exhibits in the north parlor. Taped materials would not be played while tour groups with guides are in either the center hallway or the north parlor.

#### ■ Self-guided Tour

The visitors arriving alone or with one or two others will be able to take self-guided tours of the house, using a prepared folder, reading legends mounted on the center hallway wall and on the exhibits in the north parlor and listening to short taped materials.

#### **The Exhibits**

The restored library would provide a feeling of reality by reassembling in full dimension the actual room in which the inauguration took place.

The museum exhibit would be contained in the parlor north of the library. The exhibits would relate the story of the site and the house and would contain a synopsis of the material presented in the audiovisual presentation. Having made the visitor aware of the historic significance of the event, through the audiovisual presentation, the museum exhibit now creates an awareness of the importance of the site itself, giving some reason for the event taking place at that particular place.

The exhibit room walls and exhibit cases will cover eight historic phases: the building as part of Pointsett Barracks, the Ansley Wilcox House, the Restoration of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Site, the Pan-American Exposition of 1901; the Inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt—the Man, Theodore Roosevelt—His Place in History and his Policies. All exhibits in this room will be prepared and installed by the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society in accordance with plans approved by the National Park Service. All manuscripts, paintings and artifacts will be loaned by the Society. All exhibit preparation costs will be borne by the Society.

## Audiovisual Programs

The significance of the site is related to the results of the historic event which occurred there rather than to the event itself. The actual event was a brief informal occasion seen by few, but the changes in American life which occurred after the event are of great significance. Therefore, the concern of the interpretive program should be to relate what America was before and what it was in the decade after, as the United States emerged as a world power and also began to be concerned about the conservation of its natural resources. The orderly transfer of government will be emphasized.

Because of the wide range of this objective, it can best be covered in an audiovisual presentation in the morning room. The audiovisual orientation can be a stimulating experience. A motion picture may be substituted for the slides to produce a more dependable operation as well as to open the path for more dramatic presentation.

The number of visitors who could view the message at one time would be approximately 40. Provisions should be made for about 10 more in the event of special circumstances.

The scripts would touch the major points of the message.

### Orientation Room Audiovisual Presentation

The 9-10 minute orientation message would include:

	Minutes	Slides
What America Was Like Before 1900	1	10
The House — Its Architectural Features and the Social Life Centered There	2	20
History of the House — From Pointsett Barracks to Restoration	1	10
Pan-American Exposition, Assassination, Inauguration	2	20
Appraisal of Theodore Roosevelt by His Daughter, "As I Remember Him"	3	20

An introductory voice would present numerous "personalities" to speak on one of the above titles. With music representative of a nineteenth century agrarian society an old man's voice would describe life as it was before 1900. A woman with a cultured voice would describe the architectural features of the house that qualify it to

be cited as Buffalo's surviving example of Greek Revival style of architecture and would illustrate the house's role in Buffalo society of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The musical background would be gay and waltz-like. A crisp business-like man's voice would cover the history of the house, from its days as officers' quarters for a military installation through various owners, to its recent restoration—to the strains of martial music. Using music representative of modern television introduction to news coverage, a Secret Service man would describe the President's Day at the Pan-American Exposition—what the fairgrounds looked like, the story of the assassination. Perhaps Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth would consent to tell of her father as she knew him, and would characterize not only Roosevelt's personality, but his government, its policies and accomplishments, the orderly transfer of government, and the significance of change in our Nation's Chief of State domestically and internationally.

### *What America Was Like Before 1900*

Life was much simpler. An evening of music at home, a trolley car or train ride in the country, a look at one of the new "horseless carriages" were some of the pleasures. However, for some the depression of 1893 meant that jobs were not as plentiful and the economy was shaky. The industrial revolution was in high gear. Immigrants were arriving in large numbers. The Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, and after the brief conflict, the United States found itself in a position of power with dependencies. The President of the United States was William McKinley who came from a farming family in Ohio.

### *The House — Its Architectural Features and the Social Life Centered There*

The house is considered the best surviving example of Greek Revival architecture in Buffalo. The oldest part (the front rooms) was built in 1838 as officers' quarters for the Pointsett Barracks. Leaded glass side lights in the 1894 portion, the original fireplace and mantel, the decorative plaster ceiling and the central Adamesque ornament have been retained in the restoration.

A number of well-known officers served at Pointsett Barracks during the 1830's and 1840's such as Bennett Riley and Dr. Robert Wood. In this house the barracks commander entertained his military guests as well as his own friends. Millard Fillmore, then a young lawyer in Buffalo, attended functions in this building.

While the Wilcox family lived in the house, it was often the setting for events worthy of their social position. Mr. Wilcox was a lawyer of note both in the community and statewide and was active in social work and civil service reform. His wife was the daughter of another prominent family—the Rumseys, who had pioneered in the leather industry in western New York.

### *History of the House*

After its use as a military post, the building passed into private ownership in 1847, as the home of Joseph G. Masten. Albert P. Laning acquired the house in 1863, at a time when Delaware Avenue was an important residential street in Buffalo. Frederick A. Bell was the next owner and sold it to Dexter P. Rumsey who purchased it for his daughter, Mary Grace and her husband, Ansley Wilcox. They lived in the house until their deaths in the 1930's. In 1938 Oliver Lawrence used the property for a restaurant until the 1960's when a real estate speculator leased the land with the intention of razing the building to create a parking lot. The Liberty National Bank & Trust Company purchased the property at the time when local interest was organized to save the landmark. It was held by the bank until federal legislation was secured in November 1966, and the property subsequently became the property of the United States government. During the succeeding years it was restored to its 1901 condition and opened as the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site in 1971.

### *Pan-American Exposition, Assassination, Inauguration*

As Vice-President, Roosevelt came to Buffalo during the Spring of 1901, for the opening day ceremonies of the Pan-American Exposition. The Exposition was held on land north of the City of Buffalo to celebrate the birth of the new century and to present commercial and industrial developments to our hemispheric neighbors. McKinley came on September 5, 1901, designated as President's Day. He made a speech and on the following day, Friday, September 6, he went to the Temple of Music for a reception, arriving at 3:30 p.m. He took his position, and a line of greeters moved along rapidly. A few minutes after 4:00 p.m. a young man approached the President and fired two pistol shots. The assassin was Leon F. Czolgosz, a 28 year old ironworker from Detroit, Michigan, who believed that all government should be abolished.

### *Appraisal of Theodore Roosevelt by His Daughter, "As I Remember Him"*

Mrs. Longworth will be asked to describe life in the Roosevelt family as she remembers it, perhaps how Theodore Roosevelt may have described the events of inauguration day to his family, what the first changes might have been in their lives following his inauguration. She might comment on programs and accomplishments of his administration such as putting teeth in the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, passage of the Meat Inspection Act, the Pure Food and Drug Act, and the Mann Act, and securing effective railroad legislation. Roosevelt masterminded final arrangements for joining the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans with the Panama Canal. He involved himself in the Canada-Alaska border dispute, and he declared himself the umpire in the Russo-Japanese War for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize. He preferred to "carry

a big stick" particularly in his Latin American dealings. He understood power politics and the role America should play in the world.

*Audio for Library Presentation*

It was to this house that Theodore Roosevelt came as Vice-President of the United States on September 14, 1901, to take the Presidential oath in the Library, just thirteen hours after McKinley died in Buffalo. The message might include most of the following:

By special train the Vice President had been rushed to Buffalo from Vermont, following a speaking engagement. On September 10, the physician's reports being favorable, Roosevelt joined his wife and children in the Adirondacks. Before leaving Buffalo, the Vice-President gave his itinerary to his host, Ansley Wilcox. Some time after midnight on Friday, September 13, Mr. Wilcox sent word via Albany that McKinley's condition had worsened. Roosevelt had left camp to spend the day mountain climbing and late in the afternoon on his return, he met the guide with the telegram. At 11:00 p.m. Roosevelt started for Buffalo by buckboard riding fifty miles to the nearest railroad station to take a special train to Buffalo. Enroute he learned of McKinley's death early on the morning of the 14th. Roosevelt arrived in Buffalo at 1:30 p.m.

The new President went at once to pay his respects to Mrs. McKinley. He then was driven to the home of his friend, Ansley Wilcox, where the members of the Cabinet were waiting. Secretary of War Elihu Root suggested that Roosevelt take the oath of office at once. The President agreed, and, for the first time in our history, a President took his oath of office away from the Capitol.

Ansley Wilcox later described the day's events in a statement now in the collections of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society: "On Saturday, September 14th, 1901, at about 3:15 P.M., President Roosevelt took the oath of office in the library at our house in Buffalo, administered by Judge Hazel, in the presence of six members of the cabinet and a few other persons. At that time he made his announcement about continuing the policy of President McKinley, and requesting the cabinet to continue in office.

"Immediately afterwards an informal cabinet meeting was held in the library. Mr. Root, Secretary of War, asked me if I had the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, and at his request I found in Volume 8, page 34, the proclamation of President Arthur on the death of President Garfield, September 22nd, 1881. This was examined and considered at the cabinet meeting.

"Later, President Roosevelt, in our morning room, which he used as an office, drafted the manuscript of his proclamation announcing the death of President McKinley and appointing Thursday, September 19th, a day of national mourning, &c.....

"An hour or so later he read this in the morning room to a small company that happened to drop in, — Governor Odell, Congressman Lucius N. Littauer, William C. Warren, and myself, and asked us to criticize it. His stenographer, Mr. Loeb, had made a clean copy, and in this the changes which were then agreed upon were inserted. Unfortunately this second copy was thrown away. Governor Odell and Warren made few suggestions, — Littauer and I made a good many, several of which were adopted....

"The paper was sent up to Mr. Root, Secretary of War, and Mr. Cortelyou, Secretary to the President, at Milburn's house, and was issued that same evening and dated from Washington."

### **Other Exhibit and Furnishing Arrangements**

Carpeting, an umbrella stand and a settee for visitor use will be the only furnishings in the center hallway.

The morning room will have several settees, 40 folding chairs, paintings, window shades and draperies, art objects, tables and other period furnishings.

The front porch will have several rockers, planters and a 1901 or modern flag, as shown in the 1901 photograph.

No smoking is to be permitted in the building other than in the restrooms. Ash trays will be located at the entrance and in the restrooms.

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## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE OPERATION**

### **Sales-Reception Counter**

A receptionist — audiovisual operator — sales person will handle these functions from the north entry sales/reception counter. The counter will have open shelves for publications, free literature, postcards and gift items for sale. Tickets will be sold for admission to the house. The telephone will be placed in this area; some clerical duties will be carried on behind the counter. A cash register, desk, chair, typewriter, and file cabinet will be provided. In this area is the audiovisual cabinet, having projectors, slides, film, tape recordings, and other

appropriate equipment. Folding doors on either side of the rear projection screen will allow entrance through the hallway. A public telephone should be provided in the area of the restrooms.

### **Publications**

Publications available for free distribution should include:

- The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, a mini-folder with several pictures outlining the story of the site, similar to the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society museum brochure.
- Historic Map of Buffalo.
- Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society museum brochure.

Available for sale would be:

- A wide range of Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society publications including the series *Adventures in Western New York History* and *Niagara Frontier*.
- *The National Parks* by Tilden and the National Park Service publications as recommended.
- Local picture postcards including several views of the site at a small charge.
- A booklet on the site at the price of 75 cents which would be published as part of the series *Adventures in Western New York History* and in the same form. The Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society would publish the pamphlet and guarantee a wide distribution in the schools and libraries of New York State.
- Published biographies of, and books by, Theodore Roosevelt.
- Cartoon or coloring book for pre-school and elementary grades.
- Publications from the Sagamore Hill and Theodore Roosevelt birthplace.

### **Statement of Research Status**

At the present time the staff of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society and a committee of the Junior League of Buffalo are assembling information for use in the interpretation of the site. The furnishings plan is in a first-draft stage. The collections of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society are yielding the needed information and many of the artifacts to be employed in the three-dimensional exhibits.



An initial draft of the audiovisual script with accompanying color slides has been prepared. Final editing of the presentation is in progress.

Artifacts to be used in the morning room and the north parlor to amplify the presentation

	Equal to Erie County Grade	Salary
Curator	IX	\$ 7,980
Receptionist	III	4,615
Maintenance Man	V	5,400
Part-Time Guides—\$1.85 per hour		5,110*
		<u>\$23,105</u>

\*Computed on the basis of 2,920 hours of operation per year (365 days at 8 hours per day) with two guides on duty at all times.

## COST ESTIMATES

	Exhibits	Refurbishing
Visitor Reception Area	0	\$ 3,550
Morning Room (Visitor Orientation)	_____	4,100
Audiovisual equipment	\$ 1,430**	_____
Folding chairs	500**	_____
Cost of production of audiovisual materials	**	_____
Hallway	**	7,300
North Parlor (Exhibit Room)	12,000	3,600
Library	_____	_____
Restoration	_____	19,500
Artifacts Furnishings	10,000**	_____
	\$23,930 **	\$38,050

\*\*Cost to be borne by the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society

Prepared by

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**