

MOUNT BATTIE CAMDEN HILLS STATE PARK

Mt. Battie and the picturesque stone mountain tower are rich in legend and history. In 1897, Columbus Bushwell, a Camden resident, built a carriage road to the top of the mountain. Today this old carriage road is part of the 25-mile hiking trail system in Camden Hills State Park. In 1898, Mr. Bushwell built a turreted house which he named Summit House, and opened to the public as a hotel.

A corporation of Camden's wealthier summer residents, the Mt. Battie Association, purchased Summit House in 1899 and turned the building into a clubhouse and social center. During the peak of Camden's carriage trade days at the turn of the century, Summit House was visited by many notable people, including the daughter of Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt himself came to Camden many years later to climb the mountain. A forest fire in 1918 burned the mountaintop, destroying the natural beauty of the summit for many years. Summit House was undamaged by the fire, but was torn down two years later as its use declined and Camden's carriage trade days came to an end.

In 1921, the Mt. Battie Association erected the stone tower that now stands on the exact location of Summit House. Iron pins that anchored the old building can still be seen in the rock around the tower. The 26-foot structure was designed by one of Camden's summer residents, Parker Morse Hooper. The Hooper design is almost an exact replica of an existing tower found in Newport, Rhode Island. A bronze plaque on the front of the tower reads:

**"In grateful recognition of the services of the men and women of Camden
in the World War, 1914 - 1918."**

Another plaque set in stone near the tower commemorates the writing of the poem "Renascence" by Edna St. Vincent Millay. It is said Millay wrote the poem while enjoying the view from the summit of Mt. Battie.

When Mt. Battie became part of Camden Hills State Park in 1948, the only access to the summit was the old carriage road that had deteriorated to little more than a footpath. In 1965 the Maine State Park Commission completed construction of the 1.6 mile auto road to the summit. The road now allows easy access to thousands of park visitors each year who enjoy the scenic beauty of the mountain and the magnificent views of Penobscot Bay and the surrounding countryside.

The Mt. Battie Auto Road is open to the public May 1 to November 1, 9:00 a.m. to Sunset each day.

