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A Brief Outline of Penobscot Bay

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A BRIEF OUTLINE

OF

PENOBSCOT BAY,

WITH A PARTIAL LIST OF

LANDS, PENINSULAS AND ISLANDS THEREON,

FOR SALE BY

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27 SCHOOL STREET,
BOSTON, MASS.

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1890.
ENTRANCE TO DARK HARBOR.
PENOBSCOT BAY.

It is not likely that many people realize that Penobscot Bay is the largest one upon the Maine Coast, and contains the greatest number of, and the largest individual, islands in the aggregate, of any bay on the New England shore. These islands exceed five hundred in number, varying from half an acre in area to one comprising two large townships in one island. A description of all the beautiful islands, deep water channels, harbors, thoroughfares, reaches, rivers and other tributaries, together with the abrupt cliffs, beaches, mountain shores, and beautiful woods, would require a very large volume, and then hardly do justice even partially to the subject. To discover the beauties of this section one must only go into it. Its variety of lovely scenes is too great to generalize with either pen or pencil. At one point you will be sailing on a Hudson River with its beautiful mountain shores, but with clear, tidal salt-water. Again you are among the "Thousand Islands," or, a short distance beyond, once more may be under some tall cliff, bare and grassy at its summit, as if on the "Irish Coast," and with hundreds of gray and white sea gulls, disturbed at your approach, wheeling around their nests at the crests of the precipice. Sailing onward, perhaps, is a rapid transposition to passages among low islands clad with dark
spruces to the jutting, rocky points at the water's edge. Once more, you will pass through some deep, narrow passage into a land-locked basin with wooded shores and safe anchorage, which you can only compare with some of the wonderful harbors in the Inland Sea of Japan. You may land and walk for miles through beautiful groves of tall spruces, but on a second landing are in a broad grove of gray-trunked beeches, and next in some high, grassy opening around a picturesque farm-house. But the great and triumphing glory of the Bay is in its mountains. On its immediate east is the compact group of the Mt. Desert hills; on the west, following the whole line of its thirty miles of shore, extending again thirty miles further up its main tributary (the Penobscot River) in the distance, and coming abruptly down into its waters, is the range of the Camden Mountains.

The first persons I know of who spoke or wrote enthusiastically about this region were the first ones who were authentically known to have gone into it. Captain George Waymouth, the English explorer, entered the bay in 1605. With him was a French gentleman, James Rosier (whose name is preserved in Cape Rosier, one of the largest, boldest and most beautiful peninsulas on its shores). This gentleman, writing of it at that time, says:

"Tuesday the 11th of June we passed into the river [Rosier in his narrative refers to the waters from the outer entrance of the bay northward as "the river," naturally mistaking the lower and western passages between the islands as a continuation of the river above] with our ship about six and twenty miles, of which I had rather not write than, by my relation, detract from the worthiness thereof." * * * * *

"By judgment of our captain, and by opinion of others of good judgment in our ship, here are more good harbors for ships of all burthens than England can afford, and far more secure from all winds and weather than any in England, Scotland, France or Spain." "The river runneth up into the main very nigh forty miles toward the great mountains. You shall never have under four or five fathoms water, hard by the shore, but six, seven, eight, nine and ten fathoms all along; and on both sides, every half mile, very gallant coves, some able
to contain almost a hundred sail.” “Here are made by nature most excellent places, as docks to grave or careen ships of all burthens, secured from all winds; which is such a necessary and incomparable benefit that in few places in England, or in any part of Christendom, art, with great changes can make the like.” “The wood she beareth is not shrubbish, fit only for fuel, but goodly, tall fir, spruce, birch, beech and oak.” “As we passed, with a gentle wind, up with our ship in this river, any man may conceive with what admiration we all contented in joy.” “Many of our company, who had been travellers in sundry countries, and in the most famous rivers, yet affirmed them not comparable to this they now beheld.” “Some that were with Sir Walter Raleigh in his voyage to Guiana in the discovery of the river Orenoque, which echoed fame to the world’s ears, gave reasons why it was not to be compared to this, which wanteth the danger of many shoals, and broken ground wherewith that was encumbered.”

The testimony of every visitor and writer from that day to this has been the same. The author of an illustrated article in “Harper’s Weekly,” written some two years since, while endeavoring to condense the interest on one local point, could not refrain from exclaiming: “That Bay studded with innumerable islands is one of the most beautiful in the world.”

Mr. Joel Cook of Philadelphia, one of the editors of the “Public Ledger” and correspondent for the “London Times,” wrote last year, after a brief visit to the bay: “The islands, the hills, the smooth and pleasant waters, are reminders of the Archipelago of Puget Sound, with even more beauties, and having a bracing summer air known only to these coasts of the Atlantic.” Again he writes, describing one of the harbors which he entered: “An almost completely land-locked sheet of water, where the largest ships can securely float, yet having such thorough protection from the islands enclosing it that the sailing yacht and row-boat can be enjoyed in perfect security. One might suppose this miniature summer sea in the famed Grecian Archipelago. The sail is magnificent over the smooth waters bordered by the rocky forest-covered island shores, where sheep browse in the clearings, with an occasional old-fashioned farm-house on the upland.”
Mr. Charles Eliot of Cambridge, in a recent very general but comprehensive article upon the coast of Maine and of New England at large, writes:—

"High hills come down to the sea only by Penobscot Bay and at Mt. Desert. It was about 1860 that what may be called the discovery of the picturesqueness and the summer-time healthfulness of the coast of Maine took place. When the poor hamlet of Bar Harbor leaped into fame through the resort to it of a few well-known landscape painters, it became evident that the whole coast was destined to become a much frequented summer resort."

Bar Harbor may be fairly termed the summer capital of the coast. The hills crowded together upon the island of Mt. Desert break further out into the ocean line than the more extended Camden range, and as thirty years ago there was no convenient approach excepting by water, they naturally attracted attention first—the "few landscape painters" adventurously exploring this immediate point brought it into notice. The point was a beautiful one, as beautiful as a dozen more on the broader section of the coast. A handful of young people from Boston and Philadelphia went there, lived simply in small cottages and boarding-houses, and for a few years the regime of the "flannel shirt" and easy informal life existed. The young people and their elder associates, filled with enthusiasm induced by the rarely exhilarating climate
and healthful out-of-door life, returned to the cities in the winter. The place needed no further advertisement. The numbers swelled from year to year. Great, ugly, and uncouth wooden caravansaries were rapidly constructed by the natives, and as fast as constructed became filled with people who were content to live upon the poorest of food with the poorest of service, and Bar Harbor (strange misnomer),—a place with no harbor, but an apology for one, in a slight indentation of the coast, at the head of a funnel-shaped bay, almost facing the run of the open seas, in a bad exposure, with the mountains cutting off the south-west winds, and an unsafe sailing and a bad anchorage ground,—became a great sea-shore watering place. Before the second decade of its summer occupancy was completed a marked change became evident. The "flannel shirt" began to disappear and the dress coat came in. The earlier visitors, still clinging to the place through old associations, began to bewail the loss of their former simple life. "Cottages" began to be built which were not cottages, but great houses, almost palaces. The simple "buck-board" gave way to the landeau, the dog-cart and the "four in hand," and finally, the place becoming a downright fashionable resort, the last comers and now the most conspicuous summer residents are the city millionaires, who always in such case follow last in the wake of the more cultivated, simple and refined people, who are in the end crowded to the wall and disappear from sight. A dozen or more years ago, for a very few hundred dollars one might have had choice of the pretty situations convenient to the centre of Bar Harbor. To-day these situations obtain substantial values in the tens of thousands. Cottage lots on the shore near the town have brought as much as fifty cents a square foot, or over $20,000 for a single acre; while high and apparently inaccessible lands on the hillside half a mile inland have brought $5,000 to $10,000 an acre. Last year, a dull one in the local land market, a New York millionaire bought a twenty-acre shore-front plot with inexpensive buildings, a mile from the town, for $200,000. Both the manner and cost of living now precludes people of moderate means from a summer existence at the place.
Outside Bar Harbor and around Frenchman's Bay (a sheet of water about quarter of the size of the Penobscot) are a number of fine points looking across at the hills; but native and western speculators have absorbed these, and there is upon almost every point flying the flag of a "land company." These companies, stimulated by the high values at Bar Harbor, vie with each other in trying to establish a rival point to the latter place. Their lands are surveyed, laid out in small lots, and prices in the thousands per acre put upon them. But few are sold, and their principal profit has been through stock-jobbing operations in the cities where the investing "lambs" are too unfamiliar with the ground to know that people want "either one thing or the other"; either the bustle of the busy place or absolute independence in an entirely opposite life. One does not want to be under the shadow of a great place and outside of it. If New York is to be enjoyed one hardly cares to substitute Jersey City for it.

HIS condition of affairs, no longer than half a dozen years ago, produced this result: a certain number of well-known people, beyond whom Bar Harbor and its surroundings had "grown," strayed from it experimentally into the almost entirely unoccupied region of the "Penobscot." To their surprise, they found it equally beautiful, as they confessed at the outset. They discovered the inestimable advantage of its finely protected harbors, and broad and safe sailing grounds. They found its islands infinitely greater in number and variety of form, its mountains equally beautiful, and its trees and rocks equally varied. A gentleman with his eyes turned in this direction discovered that some beautiful peninsula or island of high land with lovely mountain views, fine rocks and varied foliage, enclosing and bor-
dering on some safe and deep harbor, containing perhaps a hundred or more acres, a domain in itself, could be bought for $3,000, $4,000 or $5,000, the price of a single crowded acre at Bar Harbor. The opportunity was evident and the temptation irresistible. The personal enthusiasm of the first group of gentlemen and ladies who went there was enough to draw their friends after them from the other sea-shore resorts and from the cities. They purchased at all of the principal points. Small and well-ordered club-houses and hotels were instituted, around which grouped cottages in attractive little settlements, and the simpler informal summer life which originally existed at Bar Harbor became renewed, and still exists, protected for a long lease of life. The hotels and club-houses existing are at Islesboro, Fox-Island-Thoroughfare, Cape Rosier, Isle au Haut, Owls Head, Jamesons Point, Camden, Castine and Belfast; while scattered all through the Bay from point to point will be found the somewhat more remote and larger holdings of gentlemen who occupy the finer peninsulas and islands, living in simply constructed cottages, and perhaps having their steam-launches, yachts and boats lying in the always bordering harbor. Among the gentlemen who have within the last few years become permanent visitors to and holders of land interests on the Bay are the following, almost all of whom have purchased through me:

John T. Atterbury, Banker, New York.
Charles Francis Adams, Boston, President Union Pacific R. R.
Hon. John F. Andrew, Boston, Member of Congress.
Sidney Burgess, Boston, Insurance.
Alexander Biddle, Philadelphia, Director Penn. R.R.
Chas. P. Bowditch, Boston, Treasurer Bell Telephone Co.
Alfred Bowditch, Boston, Trustee, etc.
Ernest W. Bowditch, Boston, Landscape Gardener.
Jeffrey R. Brackett, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University.
Prof. Frank W. Chandler, Boston, Mass. Institute of Technology.
Hon. Samuel C. Cobb, Boston, President Mass. Hospital Life Office.
Frederick E. Thompson, 1st. National Bank, New York.
Henry W. Biddle, Banker, Philadelphia.
W. Lyman Biddle, Banker, Philadelphia.
Mrs. Mary P. Barstow, Washington.
One familiar with any number of these names will easily recognize that the large majority are conspicuously conservative men and careful investors, which is a sufficient guarantee of the evident value of these shore properties from a purely financial point of view.
SPRAGUE'S COVE.
COMMUNICATIONS.

Penobscot Bay is reached by three lines of large steamers from Boston, New York and Portland respectively, and by rail at two points, Rockland and Belfast, at which points the steamers also touch, and where a service of smaller steamboats connect for the short, smooth routes to the various points in the Bay. Of these smaller boats there are now eight in service, running regularly to all of the larger island, peninsular and shore ports, the following points being thus reached: Vinal Haven (South Fox Islands), North Haven (Fox-Island Thoroughfare), Pulpit Harbor (North Haven), North West Harbor, (Great Deer Isle), Little Deer Isle, and all landings on Eggmoggin Reach, Cape Rosier, Castine, Islesboro (three landings), “Green’s Landing” (Deer Isle), Isle au Haut, Camden, Northport, Searsport and Fort Point. A study of the map will show that one can hardly find a point on the large islands or main shore which will be half a dozen miles distant from some one of these landings. Both the steamboat and rail service has been and still is being increased and improved in size and accommodations from year to year.
LIST OF PROPERTIES FOR SALE ON PENOBSCOT BAY.

HERMAN'S POINT, lying outside of and being the protecting barrier of Camden Harbor, is beyond all question the finest peninsula on the whole line of the thirty miles of the west shore of Penobscot Bay. Surrounded on three sides by the water, its central and outer portions command everywhere broad and extended views up and down the bay: up along the line of mountains descending abruptly into the water, down along the shore line to the open ocean far away to the south; while to the eastward it broadly faces the open bay dotted with islands, its inner shore forming the curved indentation of the northern portion of Camden Harbor, which has most perfect and safe anchorage. The inner line of the point has beautifully curved beaches for bathing or boating, and around it and close to its shores pass the steamboats and sailing vessels going and coming to Camden town; while all of the water commerce of the Penobscot River and upper Bay ports passes up and down its outer shore, the white and gray sails and the constant movement of the crafts lending a finishing charm to the beautiful surrounding scenery. The outer shore is generally rocky, breaking out into little promontories of pro-
jecting rocks, with between them pretty little pebble-beaches. The trees on the point are very striking. Besides the finely grouped and large evergreens, a number of beautiful oaks, beeches, maples and yellow and white birches flourish, most of which are comparatively rare in this region. These trees grow to the very edge of the rocks at the shore, and the point has many pretty little grassy openings between these varied and charming groups. The land is all high and has a dry, health-

ful soil. It rises from fifteen to forty feet above high water. There are no swampy spots on it. The views of the mountains from it, across the harbor, are more than beautiful, and are accentuated by the charming foreground of its tree-groupings and its rocks and beaches. This Point is about a mile by road around the harbor to the centre of the town, and half a mile across the smooth waters to the same point. Camden, half a dozen years ago, had for summer visitors only a handful of people. To-day the summer population is nearly 3,000, new land-purchases are constantly being made and houses erected. The lands so occupied are on the eastern slopes of the mountains. These exposures are bad, being cut off from the prevailing south-west winds in summer, and everywhere too close under the mountains to get the full grandeur of their effect. Sherman's Point is the only land in Camden which misses all of these objections. The Point is most admirably protected, not only by the water on its three sides, but upon the fourth is the large
estate of the Hon. J. B. Stearns of Boston, which he keeps as his own private property, and upon which he has erected most elaborate and expensive buildings. The drives around Camden are very beautiful. The mountains running down into the sea on the east come, on their western sides, into beautiful island-dotted lakes, around which the roads follow. At some points sheer cliffs descend 800 and 900 feet perpendicularly into these lakes, and the road follows their base. Large steamboats touch daily at Camden, and one may go to or come from Boston in a night’s journey; and the railroad station at Rockland is but one hour’s drive, so that persons objecting to a water or night journey can go or come entirely by land. It is further a practically settled fact that the railroad will within a year be extended to Camden. Sherman’s Point is one of those commanding positions that bid fair at some not very distant day to be very valuable. Camden is only second to Bar Harbor, on the eastern Maine coast, in size and prosperity. Analogous to Sherman’s Point at Camden is “Bar Island,” across from Bar Harbor. This island has but thirty acres, and suffers the disadvantage of being a small island not connected with the main shore; but upwards of a quarter of a million dollars have been offered for it and refused several times. Sherman’s Point is admirably adapted for an independent estate for a gentleman to hold as a whole, or it could be divided into several parts, without any crowding, for several different householders. The trees would separate each holding so that all would have beautiful high situations and none would overlook the others. There are forty acres of land in this Point.

ISLESBORO, one of the most beautiful island townships on the coast, is about thirteen miles in length, and varies in distance from the mainland from a little over a mile to about five miles. It has nearly thirty miles of good country roads, almost always following the shores, and having constantly changing and beautiful views across its many projecting points and deep indentations, of the smaller islands, the mountains, and of the sail-dotted passage up the “West Bay” under the Camden shore. The island is, for almost its whole length, a high central
ridge sloping both ways to the sea and varying in width, according to its indentations on either side, from three miles to a few hundred feet. Its trees are very beautiful and varied from one end of the township to the other. Mr. Joel Cook's very interesting little book, with Mr. Harlow's illustrations (which was published recently in Boston), gives a pleasant descriptive outline of this island township. Islesboro has a native population of about 1,200 people, but up to the present time only a few hundred summer visitors. Recent marked improvements in its transportation service and in hotel accommodations are, however, rapidly increasing the number of people going there during the summer months. Lately a syndicate of prominent Philadelphia gentlemen have acquired almost all of the valuable shore front on the island, comprising an area of nearly 2,000 acres and including almost all of the finer promontories, hills, and practical control of its seven different harbors. In addition to this, other gentlemen from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago have private holdings, generally occupied by themselves personally, comprising some 800 acres more. The first of these lands have been carefully surveyed and laid out by competent landscape gardeners with a view to protecting their natural beauties, and are offered for sale at very moderate prices. At the southern part of the town, very beautifully situated on a high promontory near Dark Harbor, has recently been constructed a very attractive hotel, from designs of Messrs. Wheelwright and Haven, architects of Boston, known as the Islesboro Inn. In point of situation, convenience and internal as well as external attractiveness, no hotel on the coast has as yet existed which can compare with this little hostelry. Its surroundings are in every way charming, its boating and yachting facilities perfect, and all its other accessories very complete. Within a few hundred feet of the Inn is a large steamboat wharf, where the various daily boats touch. Islesboro can be reached daily from the west by the steamboat of the Maine Central Railroad, or by a new fast propeller designed by Mr. Edward Burgess of Boston (connecting with the daily trains and boats going and coming from Rockland, which touch at the "Dark Harbor" landing near the
Islesboro Inn), while the boats of the Bangor and Bar Harbor S. S. Co., plying each way, also touch at the island, giving an opportunity to vary the journey from the west by coming via Bangor and enjoying the beautiful smooth sail down the Penobscot River, or with a four hours' sail through the island passages to the eastward to reach Bar Harbor.

CAPE ROSIER, lying on the eastern shore, south of Castine and from three to five miles from Islesboro, is a bold, beautiful tract of land with a great variety of high wooded and open points, fine harbors, beaches and cliffs. Almost the whole of the shore front extending around it from opposite Castine to the head of "Eggemoggin Reach" (a line of some ten miles) is owned and controlled by a small syndicate of Boston gentlemen. As at Islesboro, the lands have been carefully and artistically divided into parcels varying from ten to thirty acres and are offered for sale at very moderate prices. Two steamboat wharves have been lately constructed, one at the northern and one at the southern extremity of the Cape, to which is established the same daily service as at Islesboro. Very comfortable temporary quarters have been arranged in a very picturesque situation at the southwestern corner of the district, where a farm-house has been altered,
enlarged and furnished by the owners for use of persons wishing to visit the district and look at the lands. Cape Rosier is backed by a series of beautiful wooded hills, among which, through the valleys and along the long salt water inlets, as well as all around the outer shore, is a great variety of beautiful drives, while further inland fine lakes and trout-streams are reached. In May and June large numbers of salmon are taken in weirs around the shore. The woods even near the shores are full of partridges, foxes and rabbits, while in the winter deer are killed. The interesting old historical town of Castine is close to the northern portion of this property.

NORTH HAVEN and the Fox Islands have no lands that are controlled by any syndicate, but almost all of the best shore lands on “Fox-Island Thoroughfare” and around “Pulpit Harbor” have been purchased and are occupied by gentlemen from Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities. Fox-Island Thoroughfare is a finely sheltered harbor and
marine highway some six miles in length, with a number of very picturesque coves projecting into the shores of the two large island townships which it separates. The constantly passing vessels through this comparatively narrow passage add a great deal to the charm of its surroundings. "Mullin's" is an excellent little inn, situated in the village of North Haven, at the northern central shore of the Thoroughfare, and is each summer filled with guests from the larger cities. Although the lands in this section have been rapidly taken up within the past year, there are still a few very fine points available at moderate prices — ranging from fifty to two hundred acres in size.

CALDERWOOD'S NECK, projecting northward into the wider part of Fox-Island Thoroughfare, is a very beautiful point, and the only one left obtainable along its shores. It is nearly a mile in length and has upward of two miles of shore frontage. It is beautifully wooded. Its southern part, or neck, is a high ridge sloping to the sea both ways; and it here, as well as from its partly wooded knolls and grassy slopes on its northern portion, commands beautiful views down the Thoroughfare and of the mountains beyond, on its western side; while to the east the whole of the open bay spreads out below. All of the commerce of the Thoroughfare from the westward comes direct-
ly down upon it, and going either way all of the vessels skirt around its bold rocky shore. It has a number of small beaches and natural boat-landings. The drives through the large wooded island-township, Vinal Haven, of which it is a part, are everywhere beautiful. The point contains about two hundred acres.

BUTTER ISLAND, lying in the centre of a beautiful and very much varied archipelago to the north-east of North Haven, comprises, with half a dozen smaller islands belonging with it, about three hundred acres. The general outline of this island from the water is not especially interesting, it presenting an almost uniform curved outline, but the island is an exemplification of the very common scenic condition that the point least interesting to look at is the most beauti-
ful to look from. The southern two-thirds of this island consist of rolling grassy knolls, slopes and pastures; the northern third is well wooded. Once reach the higher land on any part of this island, and a view is spread out before one which is of surpassing beauty. I have seen many bolder points on this coast, but no one so purely lovely as this. The grouping of the varied smaller islands in the foreground forms a perfect balance with the blue hills in the distance beyond. The five smaller islands (the Barred Islands) to the westward, belonging with the main island, are each "scenic gems". They form the projecting barrier of the excellent harbor on which Butter Island borders. The regular steamer passes three times a week, going and coming to and from Rockland, close to the island, and will always stop to take or leave passengers in the smooth channel to the south. Butter Island is the only one of any size in the bay which belongs to no township. The owner of it and its adjacent smaller neighbors would have a domain of his own, paying only a small nominal tax to the state annually.

The above list only specifies a limited number among the most available and finest points on the Bay. As these properties are from time to time being sold or advanced in price, the prices are not given, but will be sent at any time upon application, also further descriptions and prices of any points not specified or of parts of the sections here only mentioned in general. Address,

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