

2019

History of Moscow Maine

Town of Moscow

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A Brief History of Moscow Maine

The Town of Moscow's western boundaries are beautiful Wyman Lake and the famed Kennebec River. The scenic Arnold Trail winds northward through Moscow on its way to Quebec.

The first white settler after Benedict Arnold's men went through was Joseph Baker of Readfield. He came with his wife and six children in 1783. His seventh child, Dorcas, born July 29, 1784, was the first child born in Moscow. [Painting of the Joseph Baker Home](#)

In 1804, Isaac Temple and his family came up the Kennebec and built the first [sawmill](#) in Moscow.

By 1810 the population of the area had tripled. By this time, one-third of the population of Litchfield had moved into the area, settling mostly in Moscow. Among the settlers were several Baker families, all related; but not, to their knowledge, to Joseph Baker.

In November of 1812 a petition was signed to try to incorporate the town. The town had gone by the name of Bakerstown, but by this time there was a Bakerstown in southern Maine (now the town of Poland). The name of Northfield also appears on the petition, but is crossed out. There is a Northfield in Washington County. The town was finally given the name Moscow, named for the Russian city that was burned by its citizens in 1812 to dislodge the French soldiers.

Moscow was incorporated on January 30, 1816, the 211th town.

Historic Graves

One of the oldest graves in [Union Cemetery](#) is that of [Joseph Kirk](#), one of Benedict Arnold's men. The grave was originally located in Pleasant Ridge, but was relocated in Union Cemetery during the construction of [Wyman Dam](#). (When Wyman Lake was created, three cemeteries were moved to Union Cemetery.)

Baker Cemetery, also known as Sugartown Cemetery, has the grave of a member of the Boston Tea Party, which took place December 16, 1773. The marker was placed on the grave of David Decker by the Boston Tea Party Chapter DAR in 1899.

Gulf Stream Trestle

The 51 mile section of the Somerset Railroad from Bingham to Moosehead filled a great need because of the logging and increasing popularity of sportsmen. [The Gulf Stream Trestle](#) was an important link in this section of railroad. Due to the elevation change of 900 feet from Bingham to [Deadwater](#), the trestle presented one of the major engineering problems encountered on this route.

The late Henry Hill, the engineer for the railroad, realized that the tracks had to follow Austin Stream and cross it at the widest part, Gulf Stream Gorge. The resulting trestle became one of the most intriguing features of the railroad.

The trestle was 700 feet long and 125 feet high. It became one of the largest structures to span a river in New England. The Boston Bridge Company began construction in 1904. Cement was brought in by wagon, the tower piers were poured, and then the steel itself was put in place.

By 1933 the woods operations had decreased so much that the train was no longer needed above Bingham. In 1936 the iron rails were scrapped and sent to Japan. The remaining portion of the trestle was removed in the 1970's for safety reasons.

During the peak time of use, the trestle bore such loads as granite, regular freight, hundreds of vacationers and 500,000 cords of pulpwood.

Wyman Dam

One of the town's most outstanding features is [Wyman Dam](#), which supplies a large part of the power for Central Maine.

Replacing a natural course of rapids 140 feet high, the construction of the dam was started in October 1928, and the first unit was operated December 24, 1930.

During the period of construction, a labor force of 2,400 men and their families had to be housed. A settlement of nearly 300 homes known as [Daggettville](#) was built for this purpose. A school was furnished for the children and there were dormitory-like buildings for the single men. [View pictures of the Dam construction](#)

The top of the dam is approximately 3,000 feet long. In order to reach bedrock on the easterly side, it was necessary to sink caissons 128 feet below the level of water in the river.

Wyman Dam created an artificial lake twelve miles long and a mile and a half wide at its widest point, extending back nearly to the village of Caratunk. When the dam was built, a group of homes on the River Road, such as the [George Gordon Homestead](#), had to be flooded by the lake. [Picture of Wyman Lake](#) prior to the last log drive of the Kennebec Log Drive Company in 1976.