



Foundation Document Overview

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

New Hampshire



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of SAINT-GAUDENS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to preserve and interpret the home, artwork, properties, and life of renowned sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and to commemorate his, and the Cornish Colony of artists', contributions to the cultural development of the United States.



Significance

Significance statements express why Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Augustus Saint-Gaudens was an internationally renowned artist, sculptor, teacher, and leader in American culture. He taught and cultivated other artists, advocated art for all, and brought international recognition to American art. His artistic vision, expertise, and involvement were sought by officials in the United States and Europe. Among his best known works are the *Shaw Memorial*, *Sherman Monument*, *Farragut Monument*, *Diana*, and the 1907 10- and 20-dollar gold coins.
- Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site contains the home, studios, gardens, and landscape of Augustus Saint-Gaudens during the peak of his productive career from 1885 to 1907. Originally chosen for its inspirational setting, Saint-Gaudens continuously cultivated the property into a physical expression of his classically inspired aesthetic ideals.
- Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site contains the largest collection of Saint-Gaudens's artwork in the world, along with furnishings, reproductions, and other contents of his home and studio.
- Saint-Gaudens was instrumental in forming the Cornish Colony. Among the earliest artists' communities in the United States, the Cornish Colony is best known for modernizing and applying classical European artistic and architectural traditions in America. The park contains a collection of artwork created by the Cornish Colony artists, as well as the historically related Blow-Me-Down Farm, a social hub of the artists.
- The Saint-Gaudens Memorial was created in 1919 to maintain a living memorial to Saint-Gaudens on the site of his home and gardens. The memorial was one of the earliest efforts in the United States to memorialize and promote an artist's legacy and set a precedent for future memorials of notable figures.

Fundamental Resources and Values



Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Saint-Gaudens's Home and Studios**
- **Aspet Designed Landscape and Gardens**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Collections**
- **Scenic Views**
- **The Cornish Colony Influence**

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Sites Associated with the Cornish Colony**
- **Saint-Gaudens Farm and Other Contributing Structures**
- **Natural Resources and Protected Species**

Related resources and values are not owned by the park. They may be part of the broader context or setting in which park resources exist, represent a thematic connection that would enhance the experience of visitors, or have close association with park fundamental resources and the purpose of the park. The related resource represents a connection with the park that often reflects an area of mutual benefit or interest, and collaboration, between the park and owner/stakeholder.

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site's related resources include:

- **Other Original Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the Cornish Colony**

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Augustus Saint-Gaudens: His Place in American Art and Memory** – Augustus Saint-Gaudens's classically inspired works changed the ways that people regarded American art and artists.
- **Saint-Gaudens: Artistic Pioneer and Innovator** – Saint-Gaudens's innovations in sculpting techniques and processes advanced American art and affected the techniques and works of artists around the world.



- **Saint-Gaudens's Life of Talent and Ambition** – Saint-Gaudens's artistic skill, personality, and political savvy pulled him from what might otherwise have been a life of obscurity and hard work and built a social network of peers and admirers and a home life in a significantly higher social standing than from where he was born.
- **The Cornish Colony of Artists** – Based in classical tradition, European aesthetics, and with inspiration drawn from the beauty of their base in the Connecticut River Valley, the Cornish Colony of artists—a progressive, loosely organized, and interdisciplinary network of friends and colleagues prominent in the arts and politics—sought to enrich their own lives and improve the lives of others through participation in art and social movements that contributed to American life and identity.

Description

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, located in Cornish, New Hampshire, preserves the home, studios, and gardens of one of the foremost American sculptors of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Both through the importance of his sculptural works and in the influence he exercised on his contemporaries, Augustus Saint-Gaudens secured a prominent place for himself in our nation's cultural history.

The park was established by Congress through Public Law 88-543 to preserve, protect, and interpret "historically significant properties associated with the life and cultural achievements of Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (1848–1907) and to promote the arts through events in the spirit of those conducted by Saint-Gaudens. In 1976, Public Law 94-578 amended the enabling legislation to increase the authorized boundary of the park by including 65 acres of woodland surrounding Blow-Me-Down Brook and Blow-Me-Down Mill for protection of the site. In 2000, Public Law 106-491 again expanded the authorized boundary to reflect management recommendations of the 1996 general management plan allowing the park to acquire the Blow-Me-Down Farm.

The park's authorized boundary consists of 365 acres of public and privately owned homesteads, cultivated landscapes, and woodlands overlooking the Connecticut River and Mount Ascutney. The historic core of the park is Augustus Saint-Gaudens's home, Aspet, his studio, and classically inspired gardens. Surrounding Aspet are the Saint-Gaudens Farm, Blow-Me-Down Pond and Mill, and Blow-Me-Down Farm. Blow-Me-Down Farm, Mill, and Pond are associated with Charles C. Beaman Jr., who was instrumental in bringing Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Cornish and establishing the Cornish Colony of artists. The park contains 19 historic buildings; 10 nonhistoric buildings; four cultural landscapes; a museum collection of more than 10,000 cataloged objects, including hundreds of original works of art; 1.5 miles of trails; two brooks; two ponds; and a quarter-mile of frontage along the Connecticut River.

