

**THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS
ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER**



Guide to

The Trustees of Ravenswood Park Archive, 1847-1987

RP.MS.Coll. I

**By Robert Malme, Intern
From Simmons College,
Graduate School of Library and Information Science**

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Archives & Research Center
27 Everett Street, Sharon, MA 02067
www.thetrustees.org
arc@ttor.org
781-784-8200

Extent: 3 boxes, 1 oversize box
Other storage formats: 1 Broadside Cabinet large folder
Linear feet: 3.0

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

PROVENANCE

Gift of The Trustees of Ravenswood Park, 1993.

OWNERSHIP & LITERARY RIGHTS

The Trustees of Ravenswood Park Archive is the physical property of The Trustees of Reservations.

CITE AS

The Trustees of Ravenswood Park Archive. The Trustees of Reservations, Archives & Research Center.

RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS

This collection is open for research. Restricted Fragile Material may only be consulted with permission of the archivist. Preservation photocopies for reference use have been substituted in the main files.

HISTORY OF RAVENSWOOD PARK

Ravenswood Park, in the Freshwater Cove area of Gloucester, Massachusetts, consists of land donated to the city by businessman Samuel Elwell Sawyer upon his death in 1889. Sawyer, who was born in Gloucester on November 25, 1815, was a noted businessman and philanthropist who purchased woodlots, old pastures, and swamp in the vicinity of his home to keep the land undeveloped. In his will, Sawyer donated 26 parcels of his land to the city for a park, which he wanted named Ravenswood, for the castle in Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*. His will also set aside funds for purchasing surrounding land for the park when it became available, as well as money to build a chapel for the residents of Freshwater Cove, and to fund several other charitable causes in Gloucester. Sawyer asked that a board of trustees be formed to manage the funds and to help maintain the park and chapel. The Trustees of Ravenswood Park were organized in 1895 upon final settlement of Sawyer's will.

Soon after its formation, the board of trustees helped establish the park, as well as manage funds used to add parcels of land to the park through the 1970s. It also raised enough funds by 1955 to build Sawyer's requested chapel on park lands, when the plot of land suggested by Sawyer himself was

found to be too small. The expanded park lands included those where naturalist Mason “The Hermit” Walton built his cabin in the 1880s; Mason later documented his experiences in the book *A Hermit’s Wild Friends* (1903). A plaque noting the location of Mason’s cabin stands in the park today. The Trustees of Ravenswood Park gave the park property to The Trustees of Reservations in 1993.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

The Trustees of Ravenswood Park Archive contains correspondence, legal documents, maps, and other materials that document the actions of the trustees of the will of Samuel E. Sawyer. The documents not only describe the trustees’ work in managing and obtaining additional properties for Ravenswood Park, but also the construction and maintenance of the Ravenswood Park Chapel, and the trustees’ work in managing the funds for several other public charities in Gloucester. The Trustees managed Ravenswood Park and Ravenswood Park Chapel until they gave the property to The Trustees of Reservations in 1993. The bulk of material is from 1962 to 1984. The collection is organized into three series: Correspondence, Legal Documents, and Other Materials.

Series I, Correspondence, is organized into four groups: General Correspondence, Ravenswood Park Chapel, Sawyer Free Library, and Tax Status of Ravenswood Park.

The first group contains letters from Sawyer himself, documenting his plan to turn his properties into a park, as well as the efforts of the first trustees to fulfill Sawyer’s wishes. This group covers a period from 1886 to 1915. There is also correspondence regarding maintenance, land purchases, and discussions with the city of Gloucester from 1962 to 1984.

The second group contains correspondence from 1900 to 1984 concerning the construction and use of Ravenswood Park Chapel, as well as sales and purchases of land.

The third group contains a letter regarding a 1970 meeting of the trustees of the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester.

The fourth group contains correspondence with the IRS, lawyers, and local banking officials from 1962 to 1976 regarding the status of Ravenswood Park as a tax-exempt organization.

Series II, Legal Documents, contains pertinent excerpts from Sawyer’s will; deeds for land purchased by Sawyer and land purchased later for Ravenswood Park by the trustees; reports of audits by Gloucester of trust funds; court rulings regarding Sawyer’s will and subsequent land sales; and two notebooks regarding Sawyer’s land purchases. These materials cover a period from 1857 to 1968.

Series III, Other Materials, contains four subseries: Clippings, Financial Documents, Maps and Plans, and Other. Each subseries is arranged alphabetically.

The first subseries, Clippings, contains newspaper articles related to Ravenswood Park (its history and its use) and to Ravenswood Park Chapel, in addition to articles about projects on adjacent lands that could affect the park. The news articles cover a period from 1887 to 1987.

The second subseries, Financial Documents, contains information regarding the finances of Ravenswood Park and of the Chapel, as well as of several other charities created in Gloucester by Sawyer's will. The documents date from 1895 to 1984.

The third subseries, Maps and Plans, contains trail maps for the park; land plans dating back to 1847 for property that is part of the park; and plans for related construction in and near the park. Many of the plans are oversized.

The fourth subseries, Other, is organized alphabetically by item and includes unused stationery and envelopes of the park trustees; meeting minutes of the trustees from 1962 to 1984; the by-laws of Ravenswood Park Chapel; a photograph of long-time park caretaker Benjamin Franklin Winn; and an award to the trustees from the Gloucester Planting Program.

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
Series I. Correspondence			
0.50' (1 box) Dates: 1881-1984			
1	1-6	General correspondence	1881-1984
1	7	Ravenswood Park Chapel	1900-1984
1	8	Sawyer Free Library	1970
1	9-11	Tax status of Ravenswood Park	1902-1976

Series II. Legal Documents

0.50' (1 box)
Dates: 1857-1968

Series II, Legal Documents, is arranged alphabetically.

2	1-3	Background research regarding park land	[190]-[1963]
2	4	Brown, Robert F. Appointments as trustee	1968
2	5	Deeds	1857-1968
Stored also in: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 1			
2	6	Deeds in the safe deposit box. List of	1962 Nov 29
2	7-12	Gloucester (Mass.). Supplementary Report of the City Auditor. Audit of Semi-Public Trust Funds	1915-1923
2	13	Marcella Street Home Fund. Probate Court Decree regarding	1966
2	14	Massachusetts. Supreme Judicial Court. Charles Sawyer, Jr. et al., v. George O. Hovey	1861-1862

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
		Sawyer, Samuel Elwell. Last will & testament	
2	15	Copy of 1889 will	[196-]
2	16	Nelson S. Bartlett & Others, Executors & Trustees, Petitioners. Regarding Sawyer's will	1895 Mar 11- May 24
2	17	"Sawyer's Real Estate." Notebook regarding Also contains "Account of Silver, Jewelry etc. Deposited in 2 Packages in Union Safe Deposit Vault. Boston. March 21. 1890." Also contains "List of Articles Found in Closet Room of Tremont House + Stored in Rooms or Closet in 3d Story of Sawyer Free Library Building."	[1889]
2	18	Sawyer's real estate. Notebook regarding "Subscription for Norman's Woe Driveway." Letter with signatures Includes clippings. Stored in: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 2	[188-] 1885 Sep 21

Series III. Other Materials

0.50' (1 box)
Dates: 1847-1987

Series III, Other Materials, is organized into four subseries: Clippings, Financial Documents, Maps and Plans, and Other. Each subseries is arranged alphabetically.

CLIPPINGS

3	1	Ravenswood Park. History	1956-1987
3	2	Ravenswood Park. News regarding	1887-1983
3	3	Ravenswood Park. Use of	1957-1984
3	4	Ravenswood Park Chapel	1958-1975

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS			
3	5	Invoices for park maintenance	1963
3	6	Legacies given to Gloucester by Samuel E. Sawyer. Acceptance of	1895
3	7	Legal notices (clippings) regarding unpaid land taxes	1968
3	8-9	Ravenswood Park. Finances	1968-1984
		Stored also in: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 3	
3	10	Ravenswood Park Chapel. Finances	1959-1984
		Stored also in: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 3	
3	11	Sawyer Cemetery. Finances	1973-1979
3	12	Sawyer Trusts. Finances	1971-1973
3	13	Sawyer Trusts. Petition to transfer income	1973
MAPS AND PLANS			
3	14	Plans for original park land and for additional properties	1847-1973
		Stored also in: Oversize, Box 4, Folders 4-5	
		Stored also in: Oversize, Broadside Cabinet. Large Folder, Bsd 1	
3	15	Plans for Stillington Condominium Development (Gloucester)	1972, 1982
3	16	Trail maps for Ravenswood Park	1964, [196-]
		Stored also in: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 6	
OTHER			
3	17	Gloucester Planting Program Award of Merit to The Trustees of Ravenswood Park	1968
		Includes certificate and ribbon.	

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
OTHER			
Ravenswood Park Chapel			
3	18	“By-Laws of Ravenswood Associates Incorporated,” booklet	[1955]
3	19	Notes & agreements	1955-[196-]
3	20	Stationery & envelopes: “Trustees under the will of Samuel E. Sawyer, Gloucester Massachusetts. Ravenswood Park. Ravenswood Chapel”	[195-]
3	21	Trustees of Sawyer Trust Funds meeting minutes	1962-1984
3	22	Winn, Benjamin Franklin, caretaker of Ravenswood Park. Photograph of	[1962]
With correspondence regarding order of aerial photographs of Gloucester.			

Oversize

OVERSIZE BOX

4	1	Deeds (Series II)	1865-1964
4	2	“Subscription for Norman’s Woe Driveway.” Letter with Signatures (Series II)	1885 Sep 21
4	3	Ravenswood Park. Finances (Series III)	1968-1969
4	3	Ravenswood Park Chapel Fund. Finances (Series III)	1968-1969
4	4-5	Plans for original park land and for additional properties (Series III)	1900-1965
4	6	Trail map for Ravenswood Park (Series III)	[196-]

BROADSIDE CABINET. LARGE FOLDER

Bsd	1	Plans for original park land and for additional properties (Series III)	1847-1973
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