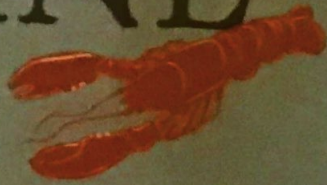
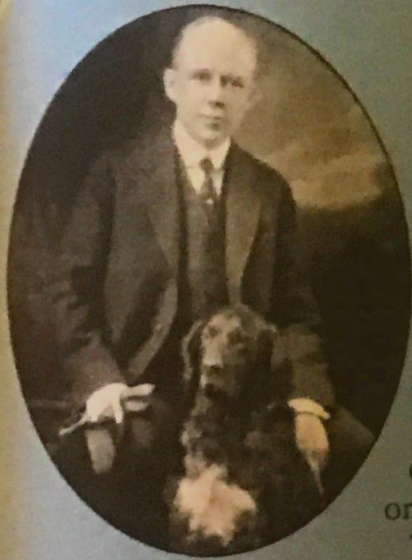


MAINE

PORTRAIT



Governor Percival Baxter 1872-1962



Many people did not agree with the Klan's definition of what it meant to be an American. Governor Percival Baxter was one such man. He entered politics to help all the people of Maine, not just the supposedly "real Americans."

Baxter came to his life's work in politics naturally. He could trace seven colonial governors from Massachusetts as his ancestors on his mother's side of the family. His father was elected the mayor of Portland for six terms.

While he loved politics, Baxter was even more interested in animals and nature. His desk was usually covered with small ivory statues of dogs, rabbits, elephants, horses, lizards, cats, and eagles. He remained a bachelor all of his life, and his dearest companions were his many dogs. When his Irish setter, Garry, died, Governor Baxter ordered all the flags in the state lowered to half-staff.

Throughout his political career, Baxter was known as a frugal money manager who often vetoed spending bills. However, one thing he didn't mind spending money on was untouched wilderness that would be saved for people to enjoy forever.

This was not an easy thing to accomplish in the Roaring Twenties. The big paper companies wanted to cut down as many trees as possible to make profits for themselves and to keep Mainers working. Most state legislators agreed with them and blocked any attempt by Governor Baxter to set aside land.

When he was finally out of office, Baxter came up with a way to preserve at least a part of Maine's wilderness. In 1930, he used his own money to buy 6,000 acres of wilderness. The tract included Mt. Katahdin. One year later, he bought even more land and donated all of it to the State of Maine.

Baxter set some conditions on his gift to Maine. He said the land must be used for a state park that would be a *sanctuary* for the animals and birds he loved so dearly. For the next 30 years, Baxter continued to buy more and more land. By his death, he had purchased and donated more than 200,000 acres of prime wilderness to Maine. Today, that land bears the name Baxter State Park. It is the largest surviving tract of wilderness in New England.

Read the words of Governor Baxter that have been placed on a boulder in Katahdin Creek in Baxter State Park. What do they tell you about why he worked so hard to preserve Maine's wilderness?

Man is born to die. His works are short-lived. Buildings crumble, monuments decay, and wealth vanishes, but Katahdin in all its glory forever shall remain the mountain of the people of Maine.