

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine History Documents

Special Collections

1903

Machiasport on Historic Machias Bay, Coast of Maine

Machiasport Improvement Society

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

Pamp
1797
Vickery

The Invitation of a Community




Machiasport

ON

**HISTORIC
MACHIAS
BAY**

Coast of
MAINE



Machiasport Improvement Society

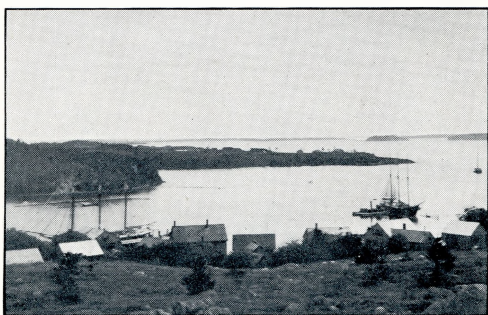
LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
AT ORONO



State of Maine Collection
RAYMOND H. FOGLER LIBRARY
GIFT OF
Mr. James B. Vickery



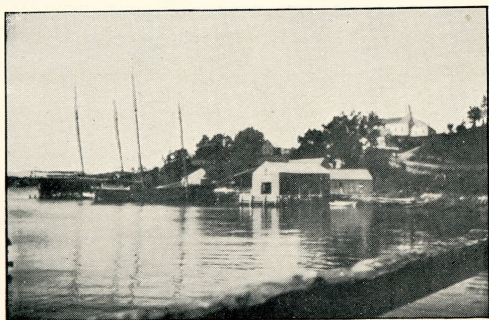
FROM Bar Harbor to Eastport, there is a large section of Maine's incomparable coast, that is practically unknown to the tourist or summer-home seeker. Of the innumerable bays in this section, Machias Bay, with its historic memories and picturesque grouping of well-wooded islands, is the most beautiful. Its western shore, with twenty-five miles of water front, abounding in deep indentations, and quiet tidal basins, forms a part of



“Down the farthest reaches of the tranquil bay.”

the town of Machiasport. Nine miles from the sea, at the head of the bay, and at the mouth of the Machias river, are the town hall and church, as well as the largest settlement. On the rocky hill back of the town, a grand view down the whole sweep of the bay between the islands, and on through the outer passages to the broad Atlantic, is obtained. In the other direction, we look into the fjord-like entrance to the Machias Valley, with its many arms, into which the tide rushing twice every twenty-four hours, furnishes an ever changing picture.

Samuel Adams Drake says: "The village of Machiasport first hugs the foot of a hill and then makes a dash up the steep ascent to scatter itself about the brow like a column of skirmishers broken and halting to take breath. From this commanding height, the meeting-house



"at the wharf and ship-yard."

with its graveyard sloping off behind it, looks up and down the farthest reaches of the tranquil bay, and the whole scene, as I saw it lying out before me, at the close of a summer's day, was certainly as sweet and restful a picture as mind could conceive or heart desire."

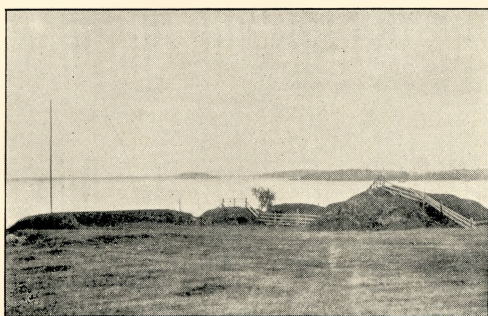
The ruins of the old revolutionary Fort O'Brien stand as a mute reminder of the first naval engagement of the war of 1776 from which this bay has been termed the "Lexington of the Sea."

The drive down the shore of the bay, abounds in a delightful alternation of deep woody cuts, and sudden glimpses of the sea, from the hillside along which the road winds.

Clark's and Birch Points with their curious Indian pictographs are ideal sites for summer

homes. Birch Knoll cottage is at the terminus of this beautiful ridge and commanding sites are to be found at every turn of the road.

The whole setting of the settlement at Buck's Harbor, a part of the town of Machiasport, is one of unusual beauty. The high headlands on either side, and the group of islands immediately in front, give the harbor the appearance and quiet surface of an inland lake, and indeed its quiet waters have been the haven of many small boats, scudding before a heavy gale. The shore from Buck's Harbor southward, is one grand ragged cliff, with now and then a bit of pebbly beach, or a deep cut like Spouting Horn. The highest point, Jasper Head, affords



The "Lexington of the Sea".

extensive views seaward, and after sunset there are visible no less than six of those silent watchguards of the coast—the light-houses—from the first order light on the South West Head of Grand Manan in the east, to the flashing rays of Moose-a-bec in the west.

The first deep cut in the rocky face of the

shore, is graceful Howard's Bay with its remarkable crescent-shaped sea wall of pebbles rounded and polished by the ceaseless waves. The sea wall is about half a mile long and is a bank about thirty feet high of pebbles, none smaller than a marble and none larger than



Glenhurst.

a cup. This wall terminates in a short strip of sand beach which leads again to the massive rock with its fissures and deep cuts, Devil's Kitchen, Neptune's Cave etc.—all ideal spots for a day's tramp or ride with a picnic lunch on the beach or rocks.

Immediately back of the beach, rises in almost sheer lines—doubly high because of its bold face and precipitous walls—the highest point in this part of the coast, Howard's Mountain. A winding road leads one with no great discomfort along the southern slope to the top, where a view is obtained that makes the climb well worth while. The Mount Desert hills are seen to the westward, and the whole coast line appears laid out below like a map, of which the high banks of Grand Manan half-shrouded

in haze limit the eastern vision. Below, many stately ships move by, some turning in at Libby Island Light to receive their cargo of lumber at Machias, others bound "down to the Provinces."

A mile or so beyond Howard's Bay are Starboard Creek with its beach, Ingalls Island with the long pebbly bar exposed at half tide, and farther out to sea, the Point of Main. At "the Creek" several cottages have been built, Starboards cottage being one of the newest.

The islands, which have added so much to the view all along shore, are indeed worthy of special mention. One who has climbed the cliff on Bare Island, or rambled through the beautiful groves on Chance's Island, or gathered



"miles of excellent roads."

delicious raspberries on Salt Island, can but feel that these fragments of the shore, detached as if to give them a more beautiful setting, lend a charm to this bay that cannot be equalled anywhere. A sail down the bay, a chowder on one of the islands in an evergreen grove, and a dashing breeze home, are some of the pleasures

that come to him who "casts dull care away" and seeks rest and quiet in this peaceful place.

The large majority of the citizens of Machiasport "follow the sea," and the bronzed face of the old sea dog is always to be found about the wharf or shipyard. In Machias Bay there



Birch Knoll Cottage.

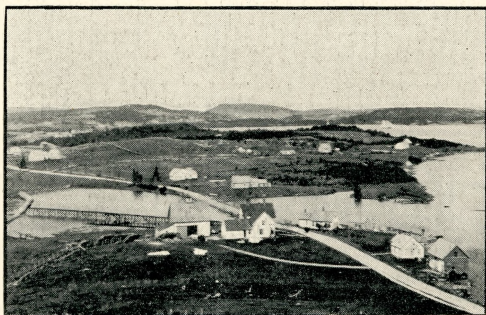
is exceptionally good sailing, for the number of islands furnish fine landing places and objects of interest, and it is a noticeable fact that even after the heaviest blows the bay becomes smooth almost immediately — a fact appreciated by ladies and children, who fear *mal-de-mer*. The hardy boatman has but to run outside to get all the swell he wants. The fish bite well, bait is plentiful, and a day's fishing off Libby Islands or the Double Shots almost always results in a boat load of fine cod or haddock, while on the ledges at the Machias Seal Islands halibut are occasionally taken. The lover of "sea-food" can here revel in an abundance of fish, clams and lobsters.

Within the town limits there are twenty-five miles of excellent roads, bordered by a profusion

of wild flowers and penetrating groves of spruce, balsam and fir, which are appreciated by lovers of driving and bicycling alike.

Three miles inland is Gardiner's Lake, with Hadley's Lake adjacent. A day's fishing trip here is sure to result in a fine catch of fish.

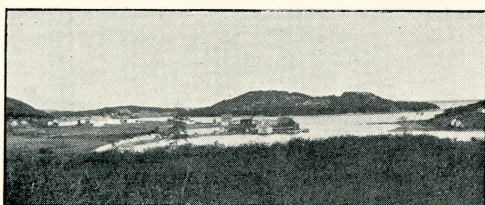
Cutler on the east, and Roque Bluffs on the west, are picturesque localities for a drive. The Machias valley leads to the heart of the hunting and fishing country of Washington County, and the sporting enthusiast has but a day's drive to the best fishing grounds in the whole state. Excellent guides are obtained at Machias, where a large number of sportsmen each year leave the train to strike off into the woods.



“ Entrance to the Machias Valley.”

All the charms surrounding Machiasport dwindle away before that of its climate. A geographical condition resembling mountain, country and seashore combined, and the situation of the town on a high point of land bounded on both sides by water, gives an equable temperature that is similar to that of an island. Not even

the "one hot day" is found here. Cool nights, requiring blankets; crisp, fresh mornings, and a bracing salt air which is sifted through several miles of fir and balsam forests, gives a tone to the system that is experienced immediately by every new comer. Regarding temperature it may be said that during July, 1901, when all the summer resorts experienced a temperature on one or two days of 100 degrees, the highest



Buck's Harbor, like a quiet inland lake.

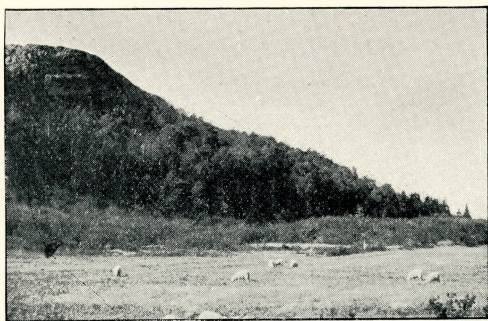
recorded in Machiasport was 88 degrees. Careful records with an accurate standard thermometer show that the average midday temperature during the hottest months, *i. e.* July and August, is 72 degrees.

No portion of the New England coast is exempt from fog. It is worthy of note however, that the duration of the fog on the Maine coast has been grossly misunderstood, and a careful study of the comparative prevalence of fog shows that the coasts of the other New England states have from two-thirds to three-fourths as much fog as Maine. The local conditions at Machiasport are such that while fog frequently appears at the mouth of the bay, the number of days it actually interferes with pleasure-going are few.

The rainfall is very light during the summer

months, and while the general storms that periodically move over the United States are here frequently accompanied by fog, there is very little rain, and a fishing trip to the lakes or a drive inland will lead out of the fog.

A feature of the climate that will certainly be appreciated by ladies and children, is the almost entire absence of thunder storms. But two, both very light, were recorded during July and August of 1901 and 1902. It is a matter of record that but three buildings have been struck in the town in the past twenty years, and in these no lives were lost. When we consider the terrific thunder storms that prevail in so many summer resorts along the



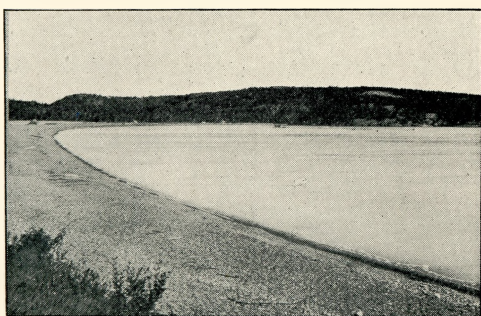
Howard's Mountain.

coast of New England, this immunity is remarkable to say the least.

Such a delightful and salubrious climate would lead one to expect a general good bill of health of the town, and such expectations are fully realized. Malaria cannot persist here.

While Machiasport is too far away from the large cities to be popular as a transient summer

resort, this fact in itself will make it additionally attractive to many people wishing a quiet place "far from the madding crowd." There are no large summer hotels here, nor land companies, and consequently the artificial conditions surrounding the usual summer resort are not



"Graceful Howard's Bay with its crescent sea wall."

found here, and property has not a fictitious value. Land, and improved real estate, are for sale and to let at reasonable rates, and the man with a moderate income may here find a summer home without paying the extravagant, and for the most part prohibitory, prices of real-estate agents at the "popular" summer resorts.

This movement to attract the attention of outsiders was initiated and is furthered by the town authorities, and each property holder acts individually. Many well-built and substantial houses are for sale or rent, and building sites are innumerable. The facilities for building are unexcelled by any other place on the Maine coast, for Machiasport is at the mouth of the Machias river, with the saw mills at Machias but four miles above.

If you are seeking a quiet and unostentatious place to get strength and rest during the generally trying months of July and August, you can surely obtain board in some of the several quiet homes in Machiasport, and examine at your leisure the ideal conditions for a summer home to be found here.

The Washington County R. R., connecting with the Maine Central, furnishes excellent rail accommodation. Through Pullman sleepers leave Boston every evening and arrive in Machias the next morning. A train also leaves Boston in the morning, arriving in Machias in the late afternoon.

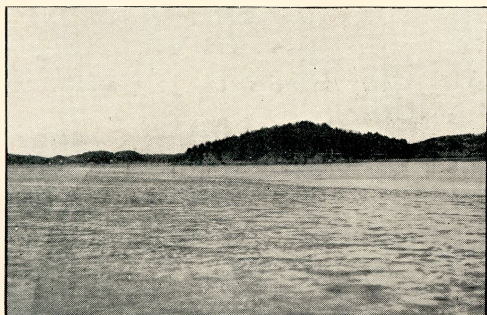
No coast resort east of Rockland has such excellent all rail facilities—a fact sure to be



Starboard's Cottage.

appreciated by those who are averse to water travel—for even the Mount Desert resorts can only be reached by a trip by boat across turbulent Frenchman's Bay.

For over thirty-five years Machiasport has been the eastern terminus of the Portland, Mt. Desert and Machias Steamboat Co., but



“Mouth of Machias River.”

owing to the destruction by fire of the steamboat wharf (one of the finest on the whole coast), their steamer, the well-known and popular “Frank Jones,” does not touch here at present. Negotiations are now being made whereby an early resumption of boat service is practically assured.



Machiasport Improvement Society,

M a c h i a s p o r t ,

M a i n e .