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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GREYLOCK RESERVATION COMMISSION

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1923



PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT
APPROVED BY THE
COMMISSION ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

REPORT OF THE GREYLOCK RESERVATION COMMISSION.

Chairman — FRANCIS W. ROCKWELL, 75 APPLETON AVE., PITTSFIELD, MASS.

Secretary — ARTHUR B. DANIELS, ADAMS, MASS.

Treasurer — WILLIAM H. SPERRY, NORTH ADAMS, MASS.

The Greylock Reservation, situated in the northwestern part of Massachusetts consists, according to the Surveyor's report, of 8,480 acres upon the summits of the northern Berkshire hills.

The Reservation was established by authority granted by chapter 543 of the Acts of 1898.

By the original act, the county of Berkshire was to care for and maintain the reservation. A commission was established of three residents in the County of Berkshire. The County makes annual appropriations for the care and maintenance of the reservation.

The commission reports annually to the County as to the application of the appropriation.

The lands purchased have been paid for by the state except a parcel of four hundred acres on the summit, the gift of a former Greylock Park Association, and a small tract in the southeast portion of the reservation, given by the late Miss Susan Churchill; the commission, under the original act, being entitled to receive gifts.

There is a small building fund in the City Savings Bank of Pittsfield, deposited by the County Treasurer from the funds collected by Mr. Rockwell, as stated in previous reports, amounting to \$1,549.65 on January 10, 1924. No part of this fund has yet been expended. It is hoped that this amount for a summit house will be increased by other gifts, which may be sent to the County Treasurer. The state declined to make an appropriation for this purpose upon the ground that it had paid for the lands and general surveys, and under the original statute, the state declined to do more.

The title deeds of lands acquired are deposited with the state treasurer, payments for the lands having been made by the state treasurer to the grantors. The State thus far has appropriated for the Reservation \$94,700, of which \$2,018 was not expended, but reverted to the Commonwealth under the time limitation.

Having reviewed thus the fundamental facts of organization and management, it might be well to turn to matters of current interest.

ROADS AND BRIDGES.

As to the bridges, Mr. Barrett writes that the "High Bridge" should be rebuilt at an estimated expense of about one thousand dollars. He stated that during the next six years it will be necessary to rebuild one bridge each year. The bridges thus far have been temporary affairs, requiring constant inspection and care.

RESERVATION WORK FOR THE YEAR.

The report of Mr. Sperry, the Treasurer of the Commission to the County Commissioners, as to the expenditures of the County appropriation for the year 1923, will give the details of expenditures. Mr. Barrett writes under date of November 23rd of certain items of the expenses.

Mr. Barrett's statement indicates the relative expenditures for the roads and

trails and for repairs upon the house for 1923. The remainder of the items of expense will be found in the report of Mr. Sperry to the County Commissioners.

Mr. Sperry reports a list of sixty-one new signs which he has placed at various points upon the Reservation for the information of visitors. These may be found at the summit and on some of the roads and trails, including one at the site of the old Ash Fort which was built of ash logs by the first settlers to protect their families from the Indians before New Ashford was incorporated. These signs are in addition to those mentioned in former reports. The selection and placing of these involved much labor upon the part of Mr. Sperry.

The discussion of these expenditures on County Roads brings to mind, naturally, the bill for the proposed new state road from Adams to the summit of Mt. Greylock over a location surveyed a few years since by the Berkshire Street Railway Company. This measure is still before the legislature, having come over from the last legislature.

Survey.

During the year 1923 no surveying has been done upon the reservation, there being no state appropriation for that purpose.

There was a fire in June on the steep trail from the foot of the County Commissioner's Road to the Summit. Not much damage was done. There was a fire near the Camping Ground about the middle of September 1923. The workmen on the mountain, having been notified by Mr. Henry Hopkins of New York, extinguished the fire. It was very dry and a high wind was blowing. The fire, which was in a grove of small pines west of the Hopper trail and on the north side of the Stony Ledge road, would have got beyond control if there had been fifteen minutes' delay. The area burned over was about a quarter acre and the damage slight. The fire was supposed to have been caused by cigarettes or pipe ashes carelessly thrown from automobiles.

Some damage was done to the southern road by the storms of October 23rd and 24th. Mr. Sperry says that the newspaper reports were exaggerated and the repairs on the road were made at once. One difficulty arose from the ditches being filled with leaves driven down by the storm.

Mr. Bazeley, the Conservator, will introduce into the legislature certain amendments to the law looking to the protection of public lands from future fires.

FIRE PROTECTION NEEDED FOR HOUSE.

There is no adequate fire protection for the Greylock Reservation lands and buildings at the present time. A water supply at the summit is needed for that purpose.

WHOM TO TELEPHONE WHEN A FOREST FIRE THREATENS GREYLOCK.

In case a forest fire threatens the Greylock reservation, any person discovering the fact will perform a public service by reporting about the fire to the following address by telephone. Verne Fitzroy, District Fire Warden, Telephone Savoy 10, or A. R. Ordway, Telephone, Westfield 600.

If Mr. Ordway is not at home, a message should be left for him. (Send the message "collect", if you wish.)

Public cooperation alone makes possible the preservation of public property.

(See Mr. Ordway's letter dated September 3, 1923, to William H. Sperry.)

The Commonwealth is fortunate in Hon. W. A. L. Bazeley's work as Conservation Commissioner and in the services of A. R. Ordway of Westfield district fire warden for the western part of the state. The interest they take in their work as shown by reports of meetings with fire wardens and by their forestry work as state officers is to be highly commended.

USE OF RESERVATION BY THE PUBLIC.

The reservation has been enjoyed by the public, both by using the southern road by automobiles and by making excursions on foot all over the reservation. It is reported that about seven thousand persons have visited the summit this

season and more than ten thousand have visited the reservation. The Stony Ledge road, to obtain the view of the Hopper, has been used the past season more than ever. There have been campers upon the reservation, the grandson of President Mark Hopkins using the camping ground.

As an educational playground the Greylock reservation fulfills an especially useful end. The Boy Scouts and the Campfire Girls for many years have studied there the trees of the Appalachian highlands and have learned at first hand the public uses and value of forest reservations.

Such knowledge was the natural heritage of practically all New England children of fifty years ago, but today concentration of population in cities makes necessary instruction in these subjects.

It is a characteristic feature of such excursions that many persons of culture return year after year to this beauty spot to spend their leisure hours.

The gradual education of the public in the use of forest reservations is bearing fruit in a gradual reduction of the number of forest fires. Fires should be built only when permission has been secured from the Superintendent. The waste portions of burning cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco should be carefully extinguished by all visitors to the reservation.

Mr. Kelton B. Miller, editor of the Berkshire Evening Eagle has inaugurated a most commendable movement to establish the Berkshire County Forestry Association.

PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL LAND.

The original bill creating the reservation authorized the obtaining of lands not to exceed ten thousand acres, so that if appropriations were made by the state, some fifteen hundred and twenty acres more might be obtained. There are some lands near the Reservation lines that might be added to advantage at a reasonable cost. There are places on the present reservation that might be replanted to advantage, as, for example, the slope from the summit to the east and lands to the north of the summit, as well as other places.

APPROPRIATIONS NEEDED FROM THE STATE FOR FORESTRY WORK.

A bill might be introduced in the legislature under the present statutes to have a sum appropriated for re-foresting certain portions of the Reservation under the management of the state department of forestry. That is a question that well might be considered.

The fire on the mountain several years before the reservation was established left large tracts where erosion is doing its work. Cases in point are on the easterly slope of the summit, also northerly of the summit house and other places.

OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION ARE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION.

The sanitary arrangements upon the summit need further attention.

The Ice Pond.

The ice pond, about eighteen hundred feet below the summit, needs further care in every way. Drinking water has been obtained this season for the summit by hauling water from Sperry's spring, about four miles below the summit on the southern road, or from the tub near the foot of the Switchback Road which is somewhat nearer the Summit.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS OF RESERVATION.

In brief the future requirements for improving conditions upon the reservation may be summarized as follows:—

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| 1. Better Fire Protection. | 4. More Land. |
| 2. Better Sanitation on Summit. | 5. Forestry Appropriations. |
| 3. Better Roads. | 6. A new Summit House. |