

... the above described premises with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto to said City of Portland as trustee as foresaid and its successors in trust and the same shall not be conveyed or encumbered by said City but shall be held forever for the benefit of the people of said Portland subject to the following terms, restriction, reservations and conditions

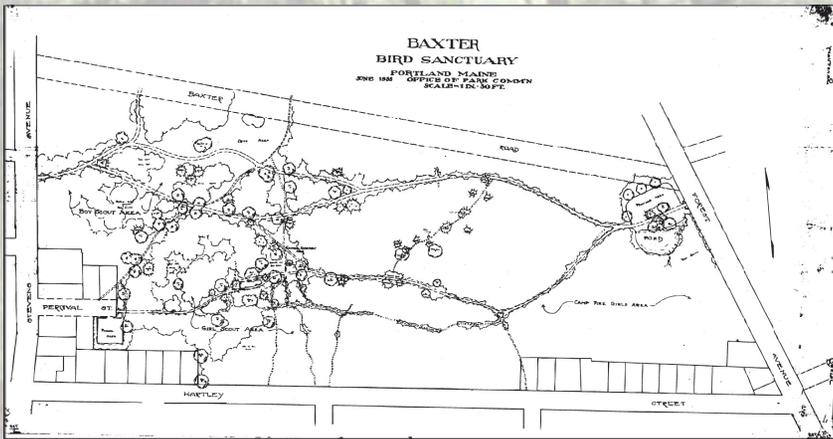
1 - shall forever be retained and used by said City in trust for the benefit of the people of Portland as a Municipal Forest and Park for public recreational and educational purposes the same forever to be known as "MAYOR BAXTER WOODS";

2 - shall forever be kept in its natural wild state and as a sanctuary for wild birds, with no streets for public conveyances and no cement walks therein and with only paths and trails for pedestrians, and any trees that shall fall or that may become a menance to life may be removed, but no other trees therein shall be taken down;

3 - shall forever be maintained for the sole use of pedestrians; and horses, automobiles and all motor vehicles, except those of the City used soley in caring for said woods, shall forever be excluded therefrom;

4 - that the heavy ornamental gates now in possession of said City shall be erected by said City either at the Forest Avenue or Stevens Avenue entrance within one year of the date of this deed;

5 - that said City shall erect within one (1) year after the date of this deed and shall forever maintain on the land hereby conveyed a suitable bronze marker the said marker to recite the conditions of this gift, the same to be attached to a granite boulder located on said land and provided by said City;



Above: Plan of Baxter Woods, dated 1935, & prepared for the Portland Parks Commission.

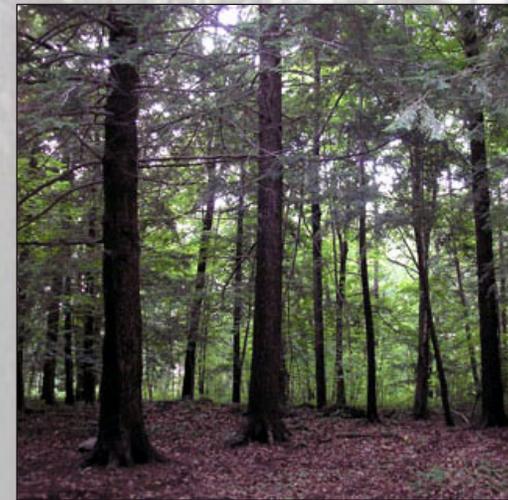


Public Services Department
55 Portland Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Welcome to Mayor Baxter Woods

a gift from Percival P. Baxter to the City of Portland
in honor of his father, James Phinney Baxter in

- 1946 -



Mayor Baxter Woods ... "shall forever be retained and used by [the] City in trust for the benefit of the people of Portland as a Municipal Forest and Park and for public recreation and educational purposes..."

A brief history of Mayor Baxter Woods



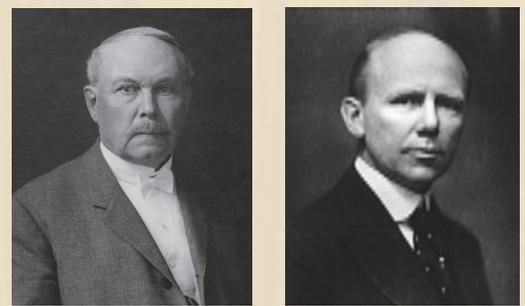
As historian Herb Adams once wrote, “Baxter Woods’ brush with history came at the hands of a politician, a portrait painter, and a plow salesman.” The municipal forest now owned by the City of Portland was, at one time, the grand estate of congressman Francis Ormond Smith, also known as “Fog” Smith “for his initials and his principles” as Mr. Adams noted.

F.O.J. Smith enjoyed a brief business venture with the portrait painter-turned-inventor Samuel F.B. Morse, who spent time at Forest Home working

with the travelling plow salesman Ezra Cornell to lay the first underground telegraph cable in a field on the property. Also known as “Forest Home” and “Smith Castle,” the house sat on the site from 1836 to 1882, when, following the deaths of Smith and his wife, the property was purchased by Mayor James Phinney Baxter.

Mayor Baxter developed little of the former estate. Portions of the property were divided, with several acres to the north sold to the Roman Catholic Diocese and streets and parcels developed to the south. Upon J.P. Baxter’s death in 1921, care for the property fell to his youngest son Percival, the eventual Governor of Maine and founder of Baxter State Park. Percival soon opened the woods to the public for the purposes of passive recreation and the land soon became known as the “Baxter Bird Sanctuary.” The community embraced the property and the care of it. The Cumberland County Audubon Society and the Longfellow Garden Club teamed to maintain the nature trails and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts adopted their own activity areas.

In April of 1946, Governor Percival Baxter presented the 29.5 acres to the People of Portland as a municipal forest to be kept in its natural state. To this end, he established distinct deed restriction to guide the use and maintenance of the park. The woods were to be known forever as “Mayor Baxter Woods.”



IMAGES. Top left, “View of the F.O.J. Smith House, Portland.” Oil on canvas by Harrison Bird Brown (1831-1915). Above left: James Phinney Baxter (1831-1921), Above right: Percival Proctor Baxter (1876-1969). Images courtesy of the City of Portland and the Maine State Archives Baxter Collection.

MAYOR BAXTER WOODS TRAILS

LEGEND

