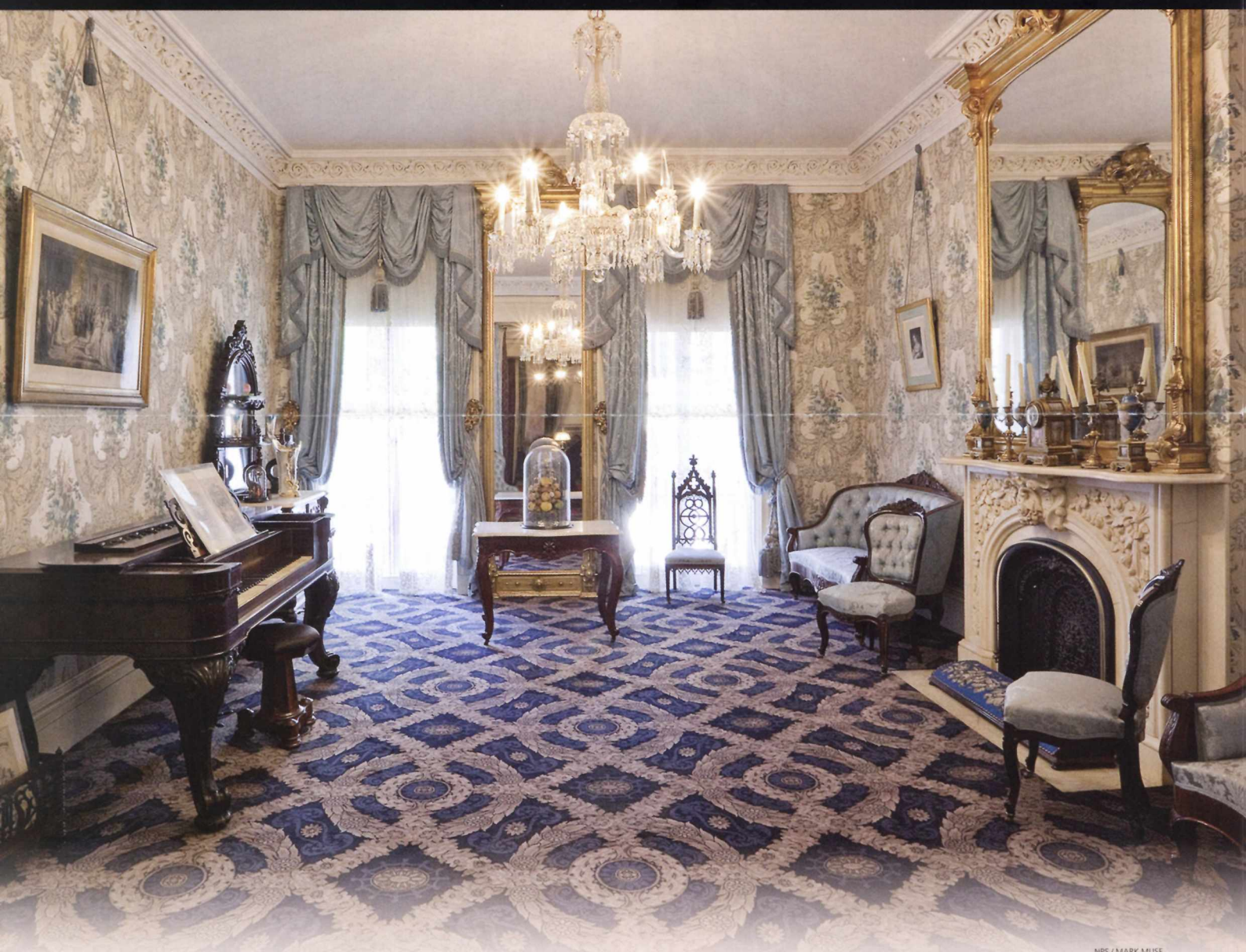


Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Historic Site
New York



NPS / MARK MUSE

“Nothing . . . can take the place of family life”

—Theodore Roosevelt at Pacific Theological Seminary, 1911

Theodore Roosevelt—champion of the “strenuous life,” larger-than-life hero to millions of Americans, and 26th president of the United States—was born on October 27, 1858, in the original brownstone townhouse on this site.



“Teedie,” as he was known to his family, spent the first 13 years of his life in this house. He was a frail and sickly child who suffered from severe asthma and other ailments. Physically unable to attend school on a regular basis, Theodore (*seen left at age four*) had some tutoring but gained

his education primarily on his own by extensive reading. He devoured books on nature, adventure, and history. He learned taxidermy and started what he called the “Roosevelt Museum of Natural History” in his room.

All four Roosevelt children—Theodore, Elliott, Anna, and Corinne—were born in the house the family occupied until the fall of 1872. When he was 10, Theodore accompanied his family to Europe, which proved a major ordeal for him because of illness and homesickness. Two years later, as Theodore’s health began to improve, his father gave him a warning and a challenge. “You have the mind,” he said, “but you have not the body, and without the help of the body, the mind cannot go as far as it

should. You must make your body.” Theodore vowed to improve his health. To help him, his father installed gymnasium equipment on the second-floor porch. Here young Theodore, along with many neighborhood youngsters, exercised daily. By the time the family made a second trip to Europe in 1872–73, his health problems no longer interfered with his activities.

After returning from Europe in 1873, the Roosevelts settled into a new home at 6 West 57th Street. The birthplace remained in the Roosevelt family until 1896. However, as the surrounding neighborhood gradually passed from residential to commercial, the house underwent a series of transformations that obliterated its original character. Reconstructed in 1920–23, it was donated to the National Park Service in 1962. The first floor contains the restored parlor, library, and dining room. The second floor consists of the bedroom where Roosevelt was born, the nursery, and the porch where his father had installed the gymnasium equipment. The ground floor has a large exhibit dedicated to Theodore.

View of New York in 1855 showing the neighborhood where Theodore grew up; his home is off the picture in the center foreground. His grandfather Cornelius lived in the house just above the large tree at the end of the park.

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK / J. CLARENCE DAVIES COLLECTION / JOHN BACHMAN



The Man and the House



Roosevelt's interest in natural science resulted in a collection of insects and stuffed birds he called the "Roosevelt Museum of Natural History."



The bullet holes in Roosevelt's glasses case, shirt, and speech are grim reminders of an assassination attempt in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1912.



Uniform and equipment worn by Theodore Roosevelt as colonel of the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War.

Passages in an Active Life

- 1858** Born October 27 at 28 East 20th Street
- 1880** Graduates from Harvard; marries Alice Hathaway Lee
- 1882–84** Member, New York State Assembly
- 1882** Publishes *Naval War of 1812*, first of many books on history, nature, travel, and public affairs
- 1884** Alice dies February 14
- 1884–86** Cattle rancher in Dakota Territory
- 1886** Unsuccessful candidate for mayor of New York; marries Edith Carow on December 2
- 1889–95** Member, US Civil Service Commission
- 1895–97** President, New York City Board of Police Commissioners

- 1897–98** Assistant secretary of the Navy
- 1898** Leads Rough Riders
- 1898–1901** Governor of New York State
- 1900** Elected US vice president; becomes president September 14, 1901, upon assassination of William McKinley

- 1902** Enforces antitrust laws; begins vigorous conservation program
- 1904** Elected US president
- 1905** Mediates Russo-Japanese peace treaty; awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- 1906** Signs the Antiquities Act and uses it to protect Devil's Tower in Wyoming
- 1907** Sends US Navy on voyage around the world
- 1909** Completes presidential term; embarks on safari in Africa
- 1912** Runs for president on Progressive Party ticket; survives assassination attempt while campaigning in Milwaukee
- 1913** Embarks on scientific expedition in South America
- 1919** Dies January 6 at his home, Sagamore Hill, in Oyster Bay, New York

The Birthplace



This 1860s image shows a carriage passing by the Roosevelt home.



1906 portrait by Irving Ramsay Wiles



Left: The house as it appeared in 1896
Right: The commercial building that replaced the birthplace in 1916



The Roosevelt home at 28 East 20th Street was a typical New York brownstone located on what was a quiet tree-lined street in the city's most fashionable residential district. The family lived there until 1872 when Theodore was 13. Eventually the house was taken over for business purposes. In 1916 it was demolished to make way for a two-story commercial building.

After Theodore's death in 1919 prominent citizens decided to purchase the site, raze the commercial building, and reconstruct Roosevelt's

boyhood home as a memorial. The reconstructed birthplace opened to the public in 1923. In 1963 the Theodore Roosevelt Association donated the site to the National Park Service.

Rooms of the house have been restored to reflect their appearance between 1865 and 1872. Most of the furnishings are from the original house or were provided by family members. Color schemes, layouts, and other details were provided by Theodore's sisters and his wife.



Theodore's parents' bedroom

Planning Your Visit

The site is open 9 am to 5 pm, Wednesday through Sunday, except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Enjoy a film about Theodore's life and visit the gallery space, which contains items from his colorful life.

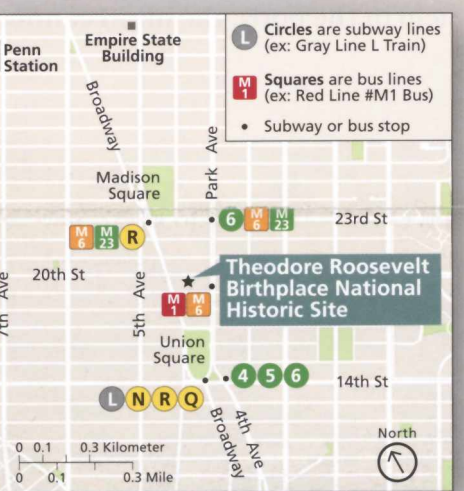
Tours Period rooms are open only during ranger-guided tours. Each tour is limited to 18 people and lasts 30 to 45 minutes. Latecomers will be asked to

join a later tour. Groups of 10 or more must call ahead to book a tour.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. Service animals are welcome. For more information, call or check our website.

Firearms Check the park website for firearms regulations.

More Information
Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site
28 East 20th St.
New York, NY 10003
212-260-1616
www.nps.gov/thrb



Subway Lexington Avenue #6 subway trains stop at the East 23rd Street station on Park Avenue South. Express #4 and #5 subways stop at Union Square. R subway trains stop at the East 23rd Street station on Broadway. Subways run 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Theodore hunted this lion in Africa.