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## Good Company

### Canobie Lake Park: Family Fun and Serious Business

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For more than 100 years, Canobie Lake Park in Salem, New Hampshire has entertained families with convenient and fun-filled excursions. But the Park is so much more. Canobie Lake Park offers rich insight into *Americana* and prudent business practices, while adapting with the times and continually putting smiles on the faces of young and old alike.

Like so many local New England amusement parks, Canobie Lake Park was developed at the turn of the 20th century by a trolley company at the end of its trolley line running from the cities to the south. The goal - increasing riders during the slower non-business commute hours; idle or unfilled trolleys didn't make money. Amusement parks brought trolley companies riders and diverse revenue sources. The early Canobie Lake Park offered visitors traditional rides, games, athletic fields, a swimming pool, a dance hall, outdoor theatre, restaurants and a picnic grove, all for accessible relief from the normal 60-hour workweek of the day and the hustle and bustle of the cities.

With the invention of the automobile, the corresponding decline in trolley use and the depression following the 1929 market crash, the Park fell on hard times and closed for two seasons. After being sold at auction and reopening in 1932, the amenities of the Park were "modernized" and marketing became essential to capture visitors no longer limited to trolley stops. Even the largest parking lot in New Hampshire for "machines" was advertised. The eras' big bands and big names replaced the early vaudeville acts, musical comedies and silent films. Legends performed at the Park - the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Peggy Lee with Benny Goodman, Sarah Vaughan with Earl Hines, and Frank Sinatra with Tommy Dorsey, to name a few.

Since 1958, Canobie Lake Park has remained in the ownership of the same three families. The Park retains its focus on entertaining families, with "guest" services being paramount, while adapting to the interests and trends of the day. As the region's corporations grew, many sought a retreat to share outings with colleagues and their families. The Park became a favorite destination for corporate outings and remains so today.

Daily live performances have remained a part of the Park's repertoire, with effort to bring new or unique shows to Canobie guests. In 1965, the William Morris Agency attempted to cancel the contract with the Park for a husband-wife duo whose recent release rose to the top of the charts. The Park stood firm on the contract, and Sonny and Cher performed *I Got You Babe* on the shores of Canobie Lake later that summer. More recently, the Park enlisted for three summers one of Las Vegas' top Elvis impersonators. Today's entertainment ranges from acrobatic "cirque" shows and "Brothers in Blue" styled tributes to current pop reviews,



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"Canobie Talent Search," and themed dance parties — something for everyone.

But most noticeable today is the on-going investment in Canobie Lake Park's amenities and attractions. While the Park remains nestled along the shores of Canobie Lake amidst towering pines and shade trees, colorful gardens, well-groomed lawns, and log-lined walkways, upon arriving at the Park, guests soon realize they are visiting a special destination. The blend of traditional design, innovative amenities and attention to detail is immediately evident from the new front gate and accommodating main entrance, both painstakingly designed and built to replicate early 20th century Adirondack structures.

Once inside, visitors disperse into the themed regions of the Park to enjoy traditional rides, such as the handcrafted antique carousel, giant Ferris wheel, thrilling Yankee Cannonball coaster, elegant DaVinci's Dream, antique cars and bumper cars. Guests seeking something a bit more extreme, enjoy the new Xtreme Frisbee, the propulsion of the Starblaster, the loops of the Corkscrew coaster, the Wipeout virtual ride and the twists and shouts of the Skater ride. Those looking to cool off join the Boston Tea Party (if you don't want to get wet, don't stand too close), Timber Splash, the log flume and the frolic and laughs of Castaway Island. Each region in the Park offers restaurants, live entertainment, shops and games to complement the experience - again, something for everyone.

To bring all this to guests, there is much behind the scenes at Canobie Lake Park and it is a vital cog in the regional economy. The Park continually reviews the use and flow of the Park grounds and attractions for improvements that will enhance the guest experience and blend with the neighborhood. With high quality, and labor/material-intensive projects virtually each year, the Park utilizes local contractors and suppliers for many of the improvements. The Park retains approximately 40 year-round employees, yet staff balloons to approximately 600 during the season. As a major employer in the area, the Park hires and trains every season a broad range of personnel from college and high school students to teachers and other seasonal employees, in each case with a focus on enhancing the guest experience. Many of the employees get their first paid experiences in life-long careers, such as security, song and dance performance, financial management, sales, among others. And the Park gives back to the community and industry, whether offering to host Town of Salem gala events or encouraging employees to serve on State boards, local organizations and numerous trade associations. In addition to bringing us thrills, laughs and smiles, Canobie Lake Park plays an integral part in the regional economy and industry.

During the last century, Canobie Lake Park has retained its identity as a family-friendly park and has diligently worked to offer great guest service and wonderful attractions at affordable prices. Canobie Lake Park has preserved the rich history and craftsmanship of bygone eras, blended it with the innovation and thrills of modern design and technology, all with persistent focus on first-rate guest service and distinctive amenities and entertainment.

Congratulations Canobie Lake Park and thanks for keeping us smiling so close to home.