



# Foundation Document Overview

## Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site

New York

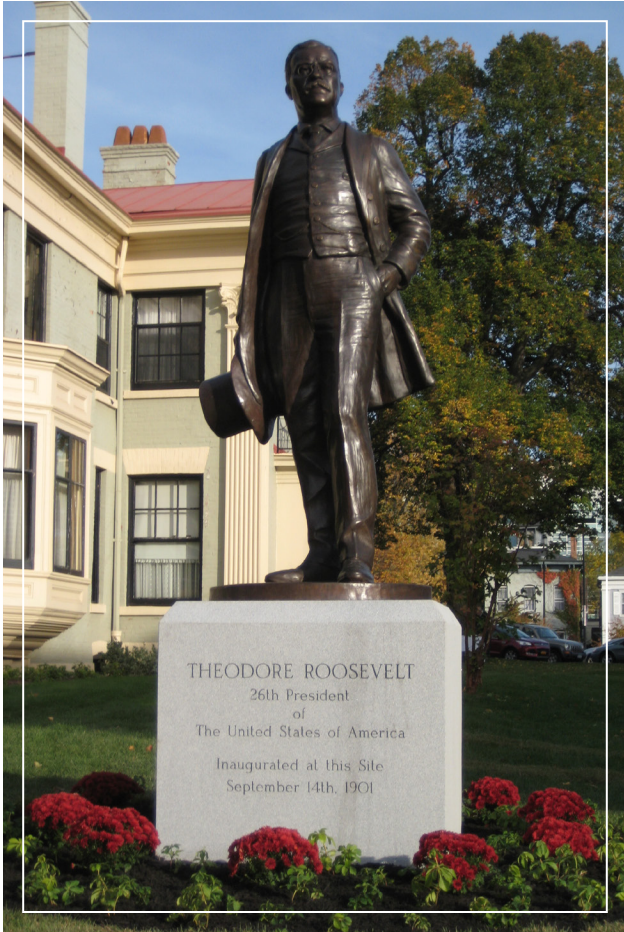


### Contact Information

For more information about the *Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site Foundation Document*, contact: [thri\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:thri_superintendent@nps.gov) or (716) 884-0095 or write to: Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, 641 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202



## Purpose



*The National Park Service and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation preserve, as a national historic site, the home in Buffalo, New York, where Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office as the 26th president of the United States. THEODORE ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE provides opportunities for the public to understand the historic events surrounding the inauguration, and conveys the lasting significance of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency.*

## Significance

Significance statements express why Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

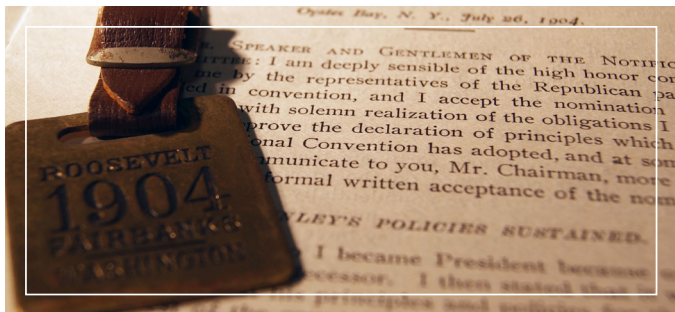
- Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office in the library of the Ansley Wilcox House. This is one of only four times when a U.S. presidential inauguration took place outside the nation's capital.
- The inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt as the 26th president illustrates the U.S. democratic process and the peaceful transfer of power even in times of crisis such as the assassination of a president.
- Roosevelt's 1901 inauguration launched a presidency that has had a major influence on both the office of the presidency and the nation's development.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **The Ansley Wilcox House and Grounds.** The property's historical significance is derived from association with events surrounding the inauguration of President Theodore Roosevelt, which took place in the house on September 14, 1901. The property's period of national significance is thus around 1901. The 1901 fabric of the house is mostly intact, and it retains its immediate landscape setting of terraced lawns and axial walkway. The property's interior spaces retain important evidence related to the original architecture and domestic functions of the Wilcox household. The property continues to reflect its period of significance and presents a commanding presence on Delaware Avenue.
- **Museum Collections.** The collections housed at the national historic site comprise more than 5,000 objects including original furnishings, books, textiles, paintings and prints, clothing, china, glassware, and other domestic objects. Three rooms—the library, the dining room, and the morning room—are furnished with original and period pieces giving visitors some sense of what the house looked like during President Roosevelt's stay.
- **Cooperative Partnership for Management of the Park Unit.** The collaborative partnership between the National Park Service and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation was authorized by Congress to manage and interpret the Ansley Wilcox House property as a national historic site for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States. For more than 40 years, the National Park Service and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation have enjoyed a successful partnership that supports the continued operation of the park and public interest.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration, in Buffalo, New York, on September 14, 1901, following the assassination of President William McKinley, demonstrated the resiliency of the presidency, the American government, and the U.S. Constitution.
- The social and political turmoil that America was experiencing in the 19th and early 20th centuries influenced Theodore Roosevelt's presidency and challenged Americans to reevaluate what constitutes a just society.
- Theodore Roosevelt's presidency was one of the most active and influential in our nation's history and its policies continue to affect the nation to this day.





## Description

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is at 641 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York. The primary feature of the national historic site is the Greek-Revival Ansley Wilcox House. The house is an impressive three-story structure, with painted brick, a two-story colonnaded front portico, and a Palladian pediment window. Theodore Roosevelt's 1901 inauguration launched a presidency that has had a major influence on both the office of the presidency and our nation's development. Ansley Wilcox, a prominent lawyer, was a contemporary and acquaintance of Roosevelt and invited him to stay in his home when Roosevelt arrived in the city after President McKinley was shot at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. It was in the library of the Ansley Wilcox House that Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office following the assassination of President William McKinley.

In the early 20th century, Delaware Avenue was one of Buffalo's finest residential neighborhoods. Its streets were lined with rows of elms, and homes were set back from the wide boulevard. Today, the Ansley Wilcox House stands as a reminder of that era. The majority of the surrounding Victorian homes and grounds have been replaced by modern commercial structures. The character of the area has changed from a stately Victorian residential neighborhood to a bustling commercial downtown. Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is included within the Allentown Historic District, a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site comprises more than one acre of property bounded on the west by Delaware Avenue, on the east by Franklin Street, and on the north and south by contemporary commercial structures and a parking area.

The house is set back from Delaware Avenue by a manicured lawn with granite steps set into a rise leading to the front portico. There are several mature shade trees and numerous shrubs on the grounds. A partially paved drive leads from Delaware Avenue to the north side of the house. Built on the foundation of the original Wilcox Carriage House, the reconstructed Carriage House allows for visitor universal accessibility to the national historic site and includes climate-controlled storage area for its historic collection. A small brick storage structure has been developed on the northeastern corner of the national historic site. The southeast part of the site is devoted to parking for about 45 vehicles to serve visitors to the national historic site.

Since its establishment by Congress in 1966, the national historic site has been managed by a local board of trustees, the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation (Foundation), through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. The National Park Service and Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation share in operating costs, with the Foundation raising its portion in the local community.

