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Indian Trails of Maine 1920

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INDIAN TRAILS of MAINE
Oct. 29, 1920,
Nineteenth Century Club, Bangor.

"trail" a misnomer. A trail is something dragged behind, and from this the track made by anything dragged behind. In the west the lodge-poles made trails; hence appropriate. In the east word used only for "game-trails". In Massachusetts the word "path", as The Bay Path was used. In Maine there were, except locally, no paths that left any mark. In winter snow-shoe tracks might make a path, but they were not enduring.

In Maine the term used has always been "routes" (tho' Joseph Chadwick, 1754, used "passage"). The land sections were called ^{canoe} ~~Reasoner's~~ Maine was a country full of water-ways. Impossible in such a country to get along by land without great difficulties. Canoe easier and would carry a load besides all food and implements needed.

It does not matter that these routes are no longer important; they still exist, as paths would not, for anyone who travelled in certain directions would naturally go by them and anyone acquainted with the woods can tell where they were.

We may classify them as the major and the minor routes. The major routes, in general, afforded passage from one river system to another. The minor routes were local cut-offs, chiefly along the seashore, to avoid stormy waters, or inland to avoid difficulties of navigation.

Mistake to think of the Indian as staying long in one place. He was a rover, travelling almost constantly and often for great distances. He thought nothing of going to Quebec, Montreal, or Boston. Tell of Chief Loron and his going in one summer from Penobscot to Boston, back to Penobscot, to Quebec, back home and to Boston again, all by canoe, about 1750

An Indian skilled on routes could travel much beyond the borders of New England. The Mohawks used to come on war raids from the interior of New York state, down the St. Lawrence and through the Maine woods, down all the rivers even to this section. They had to have with them men intimately acquainted with all our lakes, rivers and streams. Therefore they had to teach and train their young men in the geography of the Main woods.

We must forget the political boundaries of our maps. To the Indian there was no Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine or Province of Quebec; it was all one wilderness traversed by rivers. He must know equally well how to get into Massachusetts by the "Mohawk Trail" to Deerfield; by the White river route from Champlain to the Connecticut; by the route to the Merrimack and so across (here a land route) to Great Bay; or farther up to Winnepesaukee and thence to Ossipee Pond and down the Saco in to Maine-- this if he were coming from New York State

But the most important routes, because the longest, were those from Quebec. What made Quebec of such vital significance to the French? Not its citadel. Not its defensibility by cannon. But because it commanded the Indian routes into Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, also to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The whole country from Lake Champlain to the sea by Prince Edward Island was controlled in its inland ways by this one city. Hence its major importance to French and English

To describe
all 2. of Hudson & S. of H. Lawrence
will be in
map.
Connecticut &
Pennsylvania &
to great
systems - the
trunk routes
Rivers - Lakes
railroads -

The Major Routes of Maine from west to east were:

The Saco River, first turn off at Ossipee to Winnepesaukee
second turn off far up the valley into New Hampshire,
probably to the Connecticut

The Androscoggin River, to Rangeley Lakes and then across
to Megantic and the Chaudiere

The Kennebec River, first, by way of the Carrying Place

1. Ponds and Dead River to Chain Lakes and Megantic
and the Chaudiere
2. second to Moosehead Lake and so to St. John and upper
Penobscot
3. third, by the Sebasticook to Penobscot, the so-called
"Short Route"

Why Fort Halifax where it is? 1754 was made.

The Penobscot with most routes of all

1. To George's river a minor route
From Belfast to Camden inland a minor route
1. Up Penobscot to Sebasticook and Kennebec a major
route.
2. Up Piscataquis to Shirley and so to Moosehead This was
the Beskatequis-ahwangan.
Explain ahwangan
3. Up Piscataquis by branch called Pleasant River,
about on route of K.T.I. works R.R. to the Gulf and
so to Wilson Pond and Beaver Cove on Moosehead.
4. Up Penobscot to Niatow, up West Branch to Pemedumcook
Nahmakanta and so by Pollywog and Penobscot Pond to
Roach River Ponds and by Roach River to Spencer Bay on
Moosehead. This was known as Kakadjo-weengwasebemsis
ahwangan. Explain why.
5. Up West Branch to Canada line and across to Portage
Lake and the Chaudiere to Quebec. This the major
route par excellence.
6. Ditto to Chesuncook and up Caucomgomoc Lake, across
Baker Lake Carry to upper St. John waters
7. Ditto to Chesuncook to Umbazooksus Lake and by Mud
Pond Carry to Chamberlain and the Allegash to mid-St
John waters.
8. Ditto to Chamberlain and down to Churchill, across
to Munsungan waters and Aroostook River into St. John
Ditto to Chamberlain and so into Webster Lake and
down East Branch Penobscot
9. Up Mattawankeag River and across to St. Croix
10. Up Passadumkeag and so
 - a. first by Main Stream to Upper Dobsy to St. Croix
 - b. second by Niatowis Branch to Niatowis
by Gassobeens to Fourth Lake Machias
which gives access to St. Croix w
by carry to Lower Dobsy
and to East Branch Machias
by stream
by carry to the Sabaos and Middle
branch Machias

by Carry to Brandy Pond
and Great P. to Union R., W.Br.

by Carry to Campbell and Hores-
shoe into Machias waters
by Carry to Eagle Lake and the
Narraguagus

Do we know what were these major routes?
Yes, conclusively. The first map ever made of the Penobscot R., that of Joseph Chaudwick, who explored the country with Indian guides in 1764 and left both a map and a journal of his trip, indicates all the principal routes from Quebec southward.

This is the text explanatory.

"The letters in the annexed plan are taken from G to H and to X are taken from Indians draught.

The westerly branch of Chaudiere River from G up stream to the Amegeunk [Megantic] Lake at H and from thence to the head of the Connecticut river and ----- is the Indians passage to Connecticut.

At Quebec some of the gentlemen being desirous of forwarding so good a design of opening a road to New England-- they began an inquiry of their hunters and Indians-Traders, who all advised that the above passage is the highest and most practicable part of the country for opening a road from Quebec to New England, etc.

On the southerly branch of Chaudier River from G to a line of ponds I,K,L,M, is their passage to Norridgwock and from M to N to Kennebec River.

R, River St. John's said to be the straightest and most navigable route to the sea.

U, a lake being the head of the Passamaquoddy River [He is wrong. It is Webster Lake, head of East Branch of the Penobscot]

T, Lake Pomagonegamock and four ponds. [That is, the route from Allegash to Aroostook river, via Munsungan

Letter S. is a passage from Gesoncook to St. John's [That is, the Allegash route, via Mud Pond Carry]

V, Machias River

W, Narraguagus River

X, Apeumock River or Mount Desert River, called Union River [Note he gives this name as early as 1788, perhaps in 1764]

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Thus by water one could go anywhere in the state with comparatively short carries, or from Penobscot Bay to Quebec, with falls excepted, (a great exception!) only one carry of a few miles

Were there then no land trails?

There must have been some-- for unburdened men, often in haste, or for the between-seasons.

These, in general, would have been cut-offs or paths along the horsebacks to take them across the vast bogs.

The Whale's Back in Aurora sure to have been an Indian Path; the horseback in Alton sure to have been one, a short route to the Piscataquis. The road to Miló via Oldtown runs along a horseback sure to have been such a path.

Dry, walking, comparatively straight routes, sure guidance on the road and a comparatively certain N.W. and S.E. direction made these important.

But they were nothing compared to the water routes, which would always carry a load

In winter of course an Indian could go anywhere and needed no path as water would be no impediment except on the falls where rivers kept open.

The Minor Routes.

These were cut-offs and conveniences.

The man making a journey by canoe cannot face too bad weather, especially on the sea-coast. He wants a safe route.

Consequently all along the coast there were cut-offs to save exposure to the sea. *Also for food by the way.*

Think what a boon to the Indian was our barrier of islands everywhere with inside passages.

a. At Remequia Point, open for miles to the sea and the coast entirely impossible for canoes, they had a cut-off from Damariscotta River to New Harbor, another to Round Pond and no doubt still another higher up to Broad Sound.

b. They had an inside route from Camden to Belfast.

~~explain "great waves of the sea."~~

c. On the other side the bay they had an inland route most of the way from town of Penobscot to Lubec My father has been by canoe that route and described it.

Suppose an Indian wished to get most easily in bad weather from Buckspot to Blue Hill.

Down east river-- no great tide there.

Exposed Doshen shore to Castine neck.

Then Eti-da-was-ke-kay-sick ("grassy down there")
Or Edali-si-bachlemuk ("where they waited for the tide")

They carried across into Hatch's Cove on the Bigardue. If they did not wish to go to Castine's fort and did wish to avoid Cape Rosier they went between Holbrook's and Nautilus island and up to Goose Falls, so across to Weir Cove. This was Edali-chichiquaysic, the Narrows. It saved them the rough winds and tides of dangerous Cape Rosier, dreaded of canoe-men

or they went up Lawrence Bay and across into Horse-shoe Cove or Orcutt Harbor

If they wished to go still farther down the coast to Eggemoggin Reach, they went from Castine Neck by the Minnewoken (woken being a form of ahwangan, route)--up the Bagaduce River to Walker's Pond, up the pond and by a very short carry into the Punch Bowl above Sedgwick.

A very short stretch brought them to Benjamin River between Sedgwick and Brooklyn and they crossed by that to Bluehill Falls, entirely protected from the sea and wind all the way from Bucksport except for the Doshen shoals. Rest of route need not be traced.

On the west side of the river they had several protections. Fort Point they avoided by the Ounegarnook or Oonegarnuk into Stockton Springs; then behind Brigadier's Island into Belfast Bay, then by Passagassawaukeag to Canaan Lake (Megunticook Lake) and Camden Harbor. Explain "great waves of the sea" Remember on cruises they had to hunt and fish for a living and it was important not only to avoid the sea and wind but also to get something to eat.

One of the important minor routes was the one avoiding Ripogenus Carry, three miles and all the rough water of the West Branch above Katahdin.

It was called Odool-waganow-seezicook-ahwangan - the Entails Ponds route. Up Sowadnehunk Stream through such little ponds as Kidney, Dacey, Leaver, Grassy, Slaughter into Harrington Lake (flowing into Ripogenus Lake) or via Mud Pond on Guxabaxis into Chesuncook. In times of high water this was much used. Used in very old times, says Lewey Ketchum.

An interesting route was the one from Menduskeag to the same again. Bangr west side an island. Up Kenduskeag Stream to Chibahtigook (from Chebahtock, across) into the Sowadabscook and up river to Menduskeag again.

Also called 9 dani maramauk (orig name map, with my) Skelton & Hemenway 16th Dec

The name Ounegan, a carry common in this state. Take Ounegarnuk at Ft. Point. (*or Oonegarnook*)

Winnegarnook (hotel) at North West Carry

----- mills at Oldtown (Nekonegan?)

Mahdahwanagamook at Oldtown, "foot of the carry" (applied to French Island. Also Skene Aylant)

Winneganse, at Bath, equals "little carry"

Debsconeag, equals Katepskonegan, "rocky carry"

Ouniganisisikuk, Stillwater river, equals, "little carry place"

*Merricomeag -
Schwedeagan*

Maha-ounegarnook