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Historic Bangor

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BANGOR, MAINE

Visited by Champlain, 1604
First Settler, Jacob Buswell, 1769
Incorporated a City, 1834



Historic BANGOR



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THE CITY COUNCIL OF BANGOR



Sieur Samuel de Champlain

The First White Man to Ascend the Penobscot
to Bangor and Leave a Record
of His Visit

How Bangor Was Named

The annals of Bangor begin with the visit of Samuel de Champlain, who gave Mt. Desert Island its name and who founded the city of Quebec. Intrigued by the reports of a fabulous city, Norumbega, Champlain ascended the Penobscot in 1604 to find only an important Indian rendezvous and camping place where the Kenduskeag and Penobscot

Rivers merge. In the story of his voyage he mentions "the falls," the location of Bangor's water supply, long famous as the Bangor Salmon Pool. Before founding the Mission of St. Sauveur on Mt. Desert Island, the Jesuit Fathers considered establishing themselves here because of the importance of this location among the Indians.

History gives the distinction of Bangor's first settler to Jacob Buswell who, in 1769, built a log hut near the present site of St. John's Catholic Church, York Street. Among the French and Indians, Bangor was known variously as Kadesquit, Condukeag and, later, Kenduskeag. In 1776 there were some 75 persons, adults and children, resident in Kenduskeag Plantation, the settlement being in the neighborhood of Penjeawock stream, near Mt. Hope Cemetery. Following the close of the Revolutionary War more settlers arrived and with them was the first pastor, Rev. Seth Noble, a native of Westfield, Mass.

Pastor Noble was delegated to appear before the General Court of Massachusetts, of which Maine was then a part, to petition for the incorporation of the growing frontier town under the name of "Sunbury." On the long journey to Boston, the clergyman solaced himself by singing his favorite hymn, "Bangor," and, when the petition to the Court was made, he asked that the new town be designated "Bangor" instead of "Sunbury." The incorporation was allowed on February 25, 1791.

Bangor was occupied by the British in the war of 1812 and the scourge of war impeded progress until 1820, when new impulse was given by the creation of Maine as a separate state. The first bridge between Bangor and Brewer was built in 1832, and the military road to Houlton, the first connection with the great north section of the State, was constructed in the years 1828-1830.

Bangor was incorporated as a city in 1834 with Allen Gilman as its first mayor.

Because of its proximity to the timberlands, Bangor became an important center for shipyards and sawmills which sent their products far and wide. The city grew rapidly, many residents being attracted by the magnitude of the lumber industry which, about 1870, made Bangor the foremost lumber market of the world.

When Champlain Landed

From the Bangor Union Station to the bridges above, the river shore used to be a high, rocky bluff, removed within the past forty years to make room for the railroad tracks. The great oaks upon it, as Champlain said, looked "as if planted for a pleasure ground," they were so large and open. Blueberries grew beneath them and the Indian children, keeping watch for the village up the stream, played there; and there must have stood himself, the Sieur de Champlain, first white man to ascend the Penobscot and leave a record.

To his left, as he faced down the river, upon the Brewer side at the end of the present bridge, was an Indian village; to his right, near the mouth of the Kenduskeag was another larger one, where Exchange Street now is. The Indians loved this campground, they were sheltered from the cold winds, they had a sunny slope of light mellow soil for their maize fields; they had a hard shore for landing their canoes; a great spring of water was just beneath the present Penobscot Exchange Hotel; their best eel-fishery was on the rapids at Kenduskeag Bridge; winter hunting-grounds for moose on the hill by the water-tower, and summer hunting on the stream above falls.

Everything was convenient for them. Salmon, shad, and alewives in incredible numbers thronged the river in Springtime and were taken on all the falls, and great sturgeon came to the head of tide. All these they smoked and cured for Winter use.

Beaver, muskrat, deer and moose abounded on the wide meadows of all the little rivers near at hand—Great Works, Pushaw, Kenduskeag, Segedunkeunk, Sowadabscook—and these furnished both meat and clothing. In the Fall the trend of the village was up-river for hunting; in the Spring it stayed by the fisheries on the falls; in Summer it went to salt water for seal and porpoise, or for clams and lobsters. It was always moving in search of food.

The Penobscot Indians

Winter was a time of famine with the Indians. The thought of the whole year was how to lay by enough food to keep the family when snows were deep, game scarce, storms raging, or the hunter came home

empty-handed. So, in baskets and birch-bark boxes, the Indian family kept its supplies of dried meat and smoked fish and dried clams, the flour made of pounded acorns, bulbs of the yellow meadow-lily for thickening soups, bladders filled with bear, seal and porpoise oil to enrich the stew, dried berries, a hoard of maple sugar, stores of maize and beans and dried pumpkins.



Soccabasin Swassin

Remembered as One of the Leading Chieftians
of the Penobscot Indians

Who taught us about hominy and hasty pudding? Where did we learn the art of baking beans in the ground, blending them with fat and meat to a perfect food dish? Who first concocted succotash, of corn and beans and fat? Who made the first chowders, in which meat, or fish, or clams made equally good, but very different combinations, and one kettle prepared a varied meal? Who made the first clambakes with hot stones piled with steaming rockweed? We may not care for boiled moose noses, roasted beavers' tails, the large intestine of the moose or his roasted

marrow-bones, stewed muskrats or baked porcupines, all much esteemed by the Indian; but to a great degree the cookery of the early settler was an adaptation of what the Indian taught him.

There at evening, round the little camp-fire in the wig-wam, while they waited for the kettle bubbling over the coals, the Indians laughed and talked and told stories and played simple games, happy in their way, not knowing that they needed to be discovered. It was those first "hatchets, rosaries, caps, knives and other trifles," which Champlain gave them at Bangor on the 16th of September, 1604, which made a revolution in the life of the Indian, until that day quite content with his arrow, headed with Kineo flint, his sharp stone knife and his good stone axe. Champlain did not realize what it may mean to create new wants; he had started a revolution in the economic system of Indian life.

If the Sieur de Champlain on that September day had been gifted with second sight, history would have unrolled before him a scroll he could not have read beyond its opening lines. The land he had retained under the lilies of France was to be settled under the lion of England; but it was to be won and tamed by the eagles of a nation whose name he did not know.

The Early Settlers

Sturdy Norman fishermen, Basques and Bretons bred to the sea, men of low degree drawing wealth from the sea by hook and line; gentlemen adventurers from the Pyrenees, seeking trade and the fabulous Norumbega, priest and nun, approaching a yet fairer and celestial city, builded without hands, through the ways of this wilderness—these he could understand. Quarrels between French and English, with their border warfare and savagery he could have understood. And he might have understood, had he seen Brigadier Waldo, in his pomp of scarlet and gold lace, burying the leaden plate upon the hillock on the eastern shore (to fall dead on the river bank immediately after), that here was England claiming the soil. And, seeing the little groups of lean and sinewy settlers that followed in families immediately after, he might have guessed that England had made good her claim.

The Revolutionary War

But what would he have thought, a few years later, to see these same settlers in hunting shirts and homespun, sallying out to defy the red flag and scarlet coat of England's power? To hear the sharp word-thrusts of "patriot" and "tory"? To see the huge oak just beyond him, at the end of the present bridge, named "The Liberty Tree"? Samuel de Champlain did not know what liberty was, except that a man who obeyed his king might roam the world around. To defy a king—that was not the French for "liberty" in his day! Yet here were these rebels in motley, in arms against their king beyond the seas. And with them were the Indians he had conciliated himself; and France itself. It is a revolution.

War comes. For the moment England wins. Cowardly Saltonstall instead of guarding his transports and fighting his way out to the open sea, runs like a mongrel pup, deserting his land forces, who are forced to flee up the river, losing ship after ship on the way, until the last ten of them are blown up at the mouth of the Kenduskeag; and Colonel Paul Revere, the four years before had sounded the tocsin of the Revolution, kicks his heels about the site of the present Union Station, until his refugees from the lost fleet assemble to take the "spotted line" to the Kennebec. England does not stay; there is no town here worth the taking.

Peace follows, poverty, hardships, more settlers in the District of Maine of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a port now, with wharves for vessels, with commerce coming, with a town established, and they felled the tall pines, growing along the valley now called Main Street to make room for homes on the West Side.

Then war again, British aggressions, the little town held under martial law, with insolence and bullying, with insults and the conquerer's hard fist. The tales of the grandfathers were full of stories of purposeless oppression and wanton destruction; yet one did tell of a humble West Side home where a baby sat crowing on the floor, while, leaning through the open window, soldiers in red coats tossed him bits of gingerbread, just to see a baby smile at them.

Bangor Begins Lumbering

Peace, poverty, hardships, all the aftermath of war again. But the new town is young and it is growing. The Sieur de Champlain is watching a new race now, English in tenacity and endurance, but quick in wit and action, inventive, adaptable, with a gift for making things. What they want, they create. They cut pine; they erect mills; they build ships; they send their commerce to all quarters of the world, and wealth flows back to them from the sea. Great fortunes are amassed; fine homes are built; whole streets of substantial brick stores rise in ranks, all the streets on the East Side of the city are planned and laid out by Charles Bulfinch, the best architect in the land. He designs many houses also. The iron work is of the best. The city bells are cast by Revere. This is now the State of Maine, and pride approves the lavish use of wealth in outward display.

But it is a young city, full of enterprise. It sends forth armies of red-shirted lumbermen to cut the pine all winter. In Spring battalions more must follow to take the pine down the river in great drives. Countless mills riddle the logs they bring into planks and boards. A host of raftsmen take it down to the shipping waiting below. Just across the river from Champlain's watch-tower [almost a mile of continuous shipyards are building vessels; and every vessel on her maiden voyage carries a load of lumber. The wharves are lined with the world's shipping, waiting for the pine; the river is covered with rafts to be loaded upon them. It is the epic of Pine; for this is the greatest lumber port the world has ever known.

War Comes Again

Then war again. The red-shirted woodsmen, at the sound of the drum, change into lines of soldiers in blue. Such armies Champlain never saw in his day, of men untrained to arms, who dropped their tools and overnight turned into soldiers, the citizen soldiers of a republic. Nor would he have appreciated some of the sharp contrasts of this civil dissension. A few years before, when General Winfield Scott brought his whole staff to Maine for the border troubles, a young officer named Robert E.

Lee was with him. Later yet, Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, conducting a geodetic survey, used to stroll through Bangor streets. Yet, looking to the right from Oak Street Bluff, one might see the home of Vice-President Hamlin of the United States, who for four years of war was pitted against President Davis of the Confederacy; and, swinging to the left, in plain view across the river was the birthplace of General Joshua L. Chamberlain who received the surrender of Lee's Army at Appomattox. Could a man in Champlain's time have dreamed that this wilderness would ever produce such hosts of fighting men, or leaders in a struggle greater than any history before his day had ever recorded?

Later, when a battleship called the Maine had been destroyed in a foreign port—you may see the prow ornaments she once bore in Davenport Park on Main Street—the citizen soldiery rallied once more. And yet again it responded, crossing the sea to Champlain's own France to strike the decisive blow which saved her. Here was a social revolution, an organized life without its soldier class, life, like the bees of thrifty industry, but like the bees, stinging when attacked. Champlain could not have understood it.

Industrial Changes

There is another revolution, an industrial one, of which we are the center. "I did but dream it," sighs Champlain seeing, instead of ships and mills and lumber piled to the sky, only decaying wharves, grass-grown shipyards, an empty river. We know we were not dreaming, yet who imagined that the piping whistle of General Veazie's little locomotive on his twelve miles of railroad marked the advent of another era in transportation, not limited to waterways; or that the enterprise which organized companies for local shipping and lumbering meant the entry upon a corporate use of capital which would so soon obliterate the individual and leave waste and bare the once coveted waterfront? But if Champlain could not foresee the changes which time has wrought here, if he could not have understood what we know has happened, neither can we foresee nor understand what may yet be. But the River still runs on and will run on, and a great river always makes history, and the scroll of Time is never without some record.

Bangor Today

Were Champlain to return to Bangor today, he would find a still greater transition. He would find Bangor which is the commercial center of the Northern half of the State, a territory containing nearly 300,000 souls, whose yearly efforts produce \$229,000,000 in manufactured articles and agricultural products. The Sieur de Champlain would also find a Bangor which is a great recreational center, a Bangor with fine schools, fine hospitals, fine streets and the best of cultural advantages,—in fact a prosperous and happy city where one can live and work and play.

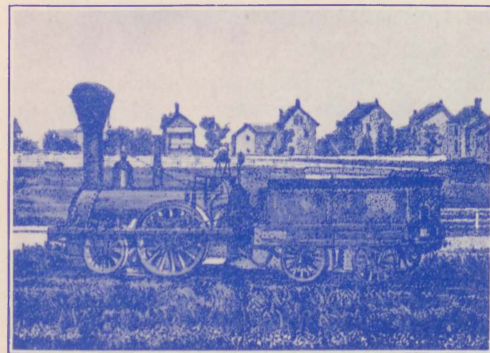
Some Bangor "Firsts"

The first Bangor settlement was just south of Penjejawock River, State Street, and here was located the "truck" house which was the meeting place of the whites and Indians for the barter of furs and provisions.

The first frame house was built here by Jedediah Preble, before the opening of the Revolutionary War.

The first sawmill to be built in Bangor, the beginning of a great industry which was to make this city a world lumber market, was built by the Harthorns, who came from Worcester, Mass., and established themselves upon "The Plains" just above Mt. Hope Cemetery. They employed in 1769 a millwright named Mansel, who came from Scituate, Mass., to erect a sawmill at the mouth of the Penjejawock stream and this became an important center of business and industry for the pioneer community.

The first vessel to be built in the settlement, the forerunner of hundreds of later craft, which carried the name of Bangor to ports all over the world, was constructed by William Boyd, a native of Bristol, Maine, who, as deacon, officiated as clergyman on Sundays and on week days was a skilled ship carpenter. In the summer of 1791 he built and launched near the "Red Bridge" for Major Robert Treat, the first vessel ever built on the Penobscot above Fort Point.



Locomotive built in England, in 1834, by George Stephenson for the Bangor and Piscataquis Canal and R. R. Co., second railroad in the United States, popularly known as "General Veazie's Railroad."

Its first trip between Bangor, Old Town, and Milford was on Nov. 6, 1836. Its last trip, Aug. 19, 1867.

Places of Interest

The early lumber industry slowly expanded and in 1795 a sawmill was erected by William Hammond and John Smart near the head of tide on the Kenduskeag, the present location of the extensive plant of Morse & Company. Previously, a smaller mill had been built by William Potter at the falls near Lovers' Leap.

The "falls" now the location of the municipal water supply and electric lighting station, are spoken of by Champlain. Here is the famous Bangor Salmon Pool. They were called "Penobscot Falls" and later, "Treat's Falls," after Major Treat who for many years carried on a successful traffic with the Indians.

Lovers' Leap, the picturesque and precipitous cliff overlooking the Kenduskeag on Valley Avenue, beyond Morse & Co.'s Mills, is a romantic spot because of its legend. The story is that Indian lovers, when forbidden to wed, ended their lives together by leaping from the cliff.

City Hall, Hammond and Columbia Streets, is properly designated the Hersey Memorial Building as it was made possible through the use of funds bequeathed to the City of Bangor by Samuel Freeman Hersey, whose bust occupies a niche over the main entrance. In the corridors are portraits of Bangor's mayors and memorial tablets to Bangor men distinguished for their Civil War records.



BANGOR PUBLIC LIBRARY
Containing the Collection of the Bangor Historical Society

Bangor Theological Seminary, one of the important Theological institutions of the country, Hammond and Union Streets, originally was located at Hampden. It has been a Bangor institution for more than 100 years. In the Seminary's chapel and library are portraits and memorial tablets recalling names distinguished in missionary and educational pioneering at home and abroad.

In Bangor Public Library, Harlow Street, is housed the interesting collection of the Bangor Historical Society which is open to the public.

The administration building of the Eastern Maine General Hospital, State Street, was the home of Frances Laughton Mace, the Maine poet.

Pioneer Transportation

The second steam railroad to be constructed in the United States was the Bangor and Piscataquis Canal and Railroad Co. from Bangor to Old Town, built in 1836 by General Samuel Veazie, a pioneer in the lumber industry. Sections of the roadbed are in good condition today.

One of the earliest electric street railways to be operated in the U. S. is the Bangor Street Railway.

The first iron steamboat to be built in this country was named "Bangor" for service between Bangor and Boston.

Bangor Memorials

In Kenduskeag Parkway is the bronze tablet memorializing Samuel de Champlain's visit to Bangor.

Also in the Kenduskeag Parkway is the statue of Hannibal Hamlin, Vice President under President Lincoln, whose home is on Fifth Street.

Peter Edes, printer, publisher and patriot, who established Bangor's first newspaper, "The Weekly Register" in 1815, is memorialized by a tablet in Maltby Park at Hammond and High Streets.

The Veterans' Memorial, unique because of its illumination, is located in the Norumbega Mall.

The Peirce Memorial on Harlow Street adjoining the Bangor Public Library, commemorates the River Drivers who played such an important part in the development of the lumber industry in Bangor. This memorial was designed by Charles E. Tefft, a native of Brewer, also the sculptor of the Hamlin statue and the Veterans' Memorial.

The first monument to be erected in the country to the memory of the heroes of the Civil War is the marble shaft in Mount Hope Cemetery.

In Davenport Park, Main Street, is a memorial to the soldiers of the Spanish War which bears the shield of the ill-fated Battleship "Maine."

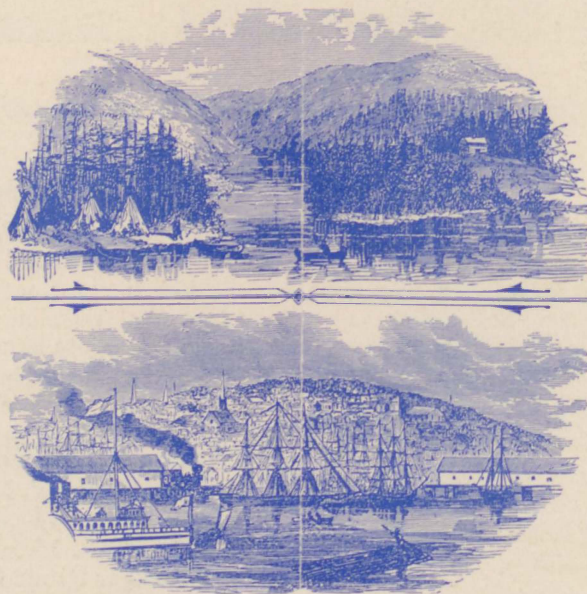
A cannon from one of Saltonstall's ships blown up at the mouth of the Kenduskeag during the Revolutionary War, is mounted in Kenduskeag Parkway where there is also a Spanish cannon recovered in Havana Harbor after the Spanish War.

THE FRONT COVER

The Lumbermen's Group, Peirce Memorial

Charles E. Tefft, Sculptor

Panorama, City of Bangor in 1854



— UPPER PICTURE —

The site of the City of
Bangor as it appeared when
Champlain came in 1604.

— LOWER PICTURE —

The City of Bangor in 1870
when it was the Greatest
Lumber Port in the World.

Some of the places of Historic Interest near Bangor:

Indian Island, Old Town

Fort Knox, Prospect

Black House, Ellsworth

Machias, Burnham Tavern, 1770, and Historical Museum

Islesford, Little Cranberry Island, Museum containing the William Otis Sawtelle Collection

Fort Pownall, 1759, Stockton

Castine, Old Forts and Walker Museum

Bar Harbor, Robert Abbe Museum