

## CHAPTER VIII COASTAL LAKES

Progressing up the coast from the New Hampshire line at Kittery, in York County, the first Maine lake is little 2½-mile ESTES LAKE, between Sanford and Alfred. It is named for a 1780 settler, Benjamin Estes, and is listed among the doomed lakes of the times.

Farther north is what W. W. Clayton's *History of York County* says was once Bonney Beag Pond, meaning "at the spread out lake." It is now known as BAUNEG BEG. It was here that a Canadian Indian raiding party was forced to winter after raising havoc in York County. Some lurid details are given by Laurance E. Webber in a newspaper account of this affair;<sup>42</sup> but what is more important today is that Maine's first day camp for the mentally retarded and handicapped children, Camp Waban, stands on the shores of Bauneg Beg. The original fee, established in 1966, of \$1 a day if parents could afford it, nothing if they could not, has never been changed. The camp now has 11 buildings on 175 acres with 670 feet of shoreline. The combination dormitory and infirmary permits eight campers to stay by the week at a cost of \$100 each.

Local and neighboring persons and organizations have volunteered much of the work and the cost. Area teenagers have been especially helpful, over 400 having assisted in the work and instruction to date, including the staging of a 1970 "Christmas in July," complete with a flying Santa Claus, gifts, and a lighted Christmas tree as one of the special Friday programs.

Children of only York County and nearby New Hampshire areas have been admitted thus far, but there are hopes of extending the service for children from any part of Maine.

The next three lakes present, in part, unfortunate situations.

MOUSAM LAKE, in Acton, is the object of regional concern

for its preservation. Strict regulations are currently in effect on building footage requirements and waste disposal systems.

This lake has two possible Abenaki translations: in New Abenaki, "grandfather," and in Old Abenaki, "a snare."

Northeast of Mousam is LITTLE OSSIPEE LAKE, whose name means "water on the other side." It, too, is on the list of doomed lakes in Maine.

An unusual experiment in providing artificial spawning grounds for togue was conducted in Little Ossipee in the mid-1900's. Crushed rock and gravel were spread upon the frozen lake and left to fall to the bottom when the ice melted, thus providing spawning grounds. The unique experiment was a success.

In Sagadahoc County, NEW MEADOWS LAKE, once advertised as "Maine's largest salt water lake," today barely exists.

DAMARISCOTTA LAKE, the next one northward, is located in Lincoln County and was once called Mardameskunteag or Madamescontee, meaning in either case "young shad pool" or "plenty of alewives," which are called "madames" in Abenaki. Along its shores are the historic shell heaps where doubtlessly Keriberba met his Nemaha (see Chapter VII).

The Damariscotta Lake Association, organized several years ago, is working to prevent deterioration of the lake waters and to acquire a dam at the outlet to maintain a predetermined water level. At present, the alewife fishery, when in operation, lowers the entire lake level.

ALFORD LAKE, in Union, Knox County, boasts of being the first Maine lake in whose waters a submarine (single occupant) was used, in August, 1970, to search for a missing person. The lake has deep, dark holes.

Just out of Rockland, also in Knox County, lies CHICKAWAUKIE LAKE, "sweet water," once called Tolman Pond, source of the supplementary water supply for Rockland. Mary Neptune, daughter of the Penobscot chief, claimed that the earlier name was either Medambattek or Medambettox, meaning, in her words, "great sucker-pond-place." However, her English comprehension has been questioned and it is quite probable that she meant "alewife" because of the approximation of the word "madames" or "mahdames" within the name.

An old Indian fighter of 1696 quoted the Mathebestic Hills as being in the vicinity. He may have meant Dodge's Mountain.

Nearby MIRROR LAKE provides Rockland's water supply.

LAKE MEGUNTICOOK, located primarily in Knox County, is a one-square-mile body of fresh water once known as Molyneaux's Pond, named for the rich French Huguenot William Molyneaux, rumored to be of noble birth. He bought much land in the area and erected several mills in the late 1700's. His main pleasure was to stroll throughout the wild section with fishing rod in one hand and gun in the other. He died by drowning when his canoe capsized; and according to a local legend, he was found floating because his hat fitted his head so tightly that the enclosed air buoyed him.

Folklore etymology tells that the name Megunticook indicates the beginning of a meal being prepared by an Indian cook who, when pressed for immediate service by his companions, informed them that he had "begun to cook." The same legend tells that Medumcook Pond, in Friendship, a town formerly called Medumcook, is supposed to refer to this same cook when he broke a cooking pot.

More realistically, the name of the Pond Medumcook presumably means "blocked by sand," and the term "Megunticook" signifies "land of great sea swells," not in reference to oceanic waves but to the silhouetted Camden Hills. In Malecite or Micmac, the translation is "big mountain harbor." Fannie Eckstorm suggests that the name Megunticook really should refer only to the harbor where early usage placed it, citing Locke's *History of Camden* (1859) which states that "In 1769 Camden at the harbor was known as Negunticook or Megunticook" which may have come from the term "Mecadacut" given to Camden in 1614 by Captain John Smith. The lake has also been known as Canaan Pond and as Lincolnville Pond.

In addition to its beauty, Megunticook is valued for its power given to several mills and factories in Camden. Its highly irregular shores and picturesque islands are divided into two distinct sections by Fernald's Neck.

Camden's Turnpike Drive skirts the lake at the foot of Mt. Battie, a replica of the Tyrolese mountains, which dominates the horizon. Folklore tells that it was named for Betty, wife of James Richards, a settler, and was known as Betty's Mountain; but this yarn has been refuted by authority Eckstorm who says that it was called Mt. Betty ten years before Betty Richards ever saw the

place, in 1768, giving as her reference "Scout Report" of 1757, by James Cargills.

It was from this vantage point that Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote her famous "Renasceance," a fact commemorated in June, 1967, by installing a bronze plaque on a boulder at the top of Mt. Battie. Her sister, Norma Millay Ellis, gave the dedication service.

On one steep elevation above Lake Megunticook looms a high white cross erected on Maiden's Cliff, at the exact location where a young Lincolnville girl, Eleanora French, in 1862 was fatally injured by a fall down the sides of the ledge. Various reasons for the mishap have been cited, as none of her companions saw her fall. The term "Maiden's Cliff" seems to have originated around 1885, and the probability is that it came from an estate promoter in the vicinity who owned property along the shore and ran sight-seeing tours around the lake in his *The Titwillow* and *The Mikado*.

A second tragedy occurred on the same cliff in July, 1972. David T. Kelley, 21, of Pennsylvania, leader of a hostel group of three other climbers, from New York, left the prescribed trail and without any climbing help, not even a rope or climbing shoes (in fact, he was barefooted), tried to scale an 800-foot sheer rock face. He reached a ledge from which he could proceed neither up nor down. A companion heard him scream "Oh, no!" and saw his friend fall 200 feet onto rocks at the beginning of the sharp, perilous ascent, near Barrett's Cove.

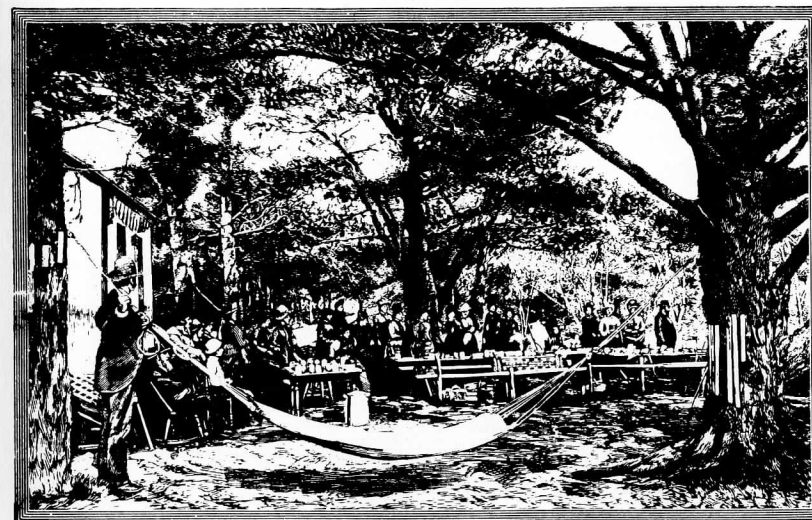
In 1831, a 60-ton schooner, the *Forest*, was built at Lincolnville and hauled by oxen across the frozen lake all the way to Camden village for launching. Thirty years later, a settlement known as "Lake City" sprang up, and the section around Lake Megunticook became a summer colony. In 1892, Lake City Inn was built near the south shore and prospered until it burned to the ground in 1895.

A fishing derby, sponsored by the Megunticook Fish and Game Association, has long been an annual event at the lake. Bass, salmon, pickerel, white perch, and in the Knox County part only, smelts, are the prevailing species in the lake.

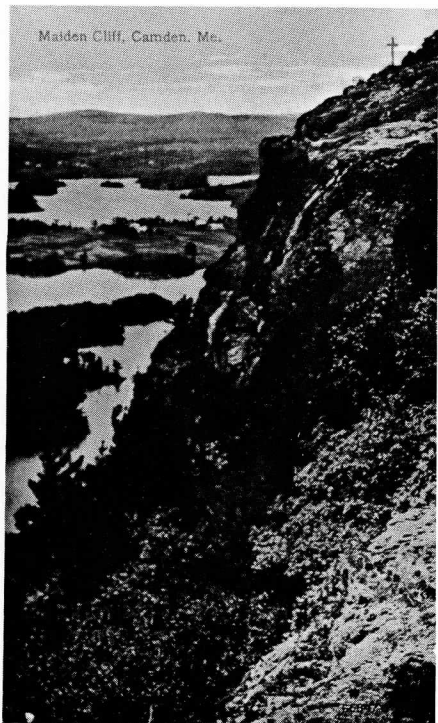
In Waldo County, north of Knox County, St. George State Park, in Liberty, was established on LAKE ST. GEORGE. Between Searsport and North Searsport, at QUANTABACOOK LAKE, Ben Ames Williams wrote many of his novels. Close by are SWAN



Turnpike Drive, Lake Megunticook, Camden.



"Ruralizing" at Megunticook Lake in the 1880s.



*Maiden Cliff  
above Lake  
Megunticook,  
Camden.*



*Mt. Battie House, Mt. Battie, Camden.*

LAKE, where there is excellent salmon fishing, and WINNECOOK LAKE (Unity Pond), famed for its superior black bass and brown trout.

Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties, in the northeast part of Central Maine, contain many lakes.

Among those in Penobscot County is trout-bearing CHEMO LAKE, known also as Leonard's Pond or Nichols Pond, whose Indian name, K'chi mug waak, means "big bog," and which was eulogized by James Rowe in 1871 by the most popular song ever written about Bangor, Maine.

Others are SAPOMAC (or Saponac) LAKE, bearing a name meaning "big opening" or "the great outlet"; MATTANWACOOK LAKE, Abenaki for "lake which ends almost at the river" or "at the end of the gravel bar," and which has an extremely short outlet, hardly a half mile's distance existing between lake and river; MATTAMISCONTIS LAKE, translated as "alewife stream" or "plentiful alewives"; ELBOW LAKE, once called Numtsceenaganawis, meaning "one-sided lake" or, in Abenaki, "little crossways pond"; LAKE KATAHDIN, bearing a name indicating "the greatest mountain"; and COLD STREAM LAKE, once known by the Indian name Tekebisuk-gamuk, significantly interpreted as "cold water."

Among the easternmost Piscataquis County lakes are PAS-SAMAGAMET LAKE, formerly Pescongamac, translated as "at the place of many fish"; POCKWOCKAMUS LAKE, signifying "muddy bottom," or, Abenaki, "little muddy pond"; and PASSADUMKEAG LAKE, said to mean either "falling water before the falls" or "where there are plenty of fish."