



Travel along the North Shore Heritage Trail (25A) and Discover the Secrets Hidden in its Backroads and Byways!

Centerport, Northport

- Select an itinerary for the day or stay for a few days and undertake a comprehensive excursion.
- Avis Car Rental at the Huntington Hilton Long Island Hotel at 631-896-2423. For a special discount mention code: H786700. If you prefer to reserve your car online at Avis@hiltonhotel and enter location code: ME2. The special rate is available only at Avis@hiltonhotel.
- For Package Vacations, Events and Members' Listing visit our homepage.

As you travel east on 25A, this two lane road winds its way through the charming towns of Centerport and Northport. A must see stop along the way is the estate of **William K. Vanderbilt II at "Eagle's Nest" (180 Little Neck Road, Centerport, NY 11721; 631 854-5555)**. Visit the mansion that hosted lavish parties during prohibition, it is now the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and houses Mr. Vanderbilt's collection of marine and wildlife specimens and ethnographic artifacts, a planetarium and observatory. The estate is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Vanderbilt is known to have said, "Prohibition was the worst thing to happen to the human race." In 1904, William K. Vanderbilt II sponsored the Vanderbilt Cup Races on Long Island, an international automobile competition on the roads that would become the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. In 1906, he formed a corporation with the likes of John Jacob Astor, August Belmont, Harry Payne Whitney and other notables to build a private highway that would host future Cup Races. In 1907, the construction of the **Long Island Motor Parkway** was in full swing. The first concrete roadway was ready for the 1908 race. The 45 mile racecourse included 10 miles on the new parkway. The cup races continued on that road until 1910.



William Kissam Vanderbilt and wife Rosamund on their yacht Ava, circa 1920s- William K, whose mansion is a must-see visit on your tour- hosted lavish parties during Prohibition and was known to have said: "Prohibition was the worst thing ever done to mankind."

After the races were moved to different venues, the Long Island Motor Parkway became a toll road for private automobile owners. The parkway was the best way to get out to Long Island for many drivers – especially in the days of Prohibition. Being a private roadway, it was not patrolled by the police and provided a safe and sure route for rumrunners making their drop-offs to thirsty Long Islanders. It became known as "**Rum Runners Road.**"

William K. Vanderbilt II had the distinction of owning the easternmost Gold Coast Mansion on the North Shore of Long Island. He purchased the property in 1910 and began building what would become a glorious, 24-room, Spanish-Revival mansion with terra-cotta tile roofs and stucco facades.

The Vanderbilt Estate (180 Little Neck Road, Centerport, New York 11721; 631-854-5555) overlooks Northport Harbor and the Long Island Sound. Designed by Warren and Wetmore, the site is unique in that Vanderbilt included a marine museum, which was open to the public during his lifetime. He called his mansion Eagle's Nest and it represents Vanderbilt's eclectic taste and varied interests.

Mr. Vanderbilt left his home and museum to the people of Long Island in his will. Today the Vanderbilt Museum boasts the only full-dome planetarium on Long Island, natural history and ethnographic collections, along with Mr. Vanderbilt's historic home in a scenic 43-acre waterfront setting. Scenes from movie *Crocodile Dundee II* (1998) were filmed at the Vanderbilt Estate.

Stop at **Mill Pond House Restaurant (437 East Main Street, Centerport, 11721; 631-261-7663)** for its charm, great food and panoramic views of the harbor. With its close proximity to the water and the Gold Coast mansion did the Mill Pond House provide libation to the Vanderbilt Estate? Once known as “Walters Inn”, this historic restaurant, located on 25A in Centerport and overlooking the Centerport Harbor, most likely had a heyday during prohibition. Tales of rumrunners bringing in whiskey under the building abound, and according to the locals there is an underground tunnel that connects Walters’ to the rest of restaurant row along 25A including the legendary prohibition speakeasy, Hall’s Chophouse directly across the street. Tell the host “Joe Sent Me” and they will give you the special “Joe Sent Me” prohibition menu. Did you know the movie, “Something Borrowed” (2011) was filmed here.



The Mill Pond House Restaurant- formerly Walters' Inn, operated during prohibition. According to local historians, Walters' may have had an underground tunnel connecting Walters' to the speakeasy across Rte 25A. This photograph was taken just after the passage of the 21st amendment.

Continue your journey to the seaside village of **Northport**. The downtown is home to quaint shops and restaurants. Be sure to take in a performance at **The John W. Engeman Theater, (250 Main Street Northport, NY 11768; 631-261-9700)** where Broadway meets Main Street, featuring live performances of Broadway shows nightly.

As you stroll through the town you might meet some local residents who may tell you about the tunnels under **Northport Village**. One native resident confirmed that one of the tunnels leads to a former speakeasy. People talk regularly about an underground bar with a bowling alley, dusty martini glasses, and Walt Whitman’s name engraved on the bar. They say you can get into the speakeasy through a harbor sewer at low tide - yet there’s no public record of such a plan. However, the native confirmed “it’s true” but won’t say where! You may even meet some locals who will recall the filming of *In & Out* (1997 comedy starring Kevin Kline & Tom Selleck) or *3 Backyards* (2010; starring Edie Falco).

There were many hotel raids across Northport during Prohibition. The historic **Muller’s Hotel, Powell’s Hotel, and Northport Hotel** were all raided in a “general mopping up of public nuisance places and speakeasies” throughout the Northport. Although, public reaction condemned the action of the officials, charging that liquor laws infringe on their personal liberties. (The Long Islander)