Maine Sporting Camp History on the Piscataquis River Tributaries, Part 2

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Maine Sporting Camp History on the Piscataquis River Tributaries

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Chapter 3 — North from Brownville on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road

From Brownville Junction it was six miles due north on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road to Prairie (North Brownville), where it turned west and continued over flattrish country to the mouth of Silver Lake and Katahdin Iron Works (KIW). This was the main route to KIW until 1883, when the railroad bypassed Prairie and went directly to Silver Lake. In Prairie, where the tote road bent west, a side tote road led to the East Branch of the Pleasant River at Lower Ebeemee Pond, which provided access to the five Ebeemee ponds.

The Ebeemee ponds

About 1870, a sickly J.A. Thompson 1 came north from Bangor on the stage headed to KIW in search of a healthier environment as suggested by his physician. 2 By the time the stage reached Prairie, the terribly rough road forced Thompson to get off and spend a few nights resting at the local accommodations. He visited West Ebeemee Pond, decided to build a cabin, and stayed; he was one of the earliest residents. He lived here most of the year for the next eight years, when his friend Thomas Waldo Billings, a trapper who lived in Brownville, encouraged him to join him on Long Pond. However, Thompson, who visited regularly and occasionally used Billing’s Long Pond trapper’s cabin, built his own cabin on Big Houston Pond c.1880. 3

In Prairie, Thompson probably stayed at Freeman Wallace Tufts’ farm, a ten-mile journey from Milo and a shanty stop for teamsters on Brownville’s north town line. The prior owners of the successful farm were Moses and Lucy Chandler, who moved to the site after selling their boarding house in KIW (c.1853). The Tufts, who moved from their farm in Belfast before 1870, owned the four northern-most farms that straddled the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road in Brownville Township by 1882. When they stopped providing accommodations is unknown; as is when a farm in this area first began serving teamsters. 4

In 1894, folks getting off the stage in Prairie could spend a night at Alexander and Cora Snow Arbo’s farm, on the north side of Brownville Township north town line. 5 Cora, born in Sebec in 1854, moved to this farm with her parents before 1860, grew up here, and in 1872 married Alexander, who was from Chesuncook. They had one child and worked a farm in Perham until c.1890, when they built and managed the Onawa House on Lake Onawa. After four years, they returned to work Cora’s family’s farm. The original home burned in 1921 and the

1 J.A. Thompson is Joseph A. Thompson. Typically, his name appeared as J.A. Thompson.
family rebuilt it. When Alexander died in 1921, their son Paul assumed ownership, continued the farm, and soon created the famous Prairie Pavilion, a dance hall that ran through the end of the 1930s and was capable of handling 500 people.

From the Arbo’s establishment guides and sports like Thompson took a branch tote road east to the outlet of Lower Ebeemee Pond, so they could paddle either northerly into West Ebeemee Pond or easterly through Pearl and Horseshoe ponds into East Ebeemee Pond. By 1882, a tote road departed from the Chamberlain Tote Road in Brownville Junction, went northeasterly, and ended at the narrows between Horseshoe Pond and East Ebeemee Pond, a location known as Ebeemee P.O.6 After 1893, a trail linked this site to the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad’s (B&A) East Ebeemee siding, a half-mile away. Neither of these two routes ever replaced the primary access route from Prairie.

Sporting camps on the Ebeemee ponds began to multiply in the mid-1890s. By 1895, Milo and Brownville guides, Bert F. Hobbs, Benjamin C. Harris, B.G. Stevens, G. Howard, Fred Heath, Wesley Gerrish, and Luther Rogers, each had a cabin at an undisclosed location on one of these ponds.7 During fall 1897, hunters stayed at Littlefield and Twombly’s sporting camp on Lower Ebeemee Pond. Exactly who built the sporting camp and in what year is unknown. This may have been the sporting camp where fishermen in January 1896 pulled in 40 pounds of pickerel in a day. By 1903, Littlefield had taken over the operation and renamed the sporting camp Littlefield’s Camp.8

Others soon came to the pond. In summer 1899, Ed A. Chase built his cabin, Camp Barbara, on Lower Ebeemee Pond. The Chases took guests from Prairie to the landing at Lower Ebeemee dam and paddled to the sporting camp halfway up the pond on what was sometimes a point. Joining him about 1902 was Lyman Leighton, who operated Camp Maquoit on Lower Ebeemee. Leighton added a branch cabin on the southern end of Upper Ebeemee Lake in 1909 and held it through at least 1913. To reach this camp some of his sports took the

6 Colby’s 1882 map (see note 4) labeled the collection of homes at the end of the road as Ebeemee P.O.
8 The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 5 no. 52 (December 1897): 14. Additionally, whether this Littlefield is related to Daniel C. Littlefield who had a private cabin on Northwest Pond c.1930 is unknown. Daniel C. grew up in Waterville and died in Milo in 1960.

B&A to Schoodic siding, where he met them for their advertised two-and-a-half-mile walk on the Nahmakanta Tote Road to the cabin. Leighton apparently closed after 1923. The B&A train schedule did not list his sporting camp for the Ebeemee stop in 1924 and thereafter.9

In 1921, Ernest (Hank) R. Strout of Milo built a cabin with the help of his father Ernest L. Strout, a carpenter, on the northeast-most point of Lower Ebeemee Pond for his personal use, but two years later, he decided to run it as a sporting camp. He began by building additional sleeping cabins, and by 1924 he and his wife, Marjorie Stanchfield, opened Strout’s Trail’s End Camp. The Strouts, their two sons, and Strout’s father lived at the sporting camp year-round until Hank built a home in Brownville so their children could attend school. Hank held other jobs in addition to his work at the sporting camp, which, as many did during this time period, opened in June and closed in September. After Ernest L. Strout died in 1936, the family continued the operation until 1967, when they sold to Walter Hedberg, and four years later Paul and Caroline Rosebush bought the sporting camp. After running the operation until 1978, they sold to Gene Jay,
who still owned the sporting camp in 2006, but was not running it as a commercial establishment.  

Those sports headed to East Ebeemee Pond had a short walk to the east side of the pond from either the B&A Ebeemee siding or the Schoodic siding after 1893. In 1906, Nelson W. McNaughton, who had a sporting camp near Schoodic siding, had a large branch camp on East Ebeemee Pond a mile-and-a-half walk from the main sporting camp. This distance probably placed them on the pond’s east side on high ground between the two low-lying areas. What became of the branch camp after the McNaughtons sold in 1915 is unknown.

Using the Ebeemee siding as an access point, Forrest S. Drake opened Ebeemee Lake Camps, with outlying cabins, before 1912. The sporting camp was a half to three-quarters-mile walk from the siding. Forrest grew up on a farm in the Brownville and Milo area, worked as a railroad agent, and married Eliza Philbrook Foss. After Eliza died in 1913, Forrest and his son, Stanley E. Drake, who also worked for the railroad, managed the sporting camp. Stanley was the sole proprietor in 1917, but then married and soon moved north to Saint Francis Plantation, where he was a land manager. Forrest, who had returned to farming, sold the sporting camp in 1919. The new owner quickly resold to Nellie Moore and Earl P. Daggett of Milo. They then sold fractional parts of the sporting camp to Carl H. Peakes, John L. Stetson, and Cecil D. Towne, all of Milo. These men apparently did not operate a commercial sporting camp, but the area was known as “Drakes.”

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In 1923, Ruth Cole, not yet married to Irwin W. Pike of Dover-Foxcroft, bought what was known as “Drakes” on the south shore of East Ebeemee Pond and reopened it as a sporting camp. Soon, Ruth and her brother Maurice Cole, and sister Nell Cole Downs, all of whom lived at the old Philbrook shanty as a sporting camp (c.1900–1906) when they were children, were advertising Mountain View Camps on East Ebeemee Pond. As most camps of the time, they advertised fresh vegetables, eggs, butter, and milk, all of which implied they had a small farm. Their access to the sporting camp was either by auto from Brownville Junction or from the Ebeemee siding. Ruth ran the sporting camp through at least 1940 according to The Maine Register, and about that time Maurice was operating Camp Moosehorns on North-west Pond six miles north of the Ebeemee siding near Packards siding.

In addition to fishing and hunting, two of the attractions for sports in the Ebeemee area were Horserace Falls and Gauntlet Falls, both of which were on the East Branch of the Pleasant River. A tote road ran from Lower Ebeemee Pond past Horserace Falls, a 15-foot drop two miles above Upper Ebeemee Lake, and continued on to Gauntlet Falls, a 20-foot drop in a chasm another three miles upriver.

The Silver Lake Settlement, Katahdin Iron Works

The last stage stop on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road was KIW at the mouth of Silver Lake, 16 miles above Brownville, but the first settlers did not use that route. The Ichabod Thomas and Eben Davis families, each owning 1,000 acres in the northern half of the township c.1810, cut a road due north from Sebec in 1816 to log and farm above the head of the lake on the West Branch of the Pleasant River until Moses Brown bought their lots c.1820. By 1832, loggers had extended the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road along the south side of Silver Lake to the farms, probably one of the earliest shanty stops, as they were ten miles beyond Prairie. When ore mining commenced a couple of miles east of the mouth of Silver Lake in the mid-1840s, a settlement, KIW, formed at the outlet of Silver Lake, the families abandoned their farms for ones in Brownville, but the mine and boarding house owners moved in to maintain the open fields in support of their operations and the shanty stop shifted to KIW.

The KIW blast furnace first operated in 1844 and then sporadically until its last firing in 1890. The iron works employed about 100 men for 12 months, for the years it was open, and another 300 men during the winter to cut the hardwood for the kilns. During those 46 years the community struggled financially much of the time, but logging and farming, and what eventually became a popular tourist destination hotel, helped sustain its residents.

Some time in the mid-1840s, Moses Chandler, a carpenter, moved his family to the community to help build the many necessary support structures. By 1850, he, his wife Lucy, and their five children were running a boarding house with five boarders and perhaps occasional sports. Commerce in the community must have been excellent for in the mid-1850s John Pollard gave up his successful Greenville farm, moved his wife, Sarah B., and five children to KIW to take over the Chandlers’ boarding house, which they renamed Katahdin Iron Works House. They also held the lease to a farm at the head of Silver Lake. Their farming success continued and by the time they left to farm in Minnesota in the late 1860s, the KIW farm was 200 acres of improved land.

Business at the Pollard’s house, one of two boarding houses that the community eventually had, was excellent, and they began to expand it with the support of the mining company who owned it. By the time the Pollards left in 1877 the structure accommodated 100 people, primarily loggers in the winter. In support of summer business, the owners recognized a financial opportunity in advertising the hotel as a summer wilderness destination point. The main attraction was the presumed healing quality of nearby Katahdin Mineral Springs, so they portrayed the house as a resort for tourists and especially for invalids.

12 Based on the Colby map and old USGS maps, this seems to be in the area that in 1882 was Ebeemee P.O.
14 A richer history of KIW is available in a number of books such as those that follow:
15 The information regarding the sequence of the hotel’s ownership is from information in Sawtelle’s books, Ancestry.com, The Maine Register, the B&As In the Maine Woods, Lucius Hubbard’s guide books, and the Bangor Daily Whig and Courier issues of:
   September 9, 1872, June 8, 1881, April 30, 1883, July 17, 1888, May 7, 1889, May 1, 1890, November 27, 1897, April 4, 1898.
John Way’s 1874 guidebook, the first Maine guidebook covering this area, described no sport activity in the KIW area. The large number of tourists coming to KIW and using the Katahdin Iron Work’s House resulted in the owner changing the name to the Silver Lake Hotel by 1877. The stage arrived on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays and went out on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The hotel would also become the rendezvous point for guides meeting their sports headed to sporting camps within a 20-mile radius.

As successors to the Pollards after 1877, the hotel owners sought persons experienced in inn keeping and farming. Their first hire was Joseph C. and Sarah Herrick, who, along with their son Arthur, moved to KIW from Hudson, where they had been innkeepers for at least the previous seven years; they farmed in Corinth before that.16 After five years, the Herricks left and J.E. Harriman, who was previously at the Fort Point House in Bangor, became the manager.17 The volume of business was sufficient to warrant more changes. He oversaw the hotel’s next expansion, thoroughly renovated and refurbished it, and instituted a special Saturday stage that met folks coming on the train from Bangor to Milo and returned them to Milo early Monday. With those changes implemented, a young Henry E. Capen, who grew up on his family’s farm near Dover, worked at his family’s hotel business in Greenville, and was a clerk at the Mount Kineo House on Moosehead Lake, took over by 1883. He managed the hotel through its heydays of the 1880s, a time when it was fresh, attractive, and easily reached by train starting in 1883.18 The hotel continued as a popular destination for Bangor area residents and Lucius Hubbard’s Maine guidebooks of the 1880s advertised Gulf Hagas and the general area.19 Capen left the hotel in 1889, married, and by 1900 was living in Augusta, where he was the proprietor of the Augusta House.

16 In 1882 the family moved from KIW and remained in Maine; Joseph died in Maine in 1896; by 1900 Arthur and his family were farming in White Lake, South Dakota and Sarah soon followed to live with them.

17 Bangor Whig and Courier, June 8, 1881.

18 As did his predecessors, Capen ran the mine’s and the hotel’s farm that now had 17 horses, a yoke of oxen, 7 cows, 100 sheep, and 5 hogs. He employed 15 farm laborers that cut 250 tons of hay and harvested 750 bushels of oats, and picked 600 bushels of potatoes and vegetables.


During the height of the hotel’s popularity, guests had numerous sites they visited on foot. The mineral springs were about a mile away. They walked a road to the top of nearby Saddlerock Mountain. Some took a two-day trip to the summit of White Cap Mountain following the logging tote roads up White Brook to the Gaffney logging camp and then a trail to the summit. Others went up the river to the hotel’s farm, where they crossed the river on the rope ferry and followed a spotted line to the top of Chairback Mountain. Guests also hiked to the top of Horseback Mountain and into East
and West Chairback Ponds, the Houston Ponds, Long Pond, Spruce Mountain Ponds, and Gulf Hagas.

Beginning in 1890, the hotel business began a noticeable decline. After Capen left in 1889, the owners renovated the hotel and hired William Heugen, the B&A conductor on the KIW line, as their manager.20 However, by this time traffic on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road was a fraction of what it once was. The railroad had reached Greenville in 1884 and it became the major supply hub for logging activity north of the headwaters of the East Branch of the Pleasant River. The hotel's winter business of housing teamsters and loggers headed north now included only those going as far as the East Branch, not far above Ten-mile shanty, the next stop north of KIW. The major impact on the community was the closing of the ironworks after the firing of the blast furnaces in 1890. This meant that during the winter seasons the hotel did not have the boarding loggers, who had cut the hardwood for the kilns in winter. Then, in 1894, the B&A extended its rail service north from Brownville to Norcross on the eastern edge of the Lower Chain Lakes (North Twin, South Twin, Pemadumcook, and Ambejejus lakes), where new wilderness hotels sprung up with views of Katahdin and steamboat rides on the lakes, a new and exciting destination point. Commerce in the community languished until 1897, when Perkins and Danforth Spoolwood Company moved into some of the iron works buildings and the hotel was again a boarding house during the logging season, but the grandeur needed to attract tourists was already lost. Fourteen years later, the spoolwood company ran out of birch to cut and left the community. The hotel was again vacant during the winter months, then burned to the ground in 1913 and no one thought it was financially feasible to rebuild. Nine years later the B&A stopped train service, but left the tracks so the remaining community residents could use a jitney for the next 11 years.

At the time the hotel burned, Albert and Sarah Green were the managers, who had taken over in 1906 from F.H. Eddy, who succeeded Heugen in 1898, and became the community's leaders until their deaths. Albert worked for the iron works until it closed, and Sarah E. McDonald came with her parents from Brownville to KIW in 1890 and then worked at the hotel. Their marriage in 1906 was a commitment to each other and to life in KIW.21 While

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20 Heugen, born in Nova Scotia, immigrated to Maine in 1870, married his wife May, and lived in Bangor where he was a railroad conductor on the line to KIW in the 1880s. He left the Silver Lake Hotel job in 1897, went to Lake Onawa to open a sporting camp, and eventually became a hotelkeeper in Bangor.

Chapter 3 — North from Brownville on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road

no one ever rebuilt the hotel, Albert and Sarah opened a place for travelers to stay in the old boarding house across the street from the old hotel site and Albert began managing a nearby farm. Eventually, he either opened or reopened a local sawmill. Their boarding house burned before 1920, but, still undeterred, they continued to board people in another house. These were tough financial times in this community and those few that stayed had to be creative.

In 1929, Albert died from complications stemming from an injury at his sawmill, but Sarah continued on until 1968. Left with no income and three children, Sarah began renting her house in 1930 and served sports at her cabin, where the conditions were rustic: no electricity; guests drew water in buckets from the river, heated with a wood stove, and did their own cooking. She also had cabins on Silver Lake that she leased from Allied Chemical Corporation and rented. In 1940, she and her 16-year-old son, Harry, two of the nine year-round residents left in the community, were again running a boarding house. In March 1941, she took over The Hermitage, a sporting camp up river below Gulf Hagas, and opened it yearly except 1945. In September 1941, Charlie Berry, proprietor of Yoke Pond Camps, who knew his time for running such a sporting camp was near the end, gave the operation to Sarah for a dollar with the understanding he would continue to run them, live at the site, and could reside there until his death.22 They sold the sporting camp in 1946 and he continued to live there. She was still renting cabins on Silver Lake and operating The Hermitage in the mid 1960s. She died in 1969 at 83 years of age.

While the popularity of the Silver Lake Hotel faded away in the 1890s, sporting camp activity picked up and remained strong for sixty years. In 1900, sports could leave Boston on a 9 a.m. train and arrive in KIW at noon the following day. KIW was the hub for sports continuing north up Big White Brook valley on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road to B-Pond and the headwaters of the East Branch of the Pleasant River at the north end of White Cap Mountain. Other guides took their sports west on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road along the north side of the West Branch of the Pleasant River through Gulf Hagas to the sporting camps on the west side of White Cap and Barren-Chairback mountain range. Those proprietors

with sporting camps in the great bowl north of Benson Mountain and on the east side of the Barren-Chairback mountain range headed south from the KIW village on the tote road to Big Houston Pond.

One aspect of KIW never changed until the 1970s. The stage road, the railroad, and then a drivable road, all ended at KIW. Up until the 1930s, sporting camp proprietors on the tote roads beyond KIW met their guests in the settlement. The first drivable road access that developed for most of these establishments on the west side of the Barren-Chairback and White Cap mountain ranges came from Greenville to the west. The difficult access kept the sporting camps popular with some, but uninviting to others.

Big Houston Pond via KIW

Trappers, and later sports, who were headed south from KIW, took the tote road over the west shoulders of Ore and Houston mountains to reach Little and then Big Houston ponds at the northeast edge of a great bowl. It extended six miles to the southwest to The Notch between Barren and Benson mountains; Roaring Brook Mountain was its east boundary; and the Barren-Chairback mountain range was its west edge. Before the mid-1890s this area was the domain of loggers, hunters, and trappers. Some of them guided sports to their trappers’ cabins, but only three of them initiated commercial establishments.

One of the early hunters and trappers in this bowl was Alonzo “Lon” Arnold of Willimantic at the west end of Sebec Lake, a short distance south of Lake Onawa. Lon (b.1854) was a commercial deer, caribou, and moose hunter for the Boston market, when it was legal, and had trapper’s cabins in The Notch, and another on the north side of Indian Pond in the bowl west of Big Houston Pond.23 His route to these cabins was a trail that followed an old tote road from Lake Onawa’s outlet to The Notch and then the pond. He spent a great deal of time trapping and hunting from the cabin in The Notch with his son Walter, who succeeded him as the foremost trapper in this area. When extensive logging took place in the bowl between 1912–1916, they abandoned his cabin on Indian Pond.

The earliest cabin on Big Houston Pond was perhaps that of Joseph A. Thompson about 1880.24 Thompson,

22 The Skillin family, who bought the Yoke Pond Camps from Charlie, provided information.

24 Rowe, Herbert W., "Across the Chairback Range," The Maine
born in 1854 to an apparently well-to-do Bangor family in the insurance business, went to Colby College for three years, but by 1870 doctors recommended he spend time in the north Maine woods. Thompson was a small man that many thought did not look healthy enough to snowshoe boundary lines, but for much of his life that was what he did. He also checked on logging operations on behalf of landowners, of whom he was one for this township. Those who lived, guided, and worked in the wilderness townships he frequented quickly learned not to judge him by his appearances. In 1882, he married Grace P. Hersey of Bangor, where they had a home, and Grace raised their only child, Arthur A. Thompson sold his undivided share of the land in 1909.

Before moving to Big Houston Pond, Thompson lived for eight-plus years in a cabin on West Ebeemee Pond to the east of Prairie. Here he got to know Thomas Waldo Billings of Brownville and traveled the area with him. Billings introduced Thompson to Big Houston Pond and convinced him to build a personal cabin there. Thompson liked to walk the tote road from KIW to his cabin and he generally stopped at Little Houston Pond to catch some fish for his next meal. His cabin, Saint’s Rest, was on a point of land on high ground near a peculiar ledge formation south of the landing at the end of the tote road from KIW. He named the cabin in memory of the many friends who visited.

From at least 1900 to 1907, Thompson often traveled with the company of his wife Grace from KIW to Big Houston Pond and then over his trail through Chairback Mountain gap past West and East Chairback Mountain ponds to Chairback Mountain Camps on Long Pond, down Long Pond and Long Pond Stream to Lake Onawa and the Young and Buxton Camps, and back to KIW. They enjoyed the fishing and the visits with the sporting camp owners. It also allowed Thompson to keep track of activity within the township of which he owned an undivided share. During this same time period, he wrote articles of these trips and others for The Maine Sportsman.

Joining Arnold and Thompson in the bowl in the mid-1890s were individuals who started the first three commercial enterprises. Frank Tibbetts, a trapper from Milo, opened a sporting camp on Big Houston Pond; it served sports from about 1895 to 1994. Two guides from KIW, Lyn P. Moore and E.R. Robinson, along with a few men from Hampden, established a commercial St. Bernard sled dog colony and trained dog sled teams in the winter of at least 1897–1898 on Little Houston Pond. Moore and Robinson left by early 1898 for the Alaskan Klondike in search of gold, and what became of the operation is unknown. In 1898, Louis Francis advertised his cabin on Upper Houston Pond, perhaps also known as Second Houston Pond (c.1900), which drained into Big Houston Pond from the west; the duration of his enterprise is unknown.27

The commercial enterprise that endured was the sporting camp operation, apparently initiated by Frank Tibbetts. He had been guiding out of Milo since at least 1883 and was Thompson’s neighbor in 1895 when he hosted sports at some cabins on the north side of Big Houston Pond’s logger’s landing at the end of the tote road from KIW. Moose hunters who were there in November 1895 described new log cabins, but who actually built them when is unknown.28 Tibbetts, an only child, lived with his parents on their farm in North Brownville in 1880, married in 1890, and ten years later he, his wife Winnie, and four children were farming in Milo. To what degree any other family members worked at the establishment is unknown.

Tibbetts sold the sporting camp by 1896 to Elon G. Moore, who operated them for five years. Moore, who was from the Bangor and Hampden area, had been trapping and hunting in the area for a number of years. In October 1892 he shot a caribou near the Pleasant Valley Tote Road nine miles above KIW and he shot another one three years later.29 Moore, who was 52 years old at the time and had a permanent residence with his wife

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30 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, December 1, 1897.
31 The succession of proprietors from 1895 to 1922 was based on deductive reasoning using the following sources: B&As In the Maine Woods and its predecessors, The Maine Sportsman, Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, The Maine Register, the sporting camp’s guest book (see note 41), and Ancestry.com.
32 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, October 4, 1892.
33 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, October 9, 1895.
Joseph A. Thompson built his home, Saint’s Rest, on Big Houston Pond. (c.1880–1970s) (courtesy Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company, In the Maine Woods, 1915)
Gratia and children in Bangor, had a store in Hermon, where he was a postmaster for a time. Moore’s son, Lyn- don (Lyn), helped his father in 1896, advertised his guid- ing in the area, and worked as a hotelkeeper two miles above Prairie in Moorsville, a community that devel- oped around a mill not far from the road to the KIW, before he went off to Alaska for a short time (c.1898). Gratia was frequently at the sporting camp with other

family members, but what role she played in the sporting camp’s operation is unknown. Moore left the sporting camp ownership in 1901, but continued to reside in KIW Township through at least 1909; he may have been living with his son at his farm in the Moorsville settlement. He died in 1916 in Hampden.

Between 1901 and 1910 the sporting camp operation went through a succession of five owners. John S. and Mattie Arnold of Brownville followed Moore, and their son, William, guided for them. John was a farmer and a logging camp boss for lumbermen cutting in the region. The Arnolds used the original structure as a dining and cooking camp and added four other small sleeping cab- ins, Porcupine Lodge, Camp Anthony, and two others. When the Arnold cabins were full, they had permission from Thompson to use his cabin. During the Arnold’s second year, they frequently saw a full-grown albino bull moose feeding at the pond. When Mattie died in 1903 John sold to A.A. Huntington and moved to KIW, where in 1910 he was boarding at Albert and Sarah Green’s hotel. Huntington was perhaps Aurill A., who was born and grew up farming in the Orneville and North Bradford area, just below Milo. By 1900, he and his wife Blanche and their children moved from their Bradford farm to Hudson to manage a hotel near the B&A. Their married son and his wife, former managers of Attean Pond Camps near Jackman, joined them at the sporting camp. They were able to keep the same arrangement with Thompson for the use of his cabin and they built two more cabins in close proximity to his.

The Kittridge brothers of Milo took over the operation from Huntington. They were probably the sons of Benjamin R. and Amelia Kittridge. Benjamin was a carpenter and carriage maker who was born in Milo in 1850. Their five sons were Albert F., Frank P., Fred M., Clinton, and Melvin. All of them except Clinton, a teacher, were carpenters. Albert, Frank, and Fred were probably the ones who ran the sporting camp; Clinton was only a young teenager at the time. Frank was familiar with the area and had met Thompson in 1898, when they were both fishing Little Houston Pond.

Joe M. Patten took over from the Kittridge broth- ers c.1908 and sold two years later to Lyndon “Lyn” P. Moore who had previously guided at the sporting camp during his father’s ownership, and was now living at his farm and hotel in nearby Mooresville. After they sold the sporting camp in 1921, they returned to Moorsville, where they resided as retirees until the early 1930s, when they moved to Orono.

While the sporting camp had many owners between the 1890s and 1920, it retained a steady business and was generally open year-round. In January 1897, Moore housed 24 birch choppers at the sporting camp while he

33 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, January 27, 1899.
34 The John Arnold family was not related to the Alonzo (Lon) Arnold family of Willimantic. William (Lell) Llewellyn Arnold was John’s son and Walter Llewellyn Arnold was Lon’s son. The two sons, who often used the same signature, “W.L. Arnold,” were friends. Walter’s respect for Lell was evident in his description of him; “a man who had spent his life in the woods.”
39 Marriage certificate, Ancestry.com
40 Lyn was not related to the Moores who had cabins at Big Benson Pond, Borestone Mountain, and Lake Onawa.
trapped.41 Most of the guests were Mainers.42 The owners were all local people who, along with their families, had been coming to the sporting camp to fish and hunt and continued to come once they gave up their ownership. After the early 1920s, most of the sports were from outside Maine. In the 1920s, the sporting camp opened for fishing and closed at the end of hunting season.

William Llewellyn (Lell) Arnold, son of previous owner John S. Arnold, and his wife Winifred ran the sporting camp from 1922 until 1947, when they retired to their home in Bangor. Prior to buying the sporting camp the couple lived in Houlton where Lell was a for-ester for Great Northern Paper Company and Winifred, a Cornell University graduate, taught German in the high school. The Arnolds spent a great deal of the year at the sporting camp.43 They typically closed up and left by the end of December and one or both of them were back in mid-to-late March and generally no later than mid-April. When they came in April 18, 1929, they had to snowshoe all the way. Area hunter and trapper Walter Llewellyn Arnold cut ice for them the winter of 1932, so they may have cut their own in other years.44 In 1938 and 1939, they had Roland Scott Emery, an area guide and former sporting camp owner at Long Pond, stay at the sporting camp all winter.45

By 1925 the sporting camp complex and its offerings had grown substantially. The sporting camp included 15 structures, among which were a dining and main lodge, and eight sleeping cabins with a living room and two bedrooms.46 Some guests liked staying in tents that Lell pitched on platforms. He maintained a lean-to at West Chairback Pond, a favorite fishing spot for guests. Ca-
noes and boats were on each of the area ponds, Little Houston, Indian, West and East Chairback, Dam, Camp, and South, and the West Branch of the Pleasant River, to support fishing and pleasure canoeing. Lell arranged multi-day guided fishing trips to Greenwood Pond on White Cap Mountain. Guides were not necessary to travel to the other ponds, all of which were a short distance away on marked trails.

The sporting camp’s promotional brochures during the Arnold years contained several points of emphasis not found in those of other sporting camps.47 The pond had good swimming and the Arnolds maintained 20 miles of walking trails that provided access to viewpoints like those on Round and Houston mountains. They also arranged one-to-five-day hiking trips for sports. In 1933, Lell guided the first group of hikers, all women, over the new Appalachian Trail (AT) to Mount Katahdin (August 22 to September 3).48

During the Lell years, sports arrived at the camp from a couple of different directions. To reach the sporting camp through c.1942, some guests spent the night at the Dillion House in Milo and others took the train to Brownville Junction where they transferred to the jitney for a ride to KIW until 1933. Lell met them in KIW with a cart and horse team for a ride over the final three miles to the sporting camp.49 Beginning in 1934, some guests arrived at the sporting camp on a side trail from the AT; the trail was the same one that Joseph A. Thompson used to reach West and East Chairback and Long ponds 30 years earlier. The trail descended from the saddle north of Third Mountain to West Chairback Pond and down to Arnold’s landing at the northeast corner of Big Houston Pond. When the trail was abandoned is unknown, but the last AT guide to list the trail was that of 1953.

After the 1947 season, the Arnolds sold to Charles H. MacDonald of Brownville and Bangor; he owned the establishment for the next three years.50 He hired Angus MacDonald (not a relative) to run the sporting camp and perform the guiding services. Angus met guests in KIW and drove them to the site in a four-wheel drive WWII surplus ambulance. Charles emigrated to the United States of America from Canada in 1900, lived in Brownville where he worked in the railroad office and then served in WWI. Ten years later he was a supervisor in a Bangor-based life insurance business, from which he retired in 1955.

John P. Grosvenor purchased the sporting camp in 1950, opened it to sports in 1951, and with the help of his family ran it for the next ten years.51 It included a main dining room and lodge and eight sleeping cabins for two to six people. The old J.A. Thompson cabin was part of the lease. At the time of his purchase, John, who was born and raised in Brownville, was working for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps at Fort Williams in 48 “Map of the Conquest of Katahdin,” Maine Memory Network, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.
49 See note 47
51 Florence Grosvenor provided information for this time period.
Big Houston Camps of the 1950s

The face of Big Houston Camps of the 1930s (courtesy Florence Grosvenor)

The main camp, dining and cooking (Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Camps behind the main camp (Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Camps near the camp wharf (Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Two sleeping camps between the wharf and Thompson’s camp (Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Thompson’s camp (Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)
Cape Elizabeth. His mother, who lived in Brownville, died that same year and left her home to John and his sister. His inheritance made it possible for him to realize his dream of running a sporting camp. Clara, John's wife, did the cooking and housekeeping. Their daughter Florence, who boarded in Brownville for the school year, waited on tables a couple of years during her summer vacation. They hired help during the busiest times that were generally early fishing season and hunting season. In winter, John went in to cut firewood and ice, and shovel the snow off the roofs. They tried maintaining a garden the first year, but animals ate most everything. During their first year, they continued to use the old ambulance to reach the sporting camp, but they soon replaced it with two jeeps.

The Grosvenors used Willie Jackson of Bangor and Veazie to do some guiding for the sporting camp beginning about 1953 and that initiated a relationship with the sporting camp that lasted until 1986.\(^{52}\) He and his wife Becky spent time at the sporting camp and their married son Elwyn and his wife were there in 1959, when she was pregnant with his granddaughter Sherrie. A couple years later Mr. Kitchen (Ketchen) of Veazie, perhaps a friend of the Jacksons, purchased the camp, and a year later the main lodge burned to the ground. Not many years later, Jackson, who owned Jackson Boat Company in Veazie, bought the sporting camp, continued its commercial operation until the late 1970s, and then used it as a private camp until October 1986. The Jackson family was at the sporting camp during the camp season, which was fishing season through hunting season.

A number of structural changes occurred during the Jackson years. To replace the main lodge Jackson built a new stick-frame structure about 100 yards from the pond’s shore at the northwest corner of his lot. The structure, situated so the family had a good view of the pond, had a basement, a gathering space for guests, and living space for his family. Past owners had planted the apples trees just below it. He added cooking facilities to Cozy Cabin, which was near the shore, and Ledge Lodge, which set beyond the Thompson cabin on the prominent ledge overlooking the pond. The old Thompson cabin was also refurbished, but it always had cooking facilities. He did not maintain Honeymoon Camp, which was on the uphill side of the road between the new lodge and Ledge Lodge, and it had disintegrated by 1986. The balance of the eight sleeping cabins Jackson initially had dwindled to Cozy Cabin (four beds), Ledge Lodge, and the old Thompson cabin by 1986. He replaced some of the lost space by building Big Camp, a stick-frame duplex type abode with kitchens and bathrooms capable of sleeping ten; it was near the pond on the south side of the landing.

Jackson liked the sporting camp’s remoteness, which he enhanced by purposely not improving the access road and providing transportation from the KIW gatehouse to the site. The road also had a gate at the West Branch of the Pleasant River bridge. The only way anyone was able to get to the sporting camp was with a four-wheel drive vehicle, snowmobile, or walking. Jackson’s granddaughter Sherrie and her sister often walked the road to the sporting camp because it was quicker than riding in the truck. In the late 1950s or early 1960s, Jackson bought a vehicle that had a track on the bottom that he might have used during the winter. His guests drove to the KIW gatehouse and parked. Jackson came out to meet them at the previously arranged time and drove them in. Sometimes guests stayed at the Jackson house in Veazie and the next morning they all drove up together to the sporting camp. Over time some of the guests became close friends and made the trip once or twice a year.

By the late 1970s, the Jacksons stopped running a commercial operation, but the family continued to frequent the sporting camp in both summer and winter. One summer day, Jackson’s granddaughter Sherrie arrived at the sporting camp and got excited when she spotted a Coca-Cola cooler down in the middle of the field. Her first thought was her grandpa must be rich to have a cooler full of coke in the woods. She ran to the cooler, which was set in a little cold stream that ran from the mountain, and, to her great disappointment, only her grandpa’s live fish bait was inside. Sherrie also enjoyed riding the snow machines the family members bought c.1970 so they could come in for a winter weekend stay and ride around the area.

Jackson sold the lease to Wayne and Ester Hardwick in October 1986 and they reopened the site as a sporting camp for the next six years.\(^{53}\) Wayne had been a lobsterman for 20 or so years and wanted to try something different, so, along with their son Dennis, they made the

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\(^{52}\) Sherrie Patterson provided much of the information about the Jackson family years.

\(^{53}\) Conversations with Ester Hardwick were the sources for information on the Hardwick years.
Maine Sporting Camp History on the Piscataquis River Tributaries

The Grosvenor Years at Big Houston
1950–c.1961
(all photos courtesy of Florence Grosvenor)

Small Camp near shore

Upper Camp enlarged

Guest Camp

Ledge Camp

Guides’ Camp
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sporting camp their new year-round home. Soon after moving in, Dennis obtained his guide’s license and some time later his father did likewise. At the time of their purchase, the sporting camp included only a main lodge, Ledge Lodge, and three other structures, Big Camp, Cozy Cabin, and Thompson Camp, each with sleeping, cooking, and dining space. The buildings had broken windows, doors, steps, and porches, and leaking roofs, all of which the Hardwicks repaired in order to keep them functional. They left the main lodge with its green color, but painted both the blue Cozy Cabin and the yellow Big Camp brown to match Ledge Camp, which had a yellow and red door. Wood stoves heated the cabins and the appliances ran on gas; they did not have an electrical generator. Their garden the first year fed the deer and they did not attempt another.
The Hardwicks lived in the main lodge, the new structure above the old orchard and the center of their operation, where they developed their routines that changed with the seasons. The basement had the gravity-fed spring that served them and the two cabins below their home. During the winter they hauled all water, propane, wood, and other materials to guests at the cabins on plastic sleds. Mrs. Hardwick did the laundry by hand and learned that trying to do it when it was below 16 degrees Fahrenheit was a waste of time. The heat of the wood stoves was her dryer. In the winter, the refrigerators froze everything, so the porch became the freezer and coolers kept meat and milk from freezing. When spring and warmer weather came, they collected shale ice from the lake for the coolers. In preparation for each winter, they cut and split by hand seven cords of wood, going through numerous wedges, mauls and splitting mauls. The sporting camp had no phone or radio contact, but they did have a radio for news and weather. During the days there was always work to do, but in the evenings they played cards and read. In the winter, both Wayne and Dennis trapped. Once a week, someone went out to Brownville to get the mail and check on reservations.

At the time they moved in, the old road from KIW up over Ore Mountain to the sporting camp was in terrible shape, but that was not the only transportation challenge. Instead of trying to use the old road, they took a newer road that swung above the north end of the pond, walked a short trail to a boat landing, and took a boat to their home. They did not offer a shuttle service from KIW to the site, so guests drove the same route. When guests arrived at the landing, they struck a large gong that hung from a tree and the family came to the landing to help. They moved gear and foodstuffs in wheelbarrows for the short walk from the parking to the lake’s shore. The wheelbarrows were tippy and more than once groceries spilled out. As soon as the lake started to freeze and snow covered the road, their walk from the sporting camp to where they left their truck ranged from a half mile to three miles and took up to two hours. Where they could leave their truck depended on the plowing by the paper company. For the first three years, they snowshoed to and from the sporting camp, and one of those seasons they could never park closer than KIW. For their final three years they used a snow machine. The safety of the ice could be a problem for as much as six weeks in both the fall and the spring. During mud season and for a month late each fall, they always had to walk in from KIW.

Unlike many sporting camps the Hardwicks were open for business year-round. The two most popular times for sports were ice fishing and spring fishing. Since their lease included the right to all the registered bear bait sites in the surrounding area, many bear hunters came in the fall and were generally successful. The summer was the slowest time and those who came simply relaxed and did not do much wandering around. The Hardwicks took interested guests to visit the ledges on the other side of the pond. Here, in the deep narrow slits in the rock, ice remained for much of the summer and they named the site “polar caves.” Folks visited Gulf Hagas and used the boats on South, Lost, and Little Houston ponds. Many of their guests returned each year and others learned of the sporting camp through their advertising in newspapers like Piscataquis Observer and their participation in the Maine Sportsman Shows in Augusta.

The Hardwicks sold to Massachusetts’s residents Richard and Julie Neal, who moved in to take over the operation in October 1992. Richard, a builder, and Julie, a teacher, came with their children, Willy 16, Tom 12, and Forrest 5, with the vision of combining their assets with what they would make from the sporting camp operation and establish the site as their home. They had customers, but ultimately not as many as they needed to make things work out for them financially, so they closed in October 1994.

The sporting camp era on Big Houston Pond ended when the Neals moved out. Wayne Bosowicz, who ran
Chapter 3 — North from Brownville on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road

The face of Big Houston Camps 1986–1992

The Hardwick Years at Big Houston
1986–1992
(photos courtesy of the Hardwick family)

Ledge Camp

Inside Cozy Camp

Cozy camp and Big Camp below
the successful Fogg Mountain Guide Service of Sebec and specialized in bear hunting, probably took on the lease for the primary reason that it included all the bear trap sites in the area. Both the Hardwicks and the Neals had enabled him to use those registered sites. However, he apparently did not operate the sporting camp as his predecessors had. Richard Riemersma bought both the land and the structures in May 2003, and as of May 2016 little was left of the structures. The only remains of the cabin on the ledge were bricks and some roofing materials. No evidence other than a level area was at the site of the main lodge. The Thompson cabin was no longer standing. The other abandoned structures had badly leaking roofs, unsafe porches, smashed windows, and separating sidewalls.

For some unknown reason the proprietors and sports at Big Houston Pond seldom traveled south to the many ponds in the bowl, which was primarily the domain of Alonzo Arnold and his son Walter, who spent his whole life in this bowl.55 Joining them was a Willimantic friend, Walter Green, who had a cabin on Indian Pond from 1922 until at least 1927; what became of it is unknown. The only other known early structure in the bowl was a small hunter’s cabin four men had on the southeast shore of Indian Pond in 1929.56 No other structures in the bowl, other than those built by Arnold for his use, appeared before c.1960, and after that he built the three cabins on Indian Pond for three different families.

Most of Arnold’s life was centered on Willimantic where he was born in 1894. He worked the logging operations c.1916 at the Indian Pond. In 1917–1918, he managed the goat herd at the Moore fox farm on nearby Borestone Mountain.57 For years he guided for Packard’s Camps at the west end of Sebec Lake, a day’s walk for him to Indian Pond. Arnold married his wife Marcia in the 20s, and they, along with Marcia’s son Ronald Freeman, resided in Willimantic, where they had a daughter Elaine in 1936 and adopted a son, Andrew Ashe Jr., in 1937. His children often fished with him on Sebec Lake and accompanied him to his trapper’s cabins for overnight stays. Arnold also developed and ran his popular and successful trapping supply business from Willimantic.

Arnold had a curiosity for the land between Willimantic and the Canadian border. His fishing interests frequently took him north to the West Branch of the Penobscot River, Nesowadnehunk Stream, and the lakes and ponds to the east of Moosehead Lake. His knowledge of the territory between Lake Onawa and Yoke Pond at the head of the Barren-Chairback and White Cap mountain ranges influenced his Willimantic neighbor, New York City Broadway actor Walter Greene, to hire him in August 1922 as a guide for a journey from Lake Onawa to Yoke Pond.58 They went through the Notch to Greene’s new cabin at the narrows on Indian Pond, poled a raft down the pond, found the abandoned trail to Big Houston Pond, crossed it in a canoe and walked into KIW, then up the West Branch to The Hermitage, where they stayed two nights so Greene could explore Gulf Hagas. Their next stops were at the sporting camps at Long Pond, Little Lyford Ponds, First West Branch Pond, and then Yoke Pond. Perhaps Greene was already thinking about a trail through this area. The one he cut c.1933 was the Appalachian Trail. Beginning August 23, 1926, Arnold made his first Allagash trip, pulling out at Fort Kent on September 3rd. Other such trips followed in subsequent years.

Trapping expertise, which Arnold began to develop in his youth, became his forte. By the time Arnold was 20 years old, he had established trap lines and built his first trapper’s cabins. When the logging was taking place around Indian Pond (1912–1917), he trapped from the Notch Camp, the cabin at Camp Pond, and 3rd Camp that was probably at Third Buttermilk Pond. One typical early route was from Willimantic to Notch Camp to Third Buttermilk Pond (3rd Camp) and down through the watershed to Bucks Cove at the west end of Sebec Lake and close to his home in Willimantic.

Once the loggers left the bowl c.1917, Arnold built more trapper’s cabins in the area. One was on the west side of Lucia Pond and “Camp Hermit Crunch” was at the foot of Caribou Bog. A few miles above Big Houston Pond on the stream from Indian Pond, he and his young

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55 Much of the information about Arnold’s activity in this bowl comes from reading his “Personal Journals 1919–1976” at the University of Maine Fogler Library, Special Collections.

56 This structure is not mentioned by Walter in his journals, but reference to it appears in The Maine Sportsman.

57 Other Arnold information came from his obituary, Bangor Daily News, July 8, 1980, a copy of which is with his personal papers at the University of Maine Fogler Library, Special Collections.

58 The information for this trip came from: “Walter Green and Walter Arnold trip journal 1922,” which is part of Walter Llewellyn Arnold Personal Papers that are at University of Maine Fogler Library, Special Collections.
trapper friend, Bill Gourley, also of Willimantic and a guide for Packard’s in the late 1920s and 1930s, built a cabin at the head of Camp Pond on the north side. One year when they were making home brew, they accidently burned the roof off the cabin. They replaced it by going up the watershed to Raytown, an abandoned logging mill community at the head of the watershed near Ray Pond, and disassembled a roof of a still-standing structure. 59 They took the roof logs across the peat bog to the head of Indian Pond, towed them down the pond into Dam Pond and either drove them down the brook or hauled them on the tote road that passed on the north side of Camp Pond before reaching the northwestern corner of Big Houston.

Arnold and Gourley coordinated their trapping efforts for many years, shared trapper’s cabins, and somehow they timed their trips so their paths only crossed. The reason for only one man at a time at the tiny cabins was that Gourley’s wife Katherine, who worked at Packard’s and married him in October 1937, traveled with him during the trapping season and skinned out the animals. However, at Camp Comfort Arnold often set up a tent to accommodate extra persons or women, and the two men sometimes enjoyed a night together here. They also shared a cabin reached from the east-most cove of Silver Lake at the foot of Saddlerock Mountain. Arnold had a canoe hidden on the west shore of the lake and they both used it to reach the east cove. The two men ran separate trap lines in geographically different areas that could be served by one cabin. Arnold’s trap lines were primarily on the east side of the Barren-Chairback mountain range, and a number of Gourley trap lines in the 1960s were on the west side of the range, where he was able to arrange for his use of one of the structures of Little Lyford Camps. While the Gourley’s moved from Willimantic to own and operate Schoodic Lake Camps from 1940 to 1971, the two continued to trap in the winter.

Some years after the woods in the bowl began to recover from the logging, he abandoned the cabin at Camp Pond in favor of Camp Comfort that he built c.1945 close to a stream that came off the Barren-Chairback mountain range and not too far west of Boot Pond. By this time the Notch Camp was not in good shape, but he had no need for it with Camp Comfort. Arnold spent considerable time at Camp Comfort until 1952, when he built a small cabin, Camp Morish, at the site on Indian Pond where his father had had a cabin on the north side. He reused the door and windows from Camp Comfort and outfitted the cabin with a gas refrigerator in 1955. In addition to the smaller cabin, he laid out the foundation for a larger cabin that he finished in the late 1950s.

59 John Leathers provided this information in an interview.
In the late 1950s and early 1960s Arnold made some life-altering decisions that allowed him to live in the environment he wanted and do what he loved most. On October 6, 1959 Arnold returned to Camp Morish to live year-round by himself and to continue to trap and pick spruce gum. Three years later, he sold his successful trapping supply-related business to his close friend Oscar Cronk. Rather than going out for supplies, he arranged for them and his mail to come in by a float or ski plane every few weeks. He rarely left his beloved wilderness and at one point did not go out for three years and 10 months. To leave was to walk his trail from Willimantic or fly by floatplane or, after 1973, go out by vehicle on a logging road cut north of his camp. Arnold had his first floatplane ride in 1947, when Terris Moore, who had a cabin on Borestone Mountain, landed on the pond to fish and offered Arnold a ride.

Arnold had friends who came in to see him, three new ones joined him on Indian Pond and others looked out for his well-being in other ways. A distant relative of his, John Leathers, a game warden, brought to and left with him a fawn he raised. Susie frequented Arnold’s dooryard for three years. After a year she went off and came back pregnant, and after the fawn was born, Susie would never let it into the cabin’s yard. Suzie came back a third year, but then never returned.60 One of those individuals looking out for Arnold was Charlie Cole, who flew in his supplies. Cole got nervous because he had not been able to land for six weeks; Arnold set out markers when the ice was at the appropriate thickness. He buzzed the cabin and airdropped supplies. Unfortunately the hard landing mixed such things as flour and soap.

Arnold met the family that would be his first neighbor on the pond in the early 1960s, when he was paddling on the Indian Pond. He noticed the Dick and Jane Harriman family of Bucksport camped in a buggy area,

60 Oscar Cronk was the source for additional information in the post-1950 era.
got to know them, and built them a cabin in 1962 on what Arnold called Brown Jug Point. The Harriman family and Arnold remained close friends until he died, and still retain the cabin he built for them.61

About 1961, Arnold had a visitor, Arthur Allgrove, who came by floatplane specifically to meet him and see if they might be compatible neighbors on Indian Pond.62 The Allgroves were well-acquainted with Maine sporting camps; Arthur guided for the Molunkus Lake Sporting Camps in 1957–1958 and his son Bruce worked there as a summer helper. Bruce, who attended Higgins Classical School in Charleston, met and became friends with fellow student Jack Packard, from Packard’s Camps on Sebec Lake. Jack and his family, friends of Arnold, suggested Indian Pond and that the Allgroves fly in to meet and talk with Arnold. It turned out they all liked one another, and Arnold helped them secure a lease and then built them a cabin in 1962. The Allgroves used the cabin four or five times each summer and still retain it in 2016.

In the mid-1970s, Walter built a cabin for Maurice Sleeper from Connecticut. The Sleepers first used a cabin Arnold built on Dam Pond. Without the impoundment of the dam, access from the water was difficult. Perhaps for that reason, Walter built a cabin for them at the head of Indian Pond, where the old logging railroad from the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) at Kuroki Siding via Raytown ended. No one ever used the cabin at Dam Pond again. Since the Sleeper ownership, Jerry West from New Jersey acquired the cabin.

The Harrimans, Allgroves, and Sleepers were people Arnold enjoyed and he looked after their cabins in their absence. His journal writing suggests they were fond of him, often bringing in unasked-for items and leaving foodstuffs for him on their departures. As he aged and slowed, they watched out for him. In his last years at the cabin, the Harrimans in particular looked after him and helped take care of him. He resided in his cabin until he became so lame in the late 1970s that he could not move about and went to stay with his friend Oscar Cronk. He died in 1980.

Either Walter or his children passed the cabin on to Wendy Shaw, a close friend of Walter and frequent visitor at the cabin. Her son, James Shaw, inherited the cabin.

**North from KIW on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road**

Back in KIW another five sporting camp owners met their sports at the Silver Lake hotel and traveled north on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road to reach their sites. Charles Randall opened a sporting camp on First West Branch Pond in 1881, a 20-mile journey. Eph Gerrish advertised his sporting camp as 12 miles from KIW on the south shore of B-Pond in the late 1880s. Charlie Berry and Jack Caughlin had a sporting camp at Yoke Pond in 1897, someone, perhaps one of these men or one of the other KIW guides, like H.A. McDonald (1894–1898) or Bert Peabody (1898), had a rough sporting camp, called “Hotel Spruce”, at Spruce Mountain Ponds six to eight miles from KIW via a path up the mountain from Ten-mile shanty, the next stop north of KIW.63 A man by the name of Cochran had what was reported as Cochran’s Camp at an unknown location on B-Pond from the late 1890s until at least 1903.64

**First West Branch Pond**

In 1879, Charles Randall accompanied his father, Phillip H. Randall, on a hike to First West Branch Pond, probably from their sporting camp at Little Lyford Pond, to hunt moose. They found an abandoned logging camp at the pond’s western-most cove, took it over, fixed it up as a personal hunting cabin, and called it Moose Camp. Two years later Charles was running it as a sporting camp.

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61 Arnold’s “Personal Journals 1919–1976” at the University of Maine Fogler Library, Special Collections.
62 Bruce Allgrove provided the information on the Allgrove family’s experience and the Sleeper cabin.
64 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, February 11, 1899, p.8.
During the Randall years, the route to the sporting camp varied. Initially, the best road, due to its yearly high traffic, was the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road to the Logan Brook area and a short side-trail to Third West Branch Pond, where travelers switched to canoes for the last leg of the 20-mile journey. Randall also began to use a slowly improving route from KIW along the West Branch of the Pleasant River, but its condition varied radically based on logging operations. By 1900, the family’s guides, like Eugene Robinson in fall 1899, met the guests at KIW and used this 19-mile rough route along the river, Pleasant Valley Tote Road, to reach the sporting camp. At the same time, some guests started coming in via an even longer route from Greenville, where they took a steamer up Moosehead Lake to Lily Bay, a buckboard to Kokadjo, a boat to South Inlet on First Roach Pond, and lastly a buckboard to the sporting camp. The trip may have been long, but, if the lakes were reasonably calm, it could be a smooth ride and little to no walking. In the 1930s, guests could reach a parking area near the sporting camp by vehicle from Greenville via the French Town Road that the CCC constructed to the end of South inlet. From here a Hollingsworth and Whitney Company logging road brought them close enough for a final short walk or buckboard ride to the sporting camp.

Over the next 18 years his clientele increased. In 1890, he had added three sleeping cabins and, in 1897, he had a total of six, and could sleep and feed 30–35 guests at a time. To help feed their guests the sporting camp had a garden and chickens, and pastured cows and horses.

The large numbers meant Charles also hired additional help. In the mid-to-late 1890s, 18-year-old Edgar Sherburne, who would eventually own the sporting camp at nearby Little Lyford Ponds, helped with chores, and Martin Conley, 60 years old in 1895, and Eugene Robinson, guided. To what extent Charles’ wife Flora and children Roy, Doris, and Elsie, participated in the operation is unknown, other than his son Roy guided. The family retained a permanent residence in Milo, where they also had a farm, and lived in the off-season.

The sporting camp’s remoteness presented numerous challenges. Those present on September 27, 1895, when Martin Conley was unloading a canoe at the sporting camp and a gun accidentally discharged, hitting him in the shoulder, learned one lesson in remoteness. As Randall and others moved Conley to a bed and began attending to him, Randall’s assistant, Edgar Sherburne, headed down the tote road along the river to KIW, the closest telegraph station, to summon a doctor from Milo. He went by foot, as being the fastest means, and reached KIW four hours later. By the time the doctor reached KIW it was dark, but they took a horse cart to the foot of Gulf Hagas and walked the next seven miles to Little Lyford Camps in the dark. At first light, after a short night’s rest, they continued by foot the next seven miles to tend to Conley.

The remoteness also provided a challenge not only to the Randalls and their guides, but their sports, nearly all of whom wished to take their game home. In the fall of 1899, one group of hunters shot a 700-pound moose four or five miles from the sporting camp. Their guide made sure they were near an old tote road when they shot the animal. After shooting it, the men built a sled, and cleared a sled path to the old tote road. Then, they had to remove the deadfall and brush from the unused tote road. Finally, they went back to the

66 A great deal of information on this sporting camp came from Eric Stirling and Rosemary James, both of the Chaddwick family tree and Hidden in the Woods: The Story of Kokad-jo (Greenville, Me: Moosehead Communications, 1977) by Shirley Duplessis.
67 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, October 1, 1895.
68 “Maine Big Game,” Forest and Stream, Vol. LIII no. 23 (December 2, 1899): 477.
Chapter 3 — North from Brownville on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road

sporting camp to retrieve a horse to pull the sled. It took two days to get the moose out. In addition, each member of the party shot his full complement of deer (three per person). The Randalls were then responsible for hauling all of the carcasses from the sporting camp to KIW. In 1902, they hauled out a sport's moose that had a rack spread of 52 inches with 20 points; to that point in time, it was the largest sent out on the B&A.69


About 1914, the Randalls sold to Louis P. and Alice Dolbier Chadwick of Holden. They had previously worked with their fathers at the Upper Dam House, dam, and farm of the Union Water and Power Company on Upper Richardson Lake in western Maine, and had moved back to Holden about 1910. After buying the sporting camp, they, along with daughter Shirlie (b. 1902), moved to Brownville where Louis’ parents joined them. The sporting camp was now known as “Chad-
Activity Scenes from Abbie Chadwick Years at First West Branch Pond Camps (1921–1946)
(courtesy Eric Stirling and family, current camp owners)

Abbie Chadwick, Violet Mayo, and friends harvesting a camp grain field.

Abbie Chadwick tending to her work on skis.

Violet Mayo hanging out the weekly laundry.

Abbie Chadwick on the handles giving Violet Mayo a ride to the next task.

Abbie Chadwick taking a break in her cabin.

Marion Call preparing activity with a horse.
wick’s Camps”. After seven years, Louis sold the sporting camp in 1921 to his brother, Fred W. Chadwick, who was 22 years younger. He too grew up on the family farm in Holden and resided there, until he made the purchase and moved to the sporting camp. A year later in July, Fred married Abbie Savage, whose parents, Milo residents, worked for Louis. The couple, with help from their son Fred and daughter Connie, ran the sporting camp for the next 25 years.

In the early 1930s, they hired a young recent Milo high school graduate, Cliff J. Kealiher, to drive the team that brought guests to the sporting camp and he remained involved for the next 43 years. Cliff liked the work and the location, and obtained a guide’s license. After serving in WWII, he returned and married the Chadwick’s daughter Connie. They left Maine for five years and then returned to buy and run the sporting camp for 23 seasons (1950–1973) with the help of their two daughters Rosie and Carol. Connie wanted the family together, so when their daughters reached school age, they obtained a home in Greenville, where they lived together as much as possible while school was in session.

In 1973, Cliff and Connie sold the sporting camp to their daughter, Carol, and her husband Andrew Stirling, and continued to reside in Greenville. Cliff then ran the area campgrounds at South Inlet, Two Mile Brook, and Scott Storehouse for the next 13 years. Andrew and Carol continued the family traditions in running the sporting camp and raising children, three sons, Jack, Nathan, and Eric, while doing so. Carol homeschooled their three boys; whereas, her grandparents had sent their children to school in Milo and they lived with relatives.

In 2003, Andrew and Carol passed the sporting camp to their youngest son, Eric, and his wife Mildred. As past family members have done, their two children, Avis and Oscar, are growing up at the sporting camp.

During the 100-plus years of Chadwick lineage ownership, a few things have changed and some have remained the same. One category of change revolves around guest stays and calendar. In the early years, guests were primarily fishermen and hunters; however, starting about the turn of the century whole families began to come for an extended stay, but gradually the length of those visits shortened to a week or two. To help bolster revenue, the sporting camp housed CCC crews working in the area in the 1930s. Beginning in 1933 the guest list expanded to include AT hikers, and those crews performing maintenance on the trail. Myron Avery, founder of the trail in Maine, and his group from Potomac, Virginia were frequent guests. Beginning about 1970, the sporting camp opened in winter for the first time in order to serve snowmobilers. About 2004, the complex welcomed cross-country skiers.

Many traditions of the sporting camp have been retained. Amazingly, the sporting camp, with five of its sleeping cabins built in the 1800s, its dining room built in 1914 by nearby neighbor Joe Boudreau, and its newest structure built in 1935, has never lost a building to fire. Each family maintained the historic ambience of a traditional Maine sporting camp of the late 1800s. They maintained a garden through 1988. The sporting camp has always had rafts or boats on Big Lyford, and Second and Third Branch Ponds for its guests. Beginning in 1906 guests climbed White Cap Mountain on the fire warden’s trail and obtained a wonderful view from its 12-foot wooden tower; guests still climb it, but on the Appalachian Trail. Most noteworthy is that each of the families worked hard to preserve the visual appearance of a late 1800s sporting camp and model the daily traditions of that life, and, within that context, found new ways to sustain their livelihood in these wilds.

**B-Pond**

Another ingenious woodsman and guide using the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road in the late 1880s was Evan (Eph) H. Gerrish, born and raised in Brownville and living in Bangor. He was one of the first men to recognize the advent of an increasing number of sports in the Maine woods and built a sporting camp at Lake Onawa. At the time, 1873, some thought it was the first sporting camp in eastern Maine. Apparently, Eph also realized that the influx of sports would increase the demand for canoes. In those early years he, like all others, used birch bark canoes in his guiding and woods work. They took great care and frequent maintenance, and above all were not easily mass-produced. By 1882, he switched from

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70 Eight years later John and Louis left the Upper Dam Hotel under the care of George and returned to Holden. George managed the hotel until 1919, when he left and moved to nearby Aziscohos Dam on the Magalloway River, but he returned a year later and stayed until 1945. After selling the sporting camp the couple moved to Errol, NH, near Upper Dam, where they farmed and Louis was caretaker at the Aziscohos Dam.

making fly rods to the first canvas-covered canoes, which he manufactured for the next 29 years in Bangor using a technique he perfected.

For transportation to his B-Pond sporting camp Gerrish took advantage of the teamster traffic on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road. He met his sport or two at KIW and then obtained a ride on a tote sled to Ten-mile shanty, the first stop north of KIW, and spent the night. The next day he and the sport departed from the main road and walked a couple of miles to B-Pond (Baker Pond) landing. Here, near a beach at the southwest corner of the pond, Gerrish built his first structure in the late 1880s. However, a new dam in 1890 presented a flooding problem and he moved easterly to the knoll above the beach. He kept his operation small, one cabin, and ran it by himself with some assistance of his local guide friends.

In 1893, Gerrish sold the single cabin to the popular KIW guides Jack Caughlin and Dave Hutchinson, who kept the sporting camp going for the next 30 years. The demand for their services was great, but they took on only the number of sports they could tend to themselves and at times turned away business. Hutchinson and Caughlin first met and became friends in 1888, when they participated in the log drive through nearby Gulf Hagas, and then logged together for the next 30 years. Jack was apparently from the area, but Dave, born in 1850 in Glasgow, Scotland, grew up in New Brunswick, Canada and moved to New Hampshire in 1886 to log.

In 1891, Jack helped Dave build a home up on the arm of nearby Shanty Mountain, an area that had great spruce gum picking. Dave picked the next couple of years with area guide, logger, and jack-of-all-trades, Martin Conley. At other times, he tended any one of a number of dams in the area including that at B-Pond. Where Jack actually lived in the 1890s is unknown, but he had a cabin in the early 1890s on Yoke Pond, north of B-Pond. About 1918, Jack disappeared leaving no word of his whereabouts, but Dave continued with the sporting camp, which now was a compound of three cabins, two they built in 1895 and the Gerrish cabin, which they rebuilt in 1901.

Hutchinson, at 73 years of age, probably ceased operations about 1923 and the camps never reopened as a commercial sporting camp. The William H. McCril- lis family heirs of Concord, Massachusetts began to buy more land to add to what their great uncle William H. McCrilis amassed in the 1870s. Perhaps in the mid-1920s, but certainly by 1938, the children of Harriet Griswold’s (McCrilis’ sister) youngest son, William H., and his wife Anne Merrill, had amassed the acres that included the structures. They used the sporting camp, but did not run it as a commercial enterprise. In 1964, the Griswold children sold the cabins and the 50 acres on which they rested to Farnham W. Smith, who was born and raised and then lived in Concord, Massachusetts. The enclave has remained with the Smith family heirs through a series of trusts.

Access to the site was not always from KIW, as it was in the early years. Logging roads changed and were not always passable. By the late 1950s, they came in from the Jo-Mary Road to the northeast, using part of the old log hauler road from Upper Jo-Mary Lake to B-Pond. Around 1960, the family traveled in from the Kokadjo area to the north side of B-Pond. At the landing, they had a special scow to bring people and dunnage across the pond to the compound.

**Yoke Pond**

Another friend of Caughlin and Hutchinson, Charlie Berry, had a sporting camp on Yoke Pond by the mid-1890s and he used the KIW access route into the 1940s. Berry built one of the cabins and some believe Caughlin built the other one prior to Berry’s presence. Charlie met his sports at KIW and before he bought a horse, they either walked or rode with a teamster to Ten-mile shanty, then walked to the beach near Hutchinson’s and Caughlin’s sporting camp at B-Pond, paddled across, and hiked a trail over the Boardman Mountain saddle and down to

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72 A great deal of the information for B-Pond came from John Leathers, who worked in the area, and from “Some Notes on a Two-Week Trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920,” an unpublished personal account written by Theodore L. Smith.
Yoke Pond in the Cooper Brook watershed of the West Branch of the Penobscot River watershed. He used some cabins on North B Ridge between B-Pond and the East Branch of the Pleasant River as a rest stop. By 1920, the buildings on the ridge were not in good condition and some believe Berry dismantled one and reassembled it at Yoke Pond. He left the others to disintegrate as access to his sporting camp was improving with an alternate new route coming from Greenville c.1921.77

**Third West Branch Pond**

Beginning around 1910 Hutchinson, Caughlin, and Berry welcomed Joe Boudreau, who became a friendly and beloved hermit of the area until he died.78 He built a cabin on Logan Brook, not far from the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road and three quarters of a mile from the east end of Third West Branch Pond. Boudreau was a woodsman, who logged, guided, fished, hunted, trapped, built log cabins for others, and probably picked spruce gum. He first came to the area about 1895 as a logger on the upper East Branch of the Pleasant River, an area served by the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road long after the portions of the road north of this area fell into disuse. Boudreau did not run a typical-of-the-times sporting camp. People knew he guided and if one or two sports sought his services, he accepted, and they stayed with him at his year-round cabin home. Boudreau probably met his sports in KIW until the early 1920s, and used

By spring 1937, when Boudreau had become so lame that he could no longer go outside, his good friend Jesse Burns moved in and took care of him.79 They first got to know each other on a c.1895 logging operation, and then hunted, trapped, and logged together until they died. Burns, who was born in 1868 in Shirley, Massachusetts and grew up in a family employed by the cotton mills, apparently moved to Maine to take up logging and other

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77 A fuller history of this camp is available online in: Geller, William. *Within Katahdin’s Realm: Log Drives and Sporting Camps,*
78 The predominant information sources for Joe Boudreau include: Eric Stirling, whose great grandparents knew Boudreau, and Shirley Duplessis’ book on Kokad-jo (see note 73).
79 Information about Jessie Burns came from a number of sources: Eric Stirling, Piscataquis County Probate Court records, Piscataquis County Register of Deeds, Moosehead Historical Society, and Ancestry.com.
woods work. By 1911, he lived in KIW and was guiding sports from the hotel to area sporting camps.\(^{80}\) He also guided for the Chadwicks and their clients, like the Howell family. In 1920, he was logging for the Howland Pulp and Paper Company and lived at camp #1 on White Brook in Bowdoin College Grant East, just north of KIW.

No one ever knew where Jesse really lived in the woods, when he was not at an active logging camp. Burns was probably asked by the McClurrie heirs to abandon his trapper’s cabins. However, by the late 1920s, Jessie had a cabin at the site of an abandoned logging camp that was just beyond the Baker Brook crossing, a little past the three-mile marker below Big Lyford Pond, on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road. Whether he built a new structure or fixed up an abandoned building is unknown. The cabin remained in usable condition through at least 1937, but someone burned the structure by 1940.\(^{81}\)

In March 1935, Burns inherited the Howell family cabin that Charles Randall built on a lot that abutted the north side of his lot at First West Branch Pond. In 1904, Charles M. Howell, one of Charles Randall’s sports, had a successful hunt. The following year he was back again for eight days with a friend and they shot a moose, two black bears, four deer, a fox and 12 partridges. Randall and his son Roy did the guiding.\(^{82}\) Randall apparently liked Howell, and when requested by Howell to build him a cabin c.1904, he agreed. Howell designed the structure, not a typical small rough-and-rustic log cabin, but one with indoor plumbing, a huge brick fireplace, and Tiffany lamps. The cabin, Howell Camp, had matching mission-style black-stained oak furniture from Morris and Murch in Boston and many pieces are still in use in the cabin. Howell, whose family owned a button manufacturing company in Newton, Massachusetts, was an avid moose hunter, and entertained his clients at his lavish cabin. He died in the late 1920s and on March 29, 1935 his wife, Annie, and her children, Frederick A. Howell of Weston, Massachusetts and Ruth Howell Hallett, also of Weston, deeded the cabin to Jesse Burns for a dollar.\(^{83}\)

A year and a half later, November 11, 1936, Burns sold the cabin to Chadwick, and two more transactions followed in the next 29 years. The sale included the main building, a smaller log structure, and a boathouse, and was contingent upon Burns being able to use the smaller log building for the next six months rent-free. At some point, Guy Gannett, the Maine publishing magnate, began staying at First West Branch Pond camps and got interested in Howell Camp. He used it enough that the name of the structure changed to Gannett Camp. Gannett Publishing Company paid for the remodeling and reconditioning of the cabin, and bought it from Chadwick September 20, 1945. Fifteen years later Cliff Kealiher, Chadwick’s son-in-law and the sporting camp’s proprietor, bought back the cabin and made it cabin #10, part of First West Branch Pond Camps.

When Burns negotiated the sale, he may have anticipated moving in to take care of Boudreau; sadly though, he was only able to care for him until November 1937, when Burns passed away.\(^{84}\) Boudreau quickly gave his sporting camp to his close friend Fred Chadwick and lived his final three years at the CCC camp on First Roach Pond at South Inlet, the site of South Inlet Campground.

Boudreau’s cabins at Third West Branch Pond served a number of purposes after he died. The Chadwicks used his cabins through at least 1942 as a branch camp that AT hikers could use with prior arrangement. By 1946, the family stopped using the site and sold the structures to Hollingsworth and Whitney Company for use in support of their logging operation. Sometime in the 1960s Cliff Kealiher bought back the cabin Boudreau built for AT hikers and Dwight Demerritt bought the cabin Boudreau used. Fred’s great grandson Eric Stirling bought the Demerritt lease in 2011 and is refurbishing the cabin for his family’s personal use.\(^{85}\)

Charles Howell also had an outlying cabin, Camp Hiawatha, built on the north side of the cove at the east end

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80 "Big Houston Camps guest register 1896–1939," University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections
82 Boston Daily Globe, November 5, 1904, p.11 and October 27, 1905, p.4.
83 After his father’s death, Frederick took over the button business, which he sold before 1940 and for which he then continued to work.
84 Upon his death the court found that Jesse F. Burns was an alias for George Franklin Griffin of Shirley, Massachusetts. Joe Boudreau knew of no relatives, so an appointed administrator of the estate began an investigation that led to a brother in Massachusetts and two sisters in Maine. Jesse had remained in contact with his siblings who knew him as George. (“Utterly Curious Story Comes from Greenville,” Bangor Daily News, May 14 or 15, 1939)
85 In 1957, Wendell Brown, an area game warden, built the other cabin at the Boudreau site. Ray Bickmore, who provided this information, and his wife bought the cabin in 1985 and continue to hold the lease. Ray’s wife taught him how to fly fish. Bill Macomber also provided information.
of Third West Branch Pond sometime in the early 1900s and subsequent owners preserved it. This cabin was not fancy, like the one on First West Branch Pond; it was a typical Maine fishing cabin. Some of the materials for the cabin came via the Roach River waterway. One board had the date October 17, 1906 written in pencil along with some undecipherable words. After Howell died in 1929, his family soon abandoned the cabin. The Dover-Foxcroft Roy Dow family picked up the lease on the abandoned cabin in 1931 from Prentiss and Carlisle Company. For some unknown reason the Howell-Burns 1935 sales agreement for the Howell cabin at First West Branch Pond identified some specific belongings that included blankets and instructed Burns to deliver them to Joe Boudreau for Camp Hiawatha at Third West Branch Pond.

Dow, a lumberman and logger, owned a number of cabins that he used for different purposes and his family continues to retain this one, his fishing cabin. Dow passed the cabin on to his son, Russell, also a woodsman, and he passed it on to his son Jim, a registered Maine guide. Over the decades of ownership, the family has done its best to preserve the cabin’s early 1900s authenticity. Whoever built the cabin, perhaps Charles Randall and men he hired, created a well-constructed cabin on posts. The advantage of such construction was the circulation of air, which kept logs drier than if the cabin sat on the ground. The sill logs finally deteriorated to the degree that Jim Dow cut and trimmed nearby trees, skidded them in, jacked up the cabin, removed the rotting logs, and put the new ones in place. They preserved the original outhouse by moving it to a different location and turning it into a work shed.

Murphy Pond

The only other neighbor of Boudreau, Burns, and Dow was Pete Peters, who had two sites in the headwater area of the East Branch of the Pleasant River between c.1935 and 1975. By the time Pete had a cabin on Murphy Pond and another on the East Branch in the mid 1930s, loggers had nearly abandoned the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road and his access was from Greenville. He moved to the Murphy Pond cabin after leaving a clerk job at the CCC Kokadjo Camp, which opened in 1933 and closed in 1938. For some of the early years, Pete lived winters in Kokadjo, but later he resided year-round at his cabin. At some point, he abandoned the Murphy Pond cabin and lived in the East Branch cabin that was at the sharp bend above a former Great Northern Paper Company depot camp at the mouth of the brook from Hutchinson Pond. When asked about the bars on the windows and the old saw blades that edged the entryways, he said the bars were to keep the law enforcers out. Others thought it had to do with his fear of bears and the woods in general.

Pete was a quiet eccentric type who had few resources. Occasionally he hosted a sport or two at Murphy Pond and at times did a little guiding for Charlie Berry at Yoke Pond Camps. He was a frequent visitor at the Yoke Pond Camps looking for a food handout, which he received. He always carried a gun, but only hunted from a roadway. One year he shot a deer that was perhaps not more than 50 feet from the road, and then sat down on the road. John Leathers came by shortly thereafter and Pete asked him and his friend to retrieve the deer. At the close of hunting season folks in the Yoke Pond area gathered to celebrate the year and everyone always joined together to give him a good collection of foodstuffs. Those who knew Pete thought he might have modeled himself on the hermit character Jake Peters in Earl Biggers’ book, Seven Keys to Baldpate. Peter, whose real name was J. Wilfred Peters, lived on the river at least through 1975. In 2016, the North Maine Woods campsite above Hutchinson Brook is the site of Pete’s now disintegrated cabin.

86 The Jim Dow family provided information on this cabin.
87 Much of the information about Peters came from John Skillin, John Leathers, and the Duplessis book on Kokadjo (see note 73).
Chapter 4 — West from KIW on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road

The Pleasant Valley Tote Road parted from the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road near the farms above the head of Silver Lake, and eventually worked its way up along the West Branch of the Pleasant River to its headwaters. By 1852 it had reached the head of Gulf Hagas, but it was nearly another 30 years before some semblance of a passageway reached Big Lyford Pond and West Branch Ponds, the river’s headwaters, and the end of the often impassable or exceedingly rough 20-mile journey from KIW.

Long Pond

About 1873, sporting and private camps began to appear along or near the lower portion of the road: Philip H. Randall at Little Lyford Pond (1873); William P. Dean at Long Pond (c.1875); Waldo Billings at Long Pond (1875); Campbell Young at the foot of Gulf Hagas (c.1892); George I. Brown and Son Camps, the Brown Farm, just over the KIW town line in Bowdoin College Grant East Township (1898); and Holman Day on Long Pond (c.1900). The Pleasant Valley Tote Road above Little Lyford Pond did not develop as a route to the sporting camps in the Big Lyford Pond and West Branch Ponds area until after 1880, when it reached the outlet of First West Branch Pond and, even then, the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road was at first used for access from KIW.

As passed down by word of mouth, William P. Dean was at the southeast corner of Long Pond building a cabin c.1865, but how he happened to be there, when his home at the time was in township #5 of Hereford, Canada, on the border north of Canaan, Vermont, and he did not move to Lincoln until 1872, remains a mystery with only a few clues. Dean, an artist turned photographer, was born in 1835 in Canada, and moved to Hereford, Canada in 1861. In January 1868, he married widowed Leah Hubbard of Colebrook, New Hampshire and they resided there along with Leah’s three daughters, and William worked as a photographer. By 1872 the family moved to Lincoln, where Dean had a photography shop until sometime in 1878. Leah divorced Dean in January 1882. Within a year Dean moved to KIW, where he re-opened his photography shop and ran it for the next 14 years. In 1889 he advertised himself as a guide, work he performed through 1898. Between 1900 and 1911, the year of his death, Dean lived with the George and Ada Larrabee family in Kingman.

Dean died while on a solo hunting and trapping excursion during the winter of 1910–1911. Ada Larrabee reported him as missing, area folks conducted an unsuccessful search, and no one found his body until May 1, 1911. On his death certificate the coroner listed Dean’s occupation as photographer, noted the cause of death as exhaustion, and wrote that “Dean came to town several years ago, made his home with a resident, had an eccentric nature, shared little about his prior life, and was a great hunter and trapper.”

In 2015, 24 of Dean’s photos (dated 1865–1875) were at the J. Paul Getty Museum near Los Angeles, California, and another 26 stereoscopic views (undated) were in the New York City Public Library digital collection. The works include pictures of Lincoln and other towns in the Penobscot River valley, Pleasant River, Ore Mountain, the KIW community, charcoal kilns at KIW, and the Silver Lake dam and nearby sawmill. Neither the museum nor the library have additional bibliographic information or are exactly sure when Dean took the pictures.

Given that Dean loved woods life away from civilization and he was new to this area of Maine, he may

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1 No first hand written account puts Dean at the pond in 1865: the recorded facts make the early date questionable.

2 The date on each Getty object is based on the medium (albumen silver prints), presentation (stereographs), and subject matter. The photos at the NYPL are labeled as “Dean and Larrabee.” Whether the Larrabee on the pictures pertains to a Larrabee family member with whom he resided is unknown.

3 J.A. Thompson, a visitor to Long Pond in the 1870s, made this observation, which was noted in: Rowe, Herbert W., “Across the Chairback Range,” The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 8 no. 94 (June 1901):
have originally built the cabin as a personal refuge, but his subsequent addition of buildings suggests that at some point he began operating a sporting camp that he stayed with until 1888. Over time Dean added three other structures, “the Octagon Camp,” “the Dean,” and one for dining and cooking. The octagon-shaped cabin was heated with a fire on a hearth in the middle of the camp and the hearth had an inverted steam locomotive smoke stack suspended over it for a chimney.4 Dean’s sports arrived in KIW where either he or a guide met them. They probably rode with a teamster to the Pleasant Valley Tote Road junction where they shifted to foot travel if no team was headed up river. Near the mouth of Henderson Brook at the foot of Gulf Hagas they waded the river, until Dean designed and built a suspension bridge, and then continued on a trail to his sporting camp.

Dean sold in 1888 to Albert and Helen Brown, who further developed the commercial operation and advertised as Chairback Mountain Camps. Albert had previously worked in the nearby iron works and Helen at the Silver Lake Hotel. The sporting camp was now a nine-mile buckboard ride from KIW, where they met the guests. During their first seven to eight years they added four buildings to the complex; the names of three of them were “the Alden,” “the Rinebach,” and “Camp Kendoza.” The name on each structure in 1906 was: The Cliffs, which was on Boulder Point, Camp Kenoza, Camp Little Rhody, Camp Bay State, Camp Ronkonkomo, Camp Ktaadin, The Octagon, The Cedars, and The Jungle.5 Dean’s original cabin was crumbling in 1901. At some point, and with Dean’s cleverness, they replaced his suspension bridge with a high-line cable ferry or, as locals named it, the aerial ferry, or, as referred to by river drivers, “Dean’s roller coaster.” It was still functioning in 1901 and proved useful when the river was clogged with logs or too high to cross with a horse and cart. To build it they stretched two cables across the river high above the water. Suspended from the cables was a box structure in which a person stood and pulled the box across.

The Browns had a large number of guests who came year after year. Many came to fish and hunt in the area of East and West Chairback Ponds, Trout Pond, Wilder Ponds, and Hedgehog Pond, where at a minimum they had a raft to fish from. They also maintained a trail that went over the Chairback Mountain saddle to Big Houston Pond. In 1895 they had a total of 76 guests.6 To accommodate the overflow crowd in 1906, they used several tents and lean-tos. Cecil B. DeMille came with his wife in 1906 and in 1908, the party included six friends. Dean visited the sporting camp nearly yearly through 1909, and probably guided for them.

After Albert died of typhoid fever at the sporting camp in 1898, Helen continued to manage the operation. She and her two daughters, Edith and Ethel, both of whom grew up at the site, ran the sporting camp for the next five years with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mills, and logger and long-time guide, Charles J. Henderson. In 1904, by virtue of his marriage to Helen, Charles became an even more integral part of the operation and the couple continued to run the establishment until about 1920, when they moved to Milo and Charles returned to the woods as an axe man in the lumber camps.

A young Clarence W. West (b. 1901) of Milo succeeded the Hendersons, was the manager through 1924, and advertised the sporting camp as Long Pond Camps. Whether or not he purchased the sporting camp from the Hendersons or had perhaps guided for them and now managed it in their absence is unknown. During his tenure the kitchen and dining room buildings burned, as did the cabin nearest to them. He had left a fire in the kitchen stove unattended. Clarence married in Milo in 1924 and by 1930 was a plumber.

Roland Scott Emery, known as Scott Emery, of Brownville took over the sporting camp for the next three years. Previously, he guided for this sporting camp and others, and was a woods worker in the off-season. Whether his wife Ada and his two sons joined him in running the sporting camp is unknown. In 1928 Emery went to work for the White Cap Mountain warden and ten years later, in 1938 and 1939, he was the winter caretaker for Big Houston Camps.

Helping at the sporting camp beginning in the 1920s was a young Ben Cole of Dover. His mother had carried him, as a two-year-old, in a burlap bag with two holes cut out for his feet, back and forth to the family’s sporting camp, the old Philbrook shanty, on Wangan Brook just above Upper Ebeemee Lake. When the Long Pond


5 Rowe, Herbert W., “Across the Chairback Range,” The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 8 no. 94 (June 1901), 230–232.

6 “Long Pond Camps / Dean Register 1895–1919,” University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections.
Chapter 4 — West from KIW on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road

Chairback Mountain Camps at Long Pond (c. 1875–present)

Dean’s Octagon House (1880s – present) (William P. Dean photographer, courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Chairback Mountain Camps 1890s (William P. Dean photographer, courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Old cold cellar (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

William Dean next to the deer (William P. Dean photographer, courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)


Chairback Mountain Camps 1907 (courtesy Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company, In the Maine Woods, 1907)
sporting camp had no work or he had a few days off, he walked out to KIW to get back to Dover. By the mid-1950s Ben's daughter Jean and her husband Joseph Megquier had their own cabin on Upper Jo-Mary Lake.7

Ralph E. York, a logger and teamster, was Emery's successor and managed the operation until 1936. In the 1920s he was a logging camp foreman in the Milo and Lake View area, and managed Lake View Hotel, where he resided with his second wife Lillian. The Yorks' access to the sporting camp was by team from either Greenville or KIW, routes used through at least 1931. Those traveling by train got off at Brownville Junction where Ralph met them and drove them to the head of Silver Lake. From the lake to the sporting camp was a four-mile buckboard ride.

The Yorks sold to Earl W. Perham and he and his wife Minnie ran the sporting camp through the end of the 1954 season.8 The Perhams were born, grew up and lived most of their lives in the Brownville and Milo area. Earl was a logger and a teamster in the off-season for the American Thread Company in Milo. The sporting camp eventually became known as Perham's Long Pond Camps. During their ownership they added a guest camp and a camp near the barn for the hired men, and built a new wharf and cold cellar. The sporting camp's connection to the outside world continued to be a phone line to KIW.

The Perhams opened in May and closed up by Thanksgiving, but left one small cabin with supplies open for the winter in case someone needed shelter. Fishermen came in May and June, and many hiked into East and West Chairback ponds to fish. Earl felt the fishing in Long Pond was poor due to the logging drive residue. Summer guests were usually present for one to two weeks. During hunting season in the fall they would have 15 to 20 guests. When the sporting camp had 25 to 30 guests, as it sometimes did on Memorial Day weekend, the camp was at capacity.

Access to the sporting camp during the Perham years was from Milo and Katahdin Iron Works. It was a long car ride from Milo into KIW where the American Thread Company had a gate. After unlocking the gate, they drove on to White Brook. From here the mode of transportation was horse and buckboard or wagon. The team went up the valley on the tote road, forded the river, continued up the mountain, and through the bog on corduroy to reach the sporting camp at the east end of Long Pond. The trip was hard for the horses and they took many rest stops along the way. The Perhams' grandchildren always thought they would never get there. In the early 1950s they used an Army surplus vehicle, perhaps an old ambulance that had high clearance and a winch on the front. They could only use it after the spring flow of the river subsided. When the water was high they used the horses. The ambulance may have been a little faster than the horses, but it was a lot rougher.

Minnie directed the sporting camp's operations, cooked, kept the accounts, was the primary contact with their guests, and never left the site once the season started. Earl's work was providing guest transportation to and from camp, caring for the horses, keeping the canoes, boats, and the two boat motors in proper condition, and securing food stuffs and other supplies as they needed them. Minnie hired a helper and Earl hired two men who worked throughout the year. At the time they bought the sporting camp their sons, Charles and Earl Jr., were older and never took on a role in the sporting camp's operations.

The hired men had specific tasks spread across the whole year. In the spring they planted the sporting camp's garden that included: green beans, wax beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, lots of lettuce, radishes, and potatoes. Throughout the sporting camp's summer season they spent considerable time maintaining the corduroy section of the access road, and cut the many cords of firewood for the following year. They saved the sawdust and used it in the icehouse. As they cut ice in the winter they placed sawdust between the ice blocks and then covered the ice when the house was full. Several times a winter they came in to shovel off building roofs. These men also helped with the horses' hay, which was cut from the fields of the old farm just above Silver Lake at KIW. They would strew the green hay on the ground near the barn, turning it to dry it before storing it in the barn.

Minnie knew that good food made a positive impression on guests and was a key element in the success of any sporting camp. The kitchen and dining room with a porch was in the main camp on the lakeshore, and served

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7 Interview with Jean Megquier.
8 Most of the information on the Perham ownership came through Nancy Mae Perham Offutt and her daughter Chris. Nancy spent the first 17 summers of her life at the sporting camp with her grandparents. Some printed history states that Earl W. Perham ran the camps with his son Jr.; Earl Jr. had no involvement with the sporting camp's operation. Earl W.'s father was John Perham.
as the gathering point for guests. Minnie’s warmth and friendliness was central and a vital part of these gatherings and guests looked forward to them. She had a small library for the guests in the dining area.

The meals were excellent, served beautifully, and included meat, starch, vegetables, salad, and desert. Minnie cooked and baked with a wood stove, turning out bread, biscuits, doughboys, rolls, donuts, and all the other baked goods. Before the garden started producing she used the canned vegetables she put up the previous year. Otherwise the vegetables and salad ingredients came fresh from their garden. The condiments, like pickles, she had canned at harvest time and stored for the winter in their cold cellar. When the raspberries were in season
The Perham Era at Chairback Mountain Camps (1936 to 1955)

Chairback Mountain Camps
the Perham Era
as remembered by
Nancy Mae Perham

Camp Garden
Ice House
Female Help Camp
Perham’s Camp
New Kitchen,
Dining Camp

Wood Shed
Barn

Guest and Staff Outhouses
Fenced Area for Horses

Root Cellars

Blood Sucker Rock

Willet Road to KIW

Holman Day Writing Retreat
on Holman Day Point

Long Pond

Camps, left to right:
Sulu
Osocozy
unknown name
Little Roadie
Nutmeg
Bay State
Octagon

Earl bringing in guests (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Post-WWII Dodge camp transportation from KIW
(courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)
Chapter 4 — West from KIW on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road

Chairback Mountain Camps of the 1940s
(courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Minnie and Earl’s house (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Camp Osocozy (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Camp Katahdin (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Ice house (courtesy Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company, In the Maine Woods, 1930)

Camp Bay State cabin (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)

Camp Little Roadie (courtesy Nancy Mae Perham)
she served them with fresh cream, made pies with them, and preserved some. She provided bag lunches for those who went off for the day. Guests never had to eat the same meal twice during a stay, even of two weeks. When a guest wanted his or her fish for a meal, Minnie dredged them in corn meal and then fried them in bacon fat. She also cooked for the staff and her family, often a little different version of what she served the guests, and they ate in the kitchen area. Her kitchen had a hand pump that drew water from the lake for cooking and washing, but their drinking water came from a spring even though the lake tested potable. She preferred to cook on the wood stove as opposed to a small gas stove that was available. For refrigeration there was one small gas unit, but she relied mostly on the ice the men cut and stored in the ice house. The sporting camp did not keep any farm animals other than the horses.

The kitchen also served as the sporting camp’s laundry facility. Minnie and her hired woman washed the camp linens in huge copper pots on the wood stove, rinsed them in the lake and wrung them out by hand. The camp had an old gas wringer that sat on the porch, but it was noisy and smoked and they had to haul water from the lake to it.

Life at camp during the summers for the Perham grandchildren was fun and exciting. Charles’ children, Nancy Mae, Jimmy, and Ronny, visited the camp with their parents in the summer and when they were old enough spent the whole summer, from July 4 to late August, before they returned home to East Hartford, Connecticut. Nancy did a few chores to help her grandmother, but they mostly played, swam, used the row boats and canoes, wandered around the woods, read books, and played cards. The few children that came with their parents for a stay did not share the same excitement about the area as Nancy and her brothers did. Once or twice a summer they would go down the lake in the big row boat with the big motor (big enough for eight or nine people) to visit the Dore’s sporting camp. The trip was exciting, especially when the water was low later in the summer and they had to navigate just so through the narrows, so as to not hit any rocks. A few times they hiked a loop that took them to Gulf Hagas and back. When raspberries were ripe Minnie and her grandchildren went to the abandoned lumber camps to pick and then enjoy them in fresh cream. Sometimes they went to the small nearby island to pick blueberries. When guests caught fish they brought them back to camp for cleaning, often by granddaughter Nancy. Sometimes there were so many Minnie set up a seven-step assembly line: cut open, gut, clean blood stream, rinse, dry, newspaper wrap, place on ice in ice house.

The sporting camp had a few AT hikers, and every few years a trail crew would come and stay at the camp for a few days. In 1948 Earl Shaffer, the first through hiker on the AT, stopped at the camp in August, slept in the barn, and bought a couple cans of food before going on. He had planned on taking the hike with a buddy, but he never returned from the war so Shaffer decided to do it alone.

The size and number of structures in the sporting camp complex was at its largest during the Perham years. As the guests approached the circular road through the camp’s grounds, the first building they saw was the barn and work shed on their right, and in the circle the workman’s camp, which sat in a wooded area south of the barn. Their first view of the lake was over a grassy area and the garden, below which was an ice house and then the cabin Minnie and Earl lived in with attached quarters for the hired female help. The long side of the main camp (dining and cooking) paralleled the nearby shore and had a porch on the west end. An open grassy area separated it from a flower garden of mostly pansies that was next to the Octagon Camp, in front of which was the wharf with five boats. The canoe rack was the next object and beyond that lined up on the rocky shore were seven sleeping cabins (Ktaadn, Bay State, Nutmeg, Little Rhodie, a space, unknown name, Osocozy, and Sulu). A small sand beach was just beyond Sulu Camp. The two outhouses, one for guests and one for staff, were up across the camp circular road. Also in the circle were the swings and the new and old cold cellars. A dead-end road from the circle went to a fenced-in meadow for the horses. Older folks referred to the meadow as the “big garden.” Nancy, Minnie’s granddaughter, thought that maybe previous owners had a large vegetable garden in this area. The Appalachian Trail entered the grounds between the icehouse and the garden.

When the Perhams were in their 60s the camp work became harder for them to manage and they knew it

9 Low water was not always weather related. The lumber company controlled the dam and sometimes left a gate open for unknown reasons. When Earl heard a gate was open, he sent a man down to close it. The lumber company never told Earl to stop.

10 Nancy Mae Perham provided the layout of the camp.
was time to sell. Harry G. Kitchen, who had not been a
guest, bought the sporting camp. The Perham heirs re-
member that he may have bought it for an organization
that might not have run it as a commercial enterprise. At
some point during his short ownership he built a new
main camp away from the lake in a position in which it
did not receive the lake breeze, so it was hot with poor
ventilation. Kitchen employed Bob McMichael to help
with the operations.

Kitchen sold in 1960 and for the next decade owners
Anne and Jim Erwin of York operated the sporting camp
under the name Chairback Mountain Camps, a name
first used by the Hendersons in the 1890s. The Erwins
and their four children were not campers or hikers, so
owning a sporting camp was a totally new experience.
However, as a boy, Jim had spent his summers on his
grandmother’s farm in South Berwick and loved being
in the woods. Those experiences and his joy of hunting
fueled his dreams of owning a sporting camp. The fam-
ily may have been attracted to this sporting camp be-
cause Jim’s uncle from the South Berwick farm owned
a private camp near the foot of the pond. In addition to
having a sporting camp, Jim was also developing his legal
and political career. From 1967 to 1972 he was Maine
attorney general and subsequently a two-time candidate
for Maine governor.

At the time of the Erwins’ purchase the sporting
camp’s structures needed considerable maintenance
work. They spent a year repairing roofs and walls, and
took down the old dining cabin, which they replaced
with a stick-frame building. When they opened a year
later they had five sleeping cabins for sports, a cabin that
they lived in, and a cabin for a maintenance person. Each
cabin had an outhouse, but no plumbing of any sort. The
kitchen had gas refrigeration, but their cook used a wood
stove until late in their ownership.

The Erwins hired a year-round caretaker and main-
tenance person, Jim Drake, who was a Monson trapper
and a general jack-of-all trades, and upon whom they
depended greatly. He and the cook took care of the gar-
den and ran the sporting camp when the Erwins were
not present, which was frequent in the fall when school
was in session. In the early spring he prepared the sport-
ing camp for the spring opening, in the fall he closed it
for the winter, and during the winter he kept the roofs
shoveled. One of the spring preparations was repairing
the boats and placing some on East and West Chairback
ponds where fishing was excellent; the fishing in Long
Pond in the 1960s was poor. When the Erwins were there
all family members present helped out, but it was not
a priority for the children to be at the site for the full
summer.

At some point in time prior to the Erwins’ ownership
the rendezvous point for anyone headed to the sporting
camp changed from KIW to Bodfish intervale. Drake
picked everyone up in a Chevy Carryall, which could
handle the rough six-mile tote road up the west side of
Long Pond Stream to a landing near the mouth of Trout
Pond Stream, a mile above the pond’s dam. From here
they used boats for the four-mile trip up the lake to the
sporting camp.

The trips up the pond and through the two rocky
narrrows were always an adventure depending on weath-
er, wind, the amount of dunnage, and especially if the
Erwin’s Irish wolfhounds were in the boat and an animal
was at the lake shore. At some point in the 1960s Jim’s
uncle, Tom Davidson, who had a cabin near the dam,
took his D-2 bulldozer into the narrrows and pushed
around some of the rocks attempting to create a bet-
ter channel. Apparently, Drake was at home in Monson
when Davidson did the work, for when he went zipping
back through the narrrows, having long ago memorized
where every rock was, he crashed into one that Davidson
had moved.

One challenge the Erwins apparently faced was at-
tracting more guests. Given the run-down condition of
the sporting camp when they bought it, those folks who
had perhaps been coming year after year had started go-
ing elsewhere. The difficulty of reaching the sporting
camp was perhaps another drawback. They also had no
reliable phone service and had to use mail to commu-
nicate about all reservation and pick-up arrangements.
They did benefit from an increasing number of hikers on
the Appalachian Trail (AT), which passed through a cor-
er of the sporting camp’s yard. In spite of their efforts,
by the latter part of the 1960s the Erwins realized the
establishment was not going to be successful commer-
cially, so they stopped taking guests and used the sport-
ing camp for their enjoyment until they sold in 1971.

After the Erwins sold, family members’ contact with
Drake continued, as did his presence in the north Maine
woods. He went to work for the Allagash Wilderness Wa-
terway, and by the early 1980s he took a job with Bangor

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11 Interview with James R. Erwin, son of Anne and Jim Erwin.
Hydro tending the Telos dam on Webster Brook. When the Erwin’s eight-year-old son Jim first met Drake, they connected and over the years Jim learned a lot from him. Perhaps their association was a part of the reason Jim worked the last log drive on Chesuncook Lake in 1971. They stayed in touch until Drake died in the mid-1990s. For Jim, Drake’s passing represented the end of an era in the Maine woods.

Keith and Shirley Hodsdon, Andover beef and vegetable farmers, succeeded the Erwins and ran the sporting camp for the next 25 years. Their son Joel, who soon sold his Tim Pond Camps lease (Eustis), joined the operation as caretaker and spent a few winters living at the sporting camp and restoring the Octagon Camp.12 The Hodsdons continued the tradition of opening with fishing in the spring and closing at the end of the hunting season. When the Hodsdons took over, the route to the sporting camp was either the one the Erwins used or the old trail up Henderson Brook from the river ford at the Hermitage. Loggers soon replaced the old trail, when they opened a road for their operation in the East Chairback Pond area. About 1990 the Hodsdons sold a percentage of the sporting camp to Howard R. and Katherine (Kitty) J. (Goodman) Simpson of Baltimore, Maryland. Howard, who had a prominent career in the bond securities business, was an avid canoeer and hiker, and had been a frequent guest at the sporting camp. The Simpsons and their four children and their families came each summer with many children and friends. Five years later they knew of the Hodsdons’ interest in selling their remaining share and bought it.13

The Simpson lease was for a private camp, but they still hired a caretaker and others to do needed work. John Leathers worked a couple of years for the Simpsons replacing logs of the sleeping cabins, and recognized the structures needed more work than he could ever get to. The part-time caretaker took down one structure closest to the water, but did so before the Simpson’s had permission to replace it. No one ever rebuilt the structure. In 2004 the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) became the landowner and three years later bought out the Simpsons, and soon reopened the sporting camp as a commercial enterprise. The AMC tore down the stick-frame kitchen and dining room and replaced it with a new log-style lodge. Some of the Simpsons returned for stays during the first years of AMC operations.

The oral history involving the initial building of Long Pond Camps c.1865 and the Octagon House some years later, tells of William P. Dean, a Civil War veteran who lost an arm, and his young son building a cabin at the pond.14 Primary documents indicated Dean was not a veteran and did not have a son. However, Dean might have been assisted in his cabin-building by a local Civil War veteran and his young son, or, Dean may have been confused with a Civil War veteran and his young son who had a cabin on the pond. A sporting camp brochure from the York era stated that soon after the Civil War several prominent Maine officers came to the pond to recuperate from wounds and disease.15

One such person who could fit either situation was Thomas Waldo Billings of Brownville and his son Andy R., who was born in 1865. Confederate soldiers wounded Billings at the Battle of the Wilderness. With his health restored, his commander asked him to organize and lead sharpshooters for the remainder of the war. Whether the wound was related to his arm is unknown, but a wound did affect his lungs and ultimately led to his death, March 10, 1890.

Billings was certainly familiar with the Long Pond area. He not only hunted and trapped the area, but he also worked for the lumber baron William McCrillis exploring and scaling lumber on his timberlands in the watershed of the East and the West Branches of the Pleasant River.16 About 1876 he decided he wanted a trapper’s cabin and built one in a clump of tall spruce on the northeast shore of Long Pond. A huge boulder with a fire hearth at its base was the wall at one end of the cabin. He made the side walls of cedar splits and covered the roof with poles topped with large sheets of bark. By 1880, Billings, who became a cooper and had a shop by 1870, was only farming, hunting, and trapping. He had become known as the area’s best big-game hunter of moose, caribou, and bear; a notoriety that came in part from a bear trap he set in October 1871 in the KIW area.

12 Joel Hodsdon obituary at Findagrave.com.
13 Interviews with James Draper and John Leathers provided information about the Simpsons.
14 Andrew Riely captured the oral history in: “Timber, Shotgun, Boot, and Ski.” Appalachia, Vol. LXII no.2 (Summer /Fall 2012).
15 York, Ralph, “Long Pond Camps,” printed brochure, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections.
and caught a 400-pound caribou. Later in life he was in charge of “the town [Brownville] farm,” which attended to indigents, the poor, and others needing assistance. Billings Falls near the head of Gulf Hagas was perhaps named for him.

As did some trappers of the time, Billings shared his cabin with fellow trapper friends. In 1878, J.A. Thompson18 was hunting in the area and made what he described as a cozy cabin his home for a time. One day, Amos Chase, a guide from Greenville who also knew Billings, was guiding Lucius Hubbard, the mapmaker and guide book writer, down the West Branch of the Pleasant River Valley.19 Not knowing Thompson or that he was using Billings’ cabin, Chase decided to stop and spend the night. Thompson knew of Hubbard and was impressed with all his instrumentation. He also noticed Hubbard had a Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity lapel pin and to Hubbard’s surprise gave him a secret fraternity sign that Hubbard immediately recognized. Thompson had belonged to the same fraternity when he attended Colby College. Hubbard was an 1872 graduate of Harvard College. The following morning Thompson paddled them down the lake so they could go on to Trout Pond, Hedgehog Pond, and Elephant Mountain, their route back to Greenville. When Thompson stopped using Billings’ cabin and what became of it are unknown, but in his columns for The Maine Sportsman in the early 1900s he did not mention his use of the cabin after 1878.20

Another Long Pond neighbor of Dean, Billings, and the Browns, was Holman Day. Between 1892 and 1908 Day, a well-known Maine newsmen and author, spent considerable time in the Lake Onawa and Long Pond area.21 Day grew up in Vasselboro and when he was 16 years old, he worked the summer at a hotel on Moosehead Lake. He loved the Maine woods and its inhabitants, and traveled to many parts of northern Maine. At some point he obtained a Maine guide’s license and took friends into the Katahdin area. Other times he was even farther north at places like Churchill Lake. He liked to have companions with him and he hunted with a camera and notepad. In the early 1900s he wrote at least two articles for Forest and Stream.22

Before spending time on Long Pond, Day had a cabin on Lake Onawa.23 Here he met and talked with the Nymphos Bodfish family, whose members had lived in the valley since c.1830. He also traveled up Long Pond Stream to Trustim Brown’s farm and sporting camp where he spent time listening and talking to Brown, who lacked formal education but had read widely and wrote coherently. From Brown’s sporting camp he walked a trail to visit Long Pond, where he met Dean and Thompson.

The east end of Long Pond and the Chairback Mountain Camps appealed to Day and at some time, probably before 1900, oral history indicates he gave up his Lake Onawa lease and built a structure on a Long Pond point that took his name. Documented history tells of Day building a “sort of lean-to” on a prominent point, a short walk from “the main camp.”24 When the Perham’s granddaughter, Nancy Mae, was at the sporting camp, only the ruins of the Day structure remained on Holman Day Point, which is across the cove from the sporting camp, a short walk, and immediately east of what locals labeled First Island.25 The size of the ruins Nancy saw suggested that Day’s structure was more than a simple three-sided lean-to with a roof. Jim Draper learned that Day hunted in the area and when he shot a deer he drained the blood of the deer by hanging it over the Chairback Mountain-facing cliff side at his structure on the point.

The “main camp” Day lived in at the pond was probably a cabin at Chairback Mountain Camps. It was reasonably large, for in 1906 when he wrote King Spruce, both his wife and publisher were present at the cabin. Day signed the guest register at Chairback Mountain Camps in 1902 and 1905. He also liked to have friends

17 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, October 16, 1871.
18 J.A. Thompson is Joseph A. Thompson. Typically, his name appeared as J.A. Thompson.
20 In May 2016 a search for a huge boulder in the vicinity of the northeast corner of Long Pond yielded only one large possible rock, but it had no black char on its face.
23 See note 21
24 See note 21
25 Information provided by Nancy Mac Perham Offutt. James Drake, who worked at Chairback Mountain Camps beginning c.1960, also referred to that same point as Holman Day Point in conversations with James Draper in the later part of the 1960s.
in attendance. Cecil B. DeMille, a frequenter of Maine sporting camps, was alleged to have been a guest of Day one summer. DeMille was a guest at Chairback Mountain Camps as per his signature in their guest book in July 1906 and May 1908. DeMille was supposedly at the lake for a number of years in a row. Given the recorded information it seems likely that Day built the lean-to structure that he used for writing when he stayed at Chairback Mountain Camps.

A curious matter concerning the “main camp” is its closeness to Chairback Mountain Camps. Sporting camp proprietors were protective of “their pond” and the surrounding area and did not generally support the building of other structures on “their pond” unless they approved. An unwritten wood’s code, which seemed to be nearly universally honored by landowners, was only one sporting camp or cabin lease per body of water. During Day’s time in the area, 1890–1910, the Brown family owned Chairback Mountain Camps. They were good friends with J.A. Thompson, who had a cabin on the other side of Chairback Mountain on Big Houston Pond. Thompson, who traveled regularly from his cabin to Long Pond and down to Lake Onawa and back to his cabin, visiting people he saw along the way, would have met Day when he was at Lake Onawa. Thompson may also have known Day because they were both Colby College attendees and loved the Maine woods. Thus, Thompson could have been the one who encouraged the Browns’ support of Day building on Long Pond near the sporting camp. Thompson also happened to be one of the township’s (T7R9 NWP) nine landowners, each holding an undivided share.

This assumption about Day’s “main camp” location raises two questions. If the “main camp” was part of the sporting camp complex, then why did Day only sign the guest register twice? Secondly, if Day had his own “main camp,” what happened to it once he stopped using it? It could have burned, but if it did not, there is no found record of another person owning a cabin in this area of the pond. If he left a “main camp” that was not part of the sporting camp complex, then the proprietors at the sporting camp would not likely have let it go to waste; they would have perhaps not maintained it, but used it. There is no information to suggest that the sporting camp either did or did not take over such a “main camp.”

In addition to other published works, Day wrote his first novel, *Squire Phin* (1905), and later *King Spruce* (1906) while at his Long Pond cabin. When he completed a chapter script he sent it out by runner and buckboard to KIW and had it mailed to his publisher, who returned it by the same conveyances. For these books’ characters he generally used a characteristic, as opposed to an actual name, of the people he came to know near his cabin. In *King Spruce* a number of Day’s characters appear to be modeled in part after people he knew in Bodfish intervale and on Long Pond. Trustim Brown, the mediator and spiritualist, was Prophet Eli. Isaac Bodfish, the mentally-retarded son of Samuel Bodfish, was Abe. Edward Young, a guide (1890s) for the area sporting camps and hermit who built a cabin on the edge of Gulf Hagas after his wife left him for another man, was one part of Linus Lane. William P. Dean, as a professional photographer and a person with an unknown past, was another part of Linus Lane. J.A. Thompson, whom lumbermen hired to walk their boundary lines and to check on loggers’ cutting operations, was Christopher Straight. In Day’s story, “On Misery Gore,” William Dean was the outlaw who threatened to burn the woods. Nymphas Bodfish, on Long Pond Stream, was the name of the captain in *Squire Phin*. While Day set *King Spruce* in the north Maine woods, he did not use an actual geographical area, but he did cite different identifiable locations of Maine’s north country and some were perhaps in the Long Pond area. Linus Lane was in a fire watch-tower, where he would signal to Attean Mountain (established in 1905). The site could have been White Cap Mountain that had a manned tower in 1906. He mentioned blasting in a river channel at “the jaws,” a place name within Gulf Hagas. The ledges crisscrossed by various characters could be those of Barren-Chairback Mountain range. Some of the characteristics of Misery Gore, lack of timber, excellent nearby blueberry picking, and home of a small group of poor people, matched Bodfish intervale.

Holman Day’s love of the Maine woods lead him to write about what he observed as the great waste left by logging operations and Maine’s failure to deal with it. His frequent news articles related to conservation and

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26 "Long Pond Camps / Dean Register 1895–1919," University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections.


logging practices and his novel *King Spruce* found their way to President Theodore Roosevelt’s desk in the White House. At the invitation of the president, Day traveled to the White House and gave him a first-hand account of what he had been observing in the Maine woods.28

**Pleasant River**

When Day, the Browns, and Dean traveled the Pleasant Valley Tote Road to and from KIW to reach their sites on Long Pond after 1892, they passed three sporting camps, Camp Comfort, George I. Brown and Son Camps, and The Hermitage.29 The Hermitage opened in 1892 on the north side of the river at the crossing of their trail to Long Pond. Campbell Young, a Scotsman and hermit, built the sporting camp, which was his home and became known as The Hermitage, in a grove of new white pine not far below Gulf Hagas Brook at the foot of Gulf Hagas. Young sold about 1903 to G.W. Morse, a Boston corporate lawyer, who built some additional buildings, including a stable, and hired a year-round caretaker, who may have also run the sporting camp for Morse. The Morse family was present much of the summer season, became friendly with the Brown family at Long Pond and the children of both families often played together.

Sometime during WWI, Wilbur Johns of Ohio, perhaps the bookbinder and printer from Mansfield, Ohio, bought the lease, apparently ran the operation, and sold before 1920 to John Happersberger, a single man from Butler, Ohio. The men perhaps knew each other, as they lived their early years within 15 miles of each other. Happersberger worked in his family’s jewelry business as watchmaker and was a jewelry wholesaler. He took a mortgage to buy the sporting camp, lived year-round at the site, hired Fred T. Allen as cook in 1918, and ran it as such through at least 1920. Allen was a mechanical draftsman in a locomotive plant near John’s Ohio community. He enlisted in WWI in May 1918 and was sent for training to University of Maine at Orono, where the armed services discharged him November 1918. By 1924, Allen and Happersberger were both back working in their previous professions in Ohio. Who introduced these three men to the Maine sporting camp business is unknown.

In the early 1920s John E. Kelley,30 President of Pleasant River Pulp Company and Advance Bag and Paper Company, either canceled the lease or in some manner took over the establishment for the next 20 years. His crews built a two-story lodge, and repaired the other hip-roof log cabins. Both companies directed log drives from the site and kept the place for their clients. Hanaford Graves was their caretaker during the 1930s.

In March 1941 Kelley deeded the land and the buildings to KIW’s Sarah Green, whom he admired, and with whom he had worked, and she reopened the complex as a commercial sporting camp for the next 25 plus years, but not in 1945. For many years Green employed Frank Godreau, a single man with no family.31 One of Frank’s jobs was to transport guests from KIW to The Hermit-age; in the 1960s he used Green’s jeep. The road was poor and they warned the guests that the vehicle would become stuck three or four times on the way in. Other guests included Appalachian Trail (AT) hikers. When The Hermitage was full, Green also rented, without approval, three of the mining company’s cabins on the river below the lake, because the company never seemed to use them. One year, when company officials showed up to use the cabins, she had guests in them.

As Green grew older, perhaps her thoughts shifted to what she could preserve forever that would be a reminder of the grandeur of her beloved KIW area. Green sold The Hermitage and property to The Nature Conservancy by 1967, stopped managing the sporting camp in 1968, and died in February 1969. The Nature Conservancy took down the structures by 1975 with a plan to put them back up at another location.32 However, they found it impossible to move the logs from the site as they had planned. A crew set the logs in the river and attempted to burn them. A number of them floated free, ending up in Silver Lake, where cabin owners salvaged them. The site became a national historical landmark in 1977 and the lovely grove of white pines that surrounded the sporting camp still stands, but are not old-growth pines that loggers of the 1800s passed over.33 By the time Young

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29 Some of the information on these sporting camps came from previously cited Sawtell books on KIW and from the B&A’s series *In the Maine Woods*. Information about the individuals came from Ancestry.com.
30 This spelling of Kelley, as opposed to Kelly, is what appears at the Piscataquis Registry of Deeds.
31 James Draper provided some of this information in interviews.
32 Much of this information came from John Leathers.
33 In many more recent articles, the pines at the site are described as old growth; the first loggers would not have spared any first and
built his first structure the pines had begun to seed in and owners since then protected them for all to see what once lined this river and first brought men here.

Below The Hermitage and near the mouth of Hay Brook an unknown proprietor opened Camp Comfort c.1900. The Maine Sportsman in 1901 listed the sporting camp as three miles from Long Pond.34 In 1903 the telegraph office at KIW received a message for a man reported to be at a nearby sporting camp.35 A runner first went to Camp Comfort, but found no one of the name, so he then went to George Brown’s Camp, The Hermitage, Little Lyford, Long Pond, Big Houston Ponds, and back to KIW. Someone eventually located the man in the Sebec area.

Down river from Camp Comfort and just above the Bowdoin College Grant East town line, George I. Brown and Son Camps or Pleasant River Camps, a half-day’s walk above Silver Lake Hotel, opened before 1894 and served sports for the next 20 years. After the iron works closed in 1890, George may have taken over an old farm or a lumber camp and added to it or built the cabins anew. George, born in 1837 in Castine, served two stints in the Civil War between 1861 and 1864. After the war he lived in Bangor, married for a second time in 1876, and worked as a butcher. By 1880 his wife

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Ellen and four children were in Bangor and he was in KIW working at the iron works. George’s only son Walter I. Brown, born before George left for the Civil War, grew up and worked in Bangor. What role Walter played at the sporting camp is unknown, but when Walter married in 1905 the marriage license listed his father’s residence as KIW and sporting camp proprietor. With deteriorating health in 1908, George left the sporting camp and never returned. 36 Except for one short period of time, he did not leave Togus National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Augusta and died there in 1920.

The Brown family sold by 1909 to William M. and Nellie D. White, who along with their son Henry J., apparently operated through 1914 or 1915. In 1880 William and Nellie lived in Glenburn where William was a painter. By 1900 Nellie, still married to William, and the children lived in Milo. William’s absence from home may be that he was working in KIW. The iron works last firing was in 1890, but he may have stayed on to log or work one of the farms or perhaps to work for George Brown. When Henry married in 1916, he listed his father’s occupation as painting and his parents were living together in Milo. The sporting camp appears to have closed and not reopened once the Whites left.

**Little Lyford Ponds**

Twenty years before Young and Brown opened their sporting camps in the early 1890s, Phillip H. Randall, a contemporary of Dean, Billings, and Thompson at Long

36 His 1908 admittance papers at Togus National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, Maine cited his occupation as ironworker.
Pond, opened and ran a sporting camp for over 25 years in a deserted set of lumber camps near Little Lyford Ponds a short 3 miles above Gulf Hagas and 12 miles from KIW on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road. Randall, who lived in the Bangor area when his first wife died and left him with six children before 1860, married again, to Harriot (Hattie) L. Jackson of Bangor, and by 1870 the family was farming in Atkinson on the Piscataquis River. Whether or not the family made the sporting camp their year-round home is unknown, but the sporting camp served both fishermen and hunters. Randall met his sports at the Milo train station and he transported them from there to the sporting camp via the tote roads. In 1896 Randall leased the sporting camp to E.W. Powers of Brownville so he could rest. By 1900 Hattie had died and Phillip soon moved to KIW, where he died in 1909.

Randall either sold or leased the sporting camp to Wallace W. Freese and his son Benjamin F. by 1900 and they advertised the sporting camp as Randall’s Camps until c.1909. Wallace was born and grew up on his family’s farm in LaGrange and moved to the Sacramento, California area before 1870. He married by 1880 and had three children. At some point, he left the family and came back to Maine, remarried, had another son, and in 1900 listed his occupation as a “hotel keeper” in Bowdoin College Grant (East), where he and his wife Belle and Benjamin lived year-round. By 1910, Wallace had

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38 The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 3 no. 31 (March 1896).
left his Maine wife and son and was back in California living with a son of his first wife.

Edgar Albion and Clara Sherburne succeeded Freese and ran the sporting camp through the 1928 season. Edgar grew up in Milo, worked for Phillip Randall’s son, Charles Randall, at First West Branch Ponds sporting camp as a teenager, and in 1900 was living in Boston and employed as a brakeman on the railroad. He returned to Milo in 1903, worked in the community, and married Clara Mitchell, a local schoolteacher. In at least 1917 he and Clara lived at the sporting camp year-round and had a KIW mailing address.

The Sherburne’s operation was a joint effort. The sporting camp had a cook camp, 13 sleeping cabins and a small cabin valued at $100 at nearby Loon Pond, known as Horseshoe Pond after 1920. It also had a garden, open fields for grazing and hay, chickens in a chicken house, and pigs, a cow, and the horses in a barn. They planted the garden as soon as they arrived in the middle of May. The consequence of the timing of the planting meant that the meals early in the season revolved around trout, potatoes, beans, bacon, a little pork, bread, cookies, doughnuts, eggs, hot cereal, and pies. Mrs. Sherburne, the cook, served a trout dish at almost every meal; fried trout, pickled trout, stuffed trout, trout chowder, and boiled trout. The menu, reminiscent of logging camps, expanded as crops matured, mud on the road dried up, and berries ripened. They also grew and stored oats for the horses. The challenges to keeping the chickens alive were skunks, raccoons, and foxes.

The couple initially advertised the sporting camp with access from KIW, but by 1922 Edgar was bringing in guests from either KIW or Greenville by horse team and on foot; the means of conveyance did not change during their ownership. Guests got off the train in KIW and, after 1922, the jitney from Brownville, and Sarah Green drove them to Kelley’s Depot Camp, west of Silver Lake and above the mouth of Big White Brook, a 50-minute ride covering four miles and costing two dollars. The Sherburne horse team with a stone sled hauled the dunnage and the guests walked from there to the sporting camp.

In 1929 the Sherburnes moved to Bucksport and sold to fellow Milo residents William (Doc) and Grace MacLeod and Miss Marion Call, and they worked together for the next 11 years. Grace was from northern Maine, where she and her husband first lived in Mars Hill and he practiced dentistry. They moved to Milo in the mid-1920s, he continued his practice and they initially lived in the Atco Inn, an inn run by the American Thread Company. Doc suspended his practice during the sporting camp season. Call lived with her sister-in-law in Milo and served as a practical dental nurse for Doc. In 1944 she married Lawrence MacLeod, son of Grace and Doc.

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39 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, October 1, 1895 and December 10, 1896.
40 Phillip Randall cut the first trail to the pond in July 1896; The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 3 no. 36 (August 1896).
Lawrence worked in the lumbering business and was living in Charlestown at the time of their marriage.

Each of the three owners assumed key roles in the sporting camp’s operations and they hired additional help. They came in together in the spring to prepare for the season, which opened in mid-May and closed in late September or early October. Grace and Marion took care of the reservations, accounts, menus, cooking, housekeeping, supply ordering, and gardens. Doc, who was a woodsman and sportsman who had been around sporting camps, met the guests in Greenville, tended the animals, drove the team to transport quests and supplies, and kept the establishment in good repair. He also brought in some of his dentistry tools, so he could do fillings and pull teeth for sporting camp guests in need. Their staff included two male helpers, a road worker, a buckboard driver, a cook and cookee, and a cabin girl.

At least two of the men were almost constantly working on the road or trying to find the break in the phone line or keeping the many trails open and boats afloat or doing some guiding. Others worked the gardens, picked berries, fed the animals, milked the cow, collected eggs, slaughtered hens and pigs, and canned foodstuffs. Getting good reliable help was often a challenge and was ultimately a major reason the MacLeods and Call cited for selling the sporting camp.

Food preparation of one sort or another was ongoing. A crew was in during the maple-sugaring season to tap the trees and put up quarts of the syrup that were stored in a root cellar where it did not freeze. When they came in to sugar, they also brought in 30 chickens and a rooster in crates that they could slide over the snow. In early May, after the snow was off the tote road, they walked the farm animals in from KIW. The first harvest-
ed crop was probably dandelion greens that they canned. As their garden crops matured, the cook prepared them for the meals and anything beyond that she canned for later in the season. Berry-picking started with strawberries in June, red raspberries in July, followed by blackberries, and then blueberries. Sporting camp guests often helped with the picking, something people enjoyed. The cook pickled the tomatoes left at the end of the season and on the next to last day of each season, they killed and canned the few remaining chickens.

The MacLeods and Call knew their challenges when they bought the sporting camp and moved quickly to address them. Their predecessors had not tended to some of the changing expectations of sports and their families. Doc fully repaired the sleeping cabins and the two women reappointed them and that included new bedsprings. They bought new boats and canoes to replace, in some cases, rafts from which the sports fished. The menu drifted away from the traditional logging camp-type fare of three large meals a day to a greater variety of preparations and fresh foodstuffs. The other major change was their promotion of guest access from Greenville, and that made it such that sports did not necessarily have to do any walking to reach the sporting camp. Doc met sports at the Greenville train terminal, drove them to Kokadjo and along First Roach Pond to a logging camp near South Inlet. From here everyone rode the buckboard to Big Lyford Camps, where they stopped to eat. Their second rest stop was at Jesse Burn’s cabin about two and a half miles from the sporting camp. At times, when the road was rough, some got off the buckboard and walked. By the end of 1933 the CCC rebuilt the road from Kokadjo to the foot of Big Lyford, where they had two cabins. When the CCC pulled out, they gave the two structures to Call and the MacLeods and they used one, “Lunch Camp,” to provide shelter for sports waiting for their teamster to take them down the Pleasant Valley Tote Road to the sporting camp. When sports were on their way home, they had lunch at the cabin before climbing in a vehicle for a ride to Greenville.

The major attraction to Little Lyford continued to be the area’s large number of excellent fishing spots. While sports could catch 80 or more fish in a day in 1935, they generally only kept a few to eat and to take home. Sports hiked trails to fish the Little Lyford, Horseshoe, Spectacle (2), Mountain Brook, Lloyd, Moose (Baker), Grassy, and Pearl ponds. They also fished the river, especially in the area of the dam and its long impoundment. Boats were available at the dam and the two landings above it until at least the late 1940s, when the dam disintegrated. The small cabin that was at Baker Pond in 1919 had collapsed by 1930, but sports had a camping area there and at Horseshoe Pond for overnight stays. A small cabin at Mountain Brook Pond was available beginning in 1940. Sports also used an old cabin not far above Gulf Hagas, but had to carry in the blankets when using it.

The MacLeods and Call sold at the end of the 1940 season, but they continued to visit the sporting camp. They fixed up a cabin of their own at the nearby abandoned lumber camp. When they gave up their own cabin is unknown, but it may have been in the late 1940s, when their friends the Turners moved to Camp Wapiti near Patten. No one seems to have taken over their site after they stopped using it.

Albert B. and Maude P. Turner, who had guided and been a winter caretaker for the MacLeods and Call, bought the sporting camp and continued the operation from 1941 through the 1947 season. They lived in Corinth with Maude’s parents when they were not at the sporting camp. Albert had grown up in the Abbot and Blanchard area and done lumbering and guiding work. As new owners, they spruced up the place with flower gardens and new red roofs on the cabins. Over the next six years Albert and his crew spend a great deal of time replacing rotted sill logs, porches, roofs, and generally attending to structural problems with which the previous owners had not dealt. They also built several new cabins and extended the sporting camp’s season by advertising to hunters, who could stay until Thanksgiving. They typically had 40–45 deer hunters. The Turners were back in January and February to trap, cut wood and ice, and then again in mid-March for maple sugaring and in mid-April to get ready for the season.

What had been only a buckboard road from Big Lyford to the sporting camp was now passable with a truck and a Model A Ford, both of which they used to bring in guests and supplies. It was now an hour and thirty minutes from Kokadjo to the sporting camp, instead of a five-and-a-half-hour boat and buckboard ride. They continued to use the Lunch Camp, but they gradually abandoned it. However, road challenges haunted them, as they did every owner. On May 12, 1943 they could not get their chickens, animals, and groceries in due to high water and guests had to walk the five miles from Big Ly-
ford. In 1946 the road was in excellent shape due to the Turner's constant attention.

The war years presented the Turners some challenges, but in spite of general transportation curtailment the number of sports coming to the sporting camp was high. Help was as hard as ever to find and foodstuffs had to be carefully planned given the rationing. The cooks continued to can, 23 quarts of dandelion greens, 50 quarts of raspberries, and many other items as the season progressed. They trapped and ate the animals, like raccoons that raided the chicken coop and porcupines that gnawed on the cabins. The MacLeods and Call had done likewise, but more out of curiosity than need. Late in 1946 the Turners brought in a gas refrigerator and stove, and electricity soon followed.

Communications between the sporting camp and the outside world presented problems to every sporting camp owner. One branch or tree landing on the phone line shorted it out and rendered it useless until removed. Sometimes the line broke, with a tree falling on it or a moose tugging to free its antlers or, beginning in the late 1940s, mechanized equipment accidentally pulling it down. If others along the line did not repair their section, then all others had no connection. Little Lyford Camps were crippled at times, when the line did not work for as much as two weeks at a time. Guests could not contact the sporting camp when they reached Greenville and desired a ride in. The mail, which contained most reservations, could be another problem when the river flooded a road or washed out a bridge. Generally someone from the sporting camp went out for the mail at least every other day.

In addition to the fishermen and hunters, other sporting camp guests hiked the area trails. Some went down to Chairback Mountain and others to White Cap Mountain. They climbed the land-slide on Baker Mountain aiming for the flag kept near the top; it could be seen from the sporting camp. Many took their lunches down to Gulf Hagas to walk the trails out to different viewpoints. The most frequently used trail, other than the ones to the ponds, was to Pinnacle Peak to the west of the sporting camp.

Little Lyford Pond Camps did not open for the 1948 and 1949 seasons, but the Turners occasionally used
it. Prior to the 1948 season they bought Camp Wapiti, which was west of Patten, and moved there at the close of their 1947 season at Little Lyford Ponds. Since they did not have a buyer for their Lyford Pond Camps until December 1949, they did not open it, but did occasionally send guests from Wapiti down there for short stays. Many of the sports who had been with them at Little Lyford joined them at Wapiti Camp. Those folks included the MacLeods, Call, Zesigers, and George Bliss, who had encouraged them to purchase Wapiti Camp.

One of the Turner’s guest families, Herbert B. and Becky (Bessie) Zesiger of Toms River, New Jersey, bought the sporting camp with a mortgage and sold it two years later in November 1951. Herbert was born in Akron, Ohio, and married, lived and worked in Ohio and Michigan, until he began his WWII service (1942–1945). He and his second wife, Bessie, and her married daughter, Teda Herndon, were guests at the sporting camp the first two weeks of September 1946. Herbert, a hunter and fisherman, found it difficult to leave at the end of the first visit. After they sold they moved back to Toms River, where they lived the rest of their lives.

For a whole week one spring in the late 1940s the sporting camp’s guests had the rare opportunity to observe a mountain lion as it roamed the edges of the sporting camp’s clearing, apparently hunting small rodents. Sightings of mountain lions between the Lyford Ponds and Yoke Pond from the early 1920s into the 1950s were frequent. Noted trapper Walter Arnold observed tracks in the 1920s around Indian Pond and had one throw a trap near the top of Saddlerock Mountain on one of the ledges. Others reported seeing them on the AT. Keith Skillin of Yoke Pond Camps observed them in the late 1940s. John Leathers, area game warden, saw their tracks in the 1950s.

Donald W. and Olga J. Chase were the Little Lyford proprietors for a few years beginning with the 1952 season. They may have made the sporting camp their year-round home; their mortgage listed no other residence. The Chases grew up in Milo, married in 1930, lived and worked in Dover-Foxcroft, ran the sporting camp, and then moved to San Diego c.1956.

The Chases sold to Charles O. Below by 1957 when access was by auto. Below grew up in Wisconsin, served in WWI, returned to Wisconsin to work in the lumber business and then as a salesman of investment bonds. By 1940 he had moved to the village of Orleans in far northern Vermont on Seymour Lake, where he married a year later and sold life insurance. He also had a home in Greenville from the mid-1950s into the 1960s. How he operated the sporting camp is unknown; he sold to the Torrey family after two years.

In October 1959 Gale and Mary Torrey and three children left Poland in their car and headed north to Greenville, Kokadjo, and the outlet of Big Lyford Pond in order to see the sporting camp they were thinking of purchasing. Here, Gale and his two oldest children went down the Pleasant Valley Tote Road to look at the sporting camp. Mary and their youngest child stayed behind near the car at the pond. Several hours later Gale returned with two excited children raving about how beautiful the place was, and their youngest sibling became envious for not having gone with them. Six months later, with the depth of mud receding, the family began hauling everything they needed in by a jeep Gale bought the previous winter and a 1948 one-and-a-half-ton dump truck. The hauling included everything from 100-pound bottles of propane, to gasoline for generators, food supplies, boats, building materials, and much more. The road was only passable by a 4-wheel drive vehicle or a truck with high ground clearance, and did not change much until about the time they sold in 1977.

Gale Torrey developed an interest in running a sporting camp during the 1950s. He grew up on a small Poland farm where work was never finished and families knew what hard work was. His father and his father’s brother were both great woodsmen. His father’s brother, Erland C. Torrey, was a fire warden on West Kennebago Mountain from 1935 to 1949 and was Chief Warden for the Maine State Inland Fisheries and Game Department, from which he retired after 25 years of service. Gale saw running a sporting camp as a way to be his own boss and knew, like work on a farm, that his auto mechanic skills used in his current employment would serve him well.

The Torreys ran the sporting camp as a family business and everyone had chores. Gale being a mechanic took care of generators (30 volt DC current in all the


43 Information came from interviews with John Leathers and Oscar Cronk.

44 The information during the Torrey years came from Erland Torrey.
cabin]s) and always kept things running. He was every-
thing from mechanic to dishwasher to laundry man to
administrator. Mary did all the cooking. The Torrey
children came into the sporting camp as soon as school
closed in June and left to return to school Labor Day
weekend. David helped out until 1965 when he left for
the military; Sally did most of the cabin cleaning until
she went off to college in 1967; Erland lugged firewood
to the cabins, mowed lawns, and kept boats bailed out
through 1973, but then came back many weekends to
do chores. During the different berry seasons everyone
helped reduce the grocery bill by picking berries, which
then appeared in the desserts that were always a big hit
with guests. As their predecessors had done, the Torreys
kept a vegetable garden for a few years. Animals ate most
everything and the fencing was no deterrent to moose. A
June 30th killing frost in their third year caused them to
finally abandon the garden.

For a couple of years in the 1960s the Torreys al-
lowed Bill Gourley, an area trapper who at the time
owned Schoodic Lake Camps, to use their sporting camp
at Little Lyford. Such arrangements were common from
the first days of sporting camps if owners did not reside
year-round at their sporting camp. In some cases, the ar-
rangement included cutting ice and firewood, and keep-
ing the roofs shoveled so they would not collapse. Albert
Turner, a former owner of the sporting camp, also lived
there a number of winters while he trapped without the
aid of a snow-machine. His only guest was an occasional
visit from the game warden. Turner rode out one year
with the Torreys when they came in for a visit.

One aspect of the sporting camp that was dear to the
Torreys was the feeling of remoteness. Having to rely on
unpredictable forms of communication contributed to
that feeling. For the first five years someone from the
family went out to the Kokadjo post office about every
third day. After it closed, the mailbox was at the head of
Frenchtown Road, where knowledgeable guests picked it
up on their way in and saved the family precious time
and gasoline. The other major factor they liked was that
guests could not drive to the camp. They parked at Big
Lyford, where a phone box nailed to a tree enabled guests
to call for a ride and Torrey came out with his four-
wheel-drive jeep to bring them in. However, by 1977 log-
gers spoiled that feeling by creating a passable road and
three years later guests could get to the sporting camp
by car.

The Torreys, who were nearing retirement age and
felt it was time to leave, sold in 1977 to Joel and Lucy
Frantzman, who ran the sporting camp as Little Lyford
Pond Lodge until 1987.45 Prior to owning the sport-
ing camp Joel worked for Outward Bound, and after
a number of years with that organization he began to
look around Maine for a site for backcountry skiing. The
Little Lyford area had the qualities that both he and his
wife, who were excellent skiers, wanted and thought they
could develop. They opened the sporting camp for the
winter in 1978. Over the next years they cleared numer-
ous ski trails, including a route that Joel used to ski into
Greenville, where he ordered and bought food and other
supplies. He skied back home and Folsom’s air service
flew the supplies into Second Little Lyford Pond, where
he picked them up and dragged them on a sled back
to the sporting camp. Joel built one cabin that the sun
heated.

After ten years, the Frantzmans sold to Kate C. and
Gustave “Bud” E. Fackelman. They had been living in
Grafton, Massachusetts where Kate taught school and
Bud taught veterinary medicine at Tufts College for 25
years.46 They managed the sporting camp for about five
years, stayed open year-round, but reserved blocks of
time for themselves so they could keep active with their
other interests. Their guests were typically those who
enjoyed outdoor activity and generally did not include
hunters, even though hunting in the area was excellent.
Some winter guests came in by ski-plane that landed on
Second Lyford Pond. Bud was an avid fly fisherman and
an Orvis and L.L. Bean certified fly tying instructor. He
taught workshops in the off-season in Greenville, where
the couple also worked with the Moosehead Lake His-
torical Society helping to catalogue some of their materi-
als.47 They built a large new modern-style log cabin that
they used and in 2016 it was the main lodge. The Fack-
elman’s ceased commercial operations about 1993 and
sold in August 1997 to Arlene and Robert (Bob) LeRoy.

The LeRoys were familiar with the north Maine
woods and sporting camp operations.48 Bob’s first intro-
duction to Maine was with his family in 1962. The year

45 Arlene and Bob LeRoy provided information about the
Frantzman era.
46 Arlen, Alice, In the Maine Woods. Hallowell, ME: Letter Systems
48 Information for the LeRoy years came from exchanges with
Arlene and Bob LeRoy.
before, Bob’s father, looking for a remote area to spend some time in, took a map of northern Maine, closed his eyes and put his finger on the map and on Caucomgomoc Lake. After a summer there, they bought a cabin at Chesuncook Village and it is still in the family. Eventually, Bob and his brother Tom moved west to work in the outdoors for a while, but they remained connected to the family cabin at Chesuncook Village. When they learned Medawisla Camps on Second Roach Pond was for sale, they made the purchase and moved back. It was at Medawisla that Bob met Arlene. After a few years, Bob and Arlene were interested in running their own operation, so they left Medawisla. While they were looking and living at Chesuncook, they helped Bert and Maggie McBurney at Chesuncook House during the last years of McBurney ownership. Their dream was to buy Chesuncook House, but that never worked out.

The LeRoys were also interested in running a sporting camp, so when they heard the Fackelmans were ready to sell in 1997, they bought Little Lyford Camps. Bud and Kate kept the cabin at Mountain Brook Pond, but sold it a year later to the LeRoys who put it on their commercial lease. The Little Lyford structures had been maintained, but Bob had plenty to do just to keep them in a steady state. Right after they bought the sporting camp, Bob’s brother Tom came for a visit. At breakfast the next morning Tom indicated that the cabin was pretty drafty. Bob asked for an explanation. During the night, Tom had rolled over and his elbow hit a log that then fell out of the wall. Bob purchased a portable sawmill that he used to mill lumber that he needed. He also converted an old wood shed into a barn that they used for their rescued animals.

The sporting camp was the LeRoys year-round home where they were interested in living, and re-creating for others, a wilderness sporting camp environment of the late 1800s. They also promoted ecotourism, as opposed to purely hunting and fishing. To create and help preserve the 1800’s ambience everyone parked all vehicles, including any snow machines, away from the sporting camp and out of sight. The sporting camp had no electricity and the cabins used kerosene lamps. They instituted the American plan, developed organic vegetable and herb gardens, kept laying hens, six sheep, a goat, and four llamas that they trained to accompany folks on hikes. In winter they did not purposely pack the sporting camp’s cross-country trails. At this time they had eight sleeping cabins on-site and the cabin at Mountain Brook Pond.

The LeRoys, working without hired help, tended to the gardens and the animals, made sure boats and canoes were available at the fishing sites, cut the fire wood, preserved food stuffs, and ensured their guests enjoyed themselves. Bob was the morning breakfast cook, Arlene took care of lunch and the evening meal, and Bob did the clean up. The menu was vegetarian and fish. In an effort to help preserve the fishery the LeRoys promoted catch and release, keeping a few small ones that they cooked for the guest. Bob also found time to teach fly-fishing.

The assistance the LeRoys did have was Abbey, their beloved dog. A popular activity of winter guests was to ski or snowshoe down into the Gulf Hagas area. When they asked about a guide to lead them through the maze of trails Bob and Arlene pointed to Abbey, who loved the excursion and waited at each junction for everyone. Summer guests, many of whom were from the city, seemed to be mostly interested in a quiet relaxing time, which included paddling around on the different area ponds, learning to fly-fish, and watching moose. No AT hikers found their way to the sporting camp.

The road to the sporting camp was not plowed in the winter so a strategy was developed to deal with it. As snow season approached, Bob loaded their snow machine into the back of the truck with chains on its tires. He drove the truck out to the plowed road when a major storm was underway; one that he figured would snowbound them. Sometimes that meant getting up during the middle of the night to see what was happening, and drive out, if it looked like the snow was mounting up to more than a foot. The reverse would happen in the spring. He would slowly bring the truck back toward the sporting camp, as the road sections became passable.

One of the LeRoy’s interests was in the preservation of the fishery of the area that surrounded their lease. About the sixth year of their proprietorship, the land ownership was in the throws of change and eventual extensive logging. Envisioning what that would bring, the LeRoys reached out to the landowners and conservation landholders like The Nature Conservancy and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). The AMC purchased their sporting camp in April 2004. Once the AMC owned the sporting camp, they were interested in buying the 34,000 acres surrounding it and did so in
October 2004. Bob went to work for the AMC as the area’s land manager and he and Arlene moved to and lived year-round at the Mountain Pond cabin that they had not included in the sale. Some years later, Bob’s love of the sporting camp business called to him once again and he left the AMC job and they sold the cabin, which is still in use.

Charles (Chuck) and Rosemary James became the AMC’s first caretakers. Rosemary had grown up at her parents’, Cliff and Connie Kealiher, First West Branch Pond Camps at the head of the river. Her father guided for both Little Lyford and First West Branch Ponds in the 1930s, and her great-grandparents, the Savages, worked at Big Houston Pond Camps c.1910 before moving on to First West Branch Pond Camps, where their daughter, Abbie, and her husband, Fred Chadwick, were the owners. Chuck worked as a ranger and campsite manager for Baxter State Park and was a deputy warden with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

On the ridgeline between the two Little Lyford Ponds was another cabin, known as Hinckley Camp. Frank C. Hinckley, who owned the cabin and the land in 1922, died in 1935. Hinckley’s father, Frank Hinckley, probably built the cabin, for which he had the financial resources to include a magnificent river stone fireplace and chimney, both of which were still standing with every stone in place in 2015. The cabin was no simple trapper’s cabin or abandoned logging camp structure fixed up.

When Frank Hinckley actually built the cabin is unknown, but his connection to the area began by 1870. He was an outdoorsman who traveled throughout the north Maine woods, a Bangor lumberman, an owner of the land around the cabin, and an incorporator of the Katahdin Dam Company to which the Maine State Legislature granted a charter in 1871 for dams on the West Branch of the Pleasant River. In May 1878 he spent 10 days on Moosehead Lake fishing with friends. Eight years later in September, he and a group went north on Moosehead Lake to Northeast Carry and down the West Branch of the Penobscot River to at least Medway at the river’s mouth. Medway was their first opportunity to either resupply or take a stage to Bangor. Frank died in 1909.

Frank C. Hinckley worked with his father, was a forester and surveyor, continued their lumbering and real estate interests, and owned the cabin in 1922 when a timber cruiser assessed it at $500; he had stopped using it. Six years later the cabin roof was badly rotted and the front porch collapsed. In 1929 Doc MacLeod of Little Lyford Camps took down the cabin, salvaging the wall logs for a new dining-kitchen structure that he built at his sporting camp.

Even though Frank C. had stopped using the cabin he did occasionally visit the area, in which he had a much grander interest. Eventually, he formed a development company and in 1932 presented a proposal for a Moosehead Lake Park and Camping Reserve. The proposed reserve of 70,000 to 100,000 acres stretched from Beaver Cove on Moosehead Lake through the Roach Ponds and down the West Branch of the Pleasant River to the head of Gulf Hagas and down Long Pond and Long Pond Stream to Lake Onawa. The plan included the Barren-Chairback and White Cap mountain ranges. The concept apparently died with Frank C.’s death in 1935.

Some may have known the Hinckley Camp as Gartley’s Gazebo, as identified by a plaque placed on the fireplace at some point, and still there at the time AMC bought the land in 2004. One possible Gartley was Gerry Gartley of Greenville. He traveled around by horse, buggy, sleigh, and motorcycle to the logging camps in the area in the 1920s to entertain the men by showing movies. A logging camp was close to the Hinckley Camp and the Hinckleys, as lumbermen in the area, would have likely supported such events. He later became the first Maine state trooper to ride a motorcycle. After WWII, he owned and operated Beaver Creek Camps on Moosehead Lake.

By the early 1870s, when Frank Hinckley perhaps first visited the upper West Branch of the Pleasant River, he would have already known about Jim Lyford, Henry Clapp, and Thomas Billings, the region’s three finest hunters and trappers, one succeeding the other between 1840 and 1890; they had no equals. At one time or another, each of them hunted and trapped from Big Ly-

49 Information during the AMC ownership came from Charles James.
50 This name appears repeatedly in the Bliss journals.
51 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, May 14, 1878, p. 3.
52 Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, September 16, 1886, p. 3.
53 Bliss journals
54 His name appears in the Chairback Mountain Camps guest book.
A map of the area exists and is privately held.
ford Pond, whose short outlet stream flows into the West Branch a few miles up river from the Hinckley Camp at Little Lyford Ponds.

Big Lyford Pond

Recorded oral history revealed that Jim Lyford (Uncle Lyford) and his son William of Sebec came to Big Lyford Pond before 1868 and built a small cabin in support of their hunting and trapping.56 They may have passed through Sebec and Onawa lakes to reach Long Pond and then followed the West Branch of the Pleasant River or traveled the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road from KIW. Jim, born in 1794, was with his parents as one of the first settlers in Sebec (1802) and resided there until he died. His wife gave birth in 1831 to William, who married his wife Hannah and fathered four children, but by 1880 moved his family to Iowa to farm.

Uncle Lyford’s trapping endeavors took him well beyond the Piscataquis watershed and into the Penobscot watershed. One of his frequent stops was at the Philbrook (farm) shanty, the last stop on the Nahmakanta Tote Road before it reached South Twin Lake.57 Here he taught a young Rufus Philbrook, eventually a well-respected trapper in his own right, how to trap. On one of his stops, after Mr. Philbrook had died (1838), most of the family was sick. He delayed his trip and stayed until they recovered.

In June 1867, Uncle Lyford was in the Moosehead Lake area and was sharing his life tales with a vacationing reporter from the Lowell Daily Citizen and News.58 Uncle Lyford was 73 years of age at the time and in excellent health, a condition he attributed to eating bear meat. He had been hunting for the past 58 years and killed 340 bears, but wanted to reach 365 before he could no longer hunt. On his hunting trips he always carried a Bible and kept a daily journal. He died a year later in 1868.

Henry Clapp of Brownville succeeded Uncle Lyford as the region’s finest hunter and trapper. Whether or not he had a cabin on Big Lyford is unknown, but he hunted the area and in all probability used Uncle Lyford’s cabin before and after he died. In March 1869 Henry was with two sports hunting and trapping for three weeks between KIW and First Roach Pond, an area that surrounds Big Lyford. They shot five moose and three caribou, and trapped a number of small animals.59 Clapp’s excursions took him into northern Maine near the Canadian border and east across the Maine border into Canada, on some occasions for nine months at a time. He was perhaps best known for his extensive knowledge of black bears. For six years he raised two female black bear cubs and observed their woodland and foraging behaviors.60 He took an 18-year-old Rufus Philbrook with him trapping for the winter of 1850.61

After Clapp died in 1873, the mantel for the area’s finest hunter went to Thomas Waldo Billings, who at an early time had shot 71 bear, 200 moose, and many caribou for the city markets, when such hunting was legal.62 Billings had a trapper’s cabin, big enough to barely hold three people, on the other side of the pond from the Jim

56 Shirley Duplessis captured the information in her history of Kokad-jo (see note 37).
Lyford site. Billings guided C.H. Ames and another man to the cabin c.1867 and nearly 40 years later Ames was at Big Lyford Camps, the site of Uncle Lyford’s trapper’s cabin at the head of the pond, reminiscing about that trip. From Billings, Ames learned that the pond, originally known as Fish Pond, became Big Lyford Pond in honor of Uncle Lyford.\(^{63}\) As did his predecessors, Lyford and Clapp, Billings also worked with Rufus Philbrook, but when Billings died in 1890 he had no successor; it might have been Philbrook had he not moved to Minnesota to trap.

What transpired at Uncle Lyford’s site on Big Lyford after he died in 1868 is unclear. Oral history indicates his son continued to use it until he moved in the late 1870s, but no indicators suggest who may have used the site during the 1880s other than someone used it. In the 1890s Reverend Ernest DeFremery Miel of Hartford, Connecticut and a doctor from Connecticut tented at Big Lyford Pond at the Uncle Lyford site with their families.\(^ {64}\) Reverend Miel was the Episcopal rector at Trinity Church in Hartford by 1893, a position he held until his death in 1925. Miel grew up in Philadelphia, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was captain of the football team, and was an 1891 graduate of Yale’s Berkeley Divinity School. At the time he camped at the pond his family included his wife Marion, three daughters, a son, and three servants. His accompanying doctor friend in the 1890s was probably fellow Berkeley Divinity School graduate Reverend John N. Lewis Jr. (1892), who was rector at Saint John’s Episcopal Church in Waterbury, Connecticut by 1901, and was with Miel on trips after 1910. Lewis and his wife Mary had no children. Apparently the families eventually built several cabins and an outside rock fireplace for cooking. The Miel route to the pond in the 1890s is also unknown, but by that time an alternative to the Pleasant Valley Tote Road was developing from Greenville. What may have influenced the Miels to vacation at this wilderness site is unknown. They were not previously guests at nearby First West Branch Pond Camps.\(^ {65}\)

Just prior to 1900 a Mr. L. M. Gordon of Piscataquis County obtained the lease for a lot that included the structures the Miels had been using and opened Big Lyford Camps, a sporting camp.\(^ {66}\) Whether or not the Miels ever had a lease for the site is unknown, as is what their arrangement with Gordon was. Given that the Miels were at the new sporting camp from 1910–1913 for much of the month of August, it would seem that they were also there during the previous decade. Gordon added more structures and a dining cabin, and ran the operation until c.1904, when Everett B. and Winifred Patten became the proprietors until c.1909, when the couple apparently bought and moved to a sporting camp in the vicinity of Chesuncook Village.\(^ {67}\) The Pattens gave up sporting camp life by 1918, when they were living in Bangor and he was a bookkeeper at a bank.

When on vacation in the Maine woods, Miel wrote to his parishioners. The saved letters in the Trinity Church archives were from Big Lyford Pond and dated 1910, 1911, 1912, and 1913. In 1915 and 1916 he wrote from a sporting camp at Ragged Lake, which was northeast of Big Lyford. From 1916 through 1920 Reverend Miel was with the Red Cross as chaplain to the armed forces in France, where he returned to visit friends in 1922. In 1923 he was ill, but in 1924 he returned to the Maine woods for his last time to a sporting camp opposite Mt. Kineo on Moosehead Lake.

Miel’s letters from Maine provide a few glimpses of the Miels’ summers in Maine, often with their friends Mary and Reverend John N. Lewis Jr.. To reach the sporting camp in 1911 the Miels took the train to Greenville and then the Moosehead Lake ferry 11 miles to Lilly Bay, where a buckboard with a capacity for 12 persons and drawn by four horses took them the next seven miles to the end of the West Branch Trail. For the last two miles to Big Lyford Pond the tote road was so rough that people walked. In some years, once the rectors had their families settled at Big Lyford, they returned to Greenville to take the train a short distance to Jackman and then headed to Penobscot Lake for a week before returning.

One of the hikes they took from Big Lyford, perhaps each year, was to climb nearby White Cap Mountain via

\(^{63}\) By 1882 mapmakers labeled the pond Big Lyford Pond.

\(^{64}\) Duplessis’ book on Kokad-jo had some information about Miel. Other information came from the archives at Hartford Trinity Church and the Berkeley Divinity School (Yale University).

\(^{65}\) The sporting camp still has the old guest books.

\(^{66}\) Daily Kennebec Journal, January 26, 1907. As other sporting camp proprietors of the time, Gordon knew that the long strings of fish advertised in such publications as In the Maine Woods by the B&A could not be sustained year after year. In January 1907, he and nine other concerned individuals petitioned the State of Maine for the closing of Big Lyford Pond to live bait fishing for five years.

\(^{67}\) The Maine Sportsman, Vol. 10 no.112 (December 1902) coupled with information from Ancestry.com.
Big Lyford Camps at Big Lyford Pond  
(c.1900–present)

Big Houston Camps dining camp 1930s  
(Bert Call photo, Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Waterfront sleeping cabins  
(Bert Call photo, Call Collection, courtesy Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Sleeping cabins  
(courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, ME, MPHCS.3346)

Sleeping cabins  
(courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, ME, MPHCS.3348)
Chapter 4 — West from KIW on the Pleasant Valley Tote Road

Preserving staff cabin  (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Sleeping cabins  (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Sleeping cabins (1991)  (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Sleeping cabins (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Camp workshop  (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Rebuilt cooking and dining facility (1991)  (Bill Geller photo 2015)

Camp garden site  (Bill Geller photo 2015)
the fire warden's trail, which, at that time, was on the west side of the mountain. The text of his letters attest to his love of the outdoors, appreciation of the wildlife, the woods’ spiritual impact, and his fondness for the French heritage he found in the area. Perhaps it was his French interests and an Episcopal enclave in Dennistown, just north of Jackman, that attracted him to the area.

Patten apparently sold to Fred N. and Florence May Webster of Springfield in 1916. Fred grew up in Lakeville and farmed there until early 1900, when he moved to Monson, married Florence in 1904, and worked as a carpenter before he shifted to blacksmithing. At the sporting camp the Websters kept a small farm with chickens for eggs and eating, a cow for milk and butter, and a garden for fresh vegetables. They encouraged guests to come via the Pleasant Valley Tote Road with a team from KIW. It was simpler than traveling to Greenville, taking the steamer to Lily Bay, and then the stage to Kokadjo, where he met them with a boat, which transported them to Second Roach Pond South Inlet and an awaiting buckboard.

In 1928 Willis M. Sherman, raised in Monson, and his wife, Annie Belle of Wellington, gave up their jobs, and with their son Ivan W. Sherman of Foxcroft, assumed ownership of the sporting camp for the next 40 years. Willis was an inspector for the railroad in Foxcroft and Annie Belle was a cloth inspector at the woolen mill. Sometime in the 1940s Ivan and his wife Eva took over running the sporting camp and Ivan’s sister Inez and her husband helped them. With the exception of a few winters after the birth of their daughter, Ivan and Eva lived in Greenville during the off-season. At the time of purchase the sporting camp had a kitchen, dining, and socializing building on the knoll above the pond and five sleeping cabins lining the shore. They had a huge garden, a cow and chickens, all of which provided provisions that Eva cooked on a wood stove and served the guests in the common dining room. The sleeping cabins had kerosene lamps for light and wood stoves for heat.

The Shermans knew that buildings in good repair, spotless house cleaning, and good food brought guests back year after year. Many men brought their wives from the city and Eva knew their discomfort with outhouses. Not only were the outhouses extremely clean and neat, she also provided a bucket full of fresh pine needles with which a user could cover the waste and keep the air fresh.

When the Shermans first bought the sporting camp, guests came either by team from KIW or by steamer from Greenville. By the mid-1930s the KIW route was not in use. People drove to the end of First Roach Pond, where a horse team met them for the final leg of the trip. A horse team was still part of the transportation system in 1942, but in the mid-1960s the final short hike was eliminated when they put in a road.

The children of the families that came for a week or two or more enjoyed the fishing, swimming, and playing with the rowboats. Ivan would often take them for a day’s outing to First Roach Pond Island, where they fished and he had a lean-to and fire pit so they could enjoy a mid-day meal. Eva had a special way with birds and animals that captivated the children. At her bird feeders she would hold out her hand with seed and birds would land on her hand and arm to feed. She could also entice small animals like chipmunks to sit on her hand and eat.

The Moore family of Paoli, Pennsylvania frequented the sporting camp for many years. The family wanted a cabin of their own design and prevailed upon the Shermans to build one, perhaps in the 1950s, on the shore set off to the west of the sporting camp. It was larger and much fancier than all the others. The Shermans’ guests stayed in the cabin when the Moore family was not present.

Big Lyford Camps never developed as a stopping point for AT hikers who opted to bypass White Cap Mountain and pick up the trail at Gulf Hagas. The AT guide books from 1934 through 1969 mentioned only the alternative route down the Pleasant Valley Tote Road and not Big Lyford Camps as a place to stay. The reason may have been the sporting camp’s close proximity to First West Branch Pond Camps and that the sporting camp was at the head of Big Lyford Pond, not at its foot where the tote road, the alternative AT route, crossed below the dam.

After Ivan’s death in 1969, the sporting camp had two owners in quick succession. Charles Wilson and his wife, who were both from Dexter, purchased and ran it for four seasons. Dr. and Mrs. Charles A. Pernice of Winslow bought the sporting camp in 1974, hired a person to run it for a year or two, and then had Cliff Kealiher manage the sporting camp for one year. Beginning the following year, the Pernices, along with their daughters and several other cooks and helpers, ran the operation for a

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68 Most of the information about the Sherman years came from Mike Otley, a camp guest.
69 Charles Pernice provided the current history information.
few years, before they closed the commercial operation and maintained the sporting camp for their private use.

In 1991 the Pernices replaced a stick-frame building the Wilson’s built after removing an old log structure on the knoll above the lake. The new structure was a traditional horizontally-placed round-log building, built in Canada and reassembled on the site. Over the years the Pernices have continued to maintain all the sleeping cabins in order to preserve the traditional ambiance of the sporting camp. They inherited a short canoe paddle that supposedly belonged to Mrs. Miel.

Henderson Brook

The West Branch of the Pleasant River valley was also home to Pat Hamlin who lived and trapped much like his predecessors, Billings and Thompson, the only difference being he came to the valley the late 1940s, more than a half century later. Hamlin, a Milo native, shunned the public eye, and was viewed as a hospitable hermit by those who lived in the area and checked on him occasionally to see that he was okay. When the Pernices of the nearby Chairback Mountain Camps heard his gun shot, they knew he was eating. Their two hired men checked on him, especially when they were in during the winter.

Hamlin first worked as a cook for a Ladd logging camp on Henderson Brook. When the camp closed Hamlin continued to live in one of the camp’s log stockade-style cabins. He lived year-round in this cabin, which was on the Maine State public lot not far from the northeast-most corner at the east end of Long Pond. After the closing of the Ladd logging operation another opened on Long Pond’s south shore opposite Middle Island and Hamlin did some cooking there, but kept his home on Henderson Brook. The only passable road ended nine miles away at KIW. Hamlin’s mother and stepfather were the proprietors of the nearby Chairback Mountain Camps from 1927–1934.

Hamlin’s tidy cabin rested in a grassy clearing with a fine spring, a view of the beaver flowage, a garden, and a root cellar. His trail to Long Pond went down the west side of the brook about 200 yards, crossed on the beaver dam, and meandered to the pond’s shore where he kept a boat storage shed. He also had hovels and other shelters on his 50-mile trap-line that wove through the region. The game he shot he canned, and his walls were generally lined with it. Fish were not his favorite, but he ate them anyway. When he needed supplies he walked out to Brownville, bought them, and returned a day or two later. In winter he used snowshoes, never having a mechanical snow-sled. At some point he began to receive some form of a monthly payment that was delivered at Greenville. Folsom’s air service in Greenville knew when the payment arrived and flew in to pick him up, and fly him back, after buying supplies and spending a night in town.

In January 1964 Dick Folsom and Jim Drake reported Hamlin was missing. Folsom flew in with Hamlin’s first supplies for the winter after the ice firmed up sometime in the first week of January, but Hamlin didn’t meet the plane as he usually did. Folsom went over to see Jim Drake at Chairback Mountain Camps thinking Pat might be there, but he wasn’t. They snowshoed back to Hamlin’s and looked around. They noted that Hamlin’s calendar last entry “the ice had frozen and looked good,” was for December 24th; he marked each day with brief notes. Pat’s coffee pot and small knapsack were hanging on the wall, suggesting perhaps that he was not off on a long walk or over-night along his trap lines. They thought that perhaps Pat had made a quick walk about to check the ice, as he expected Dick to fly in in a week or so. They contacted the authorities, and the area’s game wardens conducted a weeklong search. His body was never found and the searchers concluded that he went through the ice on the way to one of his usual trapping areas.

The cabin remained in the family after his death. Eventually Pat’s brother, Cedrick Sr., held the cabin lease and he passed it on to his son, Cedric Jr., whose nephew took it over in the early 2000s. The Hamlin families had used it regularly. In May 2016 Pat’s storage shed at the northeast corner of Long Pond was almost fully collapsed, the trail that led from it to the cabin was faint, and the cabin was still standing, but needed considerable work in order to salvage it.

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70 Mathew and Peter Hamlin, and Nancy Mae Perham Offutt, provided the information on Pat Hamlin.
71 Ralph and Lillian York
72 James Draper, a camp owner on Long Pond, had conversations with James Drake in 1965.