

RAIL, SAIL & SAGAMORE PACKAGE

Retrace the steps of the rich and famous of the Gilded Age in America.

The Rail, Sail & Sagamore package, involving the Adirondack Scenic Railroad, Great Camp Sagamore and Raquette Lake Navigation Co.'s vessel, the W.W. Durant, makes an exciting and educational package affording you a comprehensive tour through the 1870-1930 period in American history known as the Gilded Age. Step back in time to an era when the Vanderbilts, Morgans, Carnegies and other Captains of Industry "vacated" the stifling heat of New York City to "vacation" in their sumptuous Adirondack Camps, pampered by all the comforts of home and indulging in the "illusion of roughing it."

It was Mark Twain who coined the phrase "gilded age" for the turn of the 19th century, a time when vast fortunes were made in America by the Captains of Industry who built railroads, manufactured steel and established Wall Street. For these wealthy entrepreneurs- men like Vanderbilt, Carnegie, J.P. Morgan and Collis P. Huntington- fabulous wilderness estates were built in the heart of the Adirondacks so these American aristocrats could live in luxury in the most remote wilderness.

Like those who came to the region during the Gilded Age, you'll be seeing breathtaking scenery. Unlike those nineteenth century travelers who required twelve hours and more to reach the remote Adirondacks from major metropolitan centers, you will enjoy excellent roads, good lodging and restaurants, shopping opportunities in outlets and specialty shops and attractions and cultural centers that will inspire you.

Prior to the train, visitors had to either ride a buckboard or stagecoach over rough roads to access the North Woods or cruise along the blue highways, the waterways. How they looked forward to getting off that hard wooden seat and riding in relatively painless luxury aboard a steamboat for the final leg of their journey! The advent of the railroad made travel to and within the Adirondacks much more comfortable and certainly faster. In fact, such luminaries as J.P. Morgan or Alfred Vanderbilt or Andrew Carnegie would board their private railroad cars in New York City at 7:00 pm and arrive at Raquette Lake station the next morning at 7 am, refreshed and ready to enjoy their wilderness vacations, far removed from the heat, dirt and noise of the city.

Your train experience will not be an overnight one. You can choose a 90-minute wilderness jaunt, covering 20 miles roundtrip, departing from and returning to Thendara station (just 5 minutes from Old Forge) Prior to 1920 Thendara was named Fulton Chain, but was changed because it was often confused with Fulton, NY. The Thendara Station was built in 1892. Van Aukens Hotel was built in 1891 next to the station but was moved across the road to its present location because it was fear that sparks from the steam engines would set fire to it.

Another option, if traveling in a group by motor coach, could be to have your motor coach drop you off at Union Station in Utica. While the motor coach deadheads to Thendara station, you'll ride the train north for two hours in clean and comfortable climate-controlled coaches, equipped with restroom. Perhaps you prefer to take in the fresh air in the open car as the train rumbles through remote forests past sparkling rivers, ponds and streams.

The next leg of your journey involves boarding the motor coach and traveling east 35 miles to Raquette Lake to see some of the fabulous wilderness estates built by William West Durant and sold to wealthy industrial barons. You'll marvel at the rustic luxury enjoyed by the Vanderbilt family and the royal treatment received by visitors to Sagamore Lodge, as visualized by Durant. Imagine being one of 75 guests invited by Mrs. Vanderbilt for Christmas dinner, served by liveried British servants and cooked by a chef brought in from Delmonico's. Other luxurious amenities guests enjoyed as early as 1914 were flush toilets, a sewer system, hot and cold running water and electricity. There were always guides on staff to lead the fishing and hunting expeditions in ponds and preserves which were stocked for success. Besides hunting and fishing, guests were entertained with ping-pong, billiards and roulette, croquette, tennis and bowling. Even a chess expert was on staff to provide a challenging partner! Truly, the residents of Sagamore Lodge were the greatest hosts and entertainers in the Adirondacks! And speaking of entertainment, Sagamore's magnificent grounds and buildings have been in the public eye with the release of the spy movie *Good Shepherd* in December of 2006. Producer Robert DeNiro chose Sagamore as the place to recreate the Yale camp Deer Island. Sagamore makes its movie entrance as a crane shot swoops down on the lawn party in front of the Main Lodge where stars Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie and William Hurt are sipping cocktails. Secrets are told in the Playhouse and Gloria's Cottage. Mists arise in front of the Boat House. Ah, the grand and glorious days of Hollywood fame!

The third partner in the Rail, Sail & Sagamore package, the *W.W. Durant*, cruising on Raquette Lake's 99 miles of shoreline, captures the ambiance of an opulent, bygone era by surrounding guests with wainscoting, stained and etched glass, gleaming brass, rich carpeting and polish oak, while, at the same time, offering the convenience and comfort of modern amenities. Raquette Lake Navigation Co. offers a variety of cruises from Memorial Day weekend through October. Luncheon, dinner and Sunday Brunch cruises all offer delectable menus planned and executed by the chef and trained kitchen staff. Scenic excursions allow the visitor to enjoy the scenery and history without dining. Read what satisfied guests have written about their experience on the *W.W. Durant*:

"Thank you for the best dinner and evening out we've had in quite some time. I must admit I expected an interesting cruise aboard an attractive ship, but never imagined the quality of food or service which you guys provide. What an addition to the area."

"...we found the W.W. Durant to be absolutely spotless....We found the food to be perfectly prepared, delicious and served promptly and efficiently. Did we get our money's worth? YES. Will we do it again? YES....Our best to such a fine family run business....."

"Your dinner cruise is second to none. From your beautiful spotless boat, to the extremely efficient crew and a dinner matching that which one would expect in a first class restaurant, you folks provided one heck of an evening. Along with the perfection of your operation and service, we were treated to a beautiful summer evening on Raquette Lake."

There are a variety of ways to combine the three attractions in the Rail, Sail & Sagamore package. Advise your tour planner whether you'd like lunch (either on your own or included) in Thendara or Old Forge, followed by a guided tour of Sagamore and a scenic excursion aboard the W.W. Durant. Or perhaps you'd prefer a luncheon or dinner cruise aboard the Durant coupled with the train ride and Sagamore tour as you retrace the steps of the rich and famous of the Gilded Age in America.

Possibilities:

#1

9:15-11:15 Train Utica to Thendara
12:15-2:15 Luncheon cruise aboard the WW Durant
3:00-4:30 Guided tour Great Camp Sagamore

#2

10:00-11:30 Guided tour Great Camp Sagamore
12:00-2:00 Luncheon cruise aboard the WW Durant
3:00-4:30 Wilderness train ride

There's another train ride east of Raquette Lake, departing from North Creek Station, heading to Riverside Station and then return. Each way is 45 minutes. You can choose one way or round trip. This train ride also packages nicely with Sagamore tour and cruise on Raquette Lake. Call Donna at 315-354-5532 FMI or to book your package.