Maine History

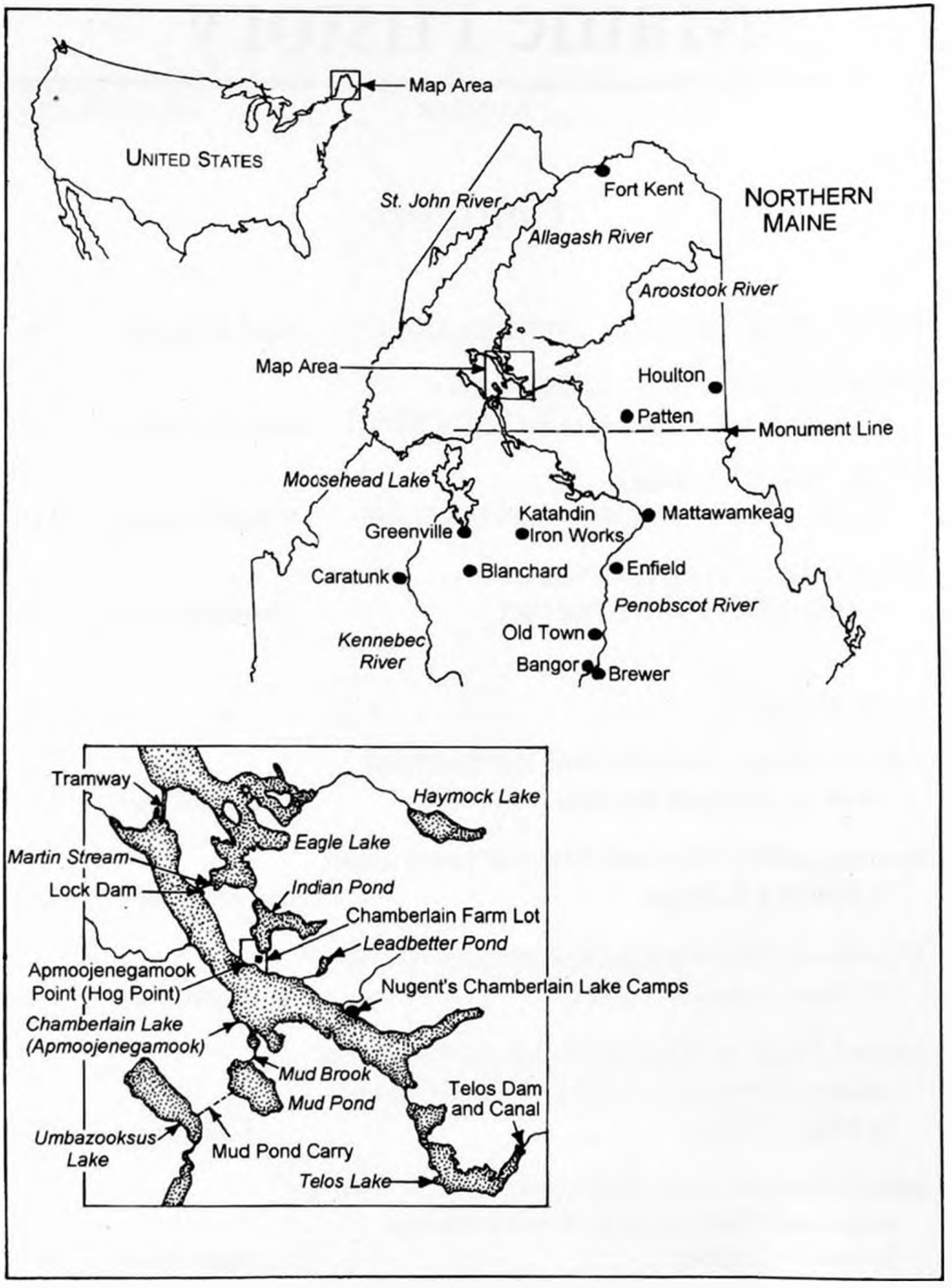
Volume 41
Number 2 *Maine Monuments and Memorials*

Article 2

7-1-2002

E. S. Coe and the Allagash Wildlands

Dean B. Bennett
University of Maine Farmington



Map by Dean B. Bennett

E. S. COE AND THE ALLAGASH WILDLANDS

By Dean B. Bennett

For more than half a century, land agent and timber-land owner Eben Smith Coe oversaw the operations of Chamberlain Farm, a large logging depot built in 1846 on the shore of Chamberlain Lake in Maine's famed Allagash region. From its founding to the present, the land on which he built the farm has undergone a succession of changes that provides insight into the meaning of wildness in American culture. Now protected as part of the Allagash wilderness waterway, Chamberlain Farm has come a full circle, and is now a fair semblance of the wilderness early native and Euroamerican visitors might have encountered in this remote but historically rich land. The following account of the early history of the farm and the logging activity it supported is adapted from THE WILDERNESS FROM CHAMBERLAIN FARM: A STORY OF HOPE FOR THE AMERICAN WILD, published by Island Press in 2001. Dean B. Bennett is professor emeritus at the University of Maine at Farmington; he has also published ALLAGASH: MAINE'S WILD AND SCENIC RIVER; THE FORGOTTEN NATURE OF NEW ENGLAND: A SEARCH FOR THE ORIGINAL WILDERNESS; MAINE'S NATURAL HERITAGE: RARE SPECIES AND UNIQUE NATURAL FEATURES.

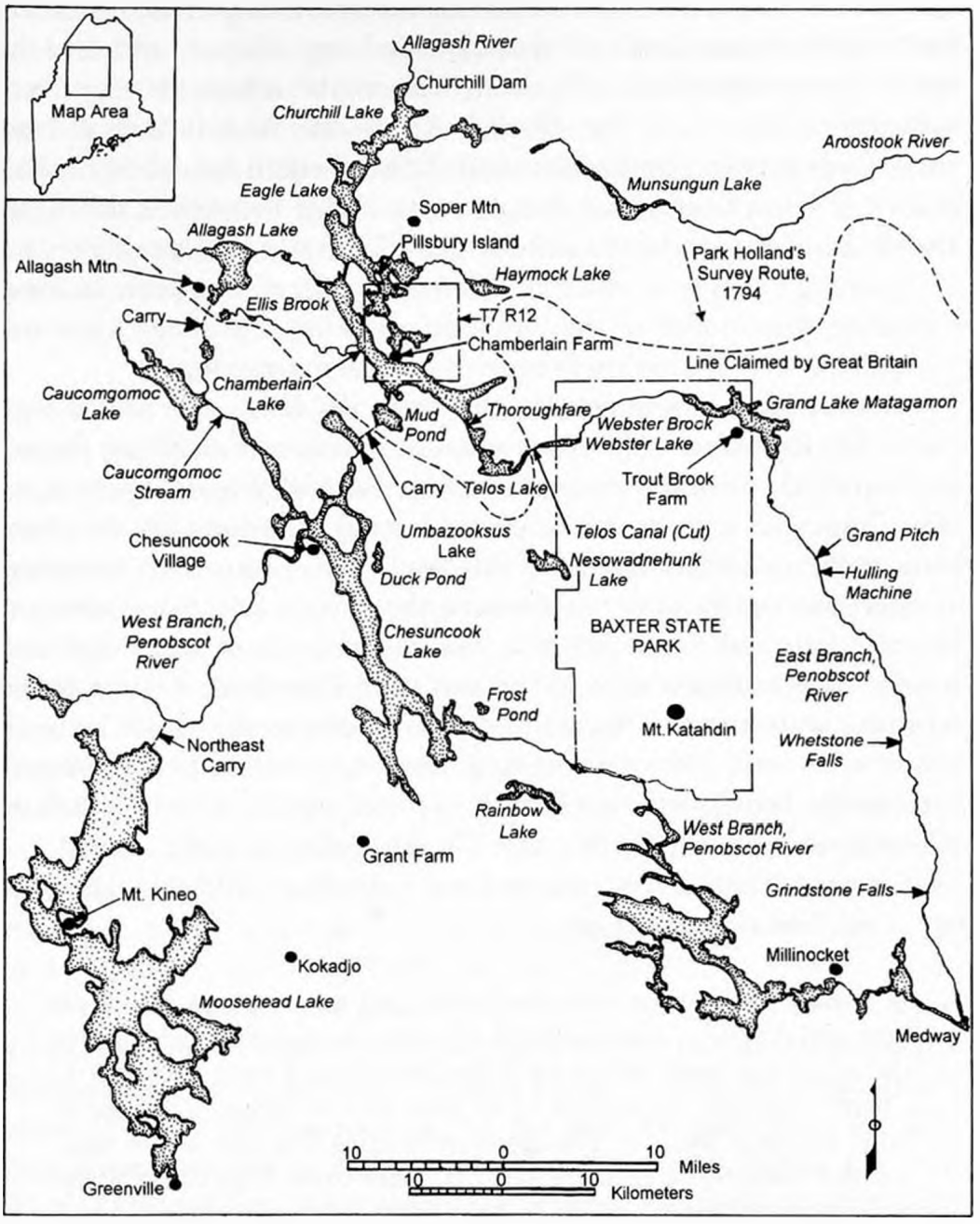
THE surveyors' first blaze marks had hardly begun to weather before the land around Chamberlain Lake, the largest of Maine's Allagash lakes, began to attract the attention of a small but powerful group of lumbermen and land speculators who would play a high-stakes game on the newly surveyed checkerboard of Maine's remote northern townships. In the early 1840s they began buying up these wilderness lands and thereby giving them new meaning: jobs, physical hardship, and small wages for some, and comfort and prosperity for others. As a group, these agents of change in the north woods were part of a new generation of entrepreneurs who were shifting the nation's capital resources from the transatlantic merchant trade to land-based enterprise. Some directed their fortunes to controlling natural resources and others to controlling people; both hoped to wield their investments so as

to increase their independence, their access to pleasure, their social status and prestige, or their social authority. They played this high-stakes game to hone their creative proficiency and to experience the thrill of triumphing over challenges. These, after all, were the standards of highest achievement in American culture at the time. Such were the motivations that influenced those entrepreneurs who cast an appraising eye on the land and water around Chamberlain Lake in the mid-1800s.

Until 1840 pine ranked as the principal species used in American commercial manufacture, and by then one-third of the original pine forest in Maine had been cut, although most of the state's northern forest remained in primeval condition. As significant as the timber resources itself, the Penobscot River provided a transportation route into to a huge portion of Maine's interior country, as well as a means of getting the logs out. As early as 1836 surveyors on the headwaters of the river reported signs that lumbermen were operating in the region. The Penobscot's valuable white pine attracted a growing number of loggers and developers in the years that followed.[1]

The Penobscot River flowed past Bangor, a deep-water port and mill town at the head of tide that in 1840 was on its way to becoming the lumber capital of the world. With lumber markets booming in the eastern seaboard cities, interest in Penobscot timberlands was rising rapidly; the state (along with Massachusetts, which held interest in Maine land until the 1850s) sold whole townships and large blocks of stumpage in the wildlands to speculators and loggers. Land agents were so successful in selling land that Maine assessed no taxes between 1836 and 1839. Interest in these lands was also evident in the rising concern about the unresolved boundary dispute between the British provinces and Maine and about the illegal timber operations this uncertainty encouraged along the Aroostook, Allagash, upper St. John, and Madawaska rivers. Clashes over land and timber led to the "bloodless" Aroostook War in 1839, but the two nations reached agreement on the boundary two years later in 1842 through the Webster-Asburton Treaty, and the region was freed of the international complications and any impediment to logging this imposed.[2]

In 1840, America's population—roughly 17 million people—was growing rapidly, and the need for lumber for housing, ships, vehicles, implements, and other products encouraged a growing number of technological advances in logging and lumbering, including crosscut saws, steam powered mills, and within a decade, rotary saws.[3] Tote roads and logging camps reached further into the north woods, and particularly



The Moosehead-Chamberlain lakes region. E.S. Coe's woods farm, built in 1846, was located on Chamberlain Lake, deep in the heart of the north Maine woods. The farm provided oats and hay for livestock, fresh vegetables for woods crews, and other essential services for logging operations in this isolated section of Maine. *Map by Dean B. Bennett.*

into the still-virgin forests in the headwaters area between the Penobscot East and West branches and the north-flowing Allagash and St. John rivers. The upper reaches of both the East and West branches interlaced with the headwaters of the Allagash River—the West Branch at Mud Pond Carry between Umbazooksus and Chamberlain Lakes and the East Branch at a short carry trail along a rocky ravine between Webster and Telos Lakes. For years both had been considered as possible canal routes. Maintaining a supply of water for driving logs was an economic factor of enormous importance in the lumberman's mind, but major river improvements were prohibitively expensive for any single logger.

To overcome this drawback, the state of Maine provided a legal means for loggers to collectively improve rivers by delegating control over a publicly navigable river to a private individual or company operating in the public interest.[4] Under such an arrangement, in 1839 lumberman Shepard Boody explored this headwaters region with a mission: to determine the feasibility of diverting the northward flowing waters of Chamberlain and Telos lake into the East Branch of the Penobscot. Boody thought that a dam at the outlet of Chamberlain Lake would raise the waters eleven feet, thereby overflowing the swale between Chamberlain and Telos and running the water southward into Webster Lake, on the Penobscot's East Branch. "From the point at sixty rods from Telos, there was a valley–a little run. No other place to make a cut."[5]

Two years later Boody returned and helped to build two dams. He later described the operation:

> In March 1841, Major Strickland employed me to go up and assist him, and show him where to build a dam at Chamberlin outlet, to turn the water this way; and to work for him there. I went up; went to Chamberlin lake. He sent for us to come back to Telos; concluded to build a dam at Telos. . . . The object in building this dam was to regulate the water—to keep the water that might come from Chamberlin. Strickland wanted the water to help drive logs from Webster pond, which they were cutting that year. . They built the Chamberlin and Telos dams. . . When Telos rose high enough, the water run over the height into Webster pond. The Stricklands got their logs out. . . . In the winter of 1842, Gen. Strickland put some men on to work below the Telos dam, removing obstructions, etc.[6]

With this simple expedient—completion of the Telos Canal, or Cut—the headwaters of the Allagash flowed southward, and for all practical purposes Chamberlain Lake was absorbed into the Penobscot watershed. Bangor lumbermen had achieved control over the waters, but to

someone standing on the shore of Chamberlain Lake at that time, nature's sacrifice would have been apparent in the flooded shores. Trees standing in the shallow waters would soon die and bleach in the sun, before toppling over and littering the shore with a barrier of broken and twisted trunks and limbs. Nevertheless, in the spring river drivers laboriously winched booms of logs across the lake to Chamberlain Thoroughfare and from there herded down the Penobscot East Branch to Old Town and Bangor.

In 1841, the year the dams were built, Salem shipping merchant David Pingree made the first of many purchases in Maine timberlands. Pingree has been portrayed as a merchant of high business integrity, a deep thinker with broad views, and a person of untiring industry. According to some accounts, his boyhood recollections of Maine spurred his interest in the state's land sales.[7] But for whatever reason, Pingree was already interested in Maine timberlands when in 1842 an event occurred that linked him to the state for the remainder of his life. Ebenezer Coe, a business acquaintance who owned land in Stetson, Maine, introduced Pingree to his twenty-eight-year-old son, Eben Smith Coe, or "E. S.," as he was called. E.S. was an engineer of uncommon skill and experience. Born into a well-to-do family in Northwood, New Hampshire, E.S. was advantaged by a private education, extensive financial support, wise counsel from his father, and useful social contacts. Although he was not fond of study and preferred outdoor work, his father sent him to a number of private schools and academies where he showed an early interest in business and an aptitude for mathematics and mechanical problems. He concluded his formal training with a civil engineering program at a school in Hartford, Connecticut. For the next few years, E.S. found irregular employment surveying railroad rights-of-way during the early phase of the industry. An economic depression and political opposition to railroad developments complicated his work, and Coe returned home to Northwood to rest and seek advice from his father, who arranged a meeting with Pingree. The meeting went well, and Pingree hired Coe as an agent to take charge of his speculations in Maine lands. Coe explored the Allagash wildlands around Chamberlain Lake, and after inspecting the pine timber on Township 7 Range 12 (T7 R12) and nearby townships, he returned with an enthusiastic report for Pingree. This was a turning point in both men's lives.

E. S. Coe had discovered his life's work in an environment he thor-

Early loggers used oxen to drag huge pine logs to a landing at the water's edge. In springtime, the logs were floated to the mills, perhaps hundreds of miles away. In the 1840s lumber operators altered this transportation system in northern Maine by constructing two dams – one at Telos Pond, and another at the outlet of Chamberlain Lake. This sent the Allagash waters southeastward through the Telos "cut" (lower illustration) into the Penobscot East Branch. *Top illustration from John Springer, FOREST LIFE AND FOREST TREES (1851); bottom illustration from Thomas Sedgwick Steele, CANOE AND CAMERA: A TWO HUNDRED MILE TOUR THROUGH THE MAINE FORESTS (1880).*

oughly enjoyed—the Maine woods. Here he found opportunities not only for financial success but also for personal achievement in a business arena well regarded by the country's developing elite. His work challenged his intellectual abilities, his engineering knowledge, and his skills. Young and vigorous, broad-chested, large-framed, and of medium height, he possessed the physical strength and health necessary for an active life that continued nearly sixty more years, a life that included untiring devotion to his work and frequent trips into the north woods to inspect and appraise the woodlands he owned and managed in Maine and New Hampshire.

Coe spent his time in the woods estimating stumpage and overseeing every aspect of the Pingree lumbering operations, including river drives, supplies, and dam construction and regulation. In addition, he lobbied the state legislature on behalf of the Coe-Pingree investments. He filled fully half his time in travel away from his home and office. A consummate businessman, Coe worked with careful attention to detail, methodically recording the particulars of his daily affairs in his office memorandums and demanding frequent and detailed reports from his employees. He carried on a voluminous correspondence, made copious notes about his business dealings, maintained detailed accounting records, and kept everything: in short, he was in control.

Coe had other qualities that contributed to his influence in business and politics: sound judgment, honesty, integrity, and self-confidence. Although he had few social contacts outside of business, he was described as courteous, pleasant, and witty; he listened carefully to others' opinions and was a sound judge of character. His sense of charity was evident in his endowment to Northwood Academy in his hometown.[8]

Coe threw himself into his work. His 1844 correspondence to Pingree showed that the merchant-speculator had obtained the services of an astute man capable of sound advice. On May 13 Coe noted that "the inhabitants of the town [Stetson] voted on Saturday at a public meeting to accept the new road . . . [and] I think we can reasonably expect a sale of quite a number of farming lots on that road this season as much of the land is very good and well situated." In a subsequent letter, Coe predicted that the Military Road and the Aroostook Road connecting the Aroostook Valley with Bangor would similarly affect the value of Pingree's land speculations. Coe suggested lotting the land and cutting the timber to forestall the threat of timber trespassing and the possibility of higher property taxes along the roads.[9]

On Coe's advice, Pingree began purchasing townships around

Chamberlain Lake. On July 16, 1844, land agents from Massachusetts and Maine sold T7 R12 to Francis Blackman for $8,436.13; less than a month later Blackman sold the township to Pingree for $8,000.00. By 1846 Pingree owned five townships around Chamberlain Lake and two on Eagle Lake, and had already begun issuing stumpage permits—this just in time for the completion of the Telos Canal.[10] As the new owner of the lands around the canal, Pingree drew up a letter addressed "to the several persons lumbering under permits from D. Pingree":

> This will be handed you by Mr. Coe who visits your region as the representative of Mr. Pingree, and who is fully authorised to act in his behalf in all matters connected with his interest under permits to you.
>
> Please make Mr. Coe acquainted with your doings under such permits as also all matters connected with Mr. Pingree's interest which have or may come under your observation—please render him any aid or assistance he may need & you shall be duly paid for same.[11]

Winter 1845-1846 saw extensive cutting on the Pingree lands. Felling the trees, however, was one thing, and getting them out was quite another. Telos Canal made it physically possible by controlling the waters for log driving, but controlling the opportunistic desire for some extra money by the canal owner, Rufus Dwinel, presented a serious obstacle. When the loggers attempted to drive their logs through the canal that spring, Dwinel forced them to pay what they considered an unfair toll. Pingree, who had built Chamberlain Dam as part of the system to supply driving water at Telos Canal, protested. Dwinel refused to budge, and to ensure that the logs would not go through until his toll was paid, he hired a menacing group of Bangor men armed with fearsome-looking knives. The loggers had no alternative but to pay, and their logs went through. The incident, known as the "bloodless Telos war," did not end there. Pingree and the other lumberman took their grievance to a hearing of the legislature's Committee on Interior Waters. The committee suggested a compromise toll, but Dwinel again refused. The legislature finally resolved the issue by passing two acts: One gave Dwinel a deadline to accept a reasonable toll; if he did not, the other act would open the canal to public use. Dwinel accepted.[12]

Like many other large landowners, Coe and Pingree faced the problem of transporting supplies to their lumbering operations. In 1846 they resolved this problem by building a large farm to provide hay, oats, and

Logging dams and canals left a lasting mark on the Maine landscape: flooded lake shores ringed with dead and bleached timber, or "dry-ki." In this illustration, river drivers standing on logs in a boom prepare to move the drive across a lake. *Steele, CANOE AND CAMERA.*

vegetables, to summer oxen and other stock, and to serve as a central depot for all kinds of equipment and goods. Similar farms had been built in the previous decade, the first, Trout Brook Farm, about twenty-five miles to the east, and the second, Grant Farm, about thirty miles south.[13] Both were large farms with farmhouses, storage barns, stables, blacksmith shops, tack rooms (for repairing harnesses), and miscellaneous out-buildings. Unlike Chamberlain Farm, they were on routes heavily trafficked by loggers and thus served as taverns as well. Grant Farm, an especially large farm, also housed a post office and an extensive telephone system connecting it to outlying logging operations.[14] Chamberlain Farm, however, expanded to include twice as much cleared land as Grant and Trout Brook farms combined—600 acres, to Grant Farm's 200 acres and Trout Brook Farm's 100 acres—despite the fact that Chamberlain Farm was more remote and more isolated. In summer, it could be reached only by water, and in winter only by temporary roads over ice and packed snow.

With Coe in charge, woodsmen began clearing fields behind a point

of land about midway up Chamberlain Lake on its northern shore. This location, according to one forest historian, "shows how far into the state the search for pine had been carried after the Telos gateway made greater areas accessible."[15] Why Coe chose this particular site is not documented, but certain topographical features are suggestive. The land rises gently behind the point, and the soil is well drained, being well above the water table and beneath a low ridge to the north, from which erosion over thousands of years built the soils to a suitable depth. This lay of the land was well suited to raising crops. The slope presents a south-facing aspect and the ridge protects it from the northwest winds; conditions tend to be drier and warmer than the surrounding lowlands, and the snow melts more quickly. Behind the ridge is another body of water, Indian Pond, to which the farm would eventually extend. The pond's frozen surface provided access by a winter road. On the Chamberlain side, the point of land creates a small cove protected from the prevailing westerly winds that sweep down the lake and build huge waves; this became the farm's anchorage. Additionally, the farm was located between the two dams—Chamberlain Dam five miles to the northwest and Telos Dam thirteen miles by water to the southeast—and provided a base of operation for those repairing and tending them. Incidental to these considerations, the site provides a beautiful view of the Katahdin mountain range.

The clearing eventually contained several large, shingled buildings constructed of eight-inch squared timbers. The first buildings, according to one visitor in 1857, were built of logs and included a dwelling place, a storehouse, and barns and other structures.[16] That visitor was Henry David Thoreau, who at the time of the farm's initial clearing was attempting an ascent of Katahdin. His influence would be felt in this place to an extent unimaginable to those living then, but for the remainder of the nineteenth century, E. S. Coe would be the most influential figure in the history of the Maine woods.

The year 1846 was significant for other reasons. By this time Coe owned several townships on Eagle and Churchill lakes at the headwaters of the Allagash. To move timber from these lakes into the Penobscot waters, he chartered two dams on the Allagash. The first was Heron Lake Dam (later called Churchill Dam), at the outlet of Churchill Lake. This dam raised the level of the upper Allagash lakes, backing the waters nearly to Chamberlain Dam, where a second dam served as a lock in which logs could be raised to the level of Chamberlain Lake and floated into it. By this time Coe had established an office and residence in Ban-

E.S. Coe found his life's work as an overseer for merchant David Pingree's million-acre Maine timberland holdings. In 1846 Coe created Chamberlain Farm as a way of overcoming the enormous logistical problems created by large lumbering operations in this isolated region. Coe directed the farm's operations for more than half a century. *Reprinted by permission of the Bangor Historical Society.*

gor, as the city's 1846 Directory indicates: "Coe E. S. agent for timber lands, office over 6 broad, b'ds Mrs. Susan Patten."[17] And during this year Coe married Mary Upham Barker.

Early the next year Pingree sold Coe a "common and undivided" one-twentieth share of T7 R12. This form of ownership, which still applies to a substantial area of northern and western Maine, provides each owner with a proportional share in the profits and losses from the undivided property. Pingree also sold an undivided share of T7 R12 to John Winn, and Pingree, Winn, and Coe separated out a 500-acre tract for Chamberlain Farm. That summer Pingree, who owned Katahdin Iron Works, located about sixty miles south of the farm, undertook construction of a road connecting the iron works to a winter road leading to Chamberlain Lake and the lumbering region. The road would benefit both his timber interests and his iron works.[18]

During these years another road was built across the Allagash region some thirty miles north of the farm, connecting Ashland in Maine to the port of L'Islet on the St. Lawrence River in Canada. Called the California Road, it served as a major supply route throughout most of the century. The road was built by lumbermen operating out of northern Maine who, by 1847, had worked their way up the Allagash from its confluence with the St. John to the area around Umsaskis Lake. From that time to the early twentieth century, those who drove the Allagash River resented

Chamberlain Farm, 1850s. Located at mid-point on the lake, the farm site offered several advantages: well drained soils; a south-facing slope, a protective ridge to the rear, and a secure anchorage on the lake. To the east, the beautiful Katahdin range of mountains dominated the horizon. *Top illustration by Dean B. Bennett, based on maps, reports, and site visits; bottom illustration from Steele, CANOE AND CAMERA.*

the Chamberlain Dam, which diverted Allagash water through Telos Canal into the Penobscot. At times, Allagash river-driving crews forcibly opened or even dynamited the dam gates.[19]

Other developments promised changes in the vicinity of the farm. By mid-century white pine was growing scarce as a source of dimension lumber, and as the pine grew scarce, lumbermen and mill owners began eyeing spruce trees for sawlogs.[20] These years also saw the invention of processes for converting wood pulp into paper, a development that would, before the end of the century, have a great impact on the forests around the farm.

In 1849 tragedy struck. Coe lost his wife and their baby during childbirth. Sometime later, perhaps after his father died in 1862, he went to live with his half-brother, Dr. Thomas Upham Coe, and his wife in Bangor. E.S. never remarried, and it appears that he became even more absorbed in his business interests. Over the next fifty years until his death in December 1899, Coe accumulated an extensive record of activity at Chamberlain Farm in journals, inventories, supply lists, bookkeeping accounts, fire insurance papers, office memorandums, and correspondence. Through this record we learn how the attitudes and values of the time, specifically in the lumbering industry, influenced activities at the farm and contributed to the transformation of the wildland in the region. Throughout these years, E.S. Coe kept a tight rein over the farm.

From the beginning, Coe appears to have been a hands-on manager who wanted direct contact with his business enterprises. A clue to this attitude is found in a journal kept by a Mr. Brown, who worked for Coe. In March 1852, Coe and Brown made a business trip into the woods. Leaving Bangor in the morning of March 5, they traveled north by horse-drawn sleigh and eventually reached Fort Kent, at the top of the state, before returning to Bangor, a trip of more than 400 miles. Coe visited lumbering operations, stopped at Katahdin Iron Works, stayed at Grant Farm, ate moose meat, spent time at Chamberlain Farm, issued logging permits, and checked on the amount of timber being cut and other business details. The following are a few entries from Brown's journal:

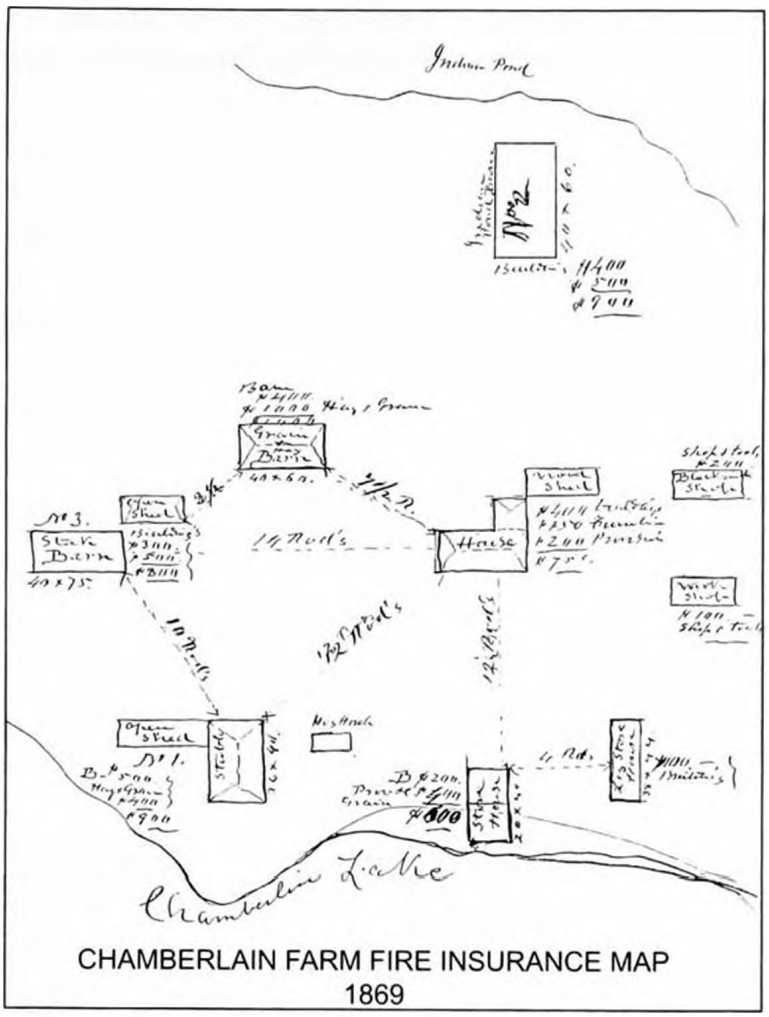
> March 5th, Left Bangor for our journey into the woods. Travelling is very bad. Snow in the afternoon; 10th, Left Katahdin [Iron Works] for Grants in #2 R13. Got at Grants about 10 Ock in Eve. Had to walk the Horses all of the way from K.I.W. because the snow is deep & soft. Horses would Slump in up to their knees; 12th, Friday at Chamberlin

> farm rained in the afternoon. Mr. Coe arrived late in the afternoon; 15th, Monday Mr. Coe, Barker, Turner & Lampson went down to Telos. Hoisted the Gates. Took an inventory of the things there, [A number of notes were inserted here, including the following.] 3/4 No 7 R 12 T E Crane & Co 6 ox & 6 horse teams hauling into Chamberlain Lake & Leadbetter Pond best logs cut on Chamberlin; 17th, Wednesday Left Chamber. Made a road of about 80 rods fr. 7 R 12 to 7 R 11. 3 men from Cranes shovel the path. Stayed all night at S. Boody Camp 8 R 10; 29th, Left Lincoln for Bangor.[21]

Coe's attention to detail and his penchant for orderly records make it possible to trace the farm's expansion through the last half of the century. In April 1858 his personal interest in the farm grew to about one-quarter ownership when David Pingree sold him nine-fortieths of the farm—a sign, perhaps, of the depth of their business relationship and their mutual respect. At this time, according to an Atlantic Mutual Fire Insurance Company policy record, the farm contained the following buildings, valued at $3,650: "Cham. Farm House with L [ell] and wood shed, all attached, warmed by three stoves; Store House; Barn No. 1, new; Barn No. 2; Barn No. 3, Stock Barn with open shed attached; Barn No. 4, Log Stable." By 1869 the value had increased to $5,750.00, and a map showed additional buildings.[22]

Each year, Coe required a detailed accounting of all buildings, equipment, supplies, and livestock at the farm. These records also show the depot actively expanding. The 1859 inventory, for example, contained lengthy lists of items categorized by buildings, giving some idea of the farm's diverse activity: items in the storehouse for sale to lumbermen included 100 pounds of coffee, 53 wool and fur hats, 25 red flannel shirts, a supply of fish hooks, 12 five-gallon pails, 78 pounds of bar soap, 17 stove pipes, and 1 new batteau. That year, the barns stored nearly 100 tons of hay and 5 tons of oats. Supplies received included seed for fifteen acres of burnt land, plough points, mule shoes, and food staples. A year later, a desk showed up on the inventory of farm-house furniture, along with a safe—possibly the very one now rusting away in the house's cellar hole. Between 1852 and 1877, the inventory grew from eleven to nearly sixty pages. Interestingly, the 1892 inventory reveals that Coe kept a room at the farmhouse.[23]

The farm's productive acreage expanded as well. In 1875 workers cleared stumps from more than seven acres, broke up and manured four acres of new land, and sowed in about thirty-six acres in oats. The 1876 record notes that farm workers ploughed forty-one acres, broke up fif-



CHAMBERLAIN FARM FIRE INSURANCE MAP
1869

During the mid-nineteenth century, Chamberlain Farm grew in size and sophistication, reflecting the expansion of the woods industry in northern Maine. This 1869 Bangor Mutual Fire Insurance Company map suggests the scope of operations—an open shed, stable, and storehouses near the shore, and behind them a stock barn, open shed, grain-and-hay barn, and the house, ell, and woodshed. Out-buildings include a blacksmith shop and wood-working shop. Up the slope was the farm's huge Indian Pond Barn. *Myron H. Avery Collection, Maine State Library, Augusta.*

teen acres of rocky soil further up the lake, stumped, ploughed, and harrowed three acres down the lake, and manured eight acres between the house and Indian Pond on the ridge and planted oats, which yielded well that year.[24] The farm log of 1881–1882 reads "Stump & Ploughed about 16 acres down the Lake—Hard & Rocky—Some very good—6 more stumped." The log also notes that the farm raised more than 100 sheep and lambs. In 1882, 5,412 pounds of goods and supplies were shipped to

the farm over a new railroad to Blanchard.[25] This was only one effect that the railroad would have on Chamberlain Farm and the surrounding region.

During these years, the farm hosted a crew of six to eight men, a foreman, and a cook. The days must have been long and hard for the men responsible for maintenance and chores and for those engaged in the ongoing work of expanding the fields and meadows. Yet the crews ate well, for the farm had vegetable gardens, milch cows, laying hens, poultry, hogs, sheep, and beef cattle, and provisions were shipped in during the winter months. One visitor remarked that the men were jolly and good natured.[26]

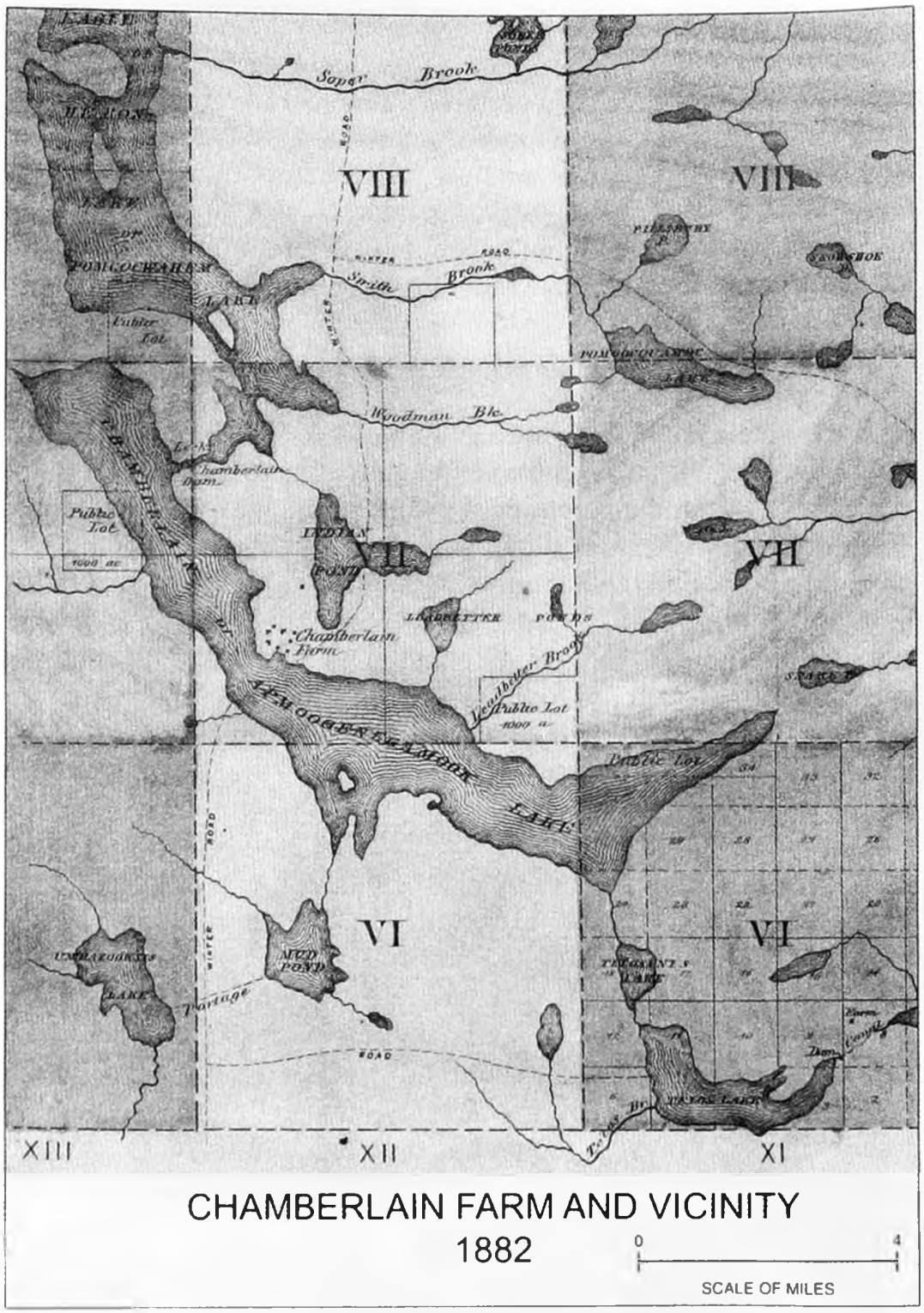
Through the second half of the century, Coe, then in his seventies and eighties, continued to keep a crew on the farm. In the mid-1870s he and David Pingree, Jr., who had taken over the Pingree interests after his father's death in 1863, filled out their holdings by buying parts of fifteen separate townships. Independently Coe bought land rounding out eleven of his own townships.[27] At the time of Coe's death in 1899, the

An 1879 woodcut of the farmhouse interior. Work days at the farm were long and hard, but the buildings were tight and secure during the severe northern Maine winters, and the crews ate well, judging from Coe's annual inventories of supplies toted in and those grown on the farm. *Steele, CANOE AND CAMERA.*

Coe-Pingree lands totaled more than a million acres, some of them owned jointly.[28] Despite these vast timber holdings, Coe and Pingree managed their resources conservatively. Pingree, for example, insisted "on sustained yield cutting practices in pulpwood with selective cutting in harvesting operations, rather than cut and abandon." Coe, too, was recognized for his prudent cutting practices: The *Bangor Daily Commericial* noted that he had "made it a rule to never cut a tree less than 16 inches in circumference at the butt. This is practical forestry. . . Every wild land owner pays Eben S. Coe the tribute of sagacious appreciation of practical wisdom in caring for forests, and today his influence is potent in example."[29]

A news item in the *Bangor Daily Commercial* in October 1888 noted the ongoing activity in the woods around the farm: "A. R. Patten, who carries on the Chamberlain farm, the place so well known to the Bangor lumbermen, has been in the city today. He says that there will be very much lumbering in his section this winter. The farm is fast being brought up to its old standard. Seven men are employed there and among the products this year were 75 tons of hay and 700 bushels of oats. They raised other produce in proportion and are well satisfied with the yield."[30] No doubt Patten reported directly to Coe's office during this visit, since Coe was still directly interested in all facets of the operation. In the spring of 1890, the aging land-manager noted: "April 9—W. R. Goodwin left today for Chamb. Lake to take care of Telos Webster Lake & Chamb Dams—for this spring gave him the same instructions as last year in regard to the management of the water."[31] Another news article, published a decade later, reported that Cornelius Murphy of Old Town was operating on little Allegash stream, a tributary of Chamberlain lake some twelve miles west of the farm. Murphy employed three camps totaling 135 men. Murphy purchased boots, potatoes, hay, meals, baked beans, and other supplies from the farm, totaling $371.99.[32] In an 1896 letter to Thomas McCard, foreman at the farm, Coe hinted at the growing tension between the woods operations and a growing phalanx of recreationists in the area:

> July 17th—Yours of the 4th at hand. . . . I hear to-day that Mr. Harvey came up the river past Chamberlain dam and said one of the gates was hoisted and that one of the farm men told him that they hoisted it to accommodate sportsmen. Now if any of your men did that or knew the gates was up and did not shut it, making it necessary for Mr. Grant to send a man up there to watch that dam, it is all wrong. I am surprised that your men should take such liberties to open the gates and



Traffic continued to flow to and from the farm through the second half of the century, arriving overland on ice and snow during the winter logging season and by boat in summer. Transportation improved steadily during these years, as the network of "winter roads" in this 1882 map suggests. *George N. Colby & Company, "Timber Plan No. 3," ATLAS OF PISCATAQUIS COUNTY, MAINE (1882).*

Mud Pond Carry, c. 1930s. The end of the nineteenth century brought new uses for the north woods, in the form of outdoor recreation. Over this route canoeists passed from the West Branch watershed into Chamberlain Lake, and from there, continued down the East Branch or northward on the Allagash waters. *Bae Powers Collection, courtesy Etta M. Hubbard.*

> allow the water to run that way, when the whole east branch drive were depending so much on the water from Telos. I should like to hear from you the facts in regard to it.[33]

Traffic continued to flow to and from the farm in the second half of the century, arriving during the winter logging season over the roads of hard-packed snow, which provided friction and freedom from swamps, stumps, and downed timber. An 1863 publication noted that "the great supply road for Chesuncook Lake and that lumbering region leads from the [Katahdin Iron] Works among the mountains by the way of Grant's, and a very large business in teaming finds its way hither, and keeps the road in very excellent condition."[34] Over the years, lumber operators improved and expanded these primitive roads. In 1874, John M. Way, Jr. published a map of the region that showed a winter road extending beyond the farm, intersecting with another road running east to Patten (later known as the Eagle Lake Tote Road), and connecting with Churchill Dam at the head of the Allagash River. Yet another winter road

reached Telos Lake from the southern end of Chesuncook Lake. Thomas Sedgwick Steele's1881 map shows a road running from Patten to Trout Brook Farm and then to Webster Lake and the Telos Dam and Farm. The traditional summer canoe access across Mud Pond Carry and down Mud Brook was improved in 1880 by Anse Smith, Jr., who established the Mud Pond Toting Service, using horses for the first time. This service, later taken over by his brother, Frank, operated through most of the remaining century and contributed to the farm's business.[35] To the east of the farm, the European and North American Railroad was completed in 1869, providing access to northern Maine between Old Town and Mattawamkeag, and a few decades later the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, running north to Houlton, boosted the logging activity in the region north of Chamberlain Farm.[36] Little by little, the farm—like the wildlands around it—was becoming more accessible.

Meanwhile, the logging industry itself was changing. In the early 1860s, the shift from pine to spruce sawlogs became more evident as old-growth pine near accessible water transportation ran out. In 1861 trapper and fur-dealer Manly Hardy reported that a crew of a loggers about fifteen miles west of the farm was "hauling spruce almost entirely."[37] In the 1880s spruce logging increased even more dramatically when a new use emerged for the species with the growth of the papermaking industry in Maine. In 1883 the Penobscot Chemical Fibre Company in Old Town introduced sulfite pulping to Maine. Although at first poplar provided most of the wood pulp for the mill, spruce replace this species early in the twentieth century, being well suited for papermaking because its long cellulose fibers, after being separated by grinding and chemical digestion, formed a strong, tough paper.[38] Northern Maine had plenty of spruce trees, and the industry drew heavily from the forests around Chamberlain Farm.

At the end of the century, an event occurred that cast a shadow over the future of the farm. It came with little warning. Coe's office memorandums for 1899 contained the usual entries about farm business. On August 31, for example, he expressed a long-standing concern about forest fires. Then, abruptly, in November the following notation appeared, written in another hand: "The Entry on opposite page, under date of 11th November, was the last Entry made in this book by E. S. Coe whose death occurred in December following." Coe's final illness was "short and free of pain," reported the Reverend Henry L. Griffin, "and, in the

Tote teams gather on the snow-covered lakeshore in front of Chamberlain Farm, c.1890s. By this time the farm was in transition. E.S. Coe died in 1899, and new forms of transportation—railroads, automobiles, trucks, all-season woods roads—made woods farms like this less critical for logging operations. Today, more than a century after Coe's death, the site is slowly returning to its natural state as part of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway—a monument to new uses and new meanings for the north Maine woods. *Carl Sprinchorn Collection (508 N.), courtesy Patten Lumberman's Museum, Patten, Maine.*

ripeness of character, years and achievement, he fell asleep on the 9th day of December."[39] Chamberlain Farm lost the person who brought it into existence and oversaw its management and care, whose own career had been linked to it economically and, almost surely, emotionally. The next chapter in the life of the farm would be quite different, as the surrounding wildlands were coming under an influence different from the directives of E.S. Coe and the early years of logging in Maine.

As large as the Coe-Pingree lands were, their holdings were no match for the timber estates created at the turn of the century by industrial giants like Great Northern Paper Company and International Paper Company. The huge investments these companies made in mills and equipment necessitated a continuing supply of pulpwood and forced the mill managers to think and manage with a longer view of the forest's health and productivity. At the century's end the public, too, showed signs of appreciating the value of the northern forest. In 1891, for example, pub-

lic concern helped inaugurate the office of forest commissioner. Public concern also reflected a feeling that timber interests were exerting too much pressure on Maine's government in their efforts to control forest use and timber harvesting. Years later, former secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall commented in his book, *The Quiet Crisis*, that states like Maine, Wisconsin, and Oregon became "company states"during these years.[40] Private forestry efforts contained a strong element of economics, which was consistent with national interest in conservation at the turn of the century. According to historian Richard Judd, this new view of the forest came at a time when the Allagash region had experienced only relatively light cutting in those areas beyond easy access to driving waters, and it was likely that some geographically isolated places still contained sizable stands of virgin spruce. The forest, he noted, "had changed surprisingly little since the 1830s."[41]

Changes, however, were coming to this remote bit of North America. In 1892, Rudolph Diesel patented an internal combustion engine, and the next year Henry Ford built his first automobile. Two years later in 1895 four automobiles were registered in the United States, and in spring 1897 the Schenectady Locomotive Works produced a ten-wheel railroad locomotive weighing 142,000 pounds and numbered it 109 for the Chicago, Hammond & Western Railroad. This locomotive—the first engine to break the stillness of Chamberlain Farm—changed the pace of life at the farm and in the adjoining woods.[42] With the advent of trucks and an expanding network of woods roads, supplies were transported directly into the logging operations.

Chamberlain Farm was not immune from these modernizing influences. In the early twentieth century the farm became less strategic as a supply depot for this changing industry, and it began a slow decline. In 1931, the farm house burned, and it was only a matter of time before the remaining buildings fell into ruin. But at the same time, the farm site was beginning to serve another purpose—as a base camp for hunting, fishing, and other wildland recreational activities. Among its residents and visitors were those who exhibited a more cooperative attitude toward nature and who saw a greater need for conservation and the sustainability of resources.

During the last half of the twentieth century, the farm and its environs attracted new breed of individuals—as interested in the forest and its resources as E.S. Coe had been in the middle of the previous century, but interested from a different perspective. Recreational interest in the north woods—increasing since at least the end of the nineteenth cen-

tury—fostered another perspective on nature, valued for its beauty, its integrity, and its diversity as much as for its yield of board feet or cords of pulpwood. In the 1960s, this view was manifested nationwide in the passage of the Wilderness Act (1964) and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968). In Maine, this new view of nature inspired the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, which placed the farm in a zone of shoreland to be managed for its wilderness character. Today, the farm site is returning to a state E. S. Coe might have encountered when he first inspected the land in the 1840s. And in the minds of an increasing number of its visitors this is a prospect to be cherished.

Today, more than a hundred years after the death of E. S. Coe, economic readjustments are bringing new perspectives and new opportunities to the forest lands of northern Maine. Vigorous debates over huge public and private land purchases, new harvesting practices and forest management techniques, conservation easements, public access, and subdivision and development initiatives suggest the rapidly changing temper of the times. Conflicts between recreational, environmental, and industrial values associated with the north woods are increasing, and advocates are, today, more organized and adept in their political efficacy. As a result of the intense pressures along the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, for instance, in spring 2002 American Rivers listed the river as one of the nation's most endangered. Resolution of the issues swirling around the Wilderness Waterway and the woods of northern Maine will require open and honest debate. A prerequisite to this is, as always, a close understanding the north woods in all his historic complexity. In this new era of uncertainty it helps to approach the debate with a clear view of the vast changes that have already taken place at Chamberlain farm and the woodlands it served for over a hundred and fifty years.

NOTES

1. Philip T. Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods* (Bangor: Furbush-Roberts Printing Company, 1963), pp. 42, 50-51; Oscar S. Smith, "The Lumber Industry on Penobscot Waters," *The Northern* 4 (August 1924): 4.

2. See Richard G. Wood, *A History of Lumbering in Maine: 1820-1861* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1935), pp. 48-82; State Chamber of Commerce and Agricultural League, *History of the Wild Lands of Maine* (Portland: the chamber, 1925), pp. 6-12; Louis C. Hatch, *Maine: A History* (1919; reprint, Somersworth, N.H.: New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1973), pp. 242-81.

3. Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods*, pp. 44, 46-47, 67.

4. See Charles T. Jackson, *Second Annual Report on the Geology of the Public Lands, Belonging to the Two States of Massachusetts and Maine* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1838), p. 57; *St. John Courier*, March 23, 1833; Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods*, p. 46; Richard W. Judd, *Aroostook: A Century of Logging in Northern Maine* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1989), pp. 62-63.

5. "The Evidence Before the Committee on Interior Waters, on Petition of Wm H. Smith, Daniel M. Howard, Warren Brown, and Theodore H. Dillingham, for Leave to Build a Sluiceway from Lake Telos to Webster Pond," reported by Israel Washburn, Jr., 134493 Telos Canal, [1846], p. 1, Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library, Augusta.

6. "Evidence Before the Committee," Telos Canal, pp. 2-3.

7. William M. Pingry, *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Moses Pengry, of Ipswich, Mass.* (Ludlow, Vermont: Warner & Hyde, 1881), pp. 68-70.

8. Henry L. Griffin, "Commemorative Address," in *Services in Memory of Eben S. Coe, The Congregational Church, Northwood Center, N. H., June Twenty-ninth, Nineteen Hundred*, ed. G. W. Bingham (Derry, New Hampshire: Charles Bartlett, 1901); Elliott C. Cogswell, *History of Nottingham, Deerfield, and Northwood* (Manchester, New Hampshire: John B. Clarke, 1878), pp. iv, 559, 657-59; Joseph Gardner Bartlett, *Robert Coe, Puritan, His Descendants* (n.p.: [privately printed], 1911).

9. E. S. Coe to David Pingree, May 13, 1844, and June 5,1844, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, Myron H. Avery Collection, Maine State Library, Augusta, Maine (hereafter MHA).

10. Land Agents of Maine and Massachusetts to Francis Blackman, July 16, 1844, book 12, p. 117; Francis Blackman to David Pingree, "Twp. 7 R. 12," August 10, 1844, book 9, p. 349, Piscataquis County Registry of Deeds, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; "Evidence Before the Committee," Telos Canal, pp. 5-6, 29.

11. Samuel Smith to the Several Persons Lumbering under Permits from D. Pingree, January 28, 1845, Coe Papers, Special Collections Department, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine (hereafter CP-FL).

12. See "Evidence Before the Committee," Telos Canal; and Myron H. Avery, "The Telos Cut," *Appalachia* 21, no. 3 (1937): 380-395.

13. See David C. Smith, *A History of Lumbering in Maine, 1861-1960* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1972), pp. 21-23; Everett L. Parker, *Beyond Moosehead: A History of the Great North Woods of Maine* (Greenville, Maine: Moosehead Communications, 1996), pp. 36-59.

14. See Parker, *Beyond Moosehead*, pp. 36-43; C. Ross McKenney and David L. Kendall, *Language of the Forest* (Unity, Maine: North Country Press, 1996), pp. 83-92; Randall Probert, *Forgotten Legacy: The Matagamon Region* (n.p.: Randall Probert, 1998), pp. 200-201.

15. Smith, *History of Lumbering*, pp. 21, 23; Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods*, p. 57.

16. A. G. Hempstead, "A Visit to Chamberlain Farm," *The Northern* 7 (November 1927): 7, 14-15; Henry David Thoreau, *The Maine Woods* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1906), pp. 243, 262.

17. *Bangor Directory* (Bangor, Maine: Samuel S. Smith, 1846), p. 16.

18. D. Pingree to John Winn, "Undivided 4/20 Twp. 7 R. 12," January 9, 1847, book 15, p. 304; D. Pingree to E. S. Coe, "Undivided 1/20 Twp. 7 R. 12," January 2, 1847, book 15, p. 309; D. Pingree, John Winn, and E. S. Coe to Jefferson Lake, "Undivided ? of 500 acres in Twp. 7 R. 12 (Known as Chamberlain Farm)," January 1, 1847, book 19, p. 102, Piscataquis County Registry of Deeds, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; Joel Eastman, "A History of the Katahdin Iron Works," M.A. thesis, University of Maine, 1965, pp. 65-67; William R. Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works: Boom or Bust* (Milo, Maine: Milo Printing Company, 1982), pp. 19, 27.

19. See Judd, *Aroostook*, pp. 59-61; Lew Dietz, *The Allagash* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), pp. 253-54; "Telos Canal and Chamberlain Dam," box 2, Oscar Fellows Papers, Special Collections Department, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine.

20. Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods*, p. 65.

21. "Journey to the Woods, 1852," folder C15, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA.

22. D. Pingree to E. S. Coe, "Undivided 9/40 of Chamberlain Farm, Twp. 7 R. 12," April 4, 1858, book 35, pp. 466-67, Piscataquis County Registry of Deeds, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; "Chamberlain Farm Fire Insurance Policy," June 1858, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA; "Chamberlain Farm Fire Insurance Policy," July 1869, ibid.

23. "Inventory of Chamberlain Farm," 1859 and "Merchandise and Supplies," E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA; "Inventory of Chamberlain Farm," June 1860, ibid.; "Chamberlain Farm Inventory," July 1,1877, ibid.; "Inventory from A. K. P. Patten to Thos McCard," April 5, 6, 1892, ibid.

24. "Chamberlain Farm House Account," 1875, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA; "Chamberlain Farm House Account," 1876, ibid.

25. "Chamberlain Farm Log," 1881-1882, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA; "Chamberlain Farm, List of Weights and Contents," December 25, 1882, ibid.

26. Lucius L. Hubbard, *Woods and Lakes of Maine* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1883), pp. 75-77.

27. See Austin H. Wilkins, *Ten Million Acres of Timber: The Remarkable Story of Forest Protection in the Maine Forestry District (1909-1972)* (Woolwich, Maine: TBW Books, 1978), p. 2; Smith, *History of Lumbering*, pp. 190-91; "The Wildlands: Who Owns Them?" *Bangor Daily Commercial*, February 7, 1905.

28. Coolidge, *History of the Maine Woods*, p. 615; "The Wildlands: Who Owns Them?"

29. Stephen Wheatland, "History of Pingree Heir Timberland Ownership,"

Biennial Report of the Forest Commissioner (Augusta: Forest Commissioner, 1969-1970), p. 120; "The Wildlands: Who Owns Them?"

30. *Bangor Daily Commercial*, October 25, 1888.

31. "E. S. Coe Office Memorandum," 1889-1898, CP-FL.

32. "Murphy's Camp at Allegash," *The Northern* 3 (January 1924): 10; "E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Account Records," February 1, 1897–February 1, 1898, CP-FL.

33. E. S. Coe to Thos. McCard, July 17, 1896, E. S. Coe Chamberlain Farm Papers, MHA.

34. Charles T. Jackson, *Katahdin Iron Works, Katahdin, Maine, 1863* (Boston: T. R. Holland, 1863), p. 7.

35. John M. Way, Jr., "Map of Moosehead Lake and the Headwaters of the Penobscot and St. John Rivers," *Guide to Moosehead Lake and Northern Maine, with Map* (Boston: Bradford & Anthony, 1874); Thomas Sedgwick Steele, *Map of the Headwaters of the Aroostook, Penobscot & St. John Rivers, Maine* (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1881); "Ronco's Camp and Mud Pond Carry," *The Northern* 6 (November 1926): 6.

36. John W. White, "Early Transportation in Northeasternmost New England, 1820-1870," *New England Social Studies Bulletin* 12 (no. 3, 1955): 19. See Jerry Angier and Herb Cleaves, *Bangor and Aroostook: The Maine Railroad* (Littleton, Massachusetts: Flying Yankee Enterprises, 1986).

37. Manly Hardy, "A Maine Woods Walk in Sixty-One, Part III," *Forest and Stream* (April 4, 1903): 263.

38. Smith, *History of Lumbering*, p. 235; Gordon G. Whitney, *From Coastal Wilderness to Fruited Plain: A History of Environmental Change in Temperate North America from 1500 to the Present* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 183.

39. "E. S. Coe Office Memorandum," 1899, CP-FL; Griffin, "Commemorative Address," p. 19.

40. Wilkins, *Ten Million Acres*, pp. 25, 53; Stewart L. Udall, *The Quiet Crisis* (New York: Avon Books, 1963), p. 110.

41. See Richard Judd, "Route to a New Frontier: The Allagash River and the Creation of a Wilderness Concept," *Habitat: Journal of the Maine Audubon Society* 3 (June-July 1986): 19-20.

42. *Proposed Plan of Preservation and Interpretation: Tramway Historic District, Allagash Wilderness Waterway* (n.p., 1994), pp. 12, 15.