

2019

History of Edgecomb Maine

Town of Edgecomb

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Town History

The following is excerpted from the Edgecomb Historical Society's Website.

Please visit this fine Website for much more information and photos at

<http://www.edgecombhistorical.org/>.

Edgecomb's special topography with its rocky spine wedged between the Sheepscot and Damariscotta rivers powerfully influenced its earliest pattern of land development. An 1815 map shows long strips of landholdings extending inland from the rivers' edge. This pattern can still be seen on the parcel maps of today with many of the original tracts still in place.

Early settlers established multipurpose households, tilling the soil, herding their animals, fishing, and gradually engaging in small home-based enterprises. The nineteenth century brought new prosperity with more Edgecomb men turning toward the sea as ship captains, merchants and ordinary sailors. The Sheepscot, Damariscotta and Cross rivers still have a hold on Edgecomb's character and identity. The notion of the family homestead with its barns, workshops, boathouses and outbuildings is still a romantic ideal with small home-based business scattered throughout the town.

Most Edgecomb land was too rocky and poor to sustain vigorous agriculture, and survival entailed mixed farming, orchards, brickyards and sheep grazing, which eventually degraded the land. Timber for fuel, construction and power for nascent industry deforested the land over the years.

New housing continues to be primarily single-family homes expanding along the 18th and 19th century roads. As woodlands returned during the twentieth century

replenishing natural resources, flora and fauna, Edgecomb, with huge parcels of unfragmented woodland, has become a quiet place, free from light pollution and with only distant traffic rumbles and local land based enterprises disturbing the peace.

Edgecomb has always had a strong identity as a town. Maine's climate, which rewards neighborliness, and its tradition of local control and community self-sufficiency have reinforced Edgecomb's sense of itself. Yet for at least 200 years, the town has also looked outward — for supplies, for the livelihood of many of its citizens and for communications, education and medical and other services.

Although today's residents depend heavily on the economies and services of nearby towns, they testify in survey after survey that they return with relief to the town's quiet nights, open woodlands, views of rivers, and scattered settlements.

"The best thing about Edgecomb is what it doesn't have." – quote from the January 7, 2008 Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting

From the 2009 Comprehensive Plan