

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

*already listed  
11/2/66*
*7/16/85*

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ansley Wilcox House

AND/OR COMMON

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

641 Delaware Avenue

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

33

STATE

New York

 \_\_ VICINITY OF  
 CODE 36

COUNTY

Erie

CODE 029

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(if applicable)*

National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

STREET &amp; NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE  
Massachusetts**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Erie County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

25 Delaware Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

STATE  
New York**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Vol. XX

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDSPublished in The Presidents: From the Inauguration of George

CITY, TOWN

Washington to the Inauguration of Jimmy Carter, ed. by Robert

G. Ferris. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1977.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is a small, 1.03 acre site on Delaware Avenue. The site contains only the Ansley Wilcox house and a parking lot on the rear portion of the property. The site is in an area that is rapidly becoming more commercial and institutional than residential in character. Commercial buildings form the site's border to the north and south.

The Ansley Wilcox house is a Greek Revival building. It is a two-and-a-half-story brick structure with a tin-panel roof. The front (original) section of the house measures 32'6" x 42'. The front entrance consists of a two-story Tuscan-colonnaded portico with a Palladian window in the pediment.

The first structure built on the property was a part of Buffalo Barracks. This garrison was constructed in 1838 during a period of strained relations between the United States and Great Britain. A prominent area of the post was a row of officers' quarters which faced the parade ground. One of these, a two-story two-family brick building, became the nucleus of the Ansley Wilcox house.

Buffalo Barracks was abandoned in 1845. It was at this time that the building, the only remaining structure, passed into private ownership. In 1863 Albert P. Lanning acquired the building. During his occupancy the portico, which was on the east side, was moved to the west side facing Delaware Avenue. Other renovations by Lanning included the addition of a one-and-one-half or two-story service wing on the east end and a full basement under the main part of the house.

In 1883 Dexter P. Rumsey, a Buffalo manufacturer, purchased the home for his daughter Mary, the wife of Ansley Wilcox - a prominent Buffalo lawyer. The first change made by Mr. Wilcox was the installation of a bay window on the first floor southside. This was designed in 1892 by George Cary, a Buffalo architect. Shortly after 1892 Mr. Wilcox embarked on a much more ambitious building program with Cary again as architect. He tripled the size of the original building by demolishing the Lanning service wing and adding approximately sixty feet of building to the east--a basement, two floors, and an attic. The remodeling did not affect the interior of the original part, except for the two first-floor parlors which were made into a large library. The result was a stately mansion in the Greek Revival style.

It was in the library that Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office and became the twenty-sixth President of the United States.

The Wilcoxes lived in the house until their deaths in the early 1930s. After an attempt to raise funds to support the house as a memorial failed,

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES September 14, 1901 BUILDER/ARCHITECT U.S. Army/George Cary

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site is significant in that on Saturday, September 14, 1901, in the library of the Ansley Wilcox home, Theodore Roosevelt became the twenty-sixth President of the United States.

Theodore Roosevelt was a close friend of Ansley Wilcox, a prominent Buffalo lawyer, and would visit him whenever Roosevelt was in Buffalo. Not long after he became Vice President, in May 1901, Roosevelt officiated at the opening of the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. Later that year, on September 6, while visiting the exposition, President William McKinley was shot by an assassin.

Roosevelt, who was then in Vermont on Lake Champlain, rushed by train to Buffalo where members of the Cabinet had begun to assemble. After spending a few anxious days at the Wilcox home, with the condition of the President seemingly better after surgery, Roosevelt joined his family in the Adirondack Mountains. Three days later he learned by messenger that McKinley was close to death. By the time he arrived back in Buffalo the next afternoon, the President had passed away.

After paying his respects to Mrs. McKinley, Roosevelt returned to the Wilcox home where the members of McKinley's Cabinet--except Secretary of State John Hay and Secretary of the Treasury Lyman Gage--assembled in the library. At 3:15 p.m., standing before Judge John R. Hazel of the U.S. District Court, Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as President.

The residence is among the few inaugural sites outside of Washington. Also, as one of the oldest houses in the city of Buffalo, it possesses some local historical and architectural significance. Ansley Wilcox was distinguished for his contributions to social work and civil service at all levels of government.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Shelgrin, William O., and Dunn, Walter S. Jr. Ansley Wilcox House N.H.S.  
 Part II, Historic Structures Report. N.p.: National Park Service, 1969.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.03 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	6 7 46 3 0	4 7 5 1 8 8 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lisa Kasprzak

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office

DATE

July 1985

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

TELEPHONE

(617) 223-0182

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National \_\_\_ State \_\_\_ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Edmund C. Barredo*

TITLE

*Chief Historian*

DATE

*July 16, 1985*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Russell M. Drayton*

DATE

*8/30/85*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Ansley Wilcox House (Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

it was sold to Oliver Lawrence who used the home as a restaurant. The interior partitions on the first and second floors of the oldest part of the house were removed to make one large room on each floor. New openings were cut between the other principal rooms on the first floor. The carriage house, north of the residence, was demolished, but part of the wall parallel with the residence was incorporated in a small two-floor addition built at the northeast corner. Robert A. Hill served as architect.

During the 1960s when the house was in danger of being demolished, local citizens campaigned to save the landmark and won. Beginning in the autumn of 1970, the building was restored through the cooperation of the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation, Inc., the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, the Junior League, Erie County, the State of New York, and the National Park Service.

The front part of the house on the first floor has been developed as a historic house museum with part refurnished and part used as a visitor reception and exhibit space. The rear portion of the house has been leased as an office.

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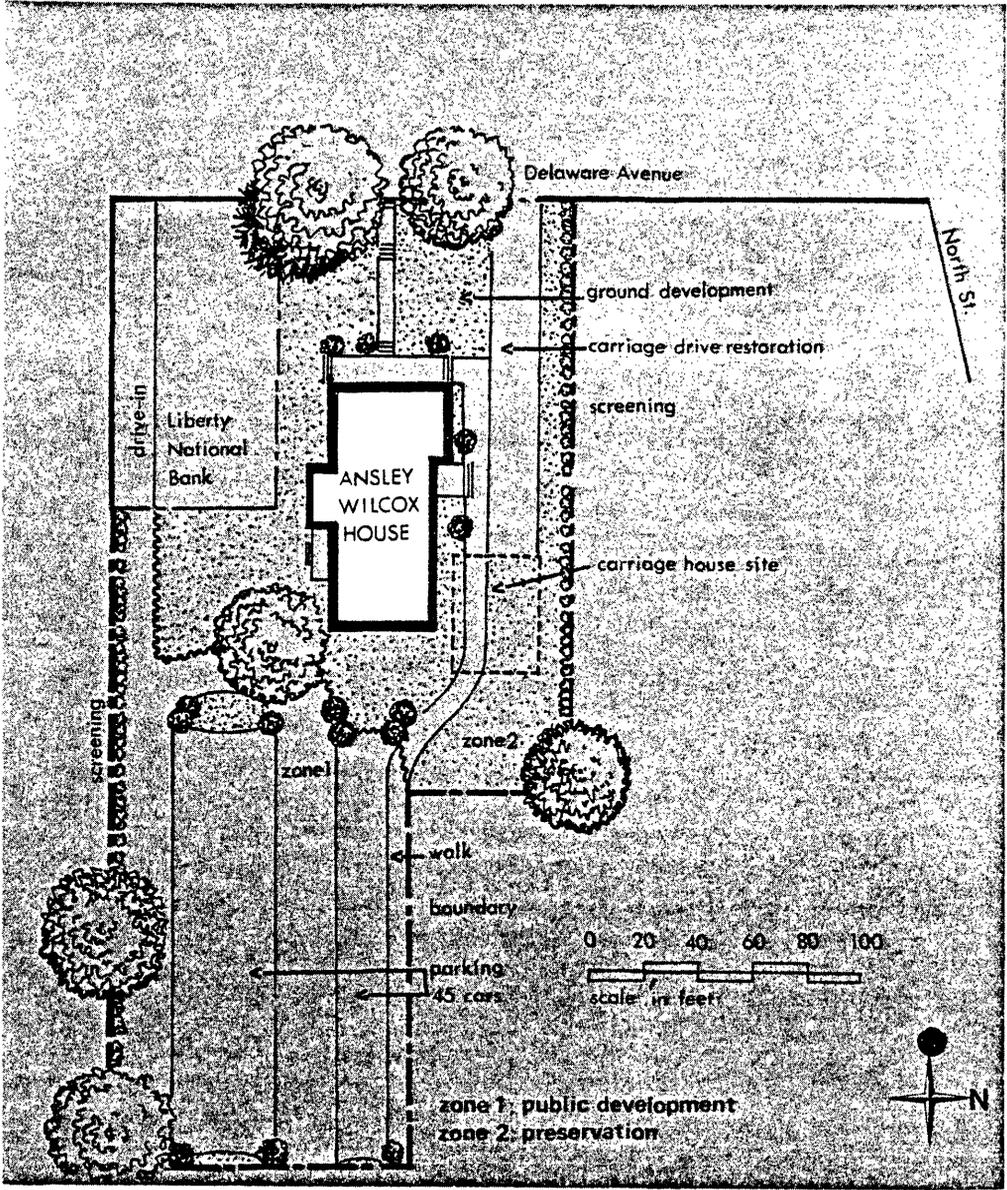
Ansley Wilcox House (Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

All that tract or parcel of land, situated in the city of Buffalo, county of Erie, state of New York, and beginning at a point in the east line of Delaware Avenue distant 110 feet southerly from the southerly line of land of Catharine Marie Richmond, recorded in Erie County clerk's office in liber 247 of deeds at page 167; running thence easterly a distance of 110 feet; running thence southerly a distance of 60 feet to a point in the north line of land of Morris Michael, recorded in Erie County clerk's office in liber 531 of deeds at page 335; running thence easterly and along the north line of land of the said Morris Michael 64 feet more or less, and continuing easterly on a line extended from the land of Morris Michael a farther distance of 174 feet more or less to the westerly line of Franklin Street; running thence northerly along the westerly line of Franklin Street 110 feet; running thence westerly 134 feet; running thence northerly and parallel with Franklin Street 59.51 feet more or less to a point distant 40 feet more or less easterly from the southeast corner of lands of Amelia Stevenson, recorded in Erie County clerk's office in liber 669 at page 299; running thence westerly 40 feet to the southeast corner of lands of the said Amelia Stevenson and continuing westerly in a line along the south line of the land of Catharine Marie Richmond a farther distance of 174 feet more or less to the easterly line of Delaware Avenue; running thence southerly along the easterly line of Delaware Avenue 110 feet to the place of beginning.



**ANSLEY WILCOX HOUSE**  
circa 1907  
Buffalo, New York

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT INAUGURAL**

