

CHAPTER IV LAKES IN THE MOOSEHEAD REGION

The MOOSEHEAD LAKE REGION, southwest of Chesuncook Lake, has an arbitrary southern boundary on a line from Armstrong, Canada, to Stillwater, Maine; and north from Portage Lake, following a general line of the Chesuncook area to Medway.

SEBOOMOOK LAKE, in Somerset County, originally Seboomick River, a part of the Penobscot which runs into Chesuncook, lies above Moosehead Lake and Northwest Carry. Holman Day termed the lake, as viewed in April, a "wild and wicked witch."¹² On its western shore, near a small cemetery, is a board inscribed, "In memory of Evelyn Grant, July 1963." This sign has raised many questions. Someone must know the answers.

The term "Seboomook" is derived from the Abenaki and the St. Francis Indians of northern Maine. One author claims that the word means "shaped like a moose's head." Another says that it means "a place where waters collect."

A second spelling is Seboomick, concurring with the name of the river and supposed by some people to be the original name of the lake. Thoreau spelled it Sebemook; and Fannie Hardy Eckstorm comments that it was Soobago, meaning "ocean," and declares that the lake should share the derivation of its name with those of Sebec and Sebago, both of which are also oceanic in appearance.

The steamer *Moosehead* used to ply the waters of man-made Seboomook; and a scow, large enough to ferry a train, provided transportation across the lake to the town of Seboomook. On the shoreline, the Great Northern Paper Company had a dock from which a standard-gauge track was laid across Northwest Carry. Now, only the rock pier remains.

The Seboomook Sluiceway, begun in the 1830's and authorized

in 1840 by the State Legislature, was never established. There was to have been a six-foot-wide canal at the bottom, from upper Penobscot to the northwest bay of Moosehead Lake, a level difference of 11.36 feet, which was to have provided means of transporting Penobscot-cut logs down the Kennebec River. This project figured in the Telos War (see Index) when the Penobscot lumbermen feared that not only logs but floodwaters as well might descend with unfortunate results, and their strong objections killed the project. The sluiceway was later destroyed by fire.

It has been rumored that an ox-railroad was once used at Northeast Carry for transporting lumbermen's supplies.

MOOSEHEAD LAKE, most extensive of all Maine lakes and considered to be the largest lake entirely within the confines of the boundaries of any one state, is aptly described in "The Legend of Moosehead Lake," a thirteen-stanza poem by a Mrs. Mace, Maine poet of the 19th century. The opening lines are:

How beautiful the morning breaks
Upon the King of mountain lakes!
The forests, far as eye can reach,
Stretch green and still from either beach,
And leagues away the waters gleam
Resplendent in the sunrise beam;
Yet feathery vapors, circling slow,
Wreath the dark brow of Kineo.

When viewed from one certain point, Kineo, the great bald "hermit mount," a 2,150-foot-high mound of hornblende, or flint rock, appears to rise from the very center of the lake and to serve as a pivot for its waters.

Kineo (sometimes spelled Kinneho), for whom the mountain was named according to the legendary source used by Mrs. Mace, was a gloomy, taciturn Indian chief who inhabited the shores of Moosehead Lake. He seemed to be possessed by some baneful demon which drove him from his tribe's councils. He both neglected and avoided his mother, Maquase, with the result that his tribesmen shunned him entirely after her unexplained disappearance. According to one charitable tale, however, Kineo followed a bright light for two nights, found his exhausted mother, who was on her way to beg him to return with her, and took her into his arms. There, on what is now known

as Squaw Mountain, she died. This mountain, an ever-present reminder of Kineo's mother, looms over the lake as if pried abruptly from the earth below, and was the site of the first lookout station in the nation.

In his resultant loneliness, Kineo occupied the mountain opposite Squaw Mountain, one that overshadows the north side of the lake and drops vertically into extremely deep water. He returned to the Penobscot tribe only when they were losing badly in a contest with other Indians. Then Kineo would come down from his mountain to rally his people.

A hush like death — and then a cry,
Fierce and exultant, pierced the sky!
They rallied round that fiery plume
And smote the foe with hopeless doom.
But when the grateful warriors fain
Would seek his well-known face again,
Their gifts and homage to bestow,
Gone, like a mist, was Kineo.

(Mrs. Mace)

Each day he hunted, but always returned to the mountain by nightfall. When finally no campfire appeared upon his mountain, and the tribe realized that Kineo was dead, they gave the name of their "wrathful, jealous, quick-to-strife" fellow tribesman to the mountain; and the waves still ". . . sigh, 'Peace to Kineo.'"

The name Kineo has various additional legends. One is from the writings of Louis Annance, a Sagamon tribal chieftain of the St. Francis tribe, who had been educated in Hanover, New Hampshire. His version is that in early days all living organisms were enormous. The Indians were so awed by the immensity of the moose that a hunter was sent to reduce the size of the animal. To accomplish the feat, the man killed a bull moose (Kineo Mountain) and made the body smaller by cutting slices from it. As apparent proof, the rock at the foot of Kineo resembles a big slice of steak with lines of both lean and fat clearly identifiable.

After the hunter had cooked some of the meat, he overturned his kettle that it might dry (Little Kineo Mountain). After this episode, all moose presumably grew smaller.

In another legend, an old Indian chieftain who was leader of the entire nation, was so great that he had the powers of God. Wandering

through the forest one day, he met two huge moose. He dropped his pack and started to chase them. The smaller of the two (Mt. Kineo) was soon overtaken and slain. The old chieftain boiled some of the meat and then turned his kettle (Little Mt. Kineo) upside down to drain, that it might not rust.

From the southern side of the lake, Mt. Kineo does resemble a huge moose, lying with its head toward the west, its rump toward the east, and its nose at the foot. The lake below seems to fashion its two forefeet, sometimes called arms. The bays and coves represent wide palmated antlers. Tahmunt, one of Thoreau's guides, maintained that the first white men in the region saw this resemblance and that they named the lake "Moosehead."

The Penobscot Indians knew the lake as Kzebem, or X-Sebem, referring to the sheen on the expansive waters. The Abenaki knew it as Sebam-cook, or Sebaygook. All names, however, include the idea of "extending waters," with the added connotation of "high bluff" in the Abenaki tongue. Chief Henry Red Eagle, in *In the Maine Woods*, relates that his grandmother used to tell about her travels to the big "se'bem." She was fascinated by the fact that the "se'bem" was so wide that in places no one could see the opposite shore. Chief Red Eagle calls the borestone formation "falsitic shyolite," and reports that it was used for spearheads, arrowheads, and tomahawks.

Known as the "Father of Maine's Inland Waters," Moosehead is situated 1,000 feet above sea level,¹³ is 40 miles long, 20 miles wide, approximately 100 square miles in area, and subject to prevailing winds from the north, cooling its waters even in midsummer. Its sinuous, rocky shoreline is similar to that of the coast of Maine itself for its bays and coves make up a 400-mile coastline. It is reported that the lake is 500 to 900 feet deep in places, but no depth over 300 feet has yet been ascertained. There are few areas of shoal water; and what little sand there is, is primarily in the bays. In the middle of the lake the bottom is universally level, according to historian Hubbard. G. Smith Stanton has written that not only does Moosehead Lake have its inlet and its outlet on the same side, a fact true of no other lake in the country, but of equal significance they are not more than a mile apart.

Various sources state that Moosehead Lake surpasses Lake Tahoe, Nevada, in ruggedness of shoreline and Lake George, hidden in the Adirondacks, in beauty. Only one inland body of water in the

United States is larger, and that is Lake Okeechobee, in Florida, with an average depth of only 12 feet, a statistic which by some standards would disqualify the waters as a lake.

More than 500 islands, large ones located in the middle of the lake and smaller ones rising in the coves and bays, constitute the largest number in any lake within one state's boundaries. Their names vary from the banal to the unique: Moose, Deer (2,200 acres), Squirrel, Mile, Black, Muskrat, Spider, Snake, Whiskey (antidote for Snake?), Birch (several: one source states the number at 42), Ledge (20), Green (2), Sloop (from its outline), Ship (from its shape), Dollar (because it changed hands in a poker game), Farm (although it was never farmed), St. Helena, Galapagos, Dr. Wiggers, Mutton Chops, Hogback, Mikeno, Treasure, Sugar (5,000 acres once valued at over \$110,000 and the favorite for delicious lakers), Sand Bar, Stop the Music (won by a contestant on a TV show by that name), O W A A, 1951, and Turk (named for a powerful white horse by that name that one dark night drowned in a deep hole, unexpected by him or his rider). About sixty of the Moosehead Lake islands are identified by number only.

The total island territory approximates 14,000 acres which sold for \$400 in 1847; was valued for \$300,000 in 1958; and by 1972 must far exceed that figure. Naturally, the actual count of island acreage varies as wind and waves erode and low water levels create.

Forty camping areas provide year-round advantages at Moosehead Lake. In addition to boating and fishing, a ski development at Moosehead Resort on Squaw Mountain and an additional ski area in Lily Bay State Park have been developed through the efforts of Scott Paper Company. The Park, located near Greenville, has 89 campsites plus boat docks and ramps. In 1967 Scott spent \$613,000 to promote skiing facilities by the addition of new T bars, 6,000 feet of double chair lift, and miles of trails. During 1969, 6,071 parties and 24,286 campers used the overnight campsites. Canoe races on snow, featuring downhill and slalom, were held there in March, 1971.

The first settler on the shores of Moosehead Lake may have been Nathaniel Haskell, of Westbrook, Maine. Arriving in 1824, he was favorably impressed; and in 1827 he purchased the Academy Grant of 600 acres for \$600 and named the location Haskell Plantation. It was listed in Somerset County at that time. When it became a town, in 1836, the name was changed to Greenville.

A railroad line was purchased in 1899 by the Bangor and

Aroostook R.R., and excursion trains ran from Greenville to Moosehead Lake for moonlight trips on the water or for outings of various organizations. The famous "wood burners" were luxuries in those earliest days, and tourists admired the spectacular wooden trestle that spanned Bunker Brook and the gulch. The railroad discontinued regular passenger service in 1952 and ran a combination car until 1958.

Then came the diesel. The last regular run from Greenville was in June, 1962, when the diesel for the last time raced by the old 20 mph posted speed limit. The guardhouse by the tracks, reminiscent of the National Guardsmen who spent their vigils there during World War I, became the "residence" of the "Hermit of Bunker Brook," an individual who made his living by picking spruce gum.

In spite of its name, the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad, laid in June, 1870, never did extend to the lake. It runs only to Burnham Junction and is the sole independently-owned short-line in Maine at the present time.

From Moosehead Lake rises the Kennebec River which serves as the outlet for the lake. Near the extreme northern end of Moosehead, the waters of both the Kennebec and the Penobscot Rivers come within fewer than three miles of each other. Nearby, the St. John finds its outlet, and the Androscoggin, its source. All of these rivers rise within 75 miles of one another at elevations from 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

Moose River, directly opposite Mt. Kineo, proceeds direct from Brassua Lake on the west and enters Moosehead at the narrowest point, the danger point of Moosehead because it receives the full force of winds. At this intersection were once several piers on which small houses provided shelter for boomchains when not in use.

Moosehead Lake has long been popular with sportsmen and tourists. Ex-Governor Percival Baxter, the State's greatest wildlife preserve philanthropist, shot his first and last deer at Moosehead in the early 1900's. His conscience never forgave him, he later said, for the destruction of one of wildlife's animals; and he became their champion and self-appointed guardian in Maine.

Such consideration is needed, for as far back as 1910, 164 guides were registered to serve the many hunters in the environment of Moosehead alone. Thoreau's guide must have been unique because he used to entertain his employer by singing hymns in Latin.

Golf was introduced along the shores of Moosehead in time to



Seboomok House, North West Carry.



Greenville Junction Steamboat Landing.



Gov. PERCIVAL P. BAXTER and "Garry," of Portland, Maine's foremost wildlife philanthropist. Established first State "Bird Day" and "Be Kind to Animals Week."



Capricious winds
at
Moosehead Lake.

provide for a tournament there in 1899. High winds caused the ladies to hold their hats firmly and to sit rather than stand to watch the players. Modesty forbade allowing the mischievous winds to billow one's skirts and disclose an ankle as might occur when a lady stood.

Boating played a big part in the field of recreation. At one time there were 26 boats on the lake: sidewheelers, woodburners, diesel, and steam. The first recorded steamer was the *Amphitrite*. Then came the *Moosehead* and the *Lumberman*. After that, the *Fairy of the Lake*, the *William Parker*, and the *Governor Coburn*, all side-paddle wheelers. In 1865 the Coruen Steamboat Company had a major travel service.

Woodburners *Katahdin*, *Moosehead*, and *Twilight* composed the fleet of 1922. The *Rebecca* was a favorite of later years.

All had exceptionally powerful engines to combat the frequently rough waters. A trip down the full length of the lake required approximately two hours. Automobiles put the *Twilight* in dry dock and reduced the *Katahdin* and the *Moosehead* to the status of towboats.

Secondary to golf and boating were baseball and croquet as tourist pastimes in early days at Moosehead Lake.

At the turn of the century, Fourth of July water contests were held in "The Cove," Greenville, at the foot of the lake, a place also designated as Kineo Point. Indians won most of the canoe and bateaux races.

The greased pole contest included in the events consisted of a large tree peeled and secured to the wharf so that the upper portion of the tree was suspended over the water. A flag was attached to the end farthest out over the lake. In stocking feet, proceeding cautiously and laboriously by fractions of an inch, the contestants attempted to reach the tip of the pole and to snatch the flag before the pole bent to become a slippery chute. One contestant, Newell Miles, legend tells, took a few careful steps, stopped, balanced himself for a few seconds, declared to the spectators "ate too much peanut," and thereupon dived into the water.

A cottage of those days could usually accommodate at least 25 persons. As for hotels, there were two at Greenville, two at the head of the lake, one at the outlet, three in the eastern bays, and one at Mt. Kineo. In 1890 the Mt. Kineo Hotel, which had replaced Kineo View, was large enough to accommodate 700 guests and 431 employees, 62 of the latter being guides and 85 being waitresses. It had

steam heat, steam elevators, gas lights, and electric bells. Advertisements read:

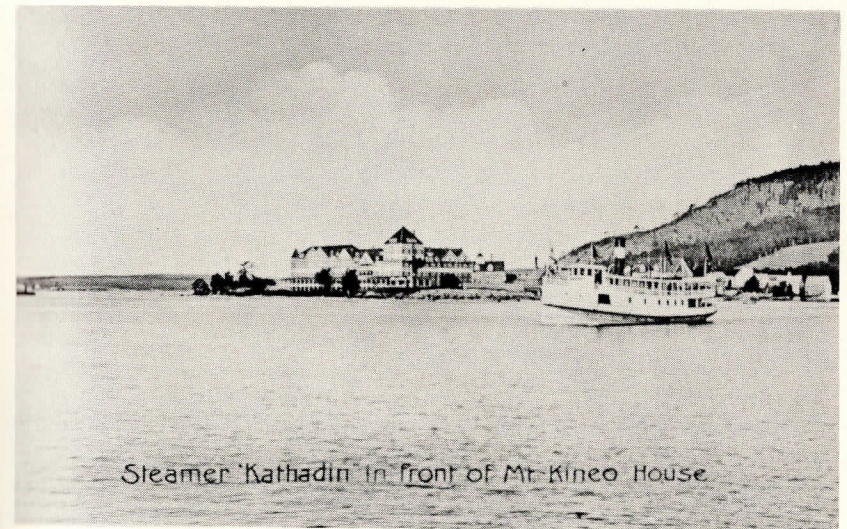
ONLY ELEVEN HOURS FROM BOSTON
FIVE CHARTER BOATS
TOURS ARRANGED TO THE ALLAGASH

In 1844 this hotel had been a small tavern, half of it being hewed timber. Enormous boulders were used for its foundation. Principal guests were lumbermen, woodsmen, river drivers, hunters, and other outdoor-working men. Additions were made to the structure before a destructive fire in 1868. Rebuilt in 1871, it was again destroyed by fire in 1882. At that time a smaller hotel was built for temporary housing, and in 1884 once again the hotel re-opened. This time the architecture was exceedingly elaborate, and the country's most prominent men were often guests. Indeed, in 1903 Mt. Kineo Hotel was proclaimed to be the largest inland water hotel in the United States.

The Mt. Kineo Company, a group of outstanding Greenville citizens, sold the hotel to the Maine Central Railroad which re-opened it in June 1911 to the salute of the mounted cannon on the grounds. Sixty-five rooms had been added and renovations had been made in general. In 1930 it was designated as the most famous fresh-water resort on the continent and was called a "small kingdom of content."

As automobile travel increased, registration at the hotel decreased. The main building was razed in 1938, leaving only the annex. In 1942 the spot was purchased by Louis Oakes and Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Hilton who restored the building and then sold it in 1967 to Robert Rines and Mrs. Henry Atherton, Massachusetts residents, who made additional renovations. The latest transaction of the Mt. Kineo Hotel was in January, 1971, when the Moosehead Kineo Company, at Camden, Maine, bought the property with the intent to open at once the golf course and several resident cottages, with the opening of the hotel a future consideration.

The original Lake House, where guests arrived by stage, charged \$2 a day. It was a large hostelry and its brochures contained illustrations of over-sized moose, legal game at that time. Two distinct advantages of Lake House were a constant breeze, which eliminated troublesome black flies and mosquitoes, and a high altitude, which prevented hay fever and asthma. The hotel provided a boat landing for steamboats that took passengers for rides around the lake; it provided livery service for teams and buggies, for rent at "reason-



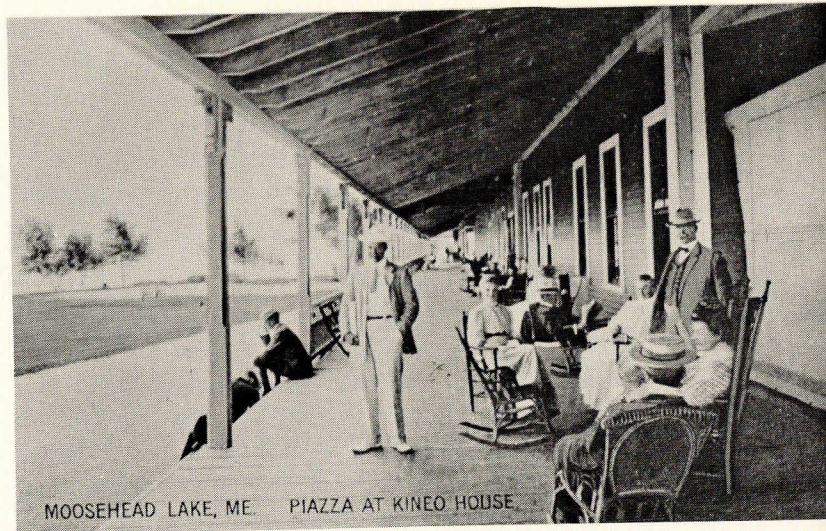
Steamer 'Katahdin' in front of Mt. Kineo House

Steamer "Katahdin" in front of Mt. Kineo House.



Stone Station
near Rangeley Lake House.

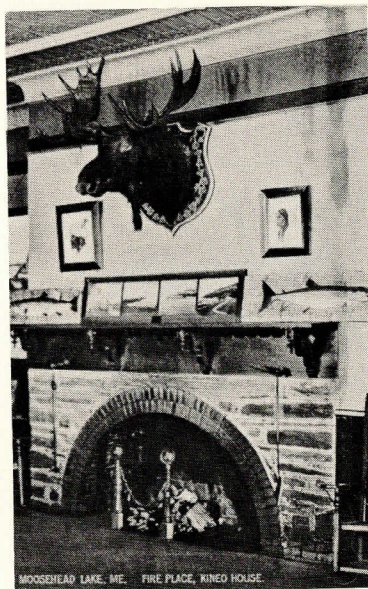
Stone Station near the Rangeley Lake House.



MOOSEHEAD LAKE, ME. PIAZZA AT KINEO HOUSE.

Piazza at the Kineo House.

Moosehead Lake, Maine



*Fireplace
at the
Kineo House.*

MOOSEHEAD LAKE, ME. FIRE PLACE, KINEO HOUSE.

able rates"; and it provided boats, canoes, and guides for its clientele. The present-day Lake House is located near the original site.

The old Piscataquis Hotel burned many years ago and doubtlessly has long been forgotten.

Squaw Mountain Inn was opened originally as a sanatorium, sponsored from 1901 to 1909 by some Boston vacationers. In addition to its regular patients, it took care of emergency cases from the surrounding area. Closed upon the resignation of the doctor in charge, Leonard H. Hatch, the building remained unoccupied for several years before another group of Boston men re-opened it in 1916 as a summer resort. In the 1920's it was substantially enlarged and a nine-hole golf course was established. The 1930's brought a library, a large hall, the Pine Room, and the unique cocktail lounge built around a solid granite rock formation where skillfully planted evergreen growth produced the appearance of a forest. The effect was heightened by a fountain, a pool, and a mural decoration of Maine scenic views.

The inn hosted such 20th Century figures as President Harry S. Truman, Secretary of State Christian Herter, and entertainer Rudy Vallee. It also served as convention headquarters for various organizations.

On a Sunday morning, May 30, 1968, the huge resort was leveled by fire. Two young girls, hotel employees, and three guests lost their lives. New facilities, called Moosehead Resort, were opened in 1970; and in January 1971, Richard K. Andrews, manager of the former Squaw Mountain Inn and of Moosehead Resort, purchased Greenville Inn and its two cottages, which had been closed for a short period of time. Intentions were to add units and refurbish the inn.

In June, 1972, 42 condominium units, a clubhouse, restaurant, lounge, and meeting rooms were begun on a waterfront area of Moosehead Lake, near the Squaw Mt. Ski Area.

Indian artifacts abound around the lake. Tribe members came even from southern New England to secure the flint of Mt. Kineo which provided dependable strength for arrowheads, spears, chisels, and other tools and weapons, and many tribesmen stayed. In fact, the very site of Mt. Kineo Hotel is claimed to have once been an Indian cemetery. Several bodies were undoubtedly those of victims of battles between marauding Mohawks (Maquas) and the Abenaki.

Moosehead Lake, around which the delicate blue lupine has re-

seeded itself until during the first weeks of each July the entire region is tinted with pastel hues, has been more than a tourist and sportsman's delight; more than an Indian camping ground. It has served as a writer's haven.

Thoreau visited the lake on at least three different occasions and always found material for his books. During his 1853 visit, he participated in a moose hunt in order to learn more about the animal; not to kill, for he never destroyed wildlife. It was on his 1857 trip that he noted that the coach in which he rode seemed more like an arsenal against robbery than a huntsman's conveyance because in addition to each man's having his "favorite" beside him, there were several more guns on the front seat and "one or two on the back one." Such evidence of intended slaughter did not please Thoreau. His *The Maine Woods* is still a source of interesting, although not always authentic, information.

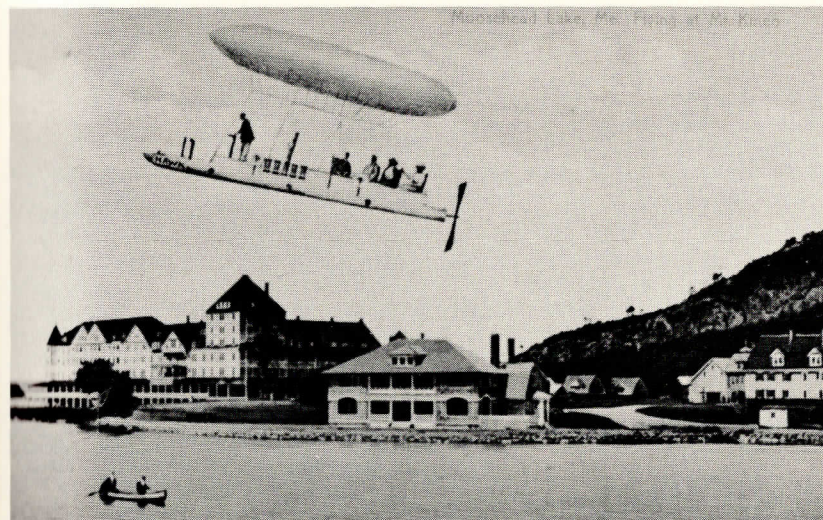
James Russell Lowell wrote "To a Pine Tree" following his trip to Moosehead Lake a few years after Thoreau's first pilgrimage there. Lowell has, moreover, become known as "Maine's first tourist." After a 2-mile carry of the northeastern section, he exclaimed, "My estimate of the distance is 18,674 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles." He seems to have been foresighted when he commented in his *A Moosehead Journal*, 1835, "It seemed to me that I could hear a sigh now and then from the immemorial pines, as they stood watching these campfires of the inexorable intruder."

Lowell good-naturedly spoke of Greenville as having "dripped down from the hills and settled in the hollow at the foot of the lake." Such was the relaxed attitude of its settlers that when Lowell notified the stage driver that one of the mail bags had fallen off, the driver's comment was to the effect that the mail was not of much value anyway, probably; and furthermore someone would no doubt pick up the bag and bring it in later.

John Greenleaf Whittier was a hotel guest on at least one occasion at Moosehead Lake, and historian Lucius Hubbard was a devotee of the region. In 1879, Mark Twain and C.A. Stephens were guests in the area.

The lake hosted the 1950 annual convention of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and has been an ideal meeting place for delegates from the United Nations who have met there for recreation and discussion.

In spite of the fact that many of the islands in Moosehead Lake



Flying at Mt. Kineo.



Guides at Kineo House.



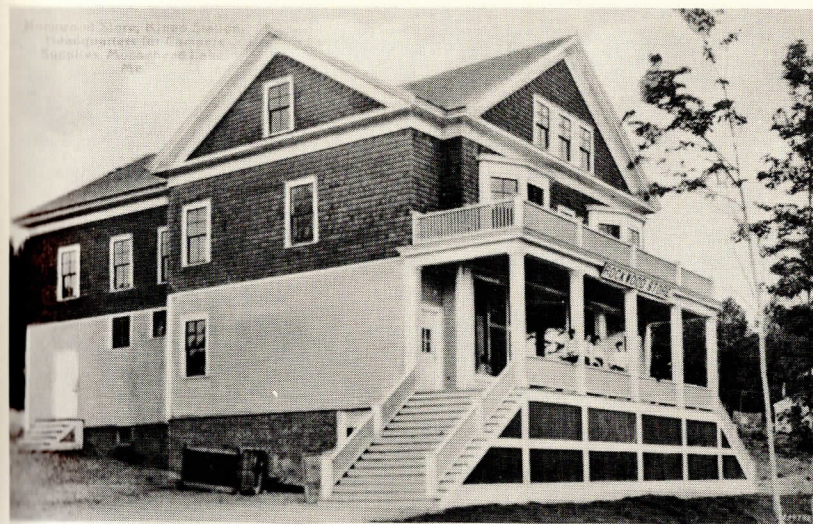
Charles Nelson making the canoe mile record on Moosehead Lake.



Squaw Mountain Inn at Greenville Junction.



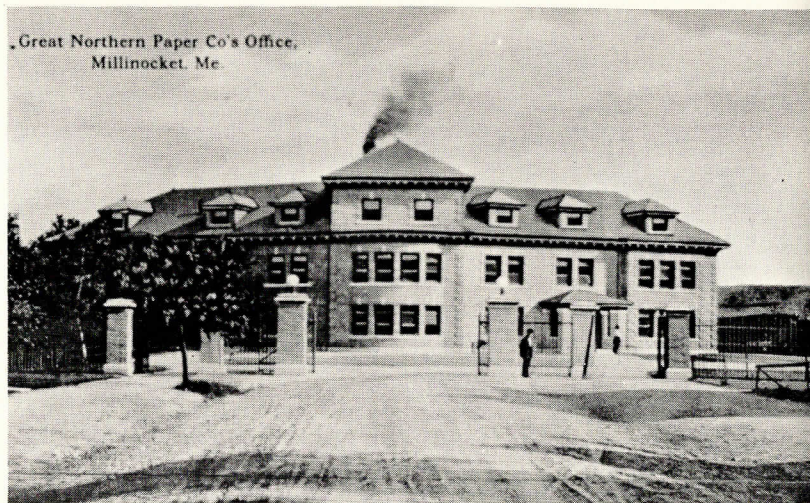
The Moosehead Inn, Greenville Junction.



The Rockwood Store at Kineo Station, Moosehead Lake.



Niben Club House, Pushaw Lake, Bangor.



Great Northern Paper Company Office, Millinocket.

are now under private ownership, the beauty of the shoreline has remained practically intact. Its waters still lure the year-round fisherman, although the future of their yield may be less bright than has been the past.

The *Sea Puppy*, a three-man submarine, built for underwater research and salvage work, is a familiar sight on the lake.¹⁴

Most of the still, or plug, fishing is in the 78-foot-depth section. In the winter of 1866, thirty tons of fish were caught in the lake, and ten more tons during the summer and fall of that year. Most of these catches went to either Boston or New York markets, and the selling price was 12c per pound. A year's catch netted about \$9,600, a considerable amount for the times. The present decline of fish in Moosehead has been attributed to the increase of winter fishing. One prize catch came in April 1967 when Harold M. Ford, of Lewiston, Maine, is said to have spent 45 minutes to land a 3-foot long togue with a girth of twenty inches.

Moosehead Lake is classified by the Fishery Research and Management Division of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game as typical of the "deep-clear type of lake," which "have few plants growing in them and contain plenty of oxygen at all depths all year round." This type is ideal for salmon, brook trout, and togue, and Moosehead has shown no oxygen deficiency to date.

Since 1967 a significant growth rate increase of salmon has been an encouraging feature of Maine's largest lake. One less fortunate fact is the introduction of yellow perch, probably induced by the closing of the fishway at the foot of Kokadjo (First Roach) Lake, thus preventing the perch from ascending into Roach waters.

ONAWA LAKE, sometimes spelled Onowa, was named, according to various sources, for an abducted Indian princess of the Penobscot tribe. In Chippewa language, the name signifies "Awake."

The legend is that Onawa's father, Chief Wawhook, was a man of great courage, valor, and wisdom, and was honored by those who knew him. For many years the Chesuncook tribe in the far north had been hostile to Wawhook and envious of his fame. Therefore, they decided to abduct his 20-year-old daughter Onawa, the only being that Chief Wawhook ever worshipped besides the Great Spirit.

It took the vengeful Chesuncooks many days to reach Onawa, who lived in a section southeast of Moosehead Lake, about 20 miles from Greenville. Once found, she was snatched from her father's wigwam, gagged, and tied. The return trip by the abductors required

a stopover on what is now Onawa Lake, where both captors and prisoner were to spend the night.

According to the legend, during the darkness the Great Spirit came, and unbound and freed the princess. By the light of "a big torch which illuminated the sky" she was able to find her way back to her tribe and her father. One author states: "For many generations after, whenever any of the Indians belonging to the tribe from which the warriors had come tarried around this lake, a pall of darkness would shroud everything; and hideous and unearthly war-whoops and sounds were heard on all sides of the lake, so that it was impossible for them to repose in the vicinity; while on the other hand any who belonged to the maiden's tribe could rest in peace."

Another legend says that the princess committed suicide by the lake and is buried there, thus creating the name of the lake.

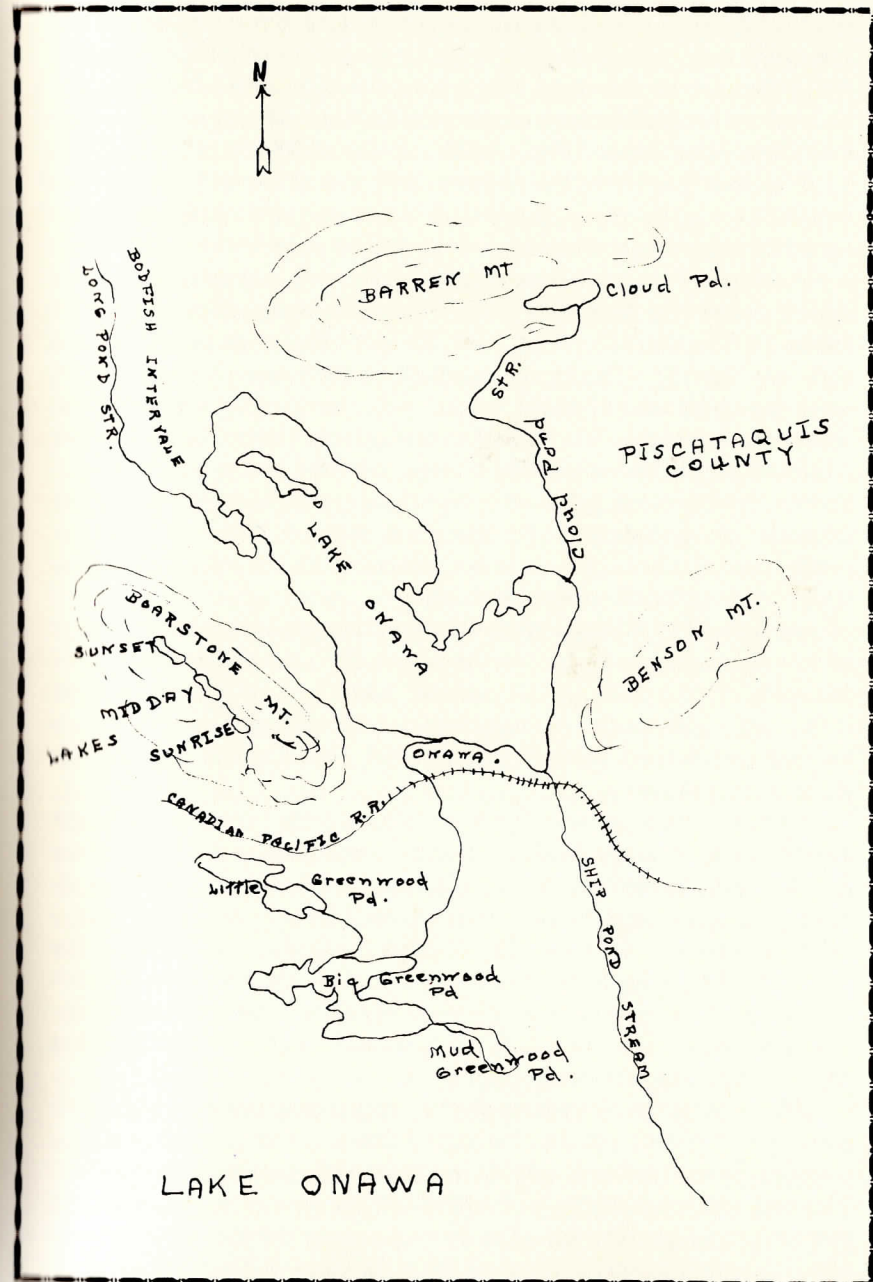
A third story tells that the lake was once called Ship Pond to coincide with Schooner Island, upon which many trees resembled the masts of a schooner. Those who prefer this tale say that the name was previously Obernecksombeek and that its present name is not true Indian in origin and has no local significance. A fourth version, by Lucius Hubbard, claims that Messrs. Sprague and Haynes renamed the lake to Onowa and that their inspiration came from these lines of Longfellow's "Hiawatha":

Sang he softly, sang in this wise,
Onoway! Awake, beloved.

Majestic bluffs encircle Onawa Lake, which is four miles long and two miles wide. It is located in Elliotsville Plantation, is of an irregular, odd, fascinating contour, and half surrounds the western base of Borestone Mountain, which many individuals compare to the famous Matterhorn. Three perfectly delightful small lakes — Sunrise, MIDDAY, and Sunset — lie on top of this mountain.

The shoreline of Onawa Lake is broken by various uniquely-shaped bays and coves in varying shades of blue. Many of the points are rocky, and large boulders line several sections of the shoreline. Picturesque islands appear at intervals. The whole is decorated by evergreens and an abundance of dainty, white birches. All of this beauty reposes in the midst of a vast expanse of unbroken wilderness except for a few scattered sporting camps and cottages, approximately 38 in 1972, which were accessible only by train (Canadian Pacific), jeep, or seaplane until the 1970's.

At the foot of Onawa Lake lies the tiny settlement of Onawa, cur-



rently claiming a year-round population of three, having no streets and few roads, and once depending solely upon a 200-mile railroad with a 1,017-foot trestle standing 138 feet above Ship Pond Stream. The little steam locomotive and its one combination car was affectionately known as *The Scoot*. From 1889, it was a lifeline for the 10 or 12 American and Canadian settlements; it served for milk distribution and even for cattle transportation, for which purpose a wooden box car would be attached; and on occasion it carried pulp.

Because of its vital importance to the area, the railroad always defied strikes. In 1950 the Canadian Pacific Railroad was on strike for two weeks, but *The Scoot* ran. Its only restriction was that it not run into Canada. Therefore, it halted at the border, beyond which there was little except forest land. Only one trapper was really inconvenienced, and he was given handcar service. Later, in 1957, when 17,000 miles of the Canadian Pacific lay idle and even the super-special trains were inactive, *The Scoot* continued to serve its clientele. Its schedule? Aye, there was the rub. The schedule depended solely upon the customer's hearing the whistle. When he heard the whistle, the train was coming.

Its route was westerly from Brownville Junction through a range of mountainous terrain in the Onawa Lake country, to Greenville Junction, at the foot of Moosehead Lake. From Greenville, the rails went north along the west shore of Moosehead, cut west again to Jackman Station, and from there led into Canada through the Boundary Mountains.

Regular stops of *The Scoot*, at places little-known outside the region, were Barnad, Benson, Bodfish and Boston Ranch, Squaw Brook, Gulf and Skinner, Morris Camp, Morkill, Keough, and Lowelltown. Most of these locations represented merely signposts with a cabin or two and a siding. Local inhabitants clustered to greet the arrival of *The Scoot* to receive news of the outside world, to get mail and supplies, and to see who was going where and, of equal importance, why. Sometimes, in cold weather, the crew offered hot coffee to the group of loyal greeters.

The mini-train served residents, lumbermen, guides with their hunting and fishing parties, individual hunters, and forest fire crews. Late in June, business would increase with summer vacationers. The one and only house in Bodfish served as a waiting room and the yard was a parking lot. *The Scoot*, to some people, was symbolic of a link with a world far removed from the heart of Maine wilderness.

It was the last steam-powered train in New England. In 1961 *The Scoot* was dieselized and in 1966 it discontinued full passenger service, although it continued to carry freight, operating between Brownville Junction, Maine, and Megantic, P.Q.

A dirt road, established in the late 1960's and terminating as a mere path, leads nearly into the village and thus permits limited automobile traffic.

Near HOUSTON LAKE, in Piscataquis County, from which lake several small ponds develop, is the township of Katahdin Iron Works, site of a mine and smelting mill operation at the foot of Ore Mountain around 1843. A bog of iron ore, a variety of hematite, existed there, as well as deposits of pigments of copper and asbestos. After the decline of the Iron Works, some of its buildings were used by the Pleasant River Lumber Company. Lumbering operations, to a small degree, are still carried on in the vicinity. Katahdin Iron Works State Park is reached only through Brownville.

SEBEC LAKE, also in Piscataquis County, a lake whose name means "much water," is the site of Maine's twentieth State Park, the Peaks-Kenney, opened in 1969 at a cost of \$600,000. It covers more than 800 wooded acres, donated by Francis C. Peaks of Dover-Foxcroft in memory of his parents and of a sister, Annie Peaks Kenney.

Although accorded a specific right of way for an entrance, a different approach to the Park seemed advisable so the State purchased an additional six acres for this purpose. The Peaks-Kenney Park includes two miles of attractive shoreline, 600 feet of fine sand at South Cove, a bathhouse with change areas and showers, fifty picnic sites, and parking facilities for 100 cars. In keeping with the policy of avoiding intrusions on the scene within State Parks, over three miles of utility lines lie underground.

Sebec Lake, fourteen miles long and two to six miles wide, is in the geographical center of the State and receives waters from at least twenty-five ponds or lesser lakes. In 1918 the steamer *Waban* towed across its waters one of the largest known booms — nearly 3,000,000 feet. Nearby stands Borestone Mountain, "the Gibraltar of Sebec."

At one time, around 1860, there was a Sebec S. S. Company. It ran the *Favorite* in 1861 and the *Rippling Wave* in 1868. The second boat was 92 feet long, had a double deck, could carry 500 passengers, and was in use for ten years.

A Lake House existed at Sebec Lake for a short duration in 1865. Enforcement of prohibition laws was rumored to be its downfall.

One anecdote of the vicinity tells of two men poling a load of shingles in a bateau when they were attacked by a swimming bear which grabbed one of them, pulling him overboard. The man sank and the bear waited for him to surface, meanwhile heading toward the remaining man, who hit the animal with a paddle. Thus heading off the intruder, the man in the boat hauled the floating companion by the hair of his head until they could make shore. As far as is known, only one person has ever lost his life in Sebec. A young man of twenty jumped into a small boat to recover a passenger's hat, got too near the steamer's guards extending from the sides of the boat, was knocked overboard, and drowned.¹⁵

Ice caves, located near an old sporting camp made from a spool factory in 1930, contain ice even on the last day in July. This fact accounts for the fame of Sebec's landlocked salmon, outstanding in New England since the mid-1800's.

PUSHAW LAKE, contrary to popular belief, does not bear an Indian name, but the name of an early English settler whose name in 1782 appeared on records as Pochard and as Pouschard and in 1791 as Pushard. An Indian name for the lake was Pigwadukgamok, Penobscot-Abenaki for "bent stream lake," probably because it doubles itself like a fish-hook bend in order to enter the river in a direction opposite to that in which it flows. Pushaw was one of the so-called "Doomed Lakes" in a March, 1971, report.¹⁶ Since then, nearly all Maine lakes have become suspect.

BRASSUA LAKE gets its name from an "Indianized" form of the French word *Francois* according to an Abenaki authority and tribesman, Stephen Laurent, of Intervale, New Hampshire. HOLEB LAKE, named for an early trapper, Holeb Nichols, with its white pine, spruce, balsam, and cedar-lined shores, drains into ATTEAN LAKE, which has granite sides rising sharp and high in definite contrast to its Birch Island with silver-edged poplars and slender white birch. Attean has been the theme for many of the Charles Hovey Pepper paintings and for the works of other artists. The lake was created by the Wyman Dam which raised Kennebec River 135 feet, resulting in the river's backing up between high hills, thus forming the artificial lake, vying in beauty with any natural one. Its name came from *Etienne* Orson, a settler around 1793.

PARLIN LAKE lies 4,000 feet above sea level beside the Canada Road which was built to join Maine's King's Highway to Quebec.

SPRING LAKE, eight miles from what was once the town of Flagstaff, had a narrow gauge railroad made entirely of wood — its ties, its rails, its cars. The engine could manipulate three miles; but for the final five miles, staunch horses pulled the train, a service delightful to the ladies who abhorred the jostling of buckboards.

Other lakes bordering on or connected with Moosehead are MUD; SEBOIS, Abenaki for "small waterway"; and BOYD, all of which are in Piscataquis County, which has more lakes and ponds than does any other tract of equal extent in the world. Boyd Lake is also the locale of the birthplace of the literary figure Hudson (Isaac) Maxim, brother of machine-gun inventor Sir Hiram Maxim. It was named for Gen. J. P. Boyd, a settler around 1805.

Continuing from north to south are SPENCER LAKE, named for a lumberman, and MOXIE, with its famous falls, the name said to be Indian for "dark water."

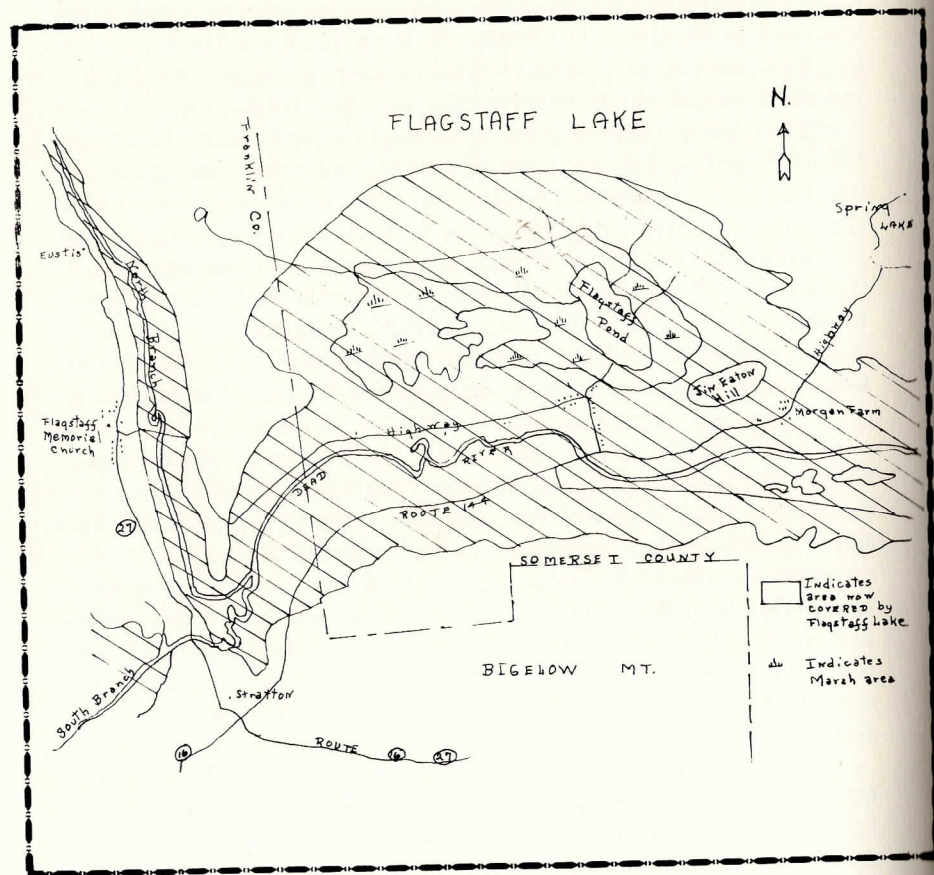
ENCHANTED LAKE, in Somerset County and somewhat above Flagstaff, abounds in legendary tales. One is that the tracks of a deer and a buck were followed out onto the lake, yet only the doe tracks led off the lake, and no open water was visible.

Actually, the lake is in two parts, Upper and Lower. Upper is called Enchanted Pond. Lower is several miles southwest and includes two granite-like ranges, Granny's Cap and Herald Mountain. There is an underground stream which rumbles for several feet under the original trail to the lower pond, Little Enchanted, and then reappears.

A skiing development on nearby Coburn Mountain has brought Enchanted Lake to public notice. Lying only a few miles from Spencer Lake, in the spring of 1968 Enchanted Lake was clear when Spencer had seven inches of ice.

FLAGSTAFF LAKE, created in 1949, at an altitude of 1,115 feet, today covers what was once a bit of sluggish water called Dead River and the original Flagstaff Plantation of 20,300 acres of farm land.

In 1775 Benedict Arnold and his men made their camp in this unbroken wilderness of flooded rivers and almost impossible carries. Arnold raised the Continental flag beside his tent (or by its peak, according to one source) during his two-day stopover and



named the territory Flagstaff. The men had started their long march to Quebec in October, but soon ice formed along the lakes and the nearby mountains were snow-capped.

One of Arnold's officers, Major Timothy Bigelow, climbed a mountain hoping to see Quebec from the top. Nothing but a desolate wilderness met his eyes, but from then on the mountain has borne his name.

The legendary Marha's Curse is associated with this march, and concerns the confinement and death of an Indian guide, Shadigee, suspected of treason. His squaw, Marha, spoke the curse to Arnold, swearing prophetically that the journey would be fruitless and that Arnold himself would eventually be scorned by his own people.

Some natives claim that in the abutment of a bridge over Dead River was a cannon which Arnold abandoned on his unfortunate march on Quebec. Now, of course, bridge, framework, and cannon lie at the bottom of the lake. According to "Old Bert" Horton, a Maine guide in 1932, there were other abandoned arms. Several small arms and six to twelve small brass cannons plus related articles were buried along with the big cannon under an odd-shaped boulder in the dead center of the village of Flagstaff. A woman whose grandfather had helped Arnold bury the cannon had confided the story to Old Bert. After the woman's death, Horton hunted unsuccessfully for the boulder that she had described. He then realized that to construct a local dam many of the boulders from the center of town had been used. Army officials substantiate the possibility of Horton's story.

Old Bert, who had been a crony of Buffalo Bill Cody, always swore that there was gold in the mountains northeast of Flagstaff, and various authorities now believe his assumption to be a reasonable one.

Many of the houses built by settlers around 1800 were still standing in 1949. How much longer they would have endured will never be known. On March 7 of that year the 90-odd families of Flagstaff, with a population between 200-300, held their last town meeting.

For several years there had been talk of building a dam; now the matter was no longer just talk. The original Flagstaff Lake plus 23 miles of the Dead River between the location of the new dam at Long Falls and the Eustis power dam were to be inundated under the control of the Central Maine Power Company which

needed the 27-square-mile lake about to be born to provide supplementary water. Inhabitants in the area would have to vacate their homes. Most of the owners agreed to accept the offers of the Power Company, the Great Northern Paper Company, and Hollingsworth and Whitney, builders of this \$5,000,000 artificial lake project. Those who did not agree had no choice but to succumb to demands. Most of the dwellings belonged to lumbermen who had built on the high northern bank.

After negotiations were concluded, a Memorial Chapel was erected on the Eustis Road; cemeteries were established in Eustis to receive the bodies buried in the area to be flooded; and homes were found or constructed for all families involved. The Ledge House, a favorite hunting lodge, was used for headquarters for the Hinman highway construction crew.

Memorable Parson's Place, built in the early 1800's and open year-round for sportsmen and their guides, for until 1850 there were no protective seasonal game laws, also fell prey to the destruction.

On July 3, 1949, 25 families still left in town plus about 400 guests, several being former residents, met for "Old Home Days," to observe the last rites of the doomed village. One gentleman came even from California, his first homecoming in over 20 years. \$1,000 had been voted from the town funds to finance this commemoration.

The program began with a church service, followed by a band concert and picnics. On the Fourth of July, the town's beloved Rev. MacDorgall of Bingham was speaker of the day. Souvenirs were sold. Beano games were played. Foot races were run. Other contests were conducted. Dancing and baseball were additional activities. As Rev. MacDorgall remarked: "In such a small village is the backbone not only of the State of Maine, but of the nation." A display of antiques was held on the Arnold flagstaff site. Already bodies were being removed for burial in the new cemetery.

Two days later, July 6, all seemed to have been done in vain, for a rash of forest fires broke out in the area. Flagstaff village was surrounded by flames in Eustis, one-half mile away; on Stanton Road, less than a mile away; and in Dead River Plantation, about six miles distant. All of these blazing areas were, coincidentally, included in the flooding plan.

On August 23, a second fire within a week broke out in Flagstaff

itself, both fires being of incendiary origin. These events prompted more families to move on, even though the first fire had been quelled before it did much damage.

The Flagstaff Post Office officially closed its doors on November 1, 1949. The 20 remaining families were to receive mail via rural delivery from New Portland. Evan Leavitt, who ran a general store which housed the post office, made known that he would stay open just as long as possible. He was among the last three inhabitants to leave and to head for his new store and home in Eustis.

By now the rivermen were working on the dam and the Central Maine Power Company had begun work on a new Mt. Bigelow Masonic Hall to replace the building that would be lost in the flooding.

Preliminary steps to de-organize the town occurred on November 21, a voting decree being required. At the next State Legislative Session (1951) the act would be presented and confirmed. The 11 eligible voters authorized the sale of the town for \$10,000, a price which included a schoolhouse and a diesel lighting plant. A substantial amount was put into trust to cover costs of the new cemetery. An additional amount was voted to the town of Eustis where Flagstaff youngsters had been attending school since September.

New Flagstaff, as it was called, was located about five miles from Stratton, actually within the township of Eustis, and therefore could not assume a political identity.

Although numerous houses and other buildings had been moved from Flagstaff to New Flagstaff, the church proved to be too much of a stumbling block. In compensation, its windows were taken to New Flagstaff and a replica of the former church was built around them, the first public construction in the new village. At the same time, the dam was nearing completion and a 26-mile lake (one source states 29) was slowly advancing upon the 15 or 20 homes still standing.

By November 24, the almost 100-year-old town of Flagstaff, home to many families on Route 149, had re-vitalized itself in a different location. New Flagstaff would overlook the new lake where already miniature lakes were dotting the premises. And still a handful of inhabitants clung to their old homes.

On March 12, 1950, Mt. Bigelow Masonic Lodge held its last meeting in Flagstaff. On March 14, the Eustis Telephone Company ended service to the two families and the construction crew remaining in Flagstaff. By March 23 the last resident had departed, and

Mrs. Rachel Russell, first assessor and clerk, had closed the final accounting. LeRoy Parsons and his son Everett began loading two trucks when the water was within fifty rods of their farm and started for Everett's new home in New Flagstaff.

The final act significant to the doomed village was when Governor Frederick G. Payne signed the bill surrendering the organization of Dead River and Flagstaff Plantation. By that time both of the localities had been under Flagstaff Lake for nearly a year.

Around the original Flagstaff Lake, moose and deer had been plentiful, but the early settlers killed only what they needed for food and clothing. Large numbers of the St. Francis Indians, however, started to come down from Canada and slaughter animals, taking nothing but the hides and leaving carcasses along the shores of the lake and in the woods. The Indians would dry the hides, scrape off the hair, pack the skins in bales, and carry them off for trading. Complaints were made by the Penobscot Indians, and several citizens joined them in petitioning the Legislature to pass a law to protect the animals. Eventually such laws were passed and the State acquired its first game wardens.

The original settlers found Flagstaff good lumbering country. They built a saw and gristmill, and passing years saw big growth in the lumbering business. Demands for pulpwood grew by bounds, timberlands were sold, and large crews of woodsmen were recruited. The sound of chain saws filled the air and big trucks began to haul pulpwood to Dead River, from where it followed the water route to pulp mills and finally became paper.

At the present time, fishing and hunting in the Flagstaff Lake area are drawing more sportsmen each year. In 1966 a trial stock of salmon was placed in the lake, resulting in an increased supply. Flagstaff has a depth of about 50 feet, prime for pickerel, yellow perch, trout, and salmon; but fishing is hampered by the enormous accumulation of dri-ki in the lake currently quoted as being 35 miles in size, an increase over original figures.

Prospects of a second man-made lake in the area are high at this time. A Flagstaff-Bigelow year-round recreational development was bruited as early as 1967. Although handicapped by financial problems, the issue was furthered in 1970 by a plan promoted by the Huber Company of Portland to cut ski trails on the slopes of Bigelow Mountain and to create an artificial lake by damming Stratton Brook. This possible development would encompass some 8,000

acres of the mountain and valley adjacent to the lake.

In nearby Kingfield is Sugarloaf Mountain whose ski slopes hosted both the World Cup ski races and the Arlberg-Kandahar Race which until its 44th year, 1971, had never been held outside of Europe.

Competition for the northeast divisional hydroplane championships were held at Flagstaff Lake in July of the same year.

Close to Flagstaff Lake is the Cathedral Pines camping area, a 300-acre campground which offers modern facilities, a public beach, and a picnic spot actually located on the historic grounds of Arnold's march. Stratton and Eustis cooperate in maintaining and supporting the grounds where the lake waters lap the very feet of the stalwart pines.

LAKE WESSERUNSETT, southeast of Flagstaff Lake and back-drop of the oldest American summer theater in continuous operation, having opened in or around 1900, was once the site of a swampy amusement park, which had a somewhat tumble-down inn, a bandstand, a few cottages, and some caged monkeys and bears. Herbert Swett, who had just graduated from Bowdoin College, conceived the idea of a theatrical center by the lake.

At the start of the 1968 season, on the cold, rain-drenched evening of the 842nd production, over 800 patrons from six states were present. It would be difficult to find a name of stage importance which at some time has not been on the call board at Lakewood Theater on Wesserunsett Lake, in Madison.

It would be equally difficult to find a summer theater production not offered at some time at the Lakewood Theater. One dramatic point in the history of this particular theater is the coincidence of Will Rogers' daughter Mary playing there in a drama which climaxed with a plane crash at the exact time that her noted father was killed in a plane crash in Alaska. Will himself had once played a role at Lakewood and had been there for a previous performance of Mary's.

In the summer of 1929, the price of a ticket depended upon the transportation used by the patron. If he came by trolley, his ticket cost 5c; if he used other means of transportation onto the grounds, he was charged 10c.

The name Wesserunsett is derived from the Indian tribe that once had a campsite in the theater area. Contrary to customary procedure, the lake did not bring recognition to the people, however;

the theater brought recognition to the lake.

Both trilobite and possible fossils have been found along the boggy, undeveloped northern section of the lake shore.

WASSAKEAG (or WASSOKEAG) LAKE, lying in Penobscot County, carries a tale of the bridge across its narrows:

September 30, 1819 — town meeting voted NO BRIDGE

April 3, 1820 — town meeting voted NO BRIDGE

May 4, 1821 — voted to pay William Smith \$15, payable in grain, to keep a constant ferry service across the river for public convenience

Spring of 1823 — Smith's pay raised to \$20 and a bridge suggested

November, 1824 — a building committee appointed to proceed with construction of a floating bridge over the 60-foot-deep narrows (no mention of a vote to have a bridge)

July 11, 1860 — voted to replace the floating bridge with a permanent structure at a cost of \$4,746 or less — the culmination of a forty-year struggle

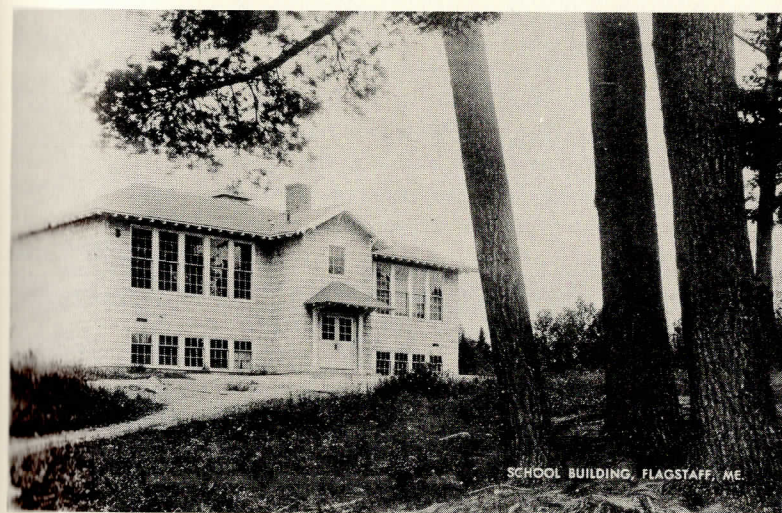
The present structure, in Dexter, "the very heart of Maine," is still called the Floating Bridge.

It has been told that a circus elephant being transported from Sangerville to Dexter refused to cross the unstable bridge and caretakers were required to walk him around the southeast end of the lake, a distance of about three miles.

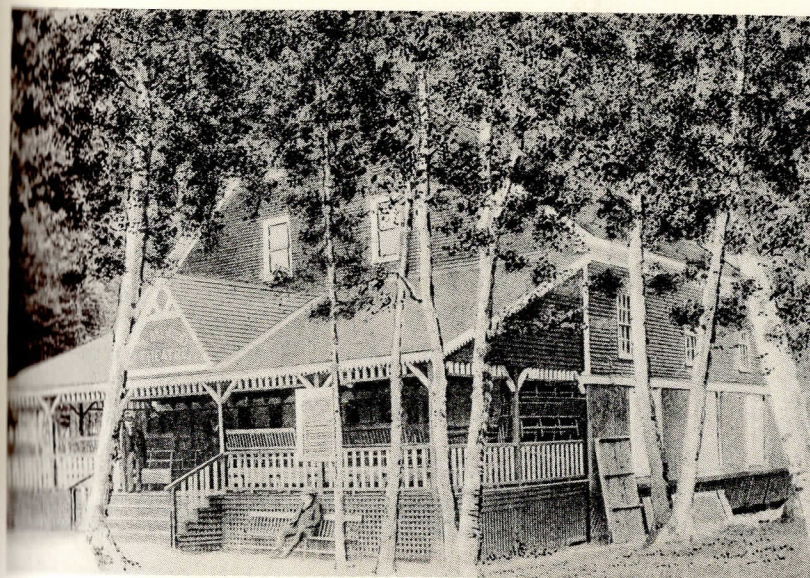
The shores of SEBASTICOOK LAKE, near Newport, are haunted by the ghost of an Indian girl who lived hundreds of years ago on Paradise Island in Sebec Lake. She was so lovely that she was called "The Beauty of the Penobscots." Her father, Sagamore, with whom she lived, had never allowed her to marry; but when he became partially blind, the girl wed a young brave to help her care for her aged, dying father.

Before long, war broke out between the Norridgewocks and Penobscots. The young husband left home to fight, carrying with him his wife's whispered words of undying love. He, in turn, invoked the wrath of Manitou on her and all her possessions with the injunction that both should be removed from the earth if she were unfaithful. He then told her that he would return before many moons and away he paddled.

Another brave, enamoured by the Indian girl, went out to the island and won her over with words and songs of love. Therefore,



One of the buildings inundated when the Town of Flagstaff was flooded.



Lakewood Theater, Madison, Maine.



Lake Sebasticook, Newport, ¼ mile from the Railroad Station.



Landing at Camp Benson, Lake Sebasticook.

when she heard that her husband had been killed in battle, she forgot her promise and wed the other.

A few weeks later, on a bright moonlit summer night, her happy husband returned, found that his wife had re-married, and started to kill the intruder. Immediately, the girl appealed to the Great Spirit; lightning and thunder came; trees bent down; waves roared on the shore; and the Island of Paradise sank, taking with it the lives of the three young Indians.

Legend has it that to this day there are visible, just beneath the surface of Lake Sebasticook, the remains of the sunken island. When storms shriek, the weird form of an Indian girl has been seen to stalk across the crest of whitecaps, arms outstretched, pleading with Manitou to withdraw his curse so that she may rest in peace.

Lake Sebasticook has been known under several names. Among them are Nalabongan (Abenaki), Nawlomagages, and Sagon-Dagon, all of which mean "above the lake" or "the lake above," which could indicate a resting place at a pond above a stretch of rapids, and an added meaning of "level" in Sagon-Dagon; its present name, Sebasticook, which has been interpreted as "passage river" or "river that runs with another"; Great East Pond; and Newport Pond.

Each spring as much water as possible is drawn from the lake which is then allowed to refill with clear water in a fight against algae. Nevertheless, it was on the list of doomed lakes in 1971.¹⁷ In April, 1972, two adjacent pieces of the lakeshore property were purchased by the state for development of a state-owned boat access facility.