

Galesburg's Standish Park Arboretum

Standish Park was designated an Arboretum by the Galesburg City Council in 2003. It was founded by Dr. John Van Ness Standish, direct descendent of Captain Miles Standish of the Mayflower Colony, in 1873.

Dr. Standish was a horticulture specialist and oversaw personally the plantings of 122 trees and 115 shrubs. He was involved with the establishment of the Galesburg Horticultural Society in 1873 and the Park Commission Board in 1876. He helped shape the policy of the park and transformed it into a park of exceeding beauty, available for visitors from near and far. He nurtured the park until his death in 1919.

Since the original plantings, many individuals and groups, of all ages, have participated in the care and plantings at the Arboretum. In the 1950's, Knox College classes in advanced taxonomy re-identified and tagged trees. In the 1970's, the Ray Brown Restoration Project set out to identify original trees and shrubs. They planted 37 trees and 6 shrubs in addition to their inventory work. In 1989, the SPRUCE committee (Standish Park Restoration Undertaking with Creative Enthusiasm) formed to replant and nurture Standish Park. As a result of their work, 38 trees and 3 shrubs were planted.

In 2003, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener volunteers re-identified the current inventory of trees and shrubs in Standish. Subsequently, the inventory was also re-tagged and efforts are underway to encourage all to visit the Arboretum to study the beautiful historic trees. There are currently 137 trees and 67 species in the Arboretum. New brochures of the Standish Park Arboretum will be available in the near future.

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