

Maine History

Volume 40
Number 1 *The Nature of Maine*

Article 1

3-1-2001

Journal Cover and TOC

Maine Historical Society

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VOLUME 40

SPRING 2001

MAINE HISTORY



The Nature of Maine

MAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

485 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Maine History is published by Maine Historical Society
Editorial Office
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5774 Stevens Hall, University of Maine,
Orono, Maine 04469

All correspondence and manuscripts for review should be sent to Editor, *Maine History*, 5774 Stevens Hall, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469. Two copies of manuscripts should be submitted in double-spaced typescript and should conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. Manuscripts accepted for publication in *Maine History* are typically 30–35 pages in length. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Maine Historical Society assumes no responsibility for the opinions and interpretations expressed by its contributors. The articles appearing in *Maine History* are abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

Books for review should be sent to the book review editor, Stanley Howe, Director, Bethel Historical Society, Dr. Moses Mason House, Bethel, ME 04217.

Cover Illustration: The popular image of Maine's environment is one of pristine nature—untouched forests, wild rivers like the Allagash, and a coastline devoid of industry and development. This issue's cover image of an early-twentieth-century car ferry at the mouth of the Allagash, however, reminds us that, since at least the end of the nineteenth century, Mainers have struggled with competing definitions of "nature" and "wilderness." Maine's landscape, of course, is not "untouched," rather, it has been powerfully shaped by human activity as Mainers have harnessed the state's extensive natural resources and adapted to a sometimes harsh and unforgiving climate. The four essays in this issue explore the question of how "nature" in Maine has been defined, exploited, contested, and preserved. In Richard Judd's exploration of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, Christopher Beach's discussion of proposed oil ports along the coast, Kimberly Sebold's examination of late nineteenth-century views of Maine's salt marshes, and Kent Ryden's commentary on the essays all explore the connections between nature as an idea and nature as a physical presence. Earlier versions of these essays were presented at the October 1999 meeting of the Northeast Popular Culture/American Culture Association Annual conference in Portland, ME. *Cover illustration courtesy of Maine Historical Society.*

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