

Miller State Park

Park History

New Hampshire's first state park was created in 1891 when Charles F. Melendy and Austin A. Spofford deeded a three-acre tract of land on the summit of South Pack Monadnock to the state. The following year the park was dedicated in memory of General James Miller, a hero of the Battle of Lundy's Lane in the War of 1812.

In the early years, all-day Sunday picnics at the summit were a popular pastime. Families would arrive by horse and wagon, with lunches packed in wooden cheese boxes, gallon jugs, and milk cans. In winter people enjoyed sledding, skiing and snowshoeing on the mountain. Until 1901 cattle were driven by foot from Massachusetts farms to the park for summer grazing on what was then open pasture extending nearly to the summit.

A hotel called the Pioneer House was built in 1892 on a ridge on the southwest side of the mountain. Unprofitable for its first proprietor, George F. Barker, the business was sold three years after opening. The hotel burned to the ground in 1896, and a new, smaller structure was erected in its place. The new building was anchored to the rocks by iron rods and chains. It was used as a hunting lodge until it was abandoned and fell into disrepair. The building was destroyed by fire in 1924, but the foundation remains visible today.

In 1939 a 27-foot steel tower, topped with a wooden lookout cabin, was erected to be used as a forest fire watch tower. The cabin no longer exists, but visitors can still climb the tower to enjoy the views.

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