

This circle of talented spirits drew members of certain moneyed and social circles. Italianate villas rose on hill-sides and in abandoned pastures. Embellished with sunken gardens, marble fountains, artfully developed villas, and rows of Lombardy poplars, a farm community turned into what local people sometimes called "little New York." The swirl of entertainment in this upper-class Bohemia was gay and elegant, but Thomas Dewing thought there were "too many picture hats" and left to seek a more secluded spot.

Today the artists who made up the Cornish Colony are gone, and with them a colorful era has passed. But at the home of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, with its well-kept house, its carefully designed gardens, and studios that retain a touch of their master's hand, one can relive for a moment an age gone by—the age of an American *belle époque* that nurtured and enchanted a singular company of artists at Cornish.

—Frank O. Spinney

About your visit. Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is located on N.H. 12A in Cornish, N.H., 9 miles north of Claremont, N.H., and 2 miles from Windsor, Vt. Taxi service is available from both towns. Visitors traveling via Int. 91 should use the Ascutney or Hartland, Vt., exits; via Int. 89, they should use the West Lebanon, N.H., exit.

The site is open from May through October. Each summer the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a cooperating group, sponsors concerts and exhibitions by contemporary painters and sculptors. Information about the park can be obtained by writing to Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, R.R. 2, Windsor, VT 05089.

Administration. Saint-Gaudens National Historical Site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, in cooperation with the trustees of Saint-Gaudens Memorial. The superintendent of Saratoga National Historical Park, R.F.D. 1, Box 113-C, Stillwater, NY 12170, is in charge of the site.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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SAINT-GAUDENS



NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Home, Studios, And Gardens Of An Important American Sculptor

Augustus Saint-Gaudens first saw "Huggins Folly," an ancient mansion crowning a bare New Hampshire hillside, on a gloomy April day in 1885. He was momentarily repelled by the bleak brick structure. But after his wife pointed out that the scene would look different in summer, Saint-Gaudens rented the house from his friend Charles Beaman, a New York lawyer who owned a country house nearby. Saint-Gaudens was about to begin a statue of Abraham Lincoln for a park in Chicago, and tradition holds that Beaman sold the artist on the house by telling him that he would find many "Lincoln-shaped" men among the lean Yankee natives. That consideration and his determination to escape another summer in New York City convinced him that he should move to the country where he could work comfortably and have his family about him. He was just 37, with long years as a student and struggling young artist behind him. Ahead lay his most productive years, and most of these would be spent here at Cornish.

There was much to be done to make the property useful for his work and acceptable to his taste. He quickly turned the barn into a studio, and he and his assistants worked there until the next November. The house itself, built about 1800 and once used as a tavern, was capacious and cool. When he constructed the terraces about the house, he removed the front porch and steps. On the west he added a classical columned porch to take advantage of the prevailing breezes and the dramatic view of Mount Ascutney across the river. Inside, the house was completely remodeled. Dormers were added to serve new rooms carved out of the huge attic, the main stairway was moved to the rear of the house, rooms were combined, doors enlarged, a wing added, the upstairs ballroom cut up into bedrooms, and baths and more bedrooms built on the south side.

Over the years Saint-Gaudens lavished much attention on the grounds. He placed a formal garden between the house and barn-studio. Where once there were only rough farmland and pastures, Saint-Gaudens developed pools, fountains, a birch clump, hedges of pine and hemlock, a bowling green with summer house (near the *Shaw Memorial*), and an expanse of lawn. To the east he built a shop for the plaster-moulder and a studio for his assistants. This studio burned in 1904 with the tragic loss of all the sculptor's correspondence, sketch books, the rec-

ords of commissions, and numerous works in progress. It was rebuilt a year later, only to burn again in 1944. The site now holds the sculpture court and exhibition galleries.

As Saint-Gaudens worked at softening what he felt were the house's harsh qualities, his friend Edward Simmons commented that the house reminded him of an "upright New England farmer with a new set of false teeth . . ." Another acquaintance, noting the classical columns, the Mediterranean pergolas, the marble pools, the archaic Pan, and the rams' heads, thought that the building was "like some austere and recalcitrant New England old maid struggling in the arms of a Greek faun."

In 1897 Saint-Gaudens went abroad to live for three years. He gave up his New York residence on West 45th Street and his studio on West 36th Street, but he kept his home in Cornish. When he returned, he lived there the remainder of his life. His search for health drove him to take up outdoor sports. He built a 60-foot scaffolding near the upper studio to support the starting run of a toboggan slide. A nine-hole golf course was laid out, and in winter Saint-Gaudens and his friends played hockey on the pond below the house and skied on nearby hills.

In June 1905 the Cornish colony, composed of the friends and companions of Saint-Gaudens who came to live and work nearby, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the sculptor's coming to Cornish by holding a masque (a play based on early Greek drama) at the foot of the field below the house. A small Greek temple was erected in the grove of large pines that once stood there. Originally made of plaster, it was later reproduced in marble and became the family burial place.

After Saint-Gaudens' death in 1907, his widow and son, Homer Saint-Gaudens, provided for the preservation of the property. They deeded the estate to a board of trustees, and later the New Hampshire legislature chartered the Saint-Gaudens Memorial as a non-profit corporation to preserve and exhibit the collections, house, and studios. For over 50 years friends and admirers of the sculptor have supported the memorial's work. In 1964 Congressional legislation authorized the National Park Service to accept the property as a gift, and a year later the memorial was designated a National Historic Site. The trustees continue to act as advisory committee.

“No one ever succeeded in art unless born with an uncontrollable instinct toward it.”

Augustus Saint-Gaudens was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1848, the year of the Potato Famine. His father, Bernard Paul Ernest, was a French shoemaker from the little village of Aspet, near the town of Saint-Gaudens in the foothills of the Pyrenees. During the 1830's and 40's he had wandered from his native country to London and then on to Dublin, where he met and married Mary McGuinness of County Longford. Several children were born to the couple before Bernard, 6 months after the birth of Augustus, took his family to the United States. They settled in New York, and there the boy grew up. When Augustus finished his schooling at 13, he was apprenticed to a French cameo-cutter. Through his teens the boy labored long days in his master's shop. His father encouraged his urge to draw, and at night Augustus attended the newly opened art school at Cooper Union. Later he studied at the National Academy of Design, which was near his home.

When he was 19 and his apprenticeship over, his father offered him a chance to see the Exposition of 1867 in Paris. He left with \$100 in his pocket, a thorough knowledge of his craft, and deep confidence in himself. While waiting for admission to the famous École des Beaux-Arts, he worked in an Italian cutter's atelier. When he was finally accepted a year later, he elected to study under the respected Jouffroy. Because he received little money from home, he supported himself by cameo-cutting. In 1870 the Franco-Prussian War forced him to leave Paris. He lived and worked in Rome for the next 5 years, except for one brief visit home. His outlook and skills matured during these years, and his warm personality attracted a wide circle of friends, both American and foreign. Among his early patrons were William M. Evarts and Elihu Root, whose portraits are displayed in Cornish and at Hamilton College, and through their influence his name became known in circles that counted. Rome was also the place of another fortunate meeting. There he first met Augusta F. Homer of Roxbury, Mass., who recorded in her diary her impression of the artist.

At 27 Saint-Gaudens returned to America and began his career. A brief stint as a mural painter under John LaFarge, whose work decorated Trinity Church in Boston, brought him happily near Miss Homer. He also established close and lasting friendships with two promising young architects, Stanford White and Charles McKim. They would become frequent professional colleagues.

The Farragut statue award in 1876 was a watershed in Saint-Gaudens' life. It brought him recognition and enough security to persuade Augusta Homer's parents not to delay further the pair's marriage. When the statue

This 1881 *Farragut* statue brought Saint-Gaudens critical acclaim.



The *Adams Memorial*, 1891.



The *Standing Lincoln*, 1887.



Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Saint-Gaudens considered this relief of *Samuel Ward* one of his best.



At work on the *Sherman*.

The Cornish Colony. The arrival of Saint-Gaudens in the summer of 1885 was the beginning of the Cornish Colony. He also brought two assistants, Frederick MacMonnies and Philip Martiny, to work with him in the barn-studio. They were the first in a long series of helpers, many of whom went on to important careers of their own. Herbert Adams, Frances Grimes, James Earle Fraser, Elsie Ward, and—most important of all—his brother, Louis Saint-Gaudens, were only some who worked here and went away enriched by the experience.

That first summer, a friend and painter, George de Forest Brush, came to Cornish and camped with his wife near the ravine just below the house. Brush had lived out west among the Indians for many years, and the teepee he built for a summer dwelling greatly amused Saint-Gaudens and his neighbors. The next spring Thomas W. Dewing, also a painter, rented a house nearby, soon followed by Henry O. Walker, Charles A. Platt, and Stephen Parrish. In 1898 Maxfield Parrish came to Cornish and began to draw those immensely popular scenes with glowing blue skies so unbelievably romantic to the viewer, yet so accurate to one who has seen a Cornish hillside on a July evening when the sky is clear and the sunset has faded.

As the attractions of Cornish became more widely known, other artists found Cornish a delightful spot in which to spend a rural summer working among congenial spirits. When the 1905 masque was performed, 70 members of the colony pooled their skills to provide the music, settings, costumes, scripts, and acting before an appreciative audience of more than twice that number.

There were poets as well at Cornish—Percy MacKaye, Witter Bynner, and William Vaughn Moody. In 1898 the American novelist Winston Churchill built a home here which he named Harlakenden House. President Woodrow Wilson used it as a vacation White House during the fateful summer of 1914 and again a year later. Ten years earlier the young Ethel Barrymore spent a summer in the colony, renting the house of Henry and Lucia Fuller. Both were painters, he of landscapes and she of miniatures. Kenyon Cox, a painter and art critic, built a home and studio here, and over the years the prominent residents of Cornish included in their numbers Charles Dana Gibson; Everette Shinn; John Elliott and his wife, Maud Howe Elliott, who was a writer; Peter Finley Dunne, the creator of “Mr. Dooley”; Herbert Croly, the author of *The Promise of American Life* and the editor of *The New Republic*; Norman Hapgood, the editor of *Collier's* magazine; Willard Metcalfe, the landscape painter; Louis Shipman, a playwright, and his wife, Ellen, who designed many of the famous Cornish gardens; and Arthur Whiting, a composer and musician.