

A NATIONAL TREASURE...

Gillette Castle – completed in 1919 as the home of one of the most celebrated stage and film actors of the early 20th century – is a national treasure, a jewel in the park and forest system of the State of Connecticut.

Purchased by the State in 1943, the castle attracts some 200,000 people every year. As a public resource of history and beauty, it has increasingly provided the setting for memorable celebrations with family and friends.

The castle is a fitting centerpiece for the green valley of the lower Connecticut river, itself designated a “Last Great Place” by The Nature Conservancy.

The buildings and estate of 184 wooded acres have been recently renovated and restored to preserve its heritage for generations to come.

In addition to important restoration work completed in 2002, the project included a new visitors’ center that opened in May 2003; it features a small auditorium, gift shop, exhibit area, and special-events plaza.

In addition to the public programs administered by the State Department of Environmental Protection, much event planning, trail upgrading, artifact restoration (notably Mr. Gillette’s electric locomotive, in 2007), and gift-shop management is supported by the work of the **Friends of Gillette Castle State Park**.

This corps of Friends volunteers is dedicated to preserving the castle’s heritage — and providing you with an enjoyable experience as you stroll the estate’s paths or examine its unique architecture from many picture-perfect vantage points.

FUN FACTS ABOUT YOUR CASTLE AND ESTATE...

The Friends of Gillette Castle... is a nonprofit, all-volunteer group which raises funds to help restore the grounds for the benefit of all. We invite you to join and support us whether you live nearby or far away.

We originated in 1998...and need YOUR help!

William Gillette (1853-1937)... was a stage and screen “superstar” who created the role of master detective Sherlock Holmes...he starred in thousands of productions...wrote 13 original plays and dozens of adaptations...last appeared on stage May 12, 1932...had 17 cats...had a 144-foot yacht named *Aunt Polly*...had a caretaker, Yukitaka Osaki, who lived in a house which still stands on the riverbank...was the son of a U.S. Senator and a prominent Hartford socialite...received honorary doctorate degrees from Yale, Dartmouth, Trinity, and Columbia...

The Castle Building... is 200 feet above the river...is made of local granite fieldstone covering steel beams...was designed by Gillette himself...

The Grounds... are 184 acres of natural woodland and granite ledge...overlook the Connecticut River...adjoin the Hadlyme Ferry, started in 1769...

The Railroad... was called “The Seventh Sister Short-Line”...had a steam and an electric engine...could carry 28 passengers...had 3.2 miles of track...had bridges, trestles, and a tunnel which are now part of the walking trails...

**FRIENDS OF
GILLETTE CASTLE
STATE PARK
P.O. BOX 133
EAST HADDAM CT 06423-0133
www.friendsofgillettecastle.org**

*We have come a long way...but
there is still much to do to bring out
the very best in William Gillette’s
Castle and estate for all our
residents and visitors. Join us!*

—The Friends 0610

YOUR CASTLE ON THE HILL...



***WILLIAM GILLETTE
AND
“THE SEVENTH SISTER”
WELCOME YOU!***