SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

Cornish ··· New Hampshire



United States Department Of The Interior
National Park Service
Region Five

Cover Photo

The Adams Memorial
By Augustus Saint-Gaudens
in Rock Creek Cemetery
Washington, D. C.

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SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Area Investigation Report

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THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL
CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT THE MEMORIAL MORE IMPORTANT THAN JUST ITS ENFORCEMENT OF THE DEEP SINCERITY, THE HIGH INTEGRITY OF SCULPTURE AS SAINT-GAUDENS PRACTICED IT. I THINK OF THE MEMORIAL ALWAYS AS UPHOLDING A FINE STANDARD. IT IS FULL OF CHARM AND BEAUTY BUT MOST OF ALL IT SEEMS TO ME TO EMBODY THE CONSCIENCE OF A GREAT ARTIST.

Royal Cortissoz

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Acknowledgment

The authors of this report were materially assisted in their evaluation of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial by a meeting at the site with Mr. and Mrs. William Platt, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Cope. Mr. Platt is President of the Memorial and Mr. Cope is a Trustee. Their knowledge of the area, and appreciation of its significance provided a valuable perspective for the preparation of this report. Mr. Allan Jansson, Caretaker of the Memorial, and Mrs. Jansson also rendered valuable help, for which we express our thanks.

INTRODUCTION

The narrative that follows does not recount Saint-Gaudens' life in detail, nor does it attempt to analyze the sculptor's work and its place in American art and culture. That place is amply attested to by the enduring strength, beauty, and inspiration of the creations which made Saint-Gaudens the foremost American sculptor of his time. Through the genius of his own hands, and by his influence on students and imitators, he shaped the artistic consciousness of an era, and won for American sculpture a recognized place in the world of art.

This report can only outline the significant role played in the sculptor's life by his long-time residence at Cornish, New Hampshire, where the home, studio, and grounds he loved are preserved as The Saint-Gaudens Memorial. A detailed and fully-documented account of the site must wait upon further research, particularly in Cornish records and in those personal papers of Saint-Gaudens which were not lost in the studio fire of 1904, described later in this report. Although time did not permit a full study, material at hand is sufficient to establish the importance of the site at Cornish, in its relations both to Saint-Gaudens and to American art and culture.

The Memorial is not a tribute in stone or bronze, but, rather, a vital and full-dimensioned portrait of the sculptor and his work. This evocation of the artistic integrity and deep humanity of the artist who lived and worked there makes the Saint-Gaudens Memorial

an historical preservation of the highest order, and one worthy of recognition and preservation by the Nation as a priceless contribution to its cultural heritage.

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

A BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Augustus Saint-Gaudens was born on March 1, 1848, in Dublin, the son of Bernard Paul Ernest and Mary Saint-Gaudens. His father, a shoemaker, was born in Aspet, France. Migrating to Ireland as a young man, he met and married Mary McGuiness. When Augustus was a few months old, probably in September, 1848, the family came to America, landing in Boston. A few weeks later the Saint-Gaudens moved to New York City, where they would live for many years.

The young Saint-Gaudens early showed an artistic aptitude, and in following this inclination learned the craft of a cameo cutter. In the evenings he studied at Cooper Union and the National Academy of Design. When he was 19 Saint-Gaudens, eager to pursue his art study abroad, went to the Paris Exposition of 1867, his sympathetic father paying for the passage. In Paris he worked as a cameo cutter, and continued his art studies there and in Rome. In Rome he received his first commissions as a sculptor, and on a second visit to the city, in 1873-74, met Augusta F. Homer, whom he later would marry.

Returning to New York he established a studio, and in 1876 was awarded the commission for the Farragut monument. In June of the following year he married Augusta Homer. From 1877 until 1880 he was in Europe, during which time he served as a member of the International Jury at the Universal Exposition in Paris. The Farragut was exhibited in plaster at the Salon of 1880, together with several

medallions, establishing the young sculptor's reputation. Back in New York in 1880, Saint-Gaudens established the studio at 148 West 36th Street, where he did much of his work for the next 17 years.

In 1884 Saint-Gaudens received the commission for the Shaw Memorial in Boston, and in the summer of 1885 established his summer residence at Cornish, New Hampshire. The great standing Lincoln was unveiled in 1887 and in 1888 General William T. Sherman gave Saint-Gaudens 18 sittings for his bust. 1891 saw the completion of the Adams memorial in Washington's Rock Creek Cemetery, perhaps the most widely-admired of Saint-Gaudens' works. In 1893 the sculptor designed the medal for the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago. The unveiling of the Shaw memorial in 1897 was another major landmark in the development of Saint-Gaudens' artistic power.

From 1897 to 1900 the sculptor was in Paris, during which time he worked on the Sherman equestrian statue. Evidence of his high reputation in Paris came when he was created an Officer of the Legion of Honor and elected a Corresponding Member of the Societe des Beaux Arts. In 1900 Saint Gaudens was stricken by cancer and returned to America. After an operation he decided to make his permanent home in Cornish.

He finished the Sherman at Cornish, and despite ill health produced in the last years of his life the seated Lincoln and a number of other works, including, at the personal request of President Theodore Roosevelt, the design for new United States coinage.

His place in the eyes of contemporary artists was emphasized at the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901. On the unanimous recommendation of the fine arts jury, composed of architects, sculptors, and painters, Saint-Gaudens was awarded a special medal of honor "apart from and above all other awards." At the request of Senator James McMillan, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, Saint-Gaudens served with Daniel H. Burnham, Charles F. McKim and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., on a park commission for the Nation's capital. The group's recommendations laid the groundwork for the District's park system and made a significant contribution to the preservation of the city's artistic values. In 1903 the great Sherman monument was unveiled at the Fifty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue entrance to Central Park, and in the following year Saint-Gaudens was elected an Honorary Foreign Academician of the Royal Academy, London. He was also a member of the Society of American Artists, which he helped found, and a member of Rome's Academy of St. Luke. The sculptor held honorary degrees from Harvard, Princeton and Yale.

On August 3, 1907, Saint-Gaudens died at his Cornish home, at the age of 59.

SAINT-GAUDENS AT CORNISH

In the summer of 1885 Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his wife, and young son, Homer, came to the tranquil Connecticut River hamlet of Cornish, New Hampshire, to establish a summer residence. The sculptor was then working on the standing Lincoln. His good friend, the young New York attorney Charles C. Beaman, had a country home at Cornish and told Saint-Gaudens that there were "plenty of Lincoln-shaped men up there."[1] The sculptor had been looking for a summer place and Cornish, then nine hours by train from New York, appeared to be the answer.

Beaman had acquired considerable property at Cornish. Among his holdings was "Huggins' Folly," a brick house already almost a century old, and for many years a tavern. Saint-Gaudens had first seen the building on a gloomy day in the previous April. On that inauspicious occasion, he recalled that the house "appeared so forbidding and relentless that one might have imagined a skeleton half-hanging out of the window, shrieking and dangling in the gale, with the sound of clanking bones."[2] Beaman offered to sell "Huggins' Folly" to Saint-Gaudens for $500, the price the young lawyer had paid for it. The sculptor was reluctant to invest this amount, insisting that he could not afford it. Moreover, he did not want the responsibility of ownership at a time when he was subordinating all

[1] Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 2 vols. (New York, 1913), I, 312; hereafter cited as Reminiscences.

[2] Reminiscences, I, 312.

personal considerations to his creative efforts. Saint-Gaudens was all for hurrying back to the familiar surroundings of New York, but his wife saw beyond dreary April to the sunny days of summer. She persuaded her husband to rent the house at a low fee agreed to by its owner.

With summer, the family returned to Cornish and Saint-Gaudens set up his studio in the old barn near the house. This dilapidated building was hastily provided with a north light,[3] and the sculptor, his brother Louis, and several assistants worked there until November. Then, no doubt, the chill winds sweeping down the Connecticut Valley and shaking the old barn made New York seem more inviting than ever. Despite the primitive facilities of the studio, that first season at Cornish was a productive one. It saw, among other accomplishments, the execution of the working sketch for the standing Lincoln.

Saint-Gaudens was a professed "boy of the streets and sidewalks." The establishment of his summer home at Cornish opened up a whole new facet of experience. Looking back years later he would recall how that "during this first summer in the country, I was thirty-seven at the time, it dawned upon me seriously how much there was outside of my little world."[4] To a friend, he wrote in the first

[3]William H. Child, History of the Town of Cornish, New Hampshire, With Genealogical Record, 1763-1910, 2 vols. (Concord, 1910?), I, 221. Cited hereafter as History of Cornish.

[4]Reminiscences, I, 311.

September at Cornish, "We are very cozy and happy here. I expect to remain until November first, and I am very contented to do so . . . . This is really a beautiful country and I certainly do not tire of it. The only difficulty is that I don't enjoy it enough. I stick to the studio too much."[5]

The summer experiment at Cornish had turned out so well that Saint-Gaudens, "enchanted with the life and scenery," reversed his previous decision about buying the house. Now he was ready to purchase the property, at the $500 price originally set by Beaman. But now the owner was the reluctant party. The development of the house and grounds under Saint-Gaudens' affectionate care had so improved the property that Mr. Beaman considered it his duty to hold on to the estate for the use of his children.[6]

The sculptor was spending heavily in the improvement of the estate and was anxious to protect his investment. Finally he delivered a virtual ultimatum to his friend Beaman. Either the owner must sell it or Saint-Gaudens would be forced to give up the place. Beaman, in 1891, agreed to the sale, and received, in addition to the cash payment, a bronze relief portrait of himself, executed by

[5] Reminiscences, I, 322-323. This letter, like many that Saint-Gaudens wrote from Cornish is dated at Windsor, Vermont, the town on the opposite side of the Connecticut River where the sculptor received his mail.

[6] Commenting on his father's development of his property over the years, Homer Saint-Gaudens wrote "there was hardly a week in all the time my father spent on this place during twenty-two years that he did not have something rebuilt or regraded, to his intense enjoyment." Reminiscences, II, 239.

Saint-Gaudens.

Saint-Gaudens' decision to buy the property was undoubtedly due in part to the growing number of his friends who had followed him to Cornish, creating there within a few years a flourishing colony which counted among its members some of the most noted literary and artistic figures of the time. Saint-Gaudens generously credited Charles Beaman as being the magnet which drew so many of their friends to Cornish, but the colony, itself, would honor the sculptor as its founder. Amont the "City Folks of Little New York," as the local inhabitants sometimes referred to them, were Charles A. Platt, the landscape painter, etcher and architect; and Kenyon Cox, the distinguished mural decorator, Saint-Gaudens' oldest friends at Cornish. Others were the painter T. W. Dewing, who remained only a short while, and the muralist Henry Oliver Walker. Later would come the American novelist Winston Churchill and the popular illustrator Maxfield Parrish, son of Stephen Parrish who earlier had been brought to Cornish by his close friend Charles Platt.[7]

While he had come to love "Aspet" as he called his home after his father's native town in France, Saint-Gaudens was irritated by what he called the "Puritanical austerity" of the old house. Seeking a remedy, he begged his good friend George Fletcher Babb, the architect, to "make this house smile." The happy result of Babb's

[7]Homer Saint-Gaudens contributed to History of Cornish, vol. I, cited above, a chapter on "City Folks' in Cornish," chapter XVII, 220-232.

efforts is evident in Aspet today, reflecting as it does the desire of the sculptor and architect "to lower and spread the building, holding it down to the ground . . . ." Saint-Gaudens himself designed the terrace which set the house apart from the open fields which previously had stretched without a break right up to the foundation of the building.[8] The addition of the spacious piazza with its row of white columns, the terrace, the dormer windows on front and back, the white fence around the house, and the planting of shrubs and gardens all relieved the harshness of what had been Huggins' Folly. The renovation of the house was highly pleasing to Saint-Gaudens, and he could recall with good humor the jest of one of his friends who commented that the house "looks like an austere, upright New England farmer with a new set of false teeth . . . ."[9]

The old barn studio, too, was a source of concern to the sculptor. Its condition was such that he feared the whole structure might collapse on the important work it contained--and on himself. After his return to America in 1900, following a three year stay in Paris, he asked Babb to design a new studio to replace the old barn. The building of the new studio probably stemmed in part from Saint-Gaudens' decision to make his permanent, year-round home at Cornish. During his last trip to Europe he was stricken by the illness which would at last prove fatal. The comfort and tranquility of Aspet were now more desirable than ever.

[8] Reminiscences, I, 316.

[9] Reminiscences, I, 316.

In the closing years of his life, Saint-Gaudens lavished much attention on the Little Studio.[10] This charming building is, today, the spot where the visitor to the Memorial feels most closely the creative spirit of the man who put so much of himself into everything he touched. His son recalled that in the decoration of the new studio it was especially interesting to watch his father applying his subtle sense of color.

> For during at least four years he made endless experiments on combinations of paint upon the interior wall of the pergola and on the columns and the trellis which supports the vines, while the portion of the Parthenon frieze along the upper edge of the wall was three times laboriously and delicately tinted before he obtained the result he desired.[11]

Despite, and in some measure because of, the illness which made it increasingly difficult for him to carry on his work, Saint-Gaudens delighted in the outdoor recreation afforded by the Cornish countryside. In rear of the new studio he built a swimming tank which still remains, and laid out a golf course on the gently rolling grounds behind the house and studio. In winter, a patch of ice was kept clear of snow for skating, and toboggan slides were put up to be enjoyed by old and young alike. Even when too ill to participate,

[10] In the Reminiscences, vol. II, 239, Homer Saint-Gaudens calls this structure the "Small Studio," and this usage was followed in the picture captions and maps for this report. Subsequent to the reproduction of the captions and maps, the authors were informed that the term "Little Studio" is more commonly used by the Trustees. This designation is followed in the text. Both terms refer to the original Saint-Gaudens studio which still stands near the house.

[11] Reminiscences, II, 239.

the sculptor delighted in watching his family, assistants, and friends enjoying the facilities for outdoor fun which he provided. Far from giving way to the disease that was taking such a heavy toll of his physical strength, Saint-Gaudens maintained his penetrating wit and intellectual vitality to the end.

A great blow to Saint-Gaudens personally, and to America's art heritage, was the fire that in October, 1904, destroyed the large studio and its contents--virtually all of four years work since his return from Europe. Ruined were the Parnell statue, the seated Lincoln which was almost finished, a statue of Marcus Daly and a number of bas-reliefs. It is a tribute to the sculptor's courage that, despite his failing health, he began again his work on the Parnell and the Lincoln. The latter was finished in the last year of Saint-Gaudens' life. Even more regrettable in the eyes of the sculptor was the fire's destruction of the stored furniture from his New York home, most of his papers and correspondence, irreplaceable photographs, paintings, and other treasured belongings.

Fortunately, the Little Studio survived, and this, with other structures in the vicinity, permitted Saint-Gaudens' work to go on. The burned studio was quickly rebuilt in more permanent form and was ready for use by the summer of 1905. Here Saint-Gaudens' assistants completed much of the work left unfinished at the time of his death. The studio completed in 1905 suffered the same fate as its predecessor when, in 1944, it was destroyed by fire. Happily, the "Little Studio," Saint-Gaudens' personal workshop, remains to

portray the man and his creative spirit.

Little more than two years before his death Saint-Gaudens was honored by his friends from the world of art, music, and drama who, following his lead, had established their summer homes at Cornish. On June 23, 1905, the 20th anniversary of their coming to Cornish, the sculptor and his wife were guests of honor at an outdoor masque performed by friends and neighbors in a pine grove near the Little Studio. The centerpiece created for the play was in the form of an altar within a small temple consisting of Ionic columns supporting a canopy. The Saint-Gaudens and several hundred guests watched as actors in the guise of figures from Greek mythology debated on a successor to Jupiter, who had announced his abdication. At last Fame is called upon to decide, and from a golden bowl a name is chosen - "Augustus Saint-Gaudens." At the conclusion of the masque the guests of honor were drawn in a chariot to the pergola of the Little Studio, where a banquet was spread. The day ended with a ball marking the opening of the new studio, built to replace the one destroyed by fire in the previous year.

In a gesture of gratitude to his friends who had shared in the masque, Saint-Gaudens made a plaque which featured in its design the Greek altar and temple erected for the performance. On the plaque appeared the name of each participant, and from the original work reductions were made and presented to each individual. Saint-Gaudens would remember this homage from his friends as the most delightful experience of his life at Cornish. William Kendall, of

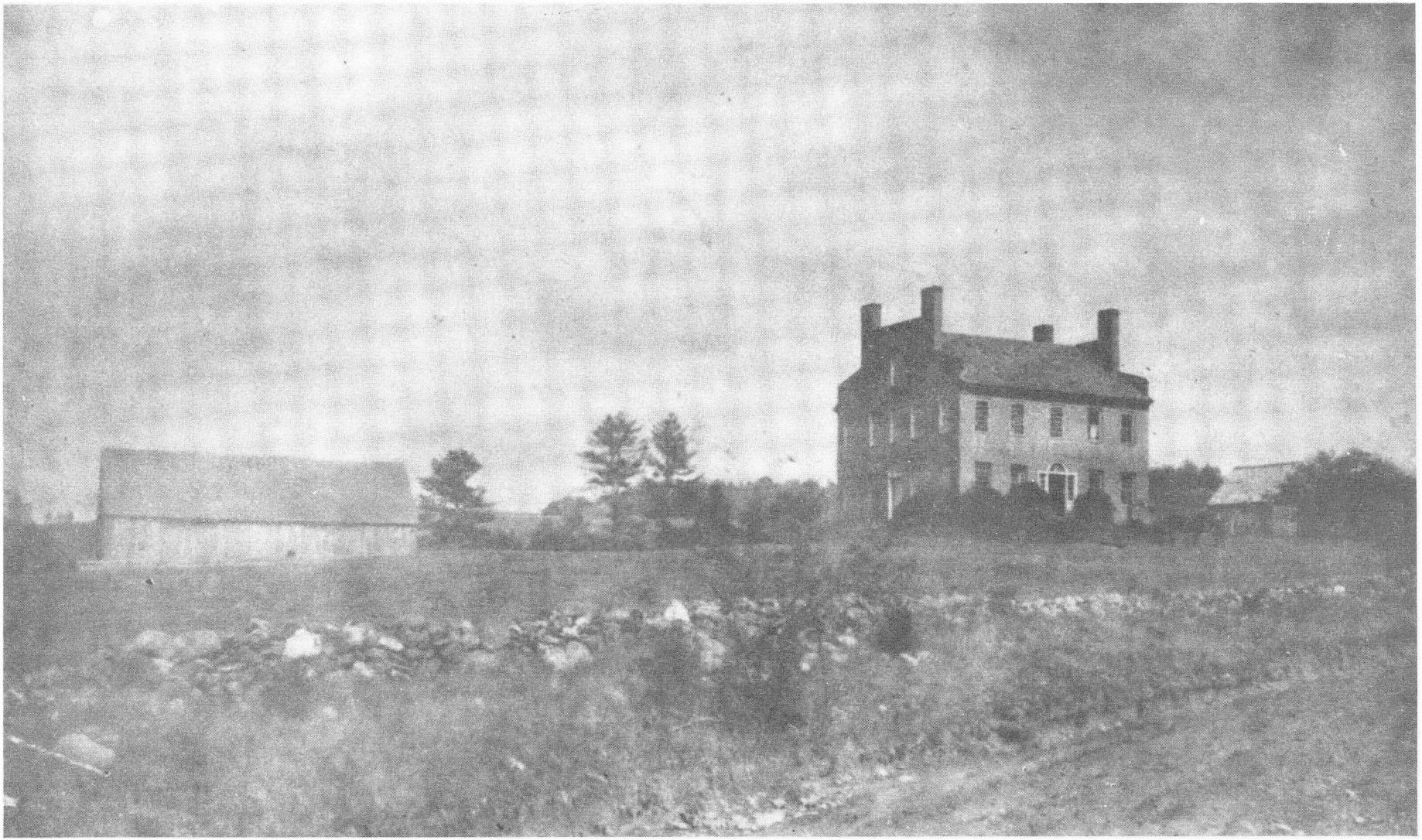
McKim, Mead and White, designed the permanent marble replica of the temple and altar of the masque which now marks the resting place of Saint-Gaudens and other members of his family.

The observance manifesting the affection of his friends came not too soon for Saint-Gaudens. But, although he had only a short time to live, the sculptor continued to accept commissions. When no longer able to work himself he was carried to his studios to supervise the work of his assistants and students. Almost to the end he persisted in the valiant effort to remain active, until at last he could do no more.

Death came to Saint-Gaudens at Aspet on August 3, 1907, when he was 59 years old. A few months after his death a traveller from abroad made a pilgrimage to Aspet, and a short time later, in March, 1908, attended the memorial exhibition of the sculptor's work at the Metropolitan Museum. In a fitting summation of Saint-Gaudens' legacy to art and the human spirit, he wrote:

> I looked around for a final survey of his achievement, ranging from the head of his father, his first work, to the head of Christ, his last; from the minute cameo brooch cut by the boy to the stupendous Sherman modelled by the man in his prime, from the small plaque of Bastien Lepage to the heroic figure of Lincoln; from the light-touched gaiety of the Sargent medallion to the learned mastery of the Shaw monument; from the formal and uninspired Silence of 1871, with finger on lips, to the subtlety of the eloquent and inspired Silence of 1891 in Rock Creek Cemetery--proclaiming the sure and silent evolution of the artist.
>
> Let the rest be silence--and gratitude.[12]

[12] C. Lewis Hind, Augustus Saint-Gaudens (New York, 1908), xxxiii.



"Huggins' Folly" as it appeared before the Saint-Gaudens made it their summer home. The old barn, at left, was the sculptor's first studio at Cornish, before its replacement by the "Small Studio."

Courtesy Saint-Gaudens Memorial



"Aspet", named for his father's birthplace in France, was first occupied by Saint-Gaudens and his family in the summer of 1885. Already a century old and for many years a tavern, its physical appearance did not commend the house when Saint-Gaudens first saw it. See preceding photograph.

National Park Service Photograph



The "Small Studio" as seen from the piazza of "Aspet."
National Park Service Photograph



The "Small Studio" replaced the 100-year-old barn in which Saint-Gaudens had his first studio at Cornish. "The completion of this studio became the jest of the family as its ramifications and complications were endless... ." (Homer Saint-Gaudens)

National Park Service photograph



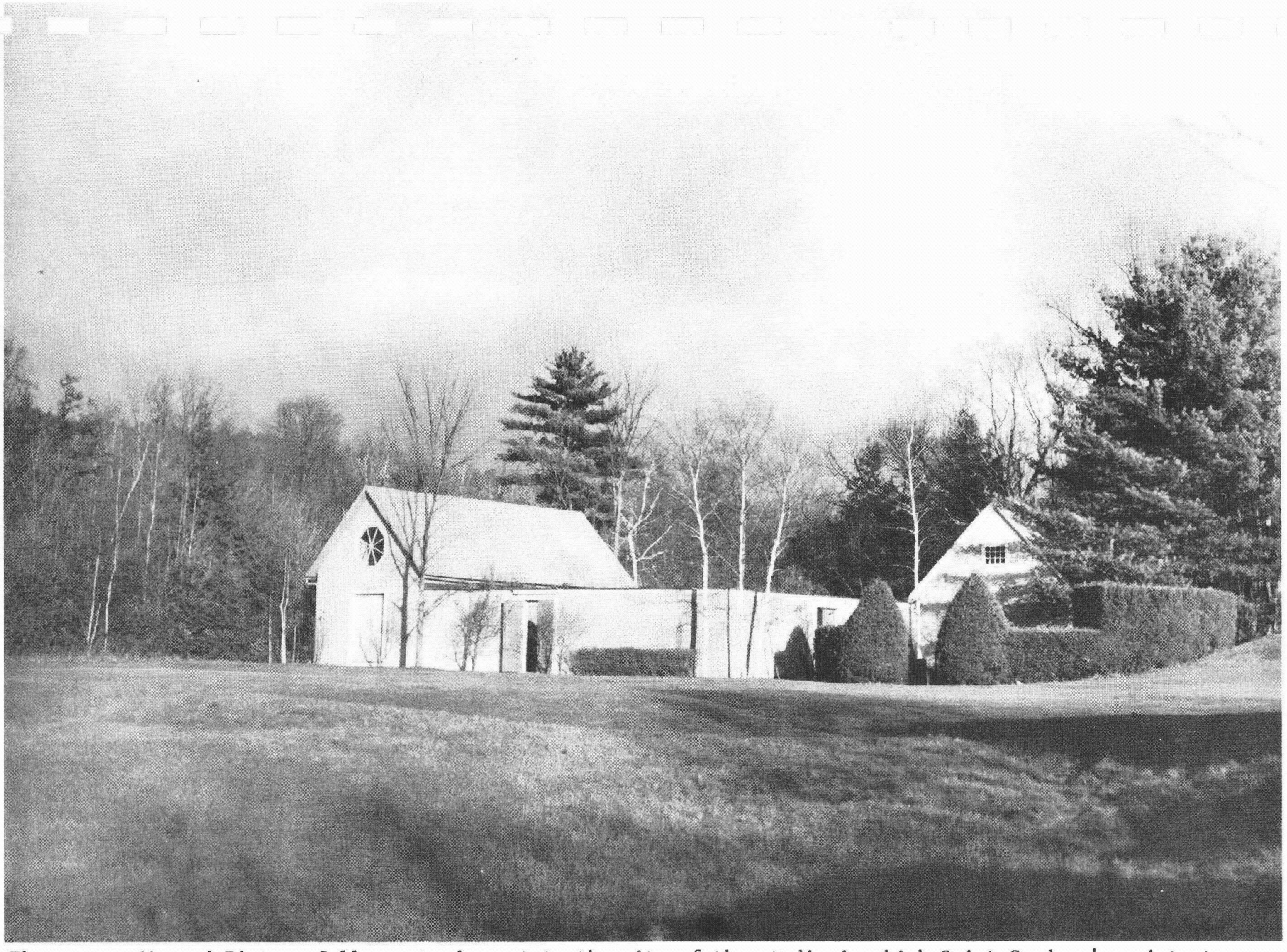
The "Small Studio" is filled with the work and the spirit of Saint-Gaudens. The Standing Lincoln with Chair is a reduction of the heroic statue in Lincoln Park, Chicago. The Diana for the Tower of the old Madison Square Garden is a cast from the original plaster model from which an enlargement in sheet copper was made.

National Park Service photograph



A corner of the "Small Studio" served as library and study for the sculptor. The bust of Bernard Saint-Gaudens, his father, was modeled in 1867 and is the earliest known work of Saint-Gaudens.

National Park Service Photograph



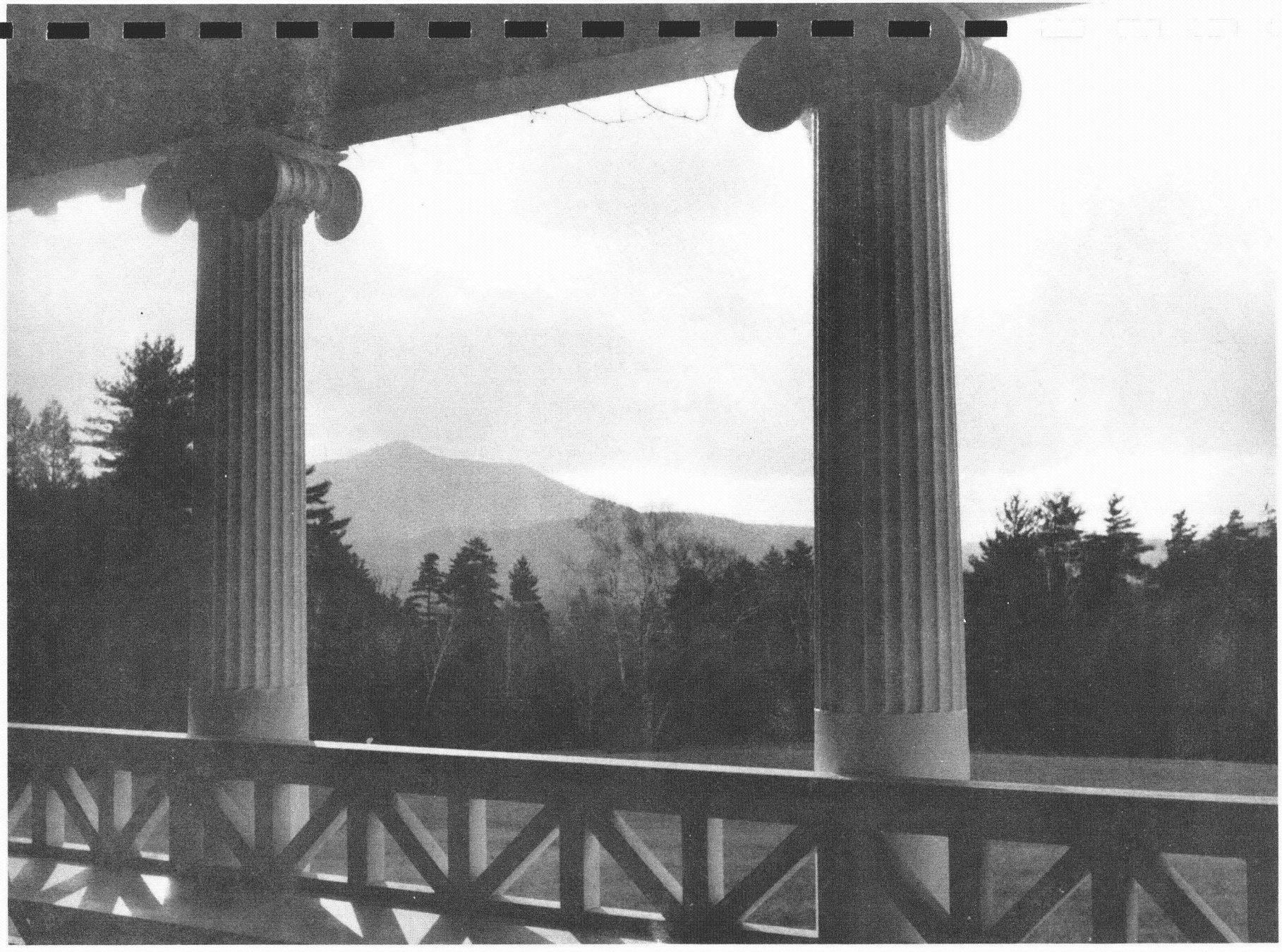
The New Studio and Picture Gallery stands next to the site of the studio in which Saint-Gaudens' assistants worked. This building was destroyed by fire in 1944. In the New Studio and Gallery are held summer exhibitions of contemporary painters and sculptors.

National Park Service Photograph



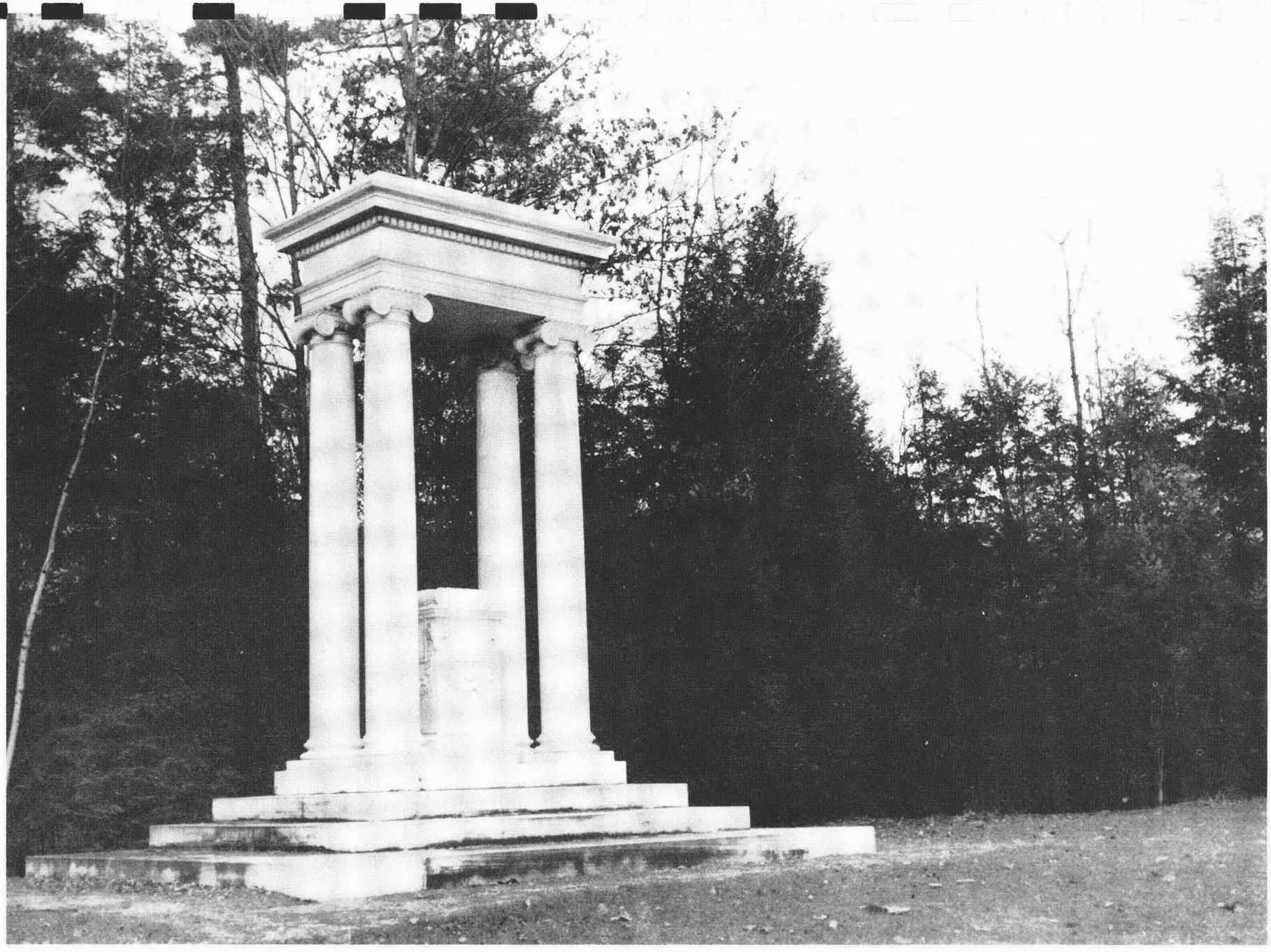
A section of the picture gallery, looking toward one of the New Studio buildings. Just inside the door is a cast of the "Puritan."

National Park Service Photograph



A few days before his death Saint-Gaudens lay watching the sunset behind Mount Ascutney. After a long silence he said, "It's very beautiful, but I want to go farther away."

National Park Service Photograph



In the marble Temple, a short walk from his home and studio, rest the ashes of Saint-Gaudens and other members of his family.

National Park Service Photograph

THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL TODAY

After Saint-Gaudens' death in 1907, the house, studios and grounds where he had lived and worked during the last 22 years of his life were retained by the sculptor's widow and son. To insure the permanent maintenance of the property as a cultural landmark, Mrs. Saint-Gaudens and Homer Saint-Gaudens deeded the property to a board of trustees[13] and on February 26, 1919, the Saint-Gaudens Memorial was incorporated and chartered by the State of New Hampshire. To provide for the operation and maintenance of the Memorial, the sum of $100,000 was raised, in great part through the Directors of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and by gifts from local persons interested in the preservation of the property. Additional land was added to protect the setting, and the road which gave access to it, from undesirable encroachment. The Memorial now contains a total of 83 acres.

The income from the endowment, plus membership dues, annual gifts from "guarantors," and admission fees of 50¢ per person, have enabled the Trustees to maintain the property, and an annual gift from the American Academy of Arts and Letters has helped provide for the summer exhibitions of contemporary art. However, income has not been sufficient to permit needed improvements and development.

The principal features of the Memorial today are Aspet,

[13] A list of the present Trustees, 1961-1962, appears in an appendix to the report.

the Saint-Gaudens home; the Little Studio which was his personal workshop, office and library; the New Studio and Art Gallery which houses casts of some of the sculptor's greatest works and provides space for the summer exhibitions; the formal gardens which are the setting for other notable reproductions, and the marble Temple with altar containing the sculptor's ashes.

The first floor of the home, with the exception of the modernized kitchen and pantries, is furnished in the period of its occupancy by the sculptor. Visitors to Aspet coming through the front door into the entrance hall may see the dining room, living room and parlor as they appeared in Saint-Gaudens' lifetime.

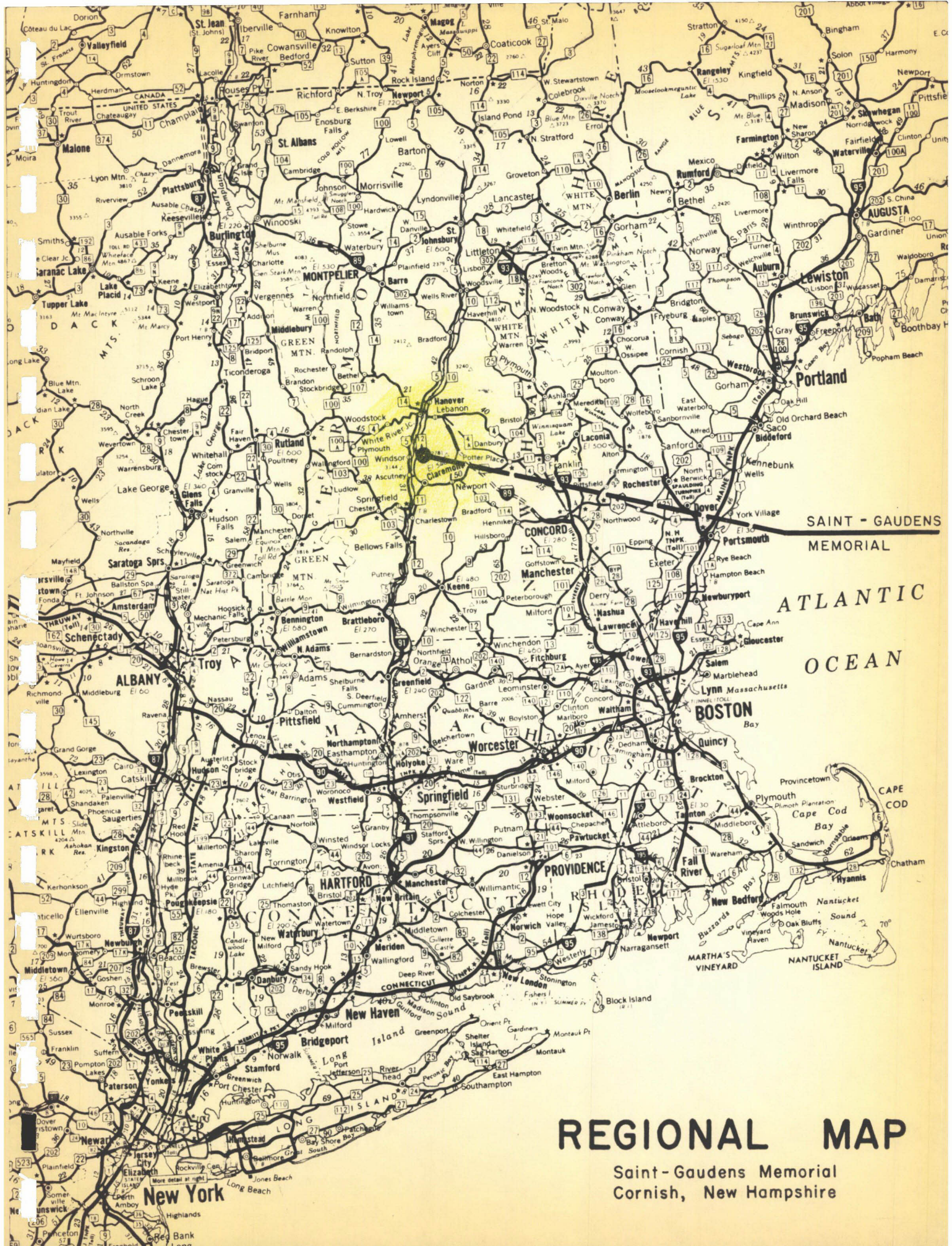
A spiral stairway with wide landing leads to the second floor. The second floor has been remodeled to provide living quarters for a curator during the period when the property is open to the public, May 30 to October 15. The attic contains storage rooms and servants' quarters.

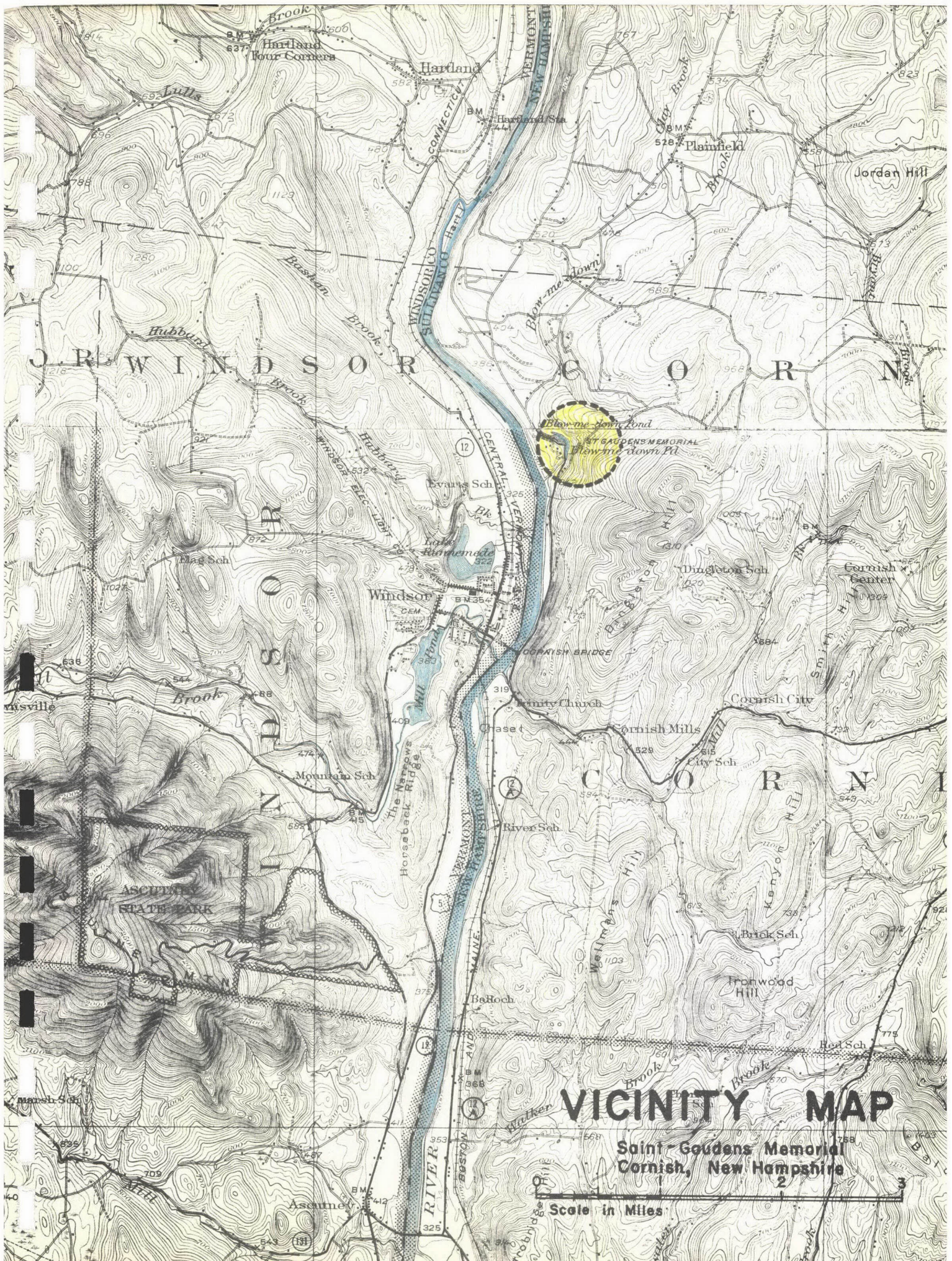
Leaving the house by way of the piazza the visitor may walk through the formal gardens behind the house, and enter the Little Studio. Here are displayed bronze and plaster casts of some of Saint-Gaudens' most noted works (see photo), in addition to an outstanding collection of his low-relief portraits. Here also, in a corner, are preserved the sculptor's desk and reference library. In drawers beneath the bookshelves are bundles of letters and papers saved by Saint-Gaudens. These deserve to be carefully examined and

indexed to make them a useful source for research.

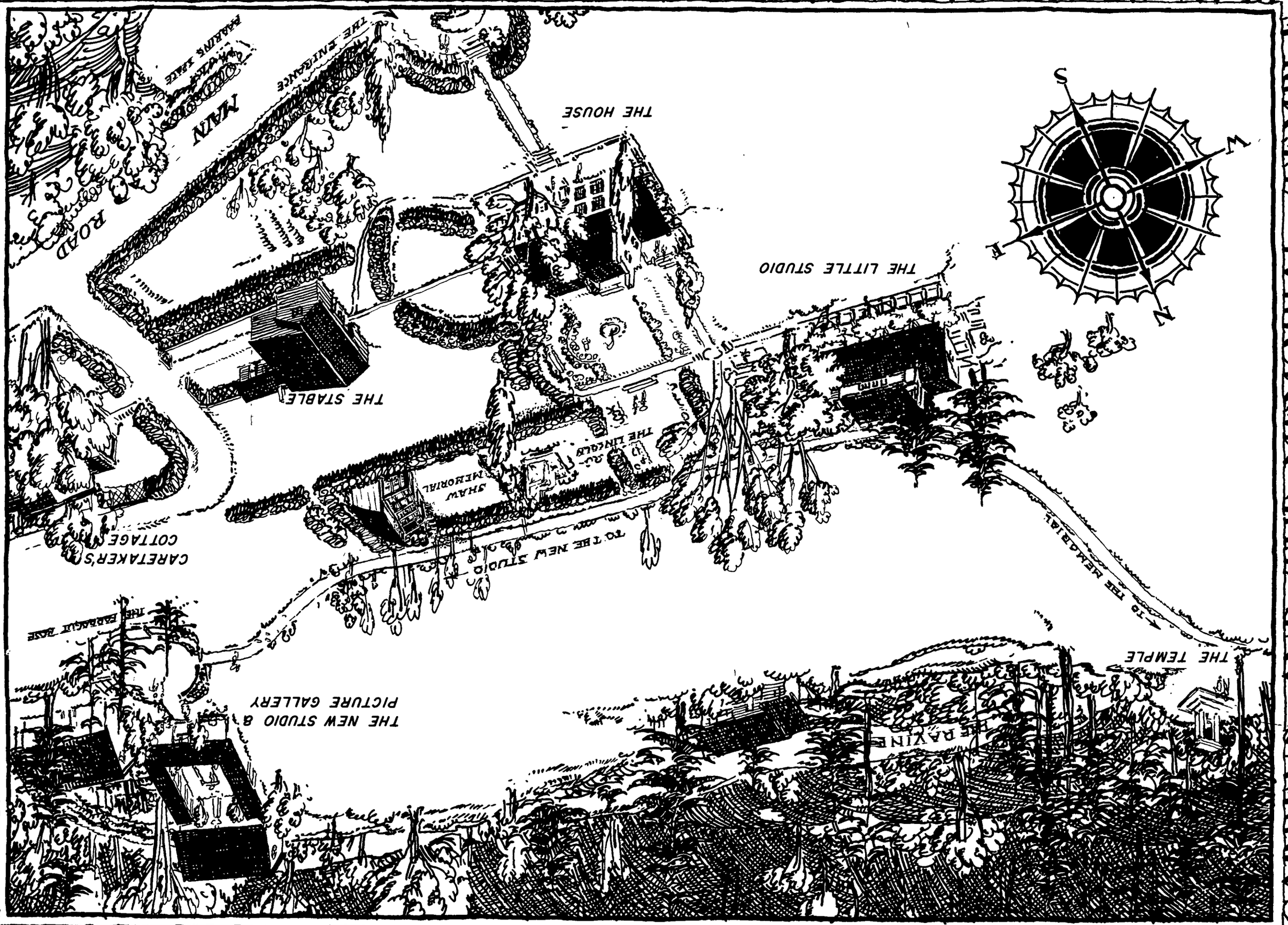
Displayed on the grounds during the summer are a cast of the seated Lincoln, and original base of the Farragut statue in New York's Madison Square. Strikingly displayed in an open-front shelter are sections of a plaster cast of the Shaw Memorial, donated to the Saint-Gaudens Memorial by the Albright Art Gallery of Buffalo.

There were 1,888 paid admissions to the Memorial in 1960.


SAINT - GAUDENS
MEMORIAL
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
REGIONAL MAP
Saint-Gaudens Memorial
Cornish, New Hampshire


VICINITY MAP
Saint-Gaudens Memorial
Cornish, New Hampshire
Scale in Miles
1
2
3
Hartland Four Corners
Hartland
Hartland Sta
Plainfield
Jordan Hill
Blow-me-down Brook
Blow-me-down Pond
ST GAUDENS MEMORIAL
Blow-me-down Rd
Evans Sch
Windsor
Mag Sch
Dingleton Sch
Cornish Center
Cornish City
Cornish Mills
City Sch
Trinity Church
Chase t
Mountain Sch
River Sch
Brick Sch
Ironwood Hill
Red Sch
Balloch
Ascutney
Marsh Sch
ASCUTNEY STATE PARK
COVERED BRIDGE
Mill Pond
Lake Runnemede
Mill Brook
Hubbard Brook
Bascom Brook
Lulls Brook
Barbadoes Hill
Smith Hill
Kenyon Hill
Wellmans Hill
The Narrows
Horseback Ridge
CONNECTICUT RIVER
WINDSOR-CORNISH BRIDGE
WINDSOR ELEC. LIGHT
CENTRAL VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MAINE
VERMONT
CONNECTICUT
WINDSOR CO
SULLIVAN CO
WINDSOR
CORNISH

PLAN OF THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL AT CORNISH NEW HAMPSHIRE · SHOWING THE HOUSE IN WHICH HE LIVED · THE LITTLE STUDIO · THE NEW STUDIOS · THE GARDENS AND THE MEMORIAL TEMPLE



PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

Location

Saint-Gaudens Memorial, the home of the American sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens from 1885 to his death in 1907, is located in the Town of Cornish, Sullivan County, New Hampshire, in the southwestern part of the State.

Situated along the Connecticut River valley near the eastern bank of the Connecticut River, the site is accessible from State Route 12-A, two miles north of the old covered bridge that spans the Connecticut River at Windsor, Vermont.

The location of the Memorial site and its physical and topographic relationships to the surrounding area of New Hampshire and Vermont is shown on the Regional Map and Vicinity Map.

The Site

The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is the name given the home, studios, gardens and land where Augustus Saint-Gaudens lived and worked during the period when Cornish was his summer and, later, his permanent home.

Situated on an 83-acre tract of land on the north portion of Dingleton Hill, the site occupies a scenic setting along the Connecticut River Valley between Vermont and New Hampshire. Outstanding views can be had from its high elevation through small openings in a dense forest cover of white pine, hemlock and northern hardwoods

that surround the area. A deep ravine falls into an attractive brook along the north side of the property. Nearby Ascutney Mountain across the Connecticut River in Vermont provides a dominant feature in the total landscape scene.

The principal buildings of the Memorial area consist of (1) the House ("Aspet"); (2) The Little Studio; (3) The New Studio and Picture Gallery and; (4) The Caretaker's House. They are grouped at the extreme east end of the property in a manner that appears to be both convenient and functional from an operational and visitor use standpoint. The general location of these buildings is shown on the Property Map. Other accessory buildings include an old stable near the house used for storage and equipment and a garage behind the caretaker's cottage used for maintenance.

The sketch plan of Saint-Gaudens Memorial shows in isometric projection the detailed layout of the developed portion of the area.

The House is connected to the Little Studio, Saint-Gaudens' workshop, by an attractive network of formal gardens on varying levels. Directly back of the house are formal beds of perennial flowers and shrubs. The gardens contain interesting water features and benches for leisurely enjoyment of the area. Reproductions of some of Saint-Gaudens' most noted sculpture are placed in the gardens during the summer months, adding to the interest of the gardens as well as demonstrating functional uses of sculpture in landscape development. A large grass panel hedged with hemlock and white pine provides appropriate areas for permanent display of casts of The

Seated Lincoln, in Chicago and the Shaw Memorial, in Boston. The original of the base of the Farragut Statue located in Madison Square, New York City, provides the motif of a formal entrance garden at the New Studio and Picture Gallery.

Existing maintenance facilities are housed in an old stable between the House and Caretaker's Cottage and in a garage behind the latter. As shown on the sketch plan, these buildings and service drives are carefully screened by hedges (hemlock and white pine) and other plantings to provide a separation from the gardens and exhibit buildings.

Directly west of the House and Little Studio is a sweeping open lawn that extends to the forest beyond. This open area also extends back along the top of the ravine to the New Studio and Picture Gallery. These open expanses within the property provide not only a dramatic setting for the buildings but long sweeping vistas within the area and landscape beyond.

About 700 feet from the New Studio is the family burial place nestled in the trees at the top of the ravine. The Temple, as it is called, was designed by William Kendall of McKim, Mead and White, and creates a beautiful setting for an evocative pause in the tour of the grounds.

An interesting use of the open areas of the property during Saint-Gaudens time was a golf course and winter sports area. Visible remains of the golf greens and tees, however, have all but disappeared.

A long slope area extending from the New Studio and Picture Gallery to the open lawn beyond the Little Studio and Temple was used in the winter time for tobogganing and skiing. The remains of a small outdoor swimming tank just outside the Little Studio on the north side of the building further attest to Saint-Gaudens' interest in year-round recreational activities.

Access to the Memorial is provided over a Cornish town road from State Highway 12-A to the parking area just opposite the entrance walk to the House, a distance of approximately 0.6 miles. The road is black-topped to just beyond the parking area, and has a gravel surface beyond that point.

General Access and Parking

Access to Saint-Gaudens Memorial is available only by automobile. The most direct route from the populated areas to the south is over U.S. Route 5 which runs north through the Connecticut River Valley. The Memorial, however, lies in a very favorable and convenient position to projected routes of the Interstate Highway System in the New England region.

Interstate Route 89 will pass just to the east and will provide a direct route from the Boston area via Interstate 93 at Concord, New Hampshire. Likewise, Interstate Route 91 from the south, which will generally parallel U.S. Route 5 through the Connecticut River Valley, will provide direct and speedy access from the Massachusetts Turnpike and connecting routes to the Massachusetts, Connecti-

cut, and New York regions.

Public parking is provided in a rectangular paved lot directly across the entrance road from the approach walk to the House. Space is available for up to 30 cars. The area can be expanded if future demand warrants, but enlargement would require clearing of trees from the surrounding forest. The parking area surface appears to be in need of repair and the drainage improved.

Boundaries and Land Ownership

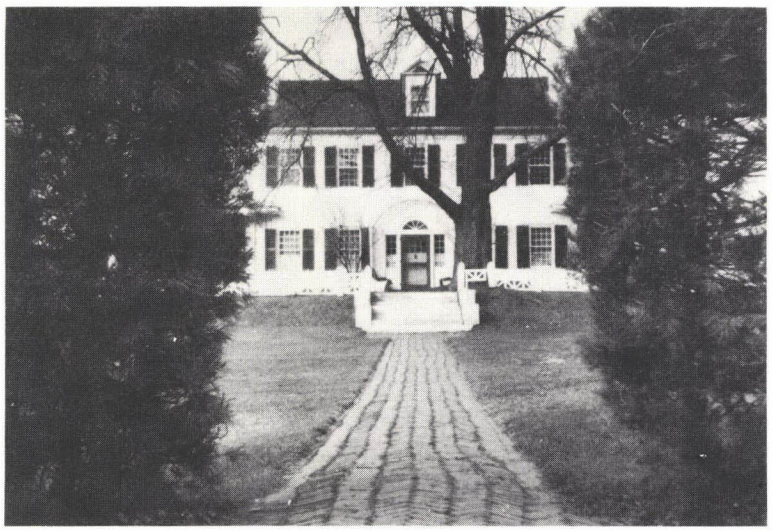
The property boundary of Saint-Gaudens Memorial is clearly defined on the Property Map. It begins approximately 1300 feet south of the entrance road on State Route 12-A and follows along the state highway and entrance road to about 700 feet beyond the parking area.

Blow Me Up Brook, at the bottom of a ravine is the boundary on the north side which continues around the west side near the bottom of the slope to the vicinity of Blow Me Down Pond.

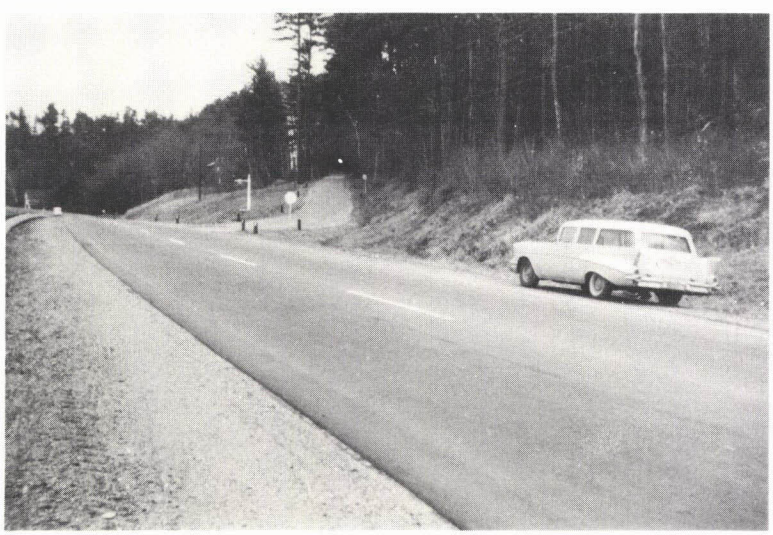
The Memorial property was acquired in four parcels of 9, 23, 29, and 22 acres as noted on the Property Map from the heirs of Saint-Gaudens and private owners.

Generally, the existing property area (83 acres) and boundaries appear to be adequate for future operation and protection of the Memorial. It is suggested, however, that the approximately 1,100 foot strip of land between the north side of the entrance road and State Route 12-A be a future acquisition. This area is important for the perpetual protection and scenic control of the entrance road

against adverse uses. It is approximately 02.7 acres in size and is delineated on the Property Map.



Approach walk to Home from parking area



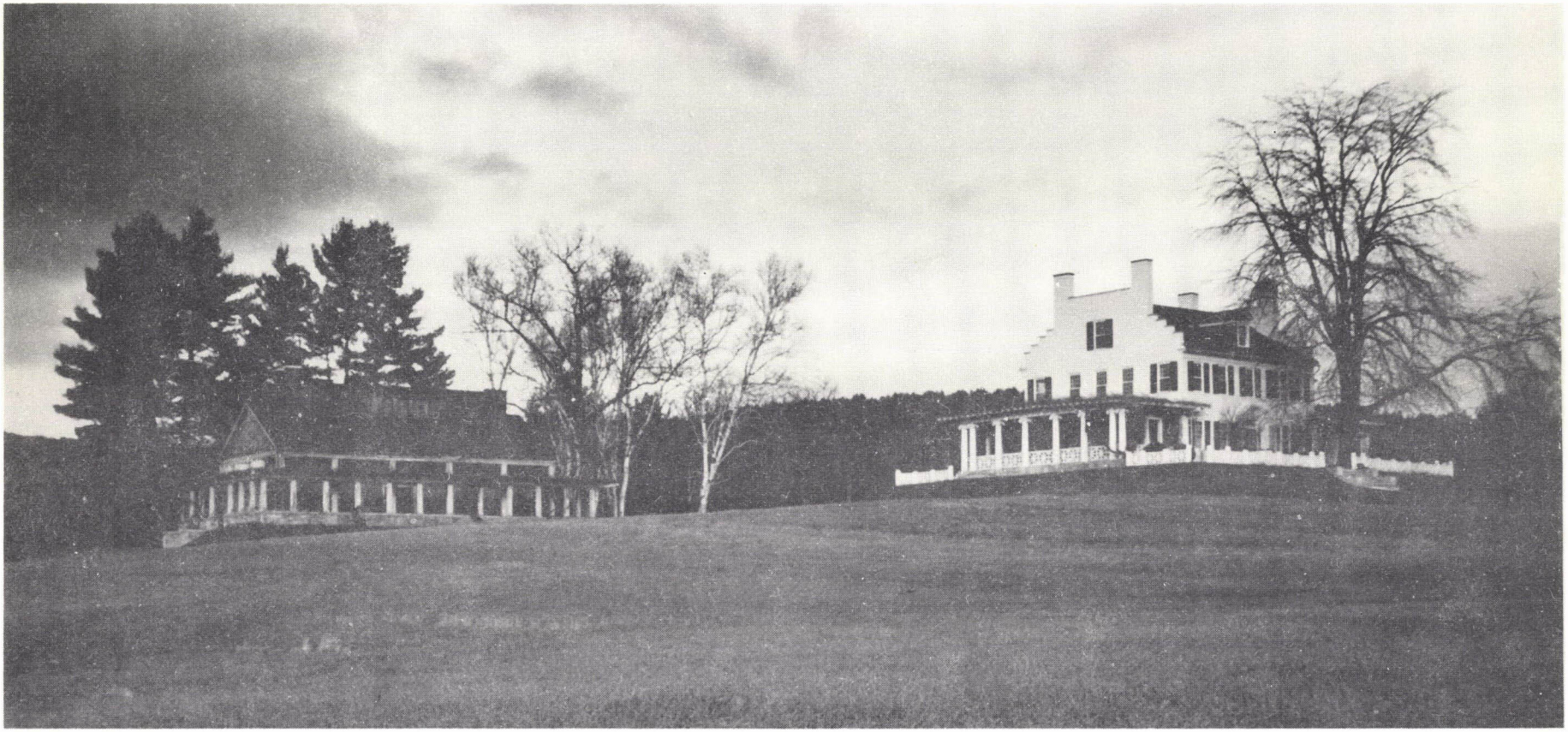
Entrance road to Saint-Gaudens Memorial
from State Route 12-A



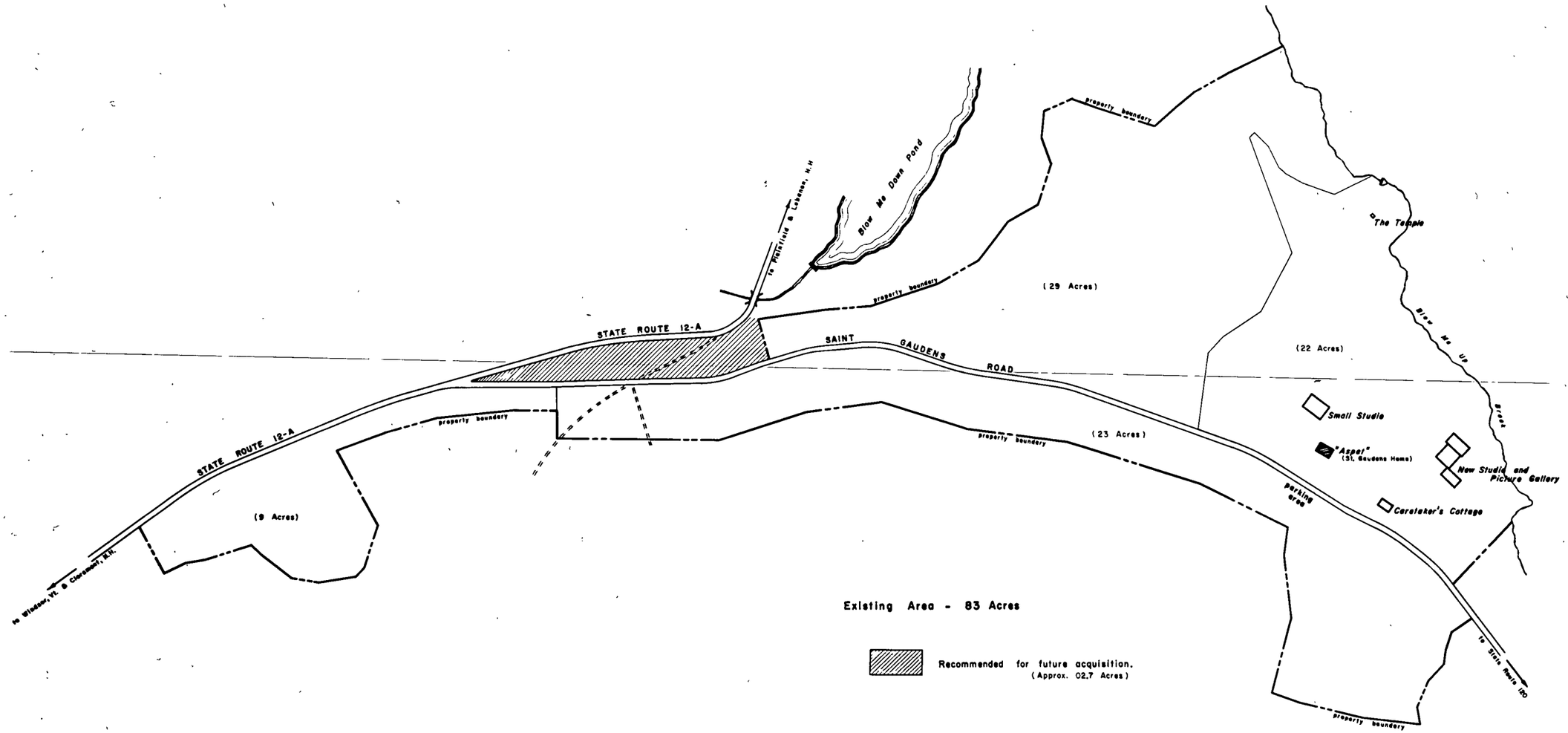
The New Studio
and
Picture Gallery

The Small Studio

"Aspet"
Saint-Gaudens
Home



Close-Up View
of
The Small Studio and "Aspet" (Saint-Gaudens Home)



BASIC DATA Map prepared by W. F. Breckenridge, Claremont, N.H., August 1951.
(Compiled from deeds and field reconnaissance)

RECOMMENDED ____ DATE

APPROVED ____

SCALE 1 inch = 200 feet

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
RECREATION RESOURCE PLANNING DIVISION
PREPARED BY REGION FIVE OFFICE

PROPERTY MAP
TITLE OF DRAWING

LOCATION WITHIN AREA
SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL
NAME OF AREA

PREPARED	
DESIGNED	FAILOR
DRAWN	FAILOR
CHECKED	
REVISED	DATE / INITIAL
REGION	FIVE
PCP	
SHEET OF	
DRAWING NO.	
DATE	Jan. 1962

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS

Development and visitor use of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial is focused upon four principal features, all of which have been previously discussed in this report.

(1) Upon arrival to the site the visitor is directed immediately to the Home of Saint-Gaudens (Aspet) located directly across the road from the visitor parking area. The home now functions as an historic house museum, with modernized living quarters on the second floor.

(2) The Little Studio was Saint-Gaudens' principal workshop, office and study. It now houses a notable collection of the sculptor's work, and preserves the setting of his small study in one corner.

(3) The New Studio and Picture Gallery serves to exhibit the works of contemporary artists and to display casts of some of the larger sculpture of Saint-Gaudens.

(4) The Formal Gardens and grounds development demonstrate Saint-Gaudens' concern for orderly and pleasing landscape development and his enthusiasm for outdoor recreation.

It is suggested that future development take cognizance of the following particular factors in order to protect and preserve the basic integrity and authenticity of the area. Any future additions and alterations to the site and buildings needed to accommodate visitors and to satisfy administrative requirements should be executed in such a way that they will be unobtrusive and a minimum intrusion

on the basic integrity of the area.

Future development and adjustments should, above all, reflect the basic taste and development envisioned and executed by Saint-Gaudens.

A centralized visitor center does not appear to be a basic requirement for this area inasmuch as the buildings are closely related and form an integrated unit. It is recommended that the House continue to function as a reception area, as it now does. The visitor can begin his tour of the other buildings and grounds after seeing the first floor of Aspet and leaving by way of the piazza.

Specific Suggestions on Development, Operations, and Interpretation

The House (Aspet)

The first floor (containing living room, adjoining parlor, dining room and central hall) should be kept as a museum reflecting Saint-Gaudens life at Cornish. The central hallway can be used for reception of visitors.

Fortunately, the first floor is laid out in such a way that it requires very little movement by the visitor for interpretation of the first floor area. When the visitor has finished his tour of the first floor he can be conveniently directed to the piazza off the living room, and proceed into the formal garden area and to the other buildings and grounds.

The second and third floor of the house are now used for living quarters and working area for the seasonal curator. It is

suggested that the second floor be adopted for permanent administrative use such as: superintendent's office, curator office, clerical facilities, staff library, etc. The third floor could continue to be used for seasonal living quarters or administrative purposes.

The modernized kitchen on the first floor, used presently by the seasonal curator could be converted into an exhibit room for display of appropriate items connected with the life of Saint-Gaudens.

An item of $15,000 has been suggested in the development schedule for rehabilitation and adaptation of the house's interior. The exterior appears to be in good condition and should not require any extensive rehabilitation within the next five years.

The Little Studio

When the visitor completes his stay in the house he may walk through the formal gardens to the Little Studio nearby. The building interprets the art of Saint-Gaudens by preserving his working area, office and library as well as exhibiting some of his work.

It is suggested that interpretation include some attention to the methods employed by Saint-Gaudens in his sculpture. It is believed that this feature will add much to the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the sculptor's art. Interpretation should rely heavily on actual art objects of Saint-Gaudens for demonstration.

The interpretive scheme of the Little Studio should be planned in such a manner that the visitor is permitted the greatest possible freedom of movement, both inside and out, consistent with

adequate protection practices, so that he will get the utmost benefit from the overall aesthetic values of the area.

The small room off the main area of the building would be an appropriate place for auxiliary exhibits and a sales corner for appropriate items connected with the Memorial. It would also provide a duty station for the seasonal curator.

The formal gardens adjacent to the House and Little Studio provide the visitor with an excellent overall perspective of the scale and proportions of the site. The gardens constitute not only a pleasing transition from the House and Little Studio, but provide an excellent setting for the display of two of Saint-Gaudens' most noted works, The Seated Lincoln and The Shaw Memorial. Other small sculpture figures and garden objects demonstrate the aesthetic and functional uses of sculpture in garden and landscape development.

In general, the gardens and overall landscape development emphasize and unify the aesthetic character of the Memorial.

Various items have been included in the development schedule for continued care and improvement of gardens and grounds.

The New Studio and Picture Gallery should continue to serve as an exhibit area for Saint-Gaudens' work and outstanding contemporary art. The display of the work of contemporary artists has been a major function of the Memorial over the years, and one of particular interest to the visiting public. The continuation of this activity seems wholly justified and appropriate to the significance and spirit of the area.

The development and arrangement of the New Studio and Picture Gallery complex has been tastefully executed by the Trustees. Improvements and alterations to the Gallery as planned by the Trustees merit early consideration in any future development. This includes enlargement of the gallery, fire-proofing of the structure, and installation of modern lighting. These improvements will make it possible to secure better and more varied exhibitions and display them more effectively. Construction items for this work have been included in the development schedule.

The Trustees have proposed the construction of a new fireproof gallery to house small bronzes and portraits in low relief. Some of these items are now housed in the Little Studio and others are stored due to lack of exhibit space. It is believed that this is a valid and legitimate proposal and one that should be included in the overall development program. It appears that a suitable location for this new gallery building would be in the vicinity of the New Studio and Picture Gallery, planned in a manner that it will constitute a minimum intrusion on the historic scene. An item of $50,000 has been included in the development schedule for this facility.

Existing maintenance and storage facilities are presently housed in a small garage behind the caretaker's cottage and in the stable back of the formal gardens. While the maintenance area seems to be well located in relation to the overall development and properly

screened, the facilities are inadequate for the operation of a well-rounded maintenance program. Items have been included for the development of a new maintenance area and building. It is suggested that the reconstructed maintenance area be concentrated in the same general area now used for maintenance purposes behind the caretaker's cottage.

Caretaker's Cottage

It is suggested that the present caretaker's cottage be retained as quarters for the maintenance supervisor. An item for repairs and alteration to the building is included in the development schedule.

Superintendent's Quarters

Permanent residential quarters for the superintendent is a primary requirement and $23,000 has been suggested in the development schedule for this facility. The residence should be located on a site where it will not intrude on the historic setting or interfere with visitor use. Adequate sites to accommodate a new Superintendent's residence are available within the existing property.

Proposed Staffing

It is recommended that the permanent staff of the area consist of (1) a superintendent; (2) clerk-stenographer; (3) maintenance supervisor and; (4) a laborer. To augment the permanent staff during the operating season it is recommended that additional personnel be added as outlined in the staffing schedule. A table showing proposed permanent and seasonal staff follows this section.

It appears desirable that the area should be administered by a superintendent who is a qualified museum curator. A full time clerk-stenographer is essential to assist the superintendent in routine clerical and administrative duties and management planning.

The primary function of the maintenance staff shall be the care and maintenance of the extensive grounds connected with the Memorial, including the formal gardens. For this reason, it is recommended that the maintenance staff be supervised by a person who is acquainted with practices and procedures of landscape maintenance.

The present caretaker is doing an exceptional job with the limited funds and resources at his command. The retention of his services as maintenance supervisor would be desirable.

Permanent protection personnel for this area does not appear to be required on a full time basis because of its relative isolation and geographic insulation from human interference. Any occasional protection or policing problems requiring the service of professional personnel could be provided by the local county sheriff's office or state police barracks through a cooperative agreement.

SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

PROPOSED STAFFING

Position & Grade	MY	1st Yr.	2nd Yr.	3rd Yr.	4th Yr.	5th Yr.
MANAGEMENT & PROTECTION						
Superintendent, GS-9	1	6435	6600	6765	6930	7095
Museum Curator, GS-7	1	5355	5520	5685	5850	6015
Clerk-Stenographer, GS-4	1	4040	4145	4250	4355	4460
Seasonal Museum Curator, GS-5	1/3	1450	1450	2/3-2900	2900	2900
Total Personal Services	3-1/3	17280	17715	19600	20035	20470
Other Expenses		4000	4050	4115	4160	4250
		21280	21765	23715	24195	24720
MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION						
Maintenanceman	1	4815	4815	4815	4815	4815
Laborer	1	3850	3850	3850	3850	3850
Seasonal Laborer	1-1/2	5775	5775	5775	5775	5775
Total Personal Services	3-1/2	14440	14440	14440	14440	14440
Other Expenses		3610	3700	4000	4500	4500
		18050	18140	18440	18940	18940
Grand Total		39,330	39,905	42,155	43,135	43,660

Development Needs

While the existing buildings including the House, Little Studio and the New Studio and Picture Gallery appear to be structurally sound, there is visible evidence for the need for general rehabilitation and additional maintenance, particularly on the interiors. As noted elsewhere in this report, available income has not been sufficient to permit needed improvements and alterations.

Based upon a general analysis of future development needs, the following development schedule has been prepared to reflect the general need for a rehabilitation and new facilities program, and is intended as a guide for further consideration of these requirements.

Proposed new construction includes (1) a superintendent's residence, (2) maintenance area and buildings; (3) Exhibit Gallery for small bronzes and low relief, (4) Redesign and improvement of entrance way at State Route 12-A, and (5) Resurfacing and improvement of parking area.

DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year	
Roads & Trails						
Entrance Road					15,000	15,000
Entrance (Redesign & improvement of entrance way at State Route 12-A)		10,000				10,000
Parking Area		4,000				4,000
Walks & Trails			2,500			2,500
Buildings & Utilities						
Superintendent's Residence (including grounds development)	20,000	3,000				23,000
Rehabilitation & Remodeling of Saint-Gaudens Home	15,000					15,000
New Exhibit Gallery for small bronzes & low relief			43,000	7,000		50,000
Improvements to New Studio & Picture Gallery		17,000				17,000
Rehabilitation of Little Studio & grounds development, including swimming tank	15,000					15,000
Maintenance Area & Building				30,000	5,000	35,000
Rehabilitation of Stable					5,000	5,000
Rehabilitation of Caretaker's Residence	2,500					2,500
General Grounds Improvements including Formal Gardens & Landscaping				7,000		7,000
Total	52,500	34,000	45,500	44,000	25,000	201,000

APPENDIX

TRUSTEES OF THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL, 1961-1962

Ex Officio		
Governor Wesley Powell		Executive Mansion Concord, N. H.
President John S. Dickey		Dartmouth College Hanover, N. H.
Officers		
William Platt, President	1962	101 Park Avenue New York 17, N. Y.
Henry S. Beal, First Vice President	1964	Windsor, Vt.
Frances Grimes, Second Vice President	1964	c/o William Platt
Francis F. Faulkner, Treasurer and Clerk	1963	5 James Street Keene, N. H.
Trustees		
Mrs. Montgomery B. Angell	1962	RFD #3 Peekskill, N.Y. 200 E. 66th St., N.Y.C.
Mrs. William E. Beaman	1963	Putnam Hills Greenwich, Conn.
Congressman Perkins Bass	1963	House of Representatives Washington, D.C.
Mr. Thomas P. Cope	1963	Lincoln, Mass.
Mr. Gardner Cox	1962	88 Garden Street Cambridge, Mass.
Mrs. William Penn Cresson	1963	Chesterwood Stockbridge, Mass.
Mr. James L. Farley	1963	High Court Cornish, N. H.
Mr. Barry Faulkner	1962	Base Hill Road Keene, N. H. 137 E. 66th St. New York 21, N. Y.

Mr. David E. Finley	1962	3318 O Street, N.W. Washington 7, D. C.
Mr. Eric Gugler	1964	101 Park Avenue New York 17, N. Y.
Mr. Clarence L. Hay	1964	1 Sutton Place S. New York 22, N. Y. Newbury, N. H.
Mr. Lewis Iselin, Jr.	1964	432 East 84th Street New York, N. Y.
Mrs. Alexander James	1962	Dublin, N. H.
Mr. Garfield H. Miller	1963	37 Gates Street White River Jct., Vt.
Mr. Paul Manship	1964	901 Broadway New York, N. Y. Lanesville, Mass.
Mr. Douglas Stuart Moore	1962	464 Riverside Drive New York, N. Y. Cutchogue, N. Y.
Mr. John O'Connor	1962	5440 Kipling Rd. Pittsburgh, Pa.
Mrs. John C. Parsons	1963	6 Woodside Circle Hartford, Conn. The Crossways Walpole, N.H.
Mrs. J. Russell Parsons	1963	Llewellyn Park West Orange, N. J.
Mr. Arthur W. Quimby	1964	34 Namaug Ave. New London, Conn. Plainfield, N. H.