

CHAPTER IX DOWN EAST LAKES

Lakes in the so-called "Down East" section of Maine include several in Hancock and Washington Counties.

In Hancock County, the most easterly one is EAGLE LAKE, located on Mt. Desert Island, between Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park. It offered a popular buckboard route in the early 1800's when its name was Young's Pond or Great Pond. About that same time, a Captain Derring of Rockland, Maine, introduced trips to Bar Harbor in his *City of Richmond*.

By 1873, there were 15 hotels in the area. On the very top of the mount, was Green Mountain House, which was chained to the ledge to withstand wind gusts. It burned subsequently and was replaced by the Summit House, around 1885.

At one time, improper sewerage in the vicinity created a typhoid epidemic and summer trade completely vanished. However, a legislative act of 1874 eliminated surface drainage; and on July 4 of that year the ceremony of "Turning on the Eagle Lake Water" by means of wooden flumes was celebrated, and summer guests returned in droves. The Eagle Lake House was built, and extra large buckboards, known as "barges," ran from Bar Harbor (which was then called Eden) to the lake. One such barge daringly displayed a fringed top.

In 1883, the Green Mountain Railway, project of Frank H. Clergue, of Bangor, was constructed for the purpose of giving people an opportunity to view both sunrise and sunset from the top of the mountain, a popular recreation of the day. It was a narrow-gauge cog type of railway, with a 6,300-foot roadbed starting from halfway down the eastern shore of Eagle Lake. Its timbers were cut from the mountain and hauled by oxen to the work site.

A little wood-burning locomotive pushed the passenger flat-bed car up the incline, and the return was made by backing down. Both engine and car had tiny front wheels and large rear wheels to maintain a level status. The car was covered by an awning, and passengers sat on benches placed widthwise. The ascent took 30 minutes, and the speed was such that frequently riders would get off the car and pick blueberries along the way. Cinders from the smoke-stack often started fires in the slash beside the roadbed, fires that sometimes grew to rather great proportions.

The gauge was four feet, seven and one half inches, and the tilt of the train reached anywhere from a 33-degree angle to a 50-degree one. The Bangor *Mining Journal* announced the trip as comparable to one up Mount Vesuvius. The little steamer *Wauwan-net*, also spelled *Wauwinet* and *Wauwinnet*, took passengers across Eagle Lake to the foot of the mountain, a 15-minute trip from the northern to the eastern end. An early passenger was Maine Senator Robert Hale, of Ellsworth, with his fellow senator, John Sherman, of Ohio, who had just been influential in restoring gold and demonetizing silver.

The railway was a success and paid six percent dividends that first year in spite of fire fighting costs. But it feared, rightfully so, competition by the carriage road under construction, and in the words of one author got "too big for its boots" by dynamiting a section of the new roadway.

Clergue's fears were realized when the carriage road opened. He tried a comeback with plans for the first electric railway in America to replace the "barge" line to Eagle Lake, but the summer colony wanted no part of such a promotion. Hannibal Hamlin was one of the opposing lawyers. The transportation and land boom on Mt. Desert broke, and the railroad quietly stopped running in 1893. Traces of the line are still visible at some points on the island.⁴⁴

The little *Wauwannet* was scuttled in Nick's Cove of Eagle Lake that same year, minus boiler and fittings. Until very recently, she could still be seen lying on the bottom of the cove.

In the 1840's, the Brewer Icehouse functioned on the north shore of Eagle Lake, in a section which is fairly open and gives a view of Bubbles Pond. The southern end is somewhat boggy and is a favorite spot for blue heron.

North of Eagle Lake, going from west to east, are ALLAMOOSIC (Allamoosook), BRANCH, and TUNK LAKES.

The word *Allamoosic* has been variously interpreted as "to step," "country of little dogs," "good for nothing," and "at the fish spawning place." Gov. William Neptune, in 1922, called the lake "adlemetit," confirming the meaning of "spawning ground." Pre-historic Red Paint people lived at its outlet where there is currently excavation for artifacts. The lake contains bass, shad, and alewives.

Branch Lake was allotted the first brown trout in Maine, a Scottish-bred fish deposited there in May, 1885.

At Tunk Lake, in Sullivan, an early immigrant started a replica of an old-time castle which was later inherited by two spinster daughters who, according to local folklore, used the house, upon completion, to provide living quarters for a multitude of cats.

The word *Tunk* is Abenaki for "principal or large swift stream," but Philip Rutherford gives the origin in the following folktale.⁴⁵

Guests at a dinner of beef stew with soft dumplings, called "doeboys" or "doughboys," asked what became of the leftover ones. The host supposedly, in fun, hurled one at a guest, exclaiming playfully, "This." Thereupon all present joined in the activity. The sound of the dumplings which missed their human targets and hit the walls, was "tunk," so everyone shouted "Tunk him" when a victim was selected. The locale of this "battle" was ever after known locally as Tunk, and in time the name spread to various local landmarks.

Admiral Richard E. Byrd once owned a camp within Black's Woods on rocky Tunk Lake.

West of these three lakes lie, in proximity, GREEN, PHILLIPS (LUCERNE), and FLOOD'S POND.

Green Lake was once known as Reed's Pond, named in 1775 for a hunter, William Reed, who disappeared in a mysterious fashion.

Phillips Lake, called Lake Lucerne, was settled by Nathan Phillips, about 1810. Nearby Bald Mountain has been described as holding the lake "like a bowl of blueberries in its outstretched arms."

The location attracted colonies of musicians, dancers, and writers. An art colony was developed by a Mr. Saddlemeier (or Saddlemeire), who named the lake "Lucerne." A group of teachers spent

time by the lake while studying variances of Maine dialect in the adjoining towns. Its peak of popularity was in the 1920's when Lucerne Lodge, largest log lodge in the world, catered to the public. The lodge has since burned; but an inn, built in 1812, once the half-way house for the stage from Bangor to Ellsworth, has been remodeled and is known as Pinewood Club. Bass, salmon, and trout are available in Phillips Lake.

Mention is made of Flood's Pond in this region because it is nationally known for its Sunapee trout, a rare breed which has undisputed purity and is found only in Flood's Pond in all of North America.

Northeast of this group of lakes is NICATOUS, whose name means "the little fork," a misnomer according to Miss Eckstorm, who maintains that the name really applies to the Fork of Passadumkeag Stream where the main stream and Nicatous Branch of the Passadumkeag unite. An older and possibly more rightful name was Kiasobeak, a term meaning "clear water lake."⁴⁶

Northeast from Hancock County lies Washington County, the most easterly section of the State of Maine as well as of the United States. The county contains numerous popular lakes.

WEST GRAND LAKE was once called Ktchenusangnagum. The name Witteguergaugum, or "mill lake," has also been used; but this name has been disputed on the grounds that although settlers came around 1820, no mill existed at the place until 1871, long after the name Witteguergaugum had reputedly been used. Two other names have been acceptable possibilities, Genesegenagun and Genesagarumsis, meaning "picture lake," "fishing," or, from Abenaki, "clay as white as bleached bones."

The lake was popular Indian territory. According to Minnie Atkins, the Passamaquoddies, when busy during the spring days, making maple sugar, would camp at the foot of Grand Lake at night and spear fish by torchlight.

Folklore of this tribe includes the story of the Kewagh. One fine afternoon, horrible shrieks were heard in the distance and seemed to be coming nearer. The elders shouted, "It is Kewagh!" The Kewagh were supposedly wanderers of the forest, gigantic in stature. Small pieces of ice were attached to their hearts, and the

strength of each wanderer depended upon how many pieces he bore. If captured by a Kewagh, the victim might become one.

By sundown, the forest wanderers were judged to be less than a mile away. Children, women, and elders were put into canoes. The braves stood ready to fight, and at least fifty dogs bayed until midnight. The following morning, when the tribesmen went to the nearby swamp, they found only human foot tracks.

Another fabled group were the Atwaskenkes, creatures with two wings, two legs, and no body, who wandered with stone hatchets with which they could fell a tree with one blow. A third group of wanderers were the Mikemwess, quite often visible to the Passamaquoddies in spite of the minute size of the creatures.

Yet another tribal legend concerns two Indian children whose parents were religious converts. The youngsters were denied the right to paddle West Grand Lake on Sundays, since that was a holy day. Being children, they paddled anyway. The result was condemnation by the Great Spirit who punished them by changing them into swans (K'chi-wump-toqueh) and inflicting the curse that their spirits must paddle the lake each night, forever. Some lumbermen claim to have seen the two white figures in a white canoe, paddling around and around an island near a cove.

A supposedly true story is that a pioneer, Gabriel Tomah, became lost near nightfall, took shelter at an Indian camp, and upon awakening the next morning discovered that his mischievous hosts had cut all buttons from his clothing and were wearing them in their necklaces.

Many Indians were living at West Grand Lake in 1793, and several as late as 1812. The Passamaquoddy tribe, Sabbayk, would paddle in one long line of canoes, one family to each boat. They engaged in frequent battles with neighboring tribes as witnessed by the innumerable Indian graves on the east shore of West Grand Lake. In 1866, one battle raged so fiercely that a brook trickling into the lake ran red and has ever since been called Blood Brook.

When the fighting ceased because of darkness, the Passamaquoddies fled to Big Lake, connected to Grand by Grand Lake Stream, near the town of Princeton. From there, they went by canoes to Peter Dana's Point, Matta-miquot, their other settlement. Although

their enemies had no canoes, the Passamaquoddies kept watch. By late afternoon, what seemed to be a large cloud of dust (later established to be windblown dead leaves) appeared on the west side of Grand Lake. Once more the Passamaquoddies jumped into their canoes and paddled to a more remote recess on Grand Lake, a lake which can provide many hideaways.

Peter Dana governed this branch of the tribe around 1845. He was powerful and wise, and his people respected and loved him.

Another of the chiefs at Grand Lake was Chief Lewey, a tall, sober, rugged man extremely proud of his Indian heritage.

Chief Joe Pierpole was a guide on Grand Lake for many years. It was he who once expressed the wish to a group of government officials that Big Lake might be rum instead of water.

The officials asked, "Then what?"

"Have St. Croix River all rum," Joe replied.

"And then what?" queried the officials.

Joe thought this over, and then with a sweet smile concluded the conversation with the comment, "Have more rum."

Historian Atkins has told that the last battle against the Mohawks, as told by Chief Nicholas, was one of supreme strategy. A few fighters were placed in advance of the main group to lure the Mohawks. The rest drew back to a narrow part of Grand Lake and arranged to fight there.

The medicine man was dressed in a bearskin and told the others to shoot at him as he ran toward the enemy. If he turned and came back, they would be defeated. If he continued toward the foe, they should follow, and would be victorious. He ran forward; so did the tribe's warriors. He continued to run; so did they. Victory was theirs. Was he medicine man or psychologist?

Access by canoe to this Great chain of waterways in Washington County is from the Selin Maine Wilderness Basin, on Pleasant Lake in Carroll. The basin is operated by Carl W. Selin, a U.S. Coast Guard captain.

A hatchery at Grand Lake, opened in 1868 as a joint cooperative effort of Maine and Massachusetts Commissions of Fisheries, was taken over in 1872 by the U.S. Commission. Landlocked salmon and togue have weighed in at up to 32 pounds. One net haul of white perch is reported to have been 700 fish.

In 1905 the water level of twelve-mile-long Grand Lake was raised seven feet by the St. Croix Paper Company, destroying a few islands and some of the sandy shores. The lake is now over 200 feet deep in places, and varies from four to ten miles wide. Three islands still remain: Bean, Marks, and Harwood. Dri-ki, which only time can eliminate, rises phantom-like in the lake. Rocks stretch up in jagged peaks. Immense ledges and huge boulders dominate the shores. One large formation, Caribou Rock, rears more than 100 yards up from the west shore of the lake. It may be a drift boulder from the north, produced by glacial elements, or it may have slid from a nearby hill long before the advent of the Indian.

Indian Hill, on the eastern slope of the lake, was a favorite look-out station for the tribes and was one of their popular campsites.

A narrows at the head of West Grand Lake connects it with POCUMCUS LAKE, the name meaning "little gravelly place," in reference to a short sandy thoroughfare between the lake and Lower Sysladobsis Lake. This short carry was known as Malecuniganess, or "lazy carry," as it was so brief a walk that often canoes were carried right side up, partly loaded. Hunters still refer to the whole Pocumcus Lake region as "The Thoroughfare."

Pocumcus has an area of 2,201 acres, a maximum depth of 44 feet, and water temperatures ideal for salmon and warm-water fish. A July 1969 study showed the water temperature on the surface to be 70 degrees; and at 40 feet below it was 64 degrees.

Bark camps were erected on several lakes in the region as well as far back in the interior of the forests. The bark was stacked in cord and half-cord piles to be transported to tanneries. The little tugboat *Fannie Bates* could tow four barges at once, two on each side, for the 25 miles to the foot of Grand Lake, where scows were then used through the lock.

The peak of demand for bark was reached in 1881 and centered around SECOND CHAIN LAKE, where 50 pairs of horses were kept to haul the bark and logs. Between 200 and 300 men were employed through the summer to peel bark from hemlock logs which were later floated downstream.

At SYSLADOBSIS, also known as DOBSIS, or SIGAYO-OPSCUS LAKE, names which mean "shark-shaped rock" and "split

rock," only eight miles from Second Chain Lake, was another bark camp where eight pairs of horses were simultaneously used with those of Second Chain; and four miles farther down stream a third camp was using 20 pairs. At times, SCRAGGLEY LAKE would have on hand 600 cords of bark readied for hauling.

Contributing their lake waters to West Grand Lake are UPPER SYSLADOBSIS, JUNIOR, PLEASANT, SHAW, HORSESHOE, BOTTLE, KEG, NORWAY, PUG (2), DUCK, MILL PRIVILEGE, LOMBARD, LOWELL, PICKEREL, TROUT, 1st OX BROOK, 2nd OX BROOK, FIRST and THIRD CHAIN, plus some minor streams; an impressive list, indeed.

POCOMOONSHINE LAKE, just below but separate from the Washington County Grand Lake complex, has been in controversy as to its Indian name. Two historians give its original name as Menikpadik, one giving its meaning as "shiner lake" and the other as "place to get cedar bark." Penobscot Indian Peter W. Ranco, a well-informed individual, claims that the name was first used to identify the outlet where, because of flowage from a dam, there was a large amount of dri-ki, and that the lake was called Pokwajanak-i-tagook, or Stumpy Brook.⁴⁷ Rutherford says it is possibly an Abenaki-English blend meaning "pond as clear as moonshine." Fannie Eckstorm humorously suggests that the term could imply that there was little ("poco") liquor ("moonshine") available.

SCHOODIC LAKE, defined as "where fish live all the year," is in the Narraguagus River drainage in Washington County. It is a "kettlehole" pond formed by glacial action, and was first known as Eskootuk, or "trout place," Lake. A salmon research project was begun at Schoodic Lake by stocking it with salmon in October 1960 to find out if the fish would survive the winter. They did, and in 1962 the experiment was termed successful; but the fish were small because the lake had no smelts upon which salmon feed. Smelts were accordingly added to the lake, and the 1969 lake survey by the Maine Inland Fisheries and Game Department reported salmon as the principal fish of Schoodic Lake.

NORTH LAKE, in the Schoodic Chain, was once called Omquememkeag, Abenaki for "lake of unripe cranberries."

Northeast of Schoodic lie HADLEY, GARDNER, ROCKY,

and EDMUNDS. Hadley was known as Sobagwagum and as Subecwangamook, meaning "lake near the salt water." Gardner is the locale of the Club Atlantis. Edmunds was presumably named for Colonel Edmund Crane, whom the Indians affectionately called "Kenalclin," a very early settler who had a mill in the vicinity.

Above this group of lakes is LOVE LAKE, near Wesley, famed for its water lilies which create scenes reminiscent of those done by the French painter Monet. Several small waterfalls enhance the streams which empty into the lake. A fine sandy beach, picnic tables, and fireplaces are for the convenience of tourists.

Nearby is CATHANCE LAKE, called both Posses-caugum (on Francis Joseph Neptune's map of 1789) and Posseps-caugamock, meaning "principal fork."

PEMMAQUAN LAKE, or Pennaquan, lies beside a rock maple ridge where the Indians used to get maple sap and make sugar. Its meanings are "sloping ridge of maples," "area covered by trees," and "sap" (or "sweet"). The amount of maple sugar made and eaten by the Indians is not known, but Joseph Chadwick, a surveyor, wrote in his "Journal" in 1764, "(we) hear the Indians make Maple Sugar nere Eguel to single Refined . . . in Sundre Weigwoms they have 3 or 400 wat which thay say is only a Stock for one year in there famelys."

In the same vicinity is BOYDEN LAKE, in Perry. It is the farthest east of any other Maine lake and was named for the family of Delphia Boyden, early settlers in the region. A legendary encounter took place at Boyden Lake between the magician, Old John Neptune, in the form of an eel, and a chief of the Micmacs, in the form of a dreaded Wilwilimecq, or water-monster. Neptune killed the monster, and since then the lake has been roily and has acquired the Indian name of Nesayik, "muddy lake."

In April, 1971, Boyden Lake was granted \$19,000 for a permanent fishway at the Eastport Water Company dam, to allow for the passage of alewives and other migratory fish.

North of Boyden Lake is HOWARD LAKE, named for Captain William Howard, an early settler in the area. The lake and vicinity were termed Howard's Gore some 100 years ago because the entire tract of land at that time was the property of Timothy Howard.

The lake is three miles long, has a maximum depth of 70 feet, contains seven islands, and covers 500 acres. Smallmouth bass, yellow and white perch, pickerel, and bullheads are in its waters. Howard Lake is three miles from the paved highway, its entrance being opposite the Moosehorn National Wild Life Refuge, established in January 1937, and now totaling 22,666 acres within the best American woodcock breeding conditions in North America.

The cottages around the lake were at one time, and still may be, owned by the members of one clan, the Clarks. The Outlet, Clark's Brook, runs through Moosehorn Refuge and empties into the St. Croix River.

Thirty-odd families once made their homes on Howard Lake. Their village had a school and church, and the inhabitants were a happy lot until black diphtheria broke out within the town. Many graves were filled within a week's time; and the few people who were spared, packed their belongings and left Howard Lake village. They never returned.

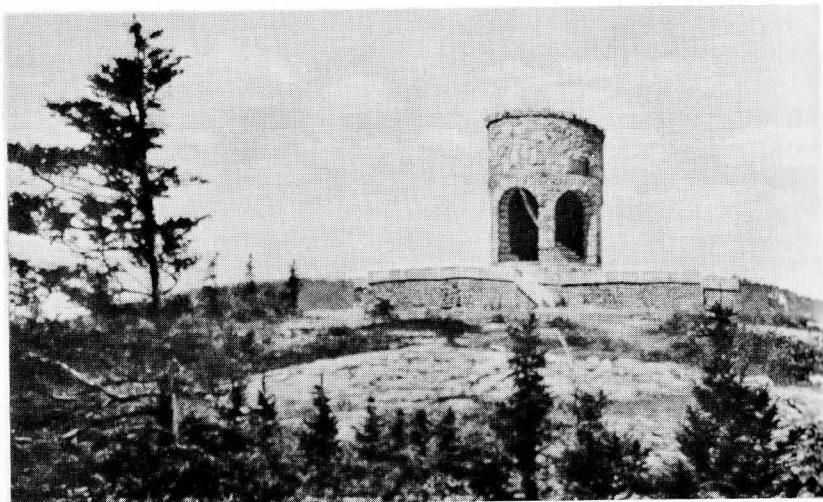
Above Howard Lake is MEDDYBEMPS LAKE meaning "horned pout" according to one source and "plenty of alewives" according to another. It does supply quite bountifully the sardine (alewife) factory at Lubec.⁴⁹

Not far distant is GOULDING LAKE, at Robbinston. This 21-acre lake is one of six chosen in 1971 for a five-year research program on trout stocking.

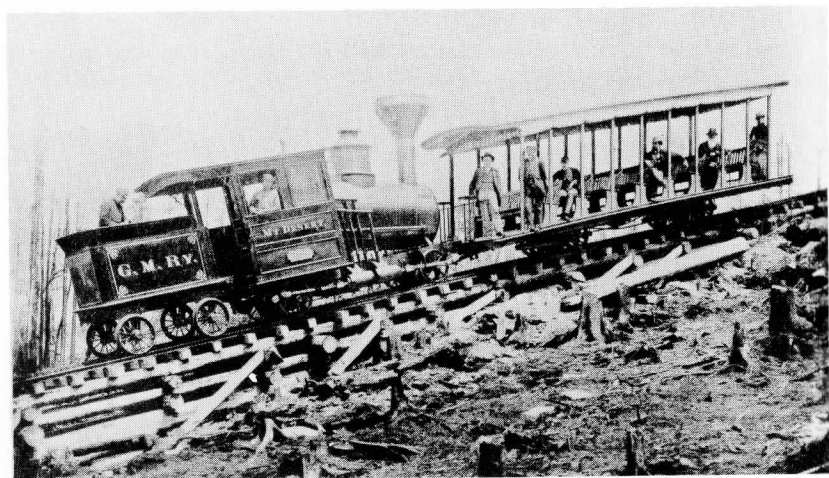
West of this group are the MACHIAS CHAIN LAKES. According to Rutherford, the word *Machias* is Abenaki for "bad little falls." History names a LAKE KEBUMKEWIS on East Machias River, sometimes listed as "Sandy Lake," but its exact location has not been authenticated. There is a possibility that it was an early name for FIRST MACHIAS LAKE.

SECOND MACHIAS LAKE was once called Numchenugmawis, an Indian word for "lake one-sided," or one having both its inlet and its outlet on the same side. THIRD MACHIAS was Egol-bayik, or "long narrow lake"; FOURTH MACHIAS was K'tolbewik, "big turtle lake"; FIFTH MACHIAS was Baakosk, or Bayekosk, which means "end of the lakes."

North of the Machias Chain is MOPANG which Governor William Neptune of Point Pleasant called Apskikek, "Lonely



Memorial Tower, Mt. Battie, Camden.



*Cog Railway to Green (Cadillac) Mt. Summit
from Eagle Lake. Dismantled in 1893.*



Log Cabin Lodge, Lucerne-in-Maine, largest in the world.



Entrance sign — Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge.

Lake," possibly because it is quite remote from other lakes in Washington County.

Far to the eastern shore, behind the town of Robbinston, are the two MAGURREWOCK LAKES, or Magalwoks, meaning "at the place of the shoveler." The wind draws through a valley and makes the snow drift as if it had been purposely shoveled there; thus the sometimes use of the word *Magulwok*, a composite of the Indian words for *shovel* and *snow*. A "megaleep" or "shoveler" was a term used for the local caribou who, with their broad forefeet, pawed the snow off reindeer moss for food.

Near the center of Washington County is CRAWFORD LAKE, once called Pokey, Abenaki for "clear, shallow, open." It was a camping ground for Indians who named it Gayway-sik, meaning "large body of water," and has been listed also as Nemdamas-suagum, meaning "sucker lake." Old Joe Benwit, a self-proclaimed magician, made his home on its shores.

Extending to the center of the town of Crawford, the lake covers 1,677 acres and its maximum depth is 27 feet. Headwaters of the East Machias River flow from Lakes Mud, Pocomoonshine, and Crawford into East Machias and Jacksonville; from there, into the Atlantic Ocean. This three-and-a-half-mile lake is a paradise for fishermen from the moment that the ice leaves. Smallmouth bass, white perch, yellow perch, chain pickerel, bullheads, eels, and smelts are plentiful. Stores and various forms of amusement are within a few minutes' drive from the lake, and a State picnic area exists by an old landing on the shore.

Above Crawford Lake are LAKES EAST MUSQUASH, meaning "reddish-brown animal," presumably the muskrat; HOUND BROOK, in reference to the abundant number of dogs running there; BASKAHEGAN, or "branch stream that turns downcurrent"; HOT BROOK, which rarely freezes; CROOKED BROOK; and LAMBERT, named for Sheribiah and Robert Lambert from New Hampshire, who settled in the area in 1754. Lake Lambert is one of the most popular fishing spots in the State.

North of these, in Washington County, lies Maine's final lake group, the CHIPNETICOOK LAKES system on the border of New Brunswick, Canada. Their name implies "at the place of the big hill stream."

Of this group, the most southerly is SPEDNIK, a name translated as "visible but shut in by mountains." The largest of the chain is GRAND LAKE, 12 miles long and four to ten miles wide, with a 200-foot depth in places. Care should be taken not to confuse this Grand Lake with West Grand Lake, to its south, near Princeton. Vanceboro, the most extreme northeast town in the most extreme northeast county of Maine, is the gateway to the Chipneticook Lakes Region.

Thus concludes a compilation of some of the facts and legends about the foremost lakes in Maine. Much has been told, but there is much more to tell. Much is known, but there is much more to know. Much has been written, but there is much more to write.

In background, benefits, and beauty — are not the lakes of Maine a precious heritage?