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# The Traveler: Two Decades: Random Notes

Myron Haliburton Avery

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# The Traveler

## *Two Decades-*

RANDOM NOTES

by

Myron H. Avery

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This article appeared in The Lewiston Journal Magazine in two sections, under the dates and captions and with the notes given below.

April 2. THE KATAHDINAUGUOH AND ITS REIGNING MONARCH, THE TRAVELER

Maine is a vast State, compared to its New England neighbors. And, in comparison with many States of greater territory, it has long stretches of wilderness country.

Those who have been to Katahdin want to go again. Those who haven't been often express a longing to get at least a glimpse of that section. But even most of those who have been near or on Katahdin know no more about the country to its north than they could gain from their summit viewpoint.

An exception is Myron H. Avery, captain, USNR, a Lubec native who is the State's leading authority on Katahdin and its environs and who has been a prolific writer on the subject.

Herewith is the first of two articles by Capt. Avery which he entitles "The Traveler, Two Decades—Random Notes."

April 9. MAGNIFICENT SCENERY GREET'S "THE TRAVELER" REGION EXPLORER

This is the second and concluding part of an article by Myron H. Avery of Lubec, Captain, U. S. N. R., which he has titled "The Traveler—Two Decades, Random Notes."

Capt. Avery has familiarized himself with the Katahdin area. While doing this, he has done much exploring in its environs.

Principally through his interest and energy, the various organizations which maintain the Appalachian Trail from Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Mt. Oglethorpe in Georgia are kept on their toes to handle the monumental task of trail clearance, blazing, signing, and lean-to repair.

The Appalachian Trail Conference has an extensive library of slides and photographs and the accompanying illustrations are supplied by courtesy of the conference. Most are by the National Park Service.

As in the trail guide book text, Capt. Avery in his numerous articles on one section or another of Maine, has been a stickler for detail and accuracy. The two sections of his account, ending this week, therefore are valuable for the data published as well as for the straightforward manner in which they are told.

# THE TRAVELER

Recently there has been manifested an increasing interest in the mountains north of Katahdin. The focusing of interest in the Katahdinauguh (the Indian name of the mountains north of Katahdin) is a very natural consequence of the diminishing inaccessibility and wildness of the Katahdin region. A focal point in this trend away from Katahdin is the area to its north, particularly The Traveler, with the superbly located South Branch Ponds. With the effusive reports of excursions to the area, it seems quite in order at this time to coordinate and set in proper sequence the history of The Traveler. The purpose here is to record, for the benefit of those who frequent the area, what exists in the way of literature, reports of previous visits, nomenclature and items of particular interest.

To some extent this note is necessarily personal. My excursions to the area have been separately detailed in various items listed in the bibliography at the end of this note. Familiarity with The Traveler region, which dates back to 1927; was an incident in a series of planned excursions which, over a period of three years, led to the summit of all of the numerous peaks of the Katahdin area, save only Center and Strickland Mountains. These peaks are somewhat set apart, and as to them, it was always the story of another year, or perhaps the pleasing thought of something remaining unfinished—something still to be done.

From these trips, maps of The Traveler region, the detailed narratives, and data recorded in "Guide to The Appalachian Trail in Maine" are the tangible benefits passed on to others with a kindred interest.

## First Record In 1883

First, the name is "The Traveler", and not the nondescript "Traveler Mountain". To early voyageurs on the Penobscot East Branch, the mountain was a familiar landmark. To these voyageurs it seemed that the mountain traveled with them. As early as 1837 this impression was recorded by State Geologist C. T. Jackson, who spoke of it in the plural as "The Travelers". The State Geological Survey party of 1861, under C. H. Hitchcock, however, designated it in the singular as "The Traveler". This significant name, "The Traveler", based on historical record, would be lost through usage

of the nondescriptive "Traveler Mountain". "Guide to The Appalachian Trail in Maine" preserves the century-old nomenclature.

Except for the State Geological Survey activities, the record of The Traveler is barren until 1883. George H. Witherle of Castine, of unequaled thorough exploration of the Katahdin region in its primitive wilderness aspect, ascended in that year the mountain (1) from above Grand Falls on the Penobscot East Branch.

This side of The Traveler has not been frequented. The topography to the east and the flat basin lands of the Penobscot East Branch remain an objective for exploration. Some future climber will no doubt discover again Witherle's Horseshoe Pond. Of particular interest is Witherle's description of the appearance, from The Traveler, of the "singular 'Fort Mountain' elevation." Thus Witherle anticipated the nomenclature action which has resulted in affixing this name.

As might be anticipated, the next written record is of a scientific visit to The Traveler. In 1910, Dr. Cushman and the Rev. C. B. Ames collected there about two thousand species of plants. The record is regrettably barren of the details of the excursion. (2)

## Thoreau's Tribute

Perhaps the outstanding literary tribute to The Traveler is that of Henry David Thoreau, whose accounts of Katahdin, of the Allagash and of the Penobscot East Branch are classics of Maine. One who has journeyed down the Penobscot East Branch can appreciate that Thoreau would leave some record of the impressiveness of these peaks, which loom up so vividly over the flat lands to the south. In 1837, when his canoe glided out onto the broad waters of the "Matangamooksis" or Second Grand or Matagamon Lake, as it is known today, Thoreau wrote that his Indian guide, Joe Polis, could not be unmoved by the scene. He said: "The very sight of the Nerlumskeechticook or Deadwater Mountains, a day's journey off over

(1)—"Excursions North of Katahdin." "Appalachia," vol. 3, no. 3, December, 1883, pp. 223-231.

(2) "The Boston Society of Natural History Bulletin," No. 13, October, 1910.



the forest, as we first saw them, must awaken in him pleasant memories."

This term, the Deadwater Mountains, would be a pleasing nomenclature for this group north of Katahdin. Mrs. Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, noted Maine authority, has, however, indicated the error in the Indian term of "Nerlumskeechticook," which Thoreau understood to mean "The Deadwater Mountains." Thus, there vanishes the only suggested Indian term for the range. It is incomprehensible, however, that such a striking landmark did not have a very specific Indian designation but a quest of the records of early travels and maps has disclosed nothing beyond Thoreau's inquiries. (3).

Comment as to what may be gleaned from the early maps of The Traveler should be a part of this resume.

As at Katahdin, with respect to the Monument Line Survey, the records of the Maine Land Agent contain much of interest. The earliest representation is "A Plan of the part of the State of Maine which was explored from Mars Hill to the Sebois in 1825 by Geo. W. Coffin and Dan'l Rose, and from the Sebois to the head of the northeast Branch of Penobscot River by Daniel Rose in 1829." Here the mountains north of Katahdin are marked "Wisatiquoik Mtns." Grand Lake is "Metjigarmo Lake." The Traveler is that mountain. Trout Brook is well defined.

An interim map records a curious variation in nomenclature. By the time when Henry David Thoreau journeyed by canoe through the Maine wilderness, "The Travelers" had become "Carbuncle Mtn." If the record of Colton's Railroad and Township Map of Maine preserves any contemporaneous usage, the similarity to the Indian legend of the White Mountains, which Hawthorne used in his story, "The Great Carbuncle," suggests a curious transposition.

#### Reverts to Wilderness

My initial visit to The Traveler occurred at the turn of the era. From 1910 to 1914, as told in "The Story of the Wassataquoik" (4) this region was one of intensive lumbering activity under the direction of Edward B. Draper. Primeval timber was being harvested on the Pogys; a sluice dropped logs into Wassataquoik Lake as did the sluice at Tip Top on

Katahdin. Draper's Packhorse Trail, the initial route to Pogy from Wassataquoik Stream, was superseded by the tote-road trending west and then south up Trout and Hathorn Brooks. This is the obscure route, today, for travelers bound to Katahdin from the Penobscot East Branch.

Then in 1916 came the disastrous Pogy Mountain fire. Lumber operations were suspended. For the next decade the country north of Katahdin reverted to the wilderness. Nature struggled to undo the ravages of man's carelessness.

Like Thoreau—but some 80 years later—my first view of The Traveler was over the placid reaches of "Matangamooksis" Lake. Thoreau had journeyed there by canoe toward the southeast. My route was novel and a long journey by trail. It began at Haymock Lake, a tributary of Eagle Lake on the famous Allagash canoe route.

Our intended course had been to reach the Penobscot East Branch by following the old Eagle Lake Tote-road. This, from time immemorial, was a lumberman's route to central Maine. Thoreau mentions the road as in existence in 1857. With the suspension of its use in lumber operations after 1916, it had become less conspicuous.

Except for the existence of blazes at detours and diverging wood roads, placed there by patrolmen of the Maine Forest Service who knew of our anticipated journey, we might have spent much time in seeking out the course of this old road. Maps of the region for trail travel were non-existent.

At length Trout Brook Farm was reached. This hostelry, a lumberman's center, a short distance back from the banks of Grand Lake, has survived three fires. It was then accessible only by the tote-road from Patten to Matagamon, the sporting camp on the north shore of the lake, and then by boat and tote-road. It was a two or three day journey from the nearest town to the east. Since 1944, it is a matter of an automobile road of only some 35 miles.

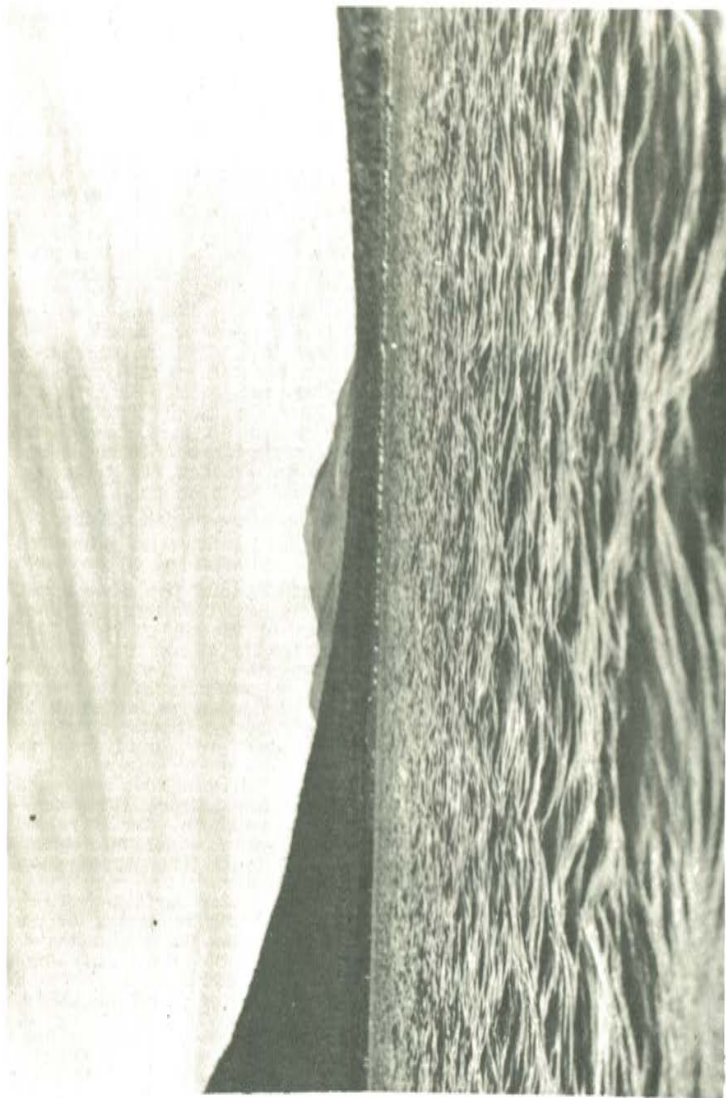
#### Based At The "Crossing"

Our objective, in 1927, was The Traveler. Like all good voyageurs, we were at pains to survey the route. This we accomplished by a short climb to the crest of Matagamon or Horse Mountain, the cliffs of which rise so abruptly from Grand Lake. There has been a fire tower on Matagamon since 1913.

There on duty, in 1927, was Joe Mitchell, father of Chief Fire Warden

(3) "The Maine Naturalist,"  
September, 1929, vol. 9, no. 3.

(4) "The Maine Naturalist,"  
September, 1929, vol. 9, no. 3.



**THE TRAVELER FROM KATAHDIN LAKE**—The photo was taken with camera pointing slightly west of north with The Traveler in far center and a shoulder of East Turner Mountain at left. Katahdin Lake is in T3 R8 WELS, Penobscot County. It has an area of 1.02 sq. m., is 1.6 m. long, and has an elevation of 1,022 ft.



John Mitchell of Patten. We drew from Mitchell his knowledge of North Traveler, where he had lumbered, of the dams he had built on nearby lakes and of the mile-long trestle on Beetle Mountain. Particularly were we impressed with Mitchell's description of the inaccessible huge patch of virgin timber high in a ravine between two enormous spurs of The Traveler.

There was then no lumbering activity in the area and the reforestation following the Pogys fire had ceased. We followed the deserted Trout Brook Tote-road west some four miles to the "Crossing." Here South Branch Ponds Brook joins Trout Brook. This is a land all laid waste, only "popple" and birch—the aftermath of all fires.

The "Crossing" was our campsite and base for the climb of The Traveler. Our intended route was a circle which would skirt the Ponds and traverse the two most prominent westward-projecting ridges. This course would lead across the summit and afford the best impression of the region. From the "Crossing," we followed the then obscure tote-road to the outlet of the Ponds, skirted the east shore of the lower pond and crossed the flat delta of Dry (Howe) Brook. Here we noted the attractive waterfall and basin about a quarter of a mile up from the shore. Beyond, a sort of trail led to a hunter's lean-to near the lower end of southern pond. We turned left, however, and commenced to climb what we termed, from its physical location, "Center Ridge". To the left was the ravine of Dry Brook. It was a short climb through sparse timber to open rocks on Center Ridge. As a record of what we observed, I quote from the 1928 "In the Maine Woods:"

"From the first bare top which we climbed on this west ridge we saw why there are two South Branch Ponds connected by a thoroughfare instead of only one pond. Dry Brook has pushed its delta almost across to the cliffs of Black Cat Mountain, (5) chocking and dividing into two ponds what had originally been a long rectangular shaped pond, perhaps a glacial trough. On the west end of the spur by which we ascended we saw examples of the rock creep described on Katahdin by the well-known Maine geologist, Prof. Edward S. C. Smith of Union College.

(5) South Branch Pond Mountains.

"From the summit we dropped north and then west into the sag of the virgin spruce. This tract whose superb inaccessibility has so far won for it immunity from the logger's axe is said to contain 6,000,000 board feet. This is probably an over enthusiastic estimate but I should not argue the question that there are 6,000 moose and deer tracks in that stand.

"The east and west ridge, north of Dry Brook, comes into a sag of the main axis north of the main peak.

This ridge has as its culminating point the north peak, very nearly as high as the main peak of The Traveler. We called this ridge, up which we had come, the Center Ridge. The traveling on this North Ridge is indescribably bad. It is simply a mass of blown-over fire-killed trees, a tangled pile of jack-straws. For much of the distance we literally walked from tree trunk to tree trunk.

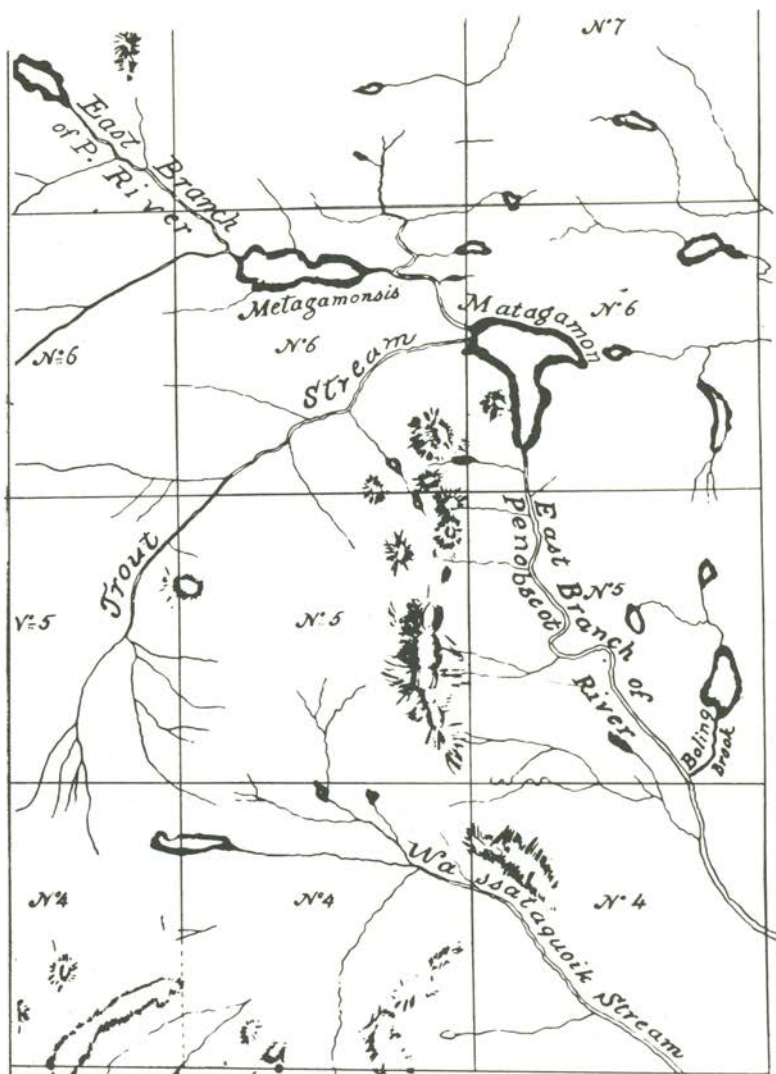
"It was dusk when we raced down over the last cliff on this ridge and once more reached the shore of the pond. Thanks to Buck's skill in finding his way in the dark, through the deceptive poplar and birch second growth, we reached our tents and food at our camp on the "Crossing".

#### Mahar's Knowledge a Help

We were particularly impressed by the abrupt west end of the North Traveler Ridge, by the game trails, and by the numerous logs split open by bears in search of food. This trip afforded a circuit of the bulk of the mountain. We were thus able to form an estimate of the character of the range as far south as the peak termed South Traveler. Another year we would traverse The Traveler by its long axis.

From the "Crossing" we continued up the old Trout Brook Tote-road—a route to Katahdin later traversed by the measuring wheel and described in "Guide to The Appalachian Trail in Maine."

I have said that our trip coincided with the first reopening of the region, following the suspension of activities after the disastrous Pogys fire. At the camp, which served the firewardens on Burnt Mountain, where a fire tower was erected in 1924, began the association with veteran woodsman and guide Charlie Mahar, whose knowledge of the area was to contribute so much to our efforts to make an accurate record of these outlying peaks of the Katahdin angle. Beyond, the route up Hathorn Brook and over the Pogys had been reopened that year by an enterprising Forest Service patrolman. Fred Walker.

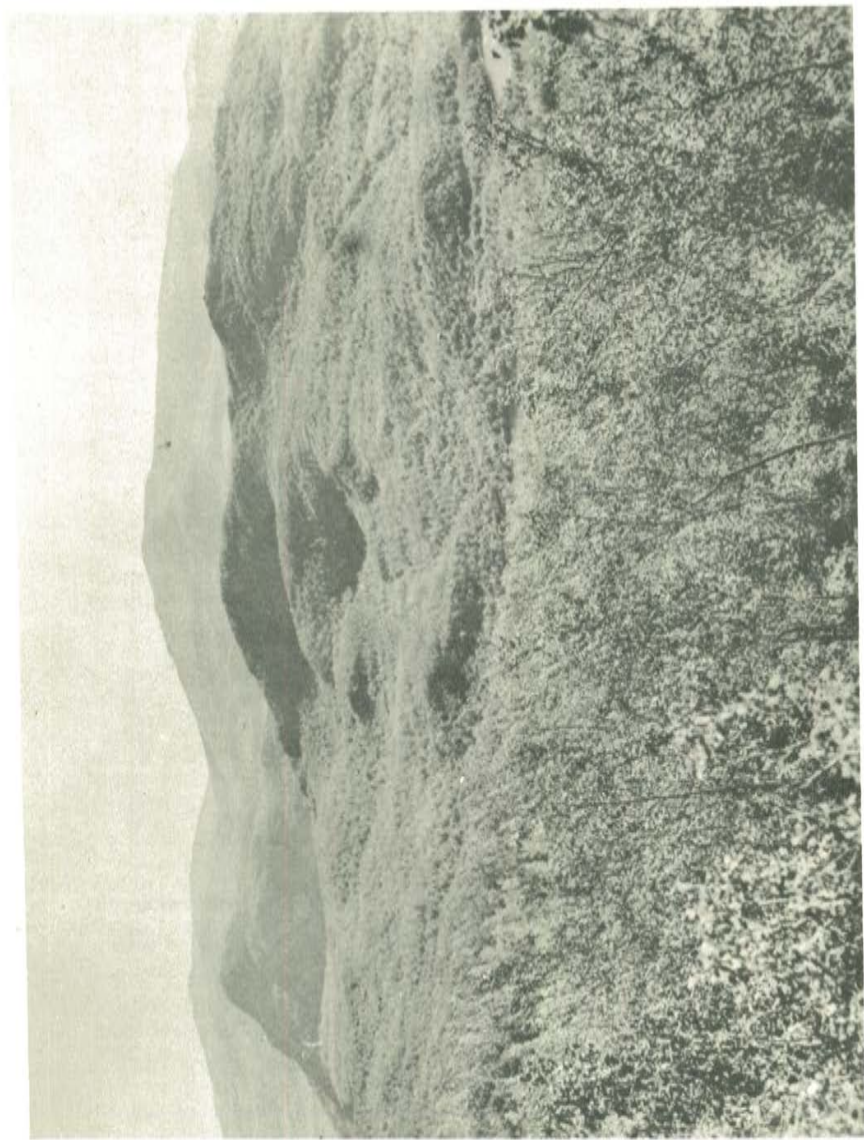


**THE TRAVELER MOUNTAIN AREA ON 1833 MAP**—Remarkable for its extreme accuracy is the plan of townships as surveyed by Z. Bradley and Edwin Rose in 1833. The accuracy of this century-old plan is such it seems worthwhile to reproduce the section between Trout Stréam, Wassataquoik Stream, and the East Branch of the Penobscot River. Those who know the region can identify the principal peaks and spurs.

At the right are Townships 4 to 7 in Range 8, West of the East Line of the State. They are in Penobscot County. In the center range (No. 9) the large mountain at the east side of Tp. 5 is The Traveler. Billfish is in the upper right corner of the same township and, north of it, in Tp. 6, is Mattagamon (or Horse) Mountain. Part of Range 10 is at the left.

The old spellings show Matagamon Lake and Metagamonsis. These, with the lake showing in T 7 R 10 are now First Second, and Third Grand Lake Mattagamon.





**THE TRAVELER FROM MATTAGAMON**—Looking south from the fire tower on Mattagamon Mountain in T6 R8 WELS (formerly spelled Matagamon and also formerly known as Horse Mountain). The Traveler and its North Ridge are on the horizon. In the central middle ground is Bald Mountain, one of at least 20 in Maine bearing that name.

The views of Katahdin from Pogey, the old well, the sluice and how we eventually came to the summit of Katahdin, is another story. I digress only to say that one route, which was intended to take us through the Northwest Basin, led in dense fog and rain up through thick scrub, past the long line of cascades on the brook in the Northwest Basin ravine. I doubt if this route would ever be deliberately chosen. Our experience was due to the error in the existing maps, which indicated the outlet of the Northwest Basin Ponds as the left hand branch rather than the right.

I made this 1927 visit with Henry R. Buck of Hartford, Conn., vice-president of the Appalachian Mountain Club and a man whose sterling character and broad range of interests were an inspiration to those who were so fortunate as to have his acquaintance. Buck's interest in the Katahdin area dated back to the A. M. C. 1924 trip to Colt's Camp at Kidney Pond. Engineer by profession, he improved the existing maps of the area.

The record of our journey was transcribed onto the expanded Katahdin Region Map. This, through several revisions, further study and travel, became the Katahdin Region Map of "Guide to The Appalachian Trail in Maine." Thus, with our several Katahdin trips, the peaks and trails fell into some perspective although not with the accuracy which an engineer would require.

There remained two major problems: What was the height of The Traveler? It was then reputed to be the second highest in Maine and only slightly lower than Katahdin. Also, what was the topography between Wassataquoik Stream and The Traveler?

As to the latter, we had some vague information. The Wassataquoik, after two decades of disuse, was again becoming known. Fishermen, who found their way up Wassataquoik Stream to Russell Pond and the beaver ponds, so numerous in the area, brought back stories of fabulous fishing. In 1924 came into the region W. F. Tracey, of the Traceys who opened the Wassataquoik to spruce logging in 1884, a memorial to which is carved on an enormous boulder in Wassataquoik Stream beside the tote-road. Tracey then built the first camp in a development which came to be known as the Russell Pond Camps.

For many years, from McDonald's ~~Bowlin~~ Camps on the Penobscot East Branch, there was a sort of

trail to The Traveler. This led by Traveler Pond and through The Traveler Gap. The "campsite", now obliterated, at the head of Up South Branch Pond represents the traces of McDonald's "sports." Little-used, this route became overgrown. Even earlier in the Rogers' logging operations, before the second Wassataquoik fire, a lumber road led up Pogey Brook to South Branch Ponds.

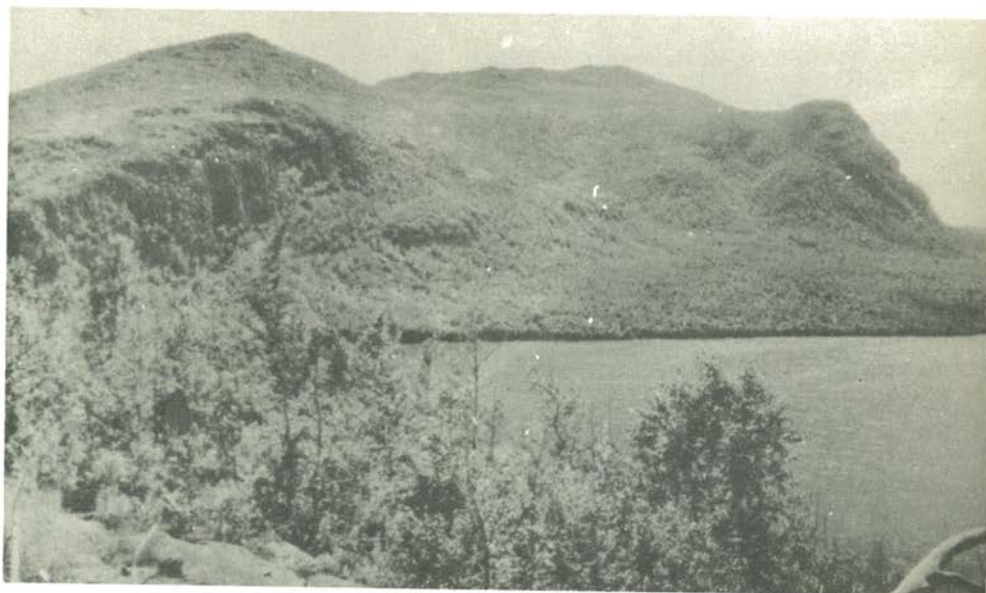
#### Made Traverse in 1920

Between The Traveler with its extension of the Turners, and the mountains to the west, there is a long valley. To the north it is termed Pogey Notch. Below the South Branch of the Wassataquoik, its flue-like shape was responsible for the velocity of the disastrous fires of 1884 and 1903. Through years of isolation, these valleys had become a morass of swamps and beaver flowages. In 1920, Ludwig K. Moorehead, veteran fisherman, had forced his way between the Wassataquoik and South Branch Ponds, a traverse attended with very considerable difficulty. His diary and photographs were of much help to us in developing an outline of the area.

The traverse of the long axis of The Traveler came in 1929. J. F. Schairer of Washington, D. C., and I traveled the range from Wassataquoik Stream to the south base of Bald Mountain in a day—a journey also attended with some considerable difficulty. Since the detailed record of this journey appeared in the now unavailable "Maine Naturalist," it seems desirable to repeat the record here.

"We left our Old City camp at 5:50 A.M. on Monday, going north through a 'popple' growth to the base of the cliffs on Sable, reaching the summit at 7:30 A.M. The barometer indicated an elevation of 1680 feet. We descended into a slight valley, going by a beaver flowage which drained to the east, and then climbed to the summit of South Traveler through a 'popple' growth, much obstructed by fire-killed trees. South Traveler affords an expansive outlook. At its eastern end is the beautiful Traveler Pond. The summit is bare, quite flat, and does not give any indication of the steep descent into The Traveler Gap and the





**SPECTACULAR PISCATAQUIS CO. VIEW**—Looking south over Upper South Branch Pond in Township 5 Range 9, West of the East Line of the State, Piscataquis County.

This is one of the outstanding beauty spots of the Maine woods. To the left are spurs of The Traveler, Center, and Pinnacle Ridges, respectively.



**SOUTH BRANCH POND**—Long renowned for their isolation, these ponds are now much more accessible. They lie between The Traveler and South Branch Mountains in the region to the north of Katahdin.





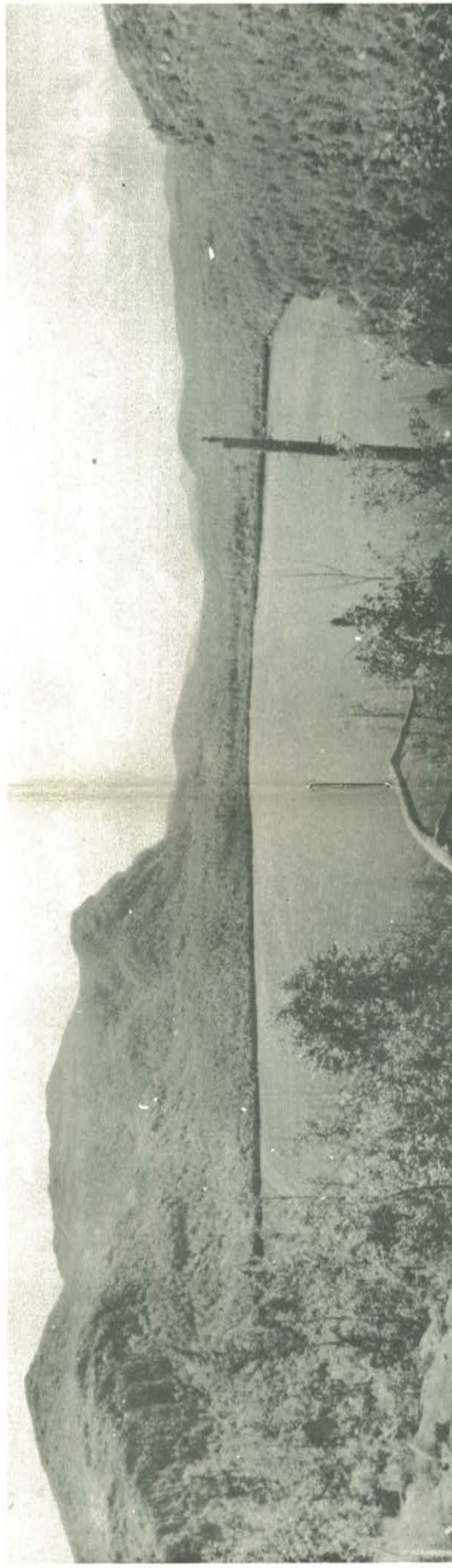
The narrow thoroughfare between the two South Branch Ponds has been almost obliterated by the wash from a ravine on The Traveler

In the far background are Turner, left, and Katahdin, right.

Photo Copyright 1928 by Prof. Edward S. C. Smith,  
Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.



At the right are spurs of The Traveler. The photograph, copyright by Edward S. C. Smith, is used by courtesy of the Appalachian Trail Conference, Washington, D. C., as are the map and other photographs



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Photo Copyright 1928 by Prof. Edward S. C. Smith, Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.



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At the right are spurs of The Traveler. The photograph, copyright by Edward S. C. Smith, is used by courtesy of the Appalachian Trail Conference, Washington, D. C., as are the map and other photographs.



difficult climb to the bare summit next north.

"We found the height of South Traveler to be 2380 feet, and at 10:15 A.M. left its open, flat summit to descend into The Traveler Gap. It is this gap which separates the two peaks described by C. T. Jackson in 1837. Through it runs the trail from McDonald's Camps on the Penobscot East Branch to the head of the Upper South Branch Pond.

"The fire-killed timber in the thick 'popple' growth adds to the difficulty of the steep ascent to the first rocky summit on The Traveler.

There is a slight wooded depression before the next summit and the route leads over two other summits to the cairn on the highest peak. From here there is a splendid outlook over the pond-strewn East Branch valley and down Pogy Notch to Katahdin. Pogy Notch is the flat valley, west of The Traveler, which runs from the South Branch of the Wassataquoik. Its western boundary is formed by the two peaks of the South Branch Mountains and to the south by the Pogys.

"Between the South Branch Mountains and the Pogys, for a distance of about two miles, this western rampart is slightly lower. On its summit, glistening in its setting of dark spruce, is Mahan Pond. Half a mile to the south is a deep gash, extending from the plateau down into Pogy Notch. This is Dry Gorge, which contains a series of terraced beaver ponds. About half a mile still farther south and lying in a sort of amphitheatre on the northeast corner of North Pogy, we noticed a small pond. This was not indicated on the maps and we had not previously known of its existence.

"There is a cairn on the highest peak of The Traveler. In 1883, G. H. Witherle had found there a 'monument of rough stones, supporting a short staff, very mossy.' Witherle also wrote that he had been 'unable to learn of any person who had previously made the ascent, although it

was supposed to have been climbed by lumbermen and hunters.'

#### Height Is Estimated

"We checked the aneroid barometer and there our hopes that The Traveler would prove to be the second highest peak in the State withered. The reading at the summit was 3340 feet. Undoubtedly the distinction must fall to Old Speck, in Grafton Notch, for which an elevation of 4700 feet is claimed, or to Saddleback with 4456.

(Ed. Note—Surveys show Old Speck third at 4,180 feet. Sugarloaf second at 5,240, and many others above the 3,400 foot mark)

"Sable Mountain is composed of granite; South Traveler and the rest of the Dead-Water Mountains are rhyolite. Somewhere in the gap between Sable and South Traveler is the contact of these two rocks, which owe their difference to the fact that the granite cooled beneath the surface while the rhyolite flowed to the top.

"Two years ago Henry Buck and I came to the South Branch Ponds, ascended The Traveler by way of the Center Ridge and descended

over the North Ridge. I think that this route up the Center Ridge not only has the most gradual ascent but is the most free from fire-killed timber, which forms such an effective barricade against the would-be climber.

"From the main peak we followed the ridge in a curving course, first to the north and then to the west, through the virgin spruce tract estimated to contain 6,000,000 board feet of lumber, out on the North Ridge of the Traveler. At the base of the high North Peak we stopped and surveyed the situation. Here we should leave The Traveler and turn north to continue our route over the Dead-Water Mountains."

The "longitudinal" trek of The Traveler had consumed ten hours, from 6:00 A.M., of most difficult dry traveling. Our camp on the shelf over-looking the moonlight-bathed Penobscot East Branch valley below, beside two deep pools in the eastward flowing brook, was one of those campsites never to be forgotten.

Our barometric elevation experiments had a promising beginning. When we left Old City Campground,





**A VIEW AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY**—This is the earliest known photo of The Traveler, taken at the Bell Camp on the South Branch of the Wassataquoik about 1900 by Dr. Lore A. Rogers. South Traveler is in the foreground, North Peak at the left.



**LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE FIRE TOWER ON MATTAGAMON (MATAGAMON OR HORSE) MOUNTAIN**—In the central middle ground is Bald Mountain. The Traveler and its north ridge are in the background. The photo is from a series of 180 by the National Park Service.

we had an exact elevation from the U. S. Geological Survey Katahdin Quadrangle. As we were able to reach the main peak within seven hours, we had thought that the error would be inconsiderable. When we returned to base, we found the barometer entirely out of order. This was our consolation for the low reading of 3,340 feet. I have not known of any repetition of this experiment. Due to the difficulty of obtaining an accurate reading for the base, few parties would have the advantage for a similar experiment which our route afforded.

During the years which followed, in the survey of Maine, I asked Geological Survey parties to take every opportunity to obtain readings of vertical angles, as was done with Old Speck. (This is another elevation question of interest to Maine enthusiasts; see "Appalachian Trailway News," May 1941, p. 28.) The opportunity did not materialize, so the height of The Traveler remains an unanswered question of much interest. The map, resulting from this 1929 trip, was publicized through "The Maine Naturalist" and "In The Maine Woods."

#### Continued Exploration

From our circuit of The Traveler we returned to South Branch Ponds, and camped at the abandoned McDonald's Campsite, then in ruins. To complete the exploration, we crossed Pogy Notch, climbed South Branch Mountains, past Mahar Pond and the series of terraced beaver ponds, going west as far as McCarty Camp on Trout Brook.

The narrative of our climbs of the remaining peaks of the Deadwater Mountains, Bald Mountain, the Middle and West Peaks of Billfish and some account of the ponds in the area was set forth in detail in *The Maine Naturalist*. (6) These peaks have much of interest and, with the increased travel to this area, perhaps some future issue of *Appalachia* will reprint what we learned and recorded of this region some twenty years ago. Pinnacle Ridge, Little Peaked and Bald Mountain, together with the exact number of peaks to the north, appeared on the Katahdin Region Map after this trip.

There is still unanswered a question which intrigued our interest. High on Pinnacle Ridge, at night in the utter stillness of the South Branch Ponds, we could hear a wat-

erfall. What is its location? Baxter State Park Supervisor, now Lieutenant, Harold J. Dyer has established the locality of this waterfall as follows:

"I stumbled onto the falls and cascades on the center branch of Howe Brook, the branch which originates in the patch of virgin timber on the west side of the saddle between Traveler Peak and the North Ridge. The falls are about 200 to 300 yards below the virgin growth. We hit the falls on the climb up, and heard the waterfall as we went out on Pinnacle Ridge on the way down."

Then, too, the relationship between the curiously-shaped Barrell Ridge and Little Peaked Mountain was a matter of speculation. Baxter Park Supervisor Dyer's correction of our map has set at rest this question. We had felt that we had sufficiently recorded the peaks, trails and lakes and our journeyings.

#### Ascent in Winter

The narrative of a Winter ascent is always of considerable interest. The first record seems to be that of Baxter State Park Supervisor Harold J. Dyer:

"In 1941, about the middle of March, I made a Winter check of moose yarding conditions on Traveler which took me up Howe Brook to the saddle between Traveler Peak and Pinnacle Ridge. Here in this saddle we started a big bull moose, and farther along hit evidence of three other moose traveling about the virgin timber which is just west of the saddle between Traveler Peak and the North Ridge.

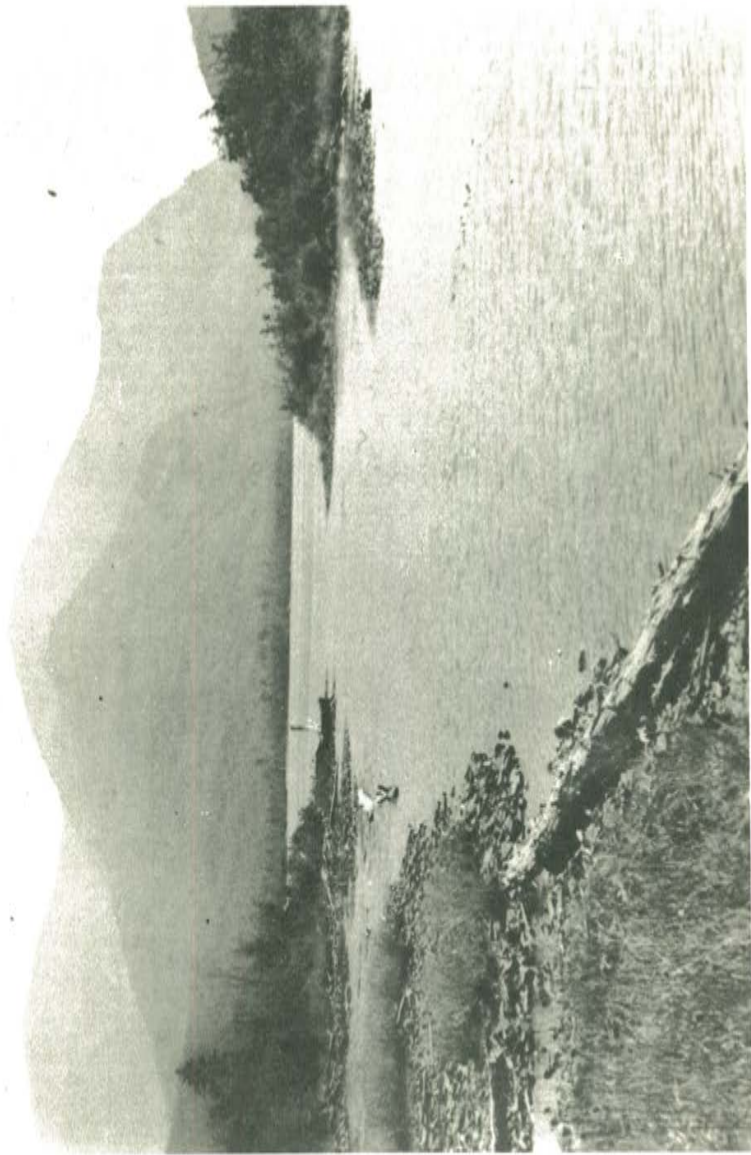
"The remarkable feature of the trip, which started from the State Warden's Camp, the outlet of the lower South Branch Pond, was our ascent to the summit with our snowshoes tied to our packs. We had the blessings of a previous days thaw followed by a hard freeze that night which enabled us to travel until noon on the frozen surface of the snow. The moose were also able to travel easily on this heavy crust.

"The trip included a circuit of the North Ridge, checking the virgin timber to the north of North Traveler, and then returning almost directly to the camp at South Branch Ponds. After our noon lunch we were forced to use our snowshoes. Henry Souci of Millinocket, an employe of the Inland Fisheries and Game Research Dept. at that time, was with me. I made extensive photographs of the trip."

Dr. Lore A. Rogers, the source of much of the history of the Was-

(6) "The Dead-Water Mountains, The Maine Naturalist," 1930; vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 2-10.





**AT THE OUTLET OF SOUTH BRANCH PONDS**—Here are the remains of an old lumbermen's dam. These ponds have a spectacular setting between The Traveler and South Branch Mountains. Here, are shown a part of the North and Center Ridges. Photo from National Park Service collection.

satisfactorily, particularly the Ayer and Rogers operations in the nineties, has supplemented this record by calling attention to the fact that Ayer and Rogers had a camp in 1896 and sluiced logs off the east side of Pogy Mountain. Their route, a tote-road, led from the Old City Campground up Pogy Brook. Dr. Rogers' delightful reminiscences of lumbering operations in their idea, were published in the December 1938 issue of "Appalachia" (P. 214).

The subsequent trend of travel to the region and the reports of exploration have borne out our expectations. Ten years after the initial trip, I came again to The Traveler country with a party from the National Park Service, appraising the region to determine its suitability for National Park purposes. The experience afforded an opportunity to measure trails and prepare guidebook data. However, the real contribution of this 1937 "expedition" is the incomparable and much-publicized National Park Service set of pictures of the Katahdin region. The Appalachian Trail Conference's 100-slide annotated lecture on the Katahdin area also contains full representation of The Traveler region.

As to the piscatorial qualities of the region with the togue, landlocked salmon and square-tails at South Branch Ponds, we have already too much publicized these elsewhere. We can find consolation for our error in the little success of casual fishermen. The plane wreckage on the shore of the lower Pond is the souvenir of one fisherman

who had solved the piscatorial secrets of South Branch Ponds to the extent that he returned time and time again.

#### Approach Is Simplified

Today the story is quite otherwise. The inaccessibility of The Traveler is regrettably a thing of the past. An automobile road, built in 1944, from the west shore of Matagamoon Lake up Trout Brook, now places parties only three miles from The Traveler, at our #927 campsite at the "Crossing". No mountain, of its attractions, will be so readily accessible from an automobile base. The tote-road to the State Camp and airplanes bringing supplies to extensive camping parties at South Branch Ponds eliminate any last vestige of the impression that The Traveler is a mountain to be gained only after a long journey of much toil. This new road in Baxter State Park—a land dedicated to freedom from automobile roads and tourist intrusion—is an unescapable fixture for a quarter of a century. The reviving automobile transportation at the end of the war poses increasing problems. The matter has serious potentialities.

Come what may, from the distance on "Matangamooksis", or as one views the mountain from the swiftly flowing Penobscot East Branch, The Traveler will never fail to impress, as it has done during the last century, since the vision of white men first was directed toward its shining summits.

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(The photographs used with this article are the earliest known of The Traveler region.)



**THE GRAND LAKE FIRE ROAD FROM PATTEN** leads past the west shore of Grand Lake Mattagon at the base of the mountain known as "Matagamon" or "Horse" Mountain. According to L. L. Hubbard, famous author of the Maine Woods, it derived its name from the rather contemptuous attitude of the Indians toward it. Photo from the collection of the National Park Service.

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See Opposite Page ---

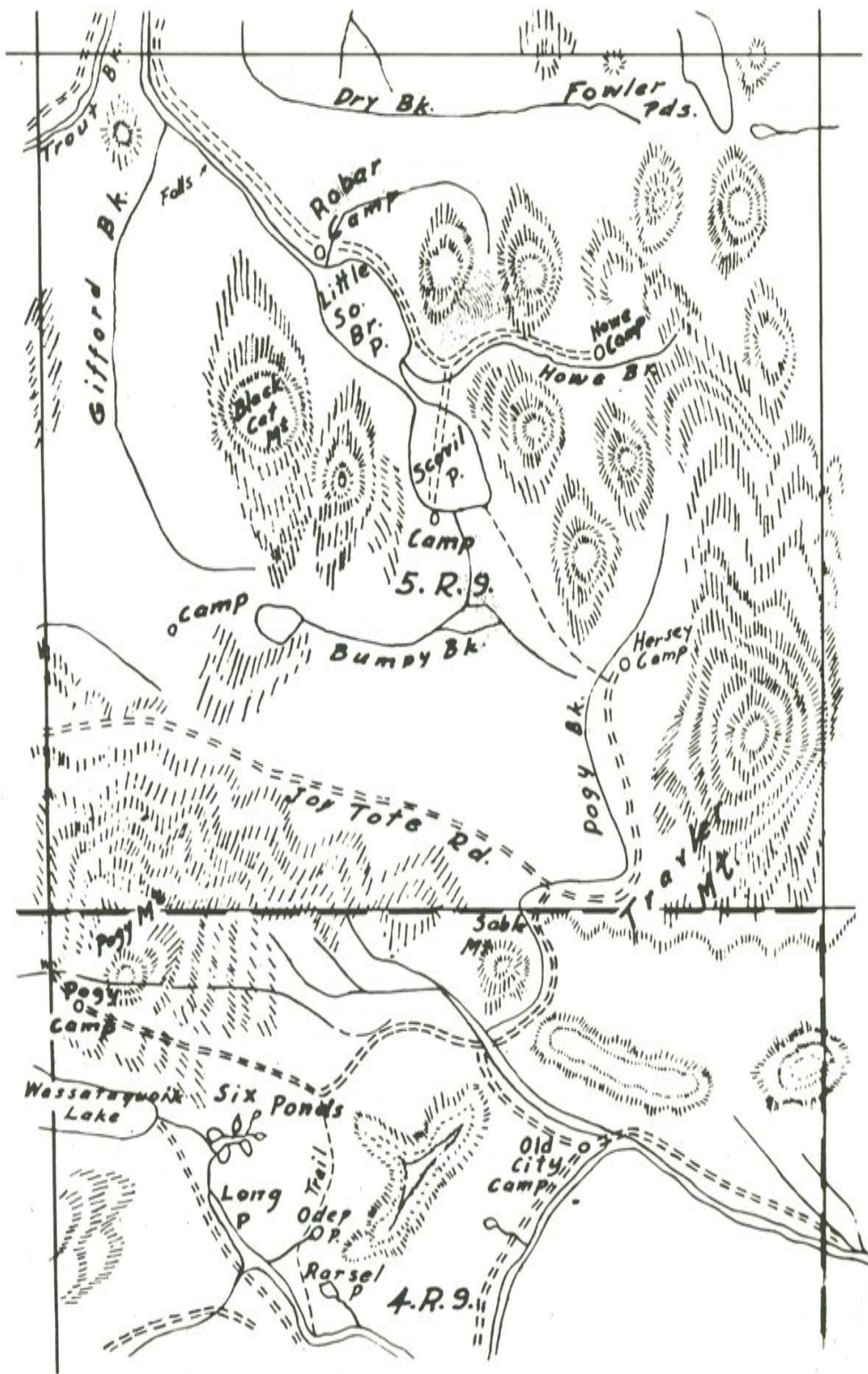
**A 1920 MAP OF THE TRAVELER REGION**—Reflecting the lumbering history of The Traveler area is this excerpt from a map current in 1920. There will be noted the lumber camp location at the "Campsite" at the head of Upper South Branch Pond, together with a camp on the banks of Howe's Brook.

"The map is reproduced to afford some future Traveler explorer an opportunity to see if any trace remains of these: The new State Camp is, of course, close to the site of the Robar Camp. I endeavored without success to locate the 'Joy Tote-road,'" says Capt. Avery.

The various excursions narrated in this article resulted in the portrayal of the region in the map in Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Maine. This was checked and further corrected by Baxter State Park supervisor Harold J. Dyer. The 1945 Supplement to the Maine Guide reproduces this as the most accurate large scale map of The Traveler.

The Traveler is in the southeast corner of Township 5 Range 9 West of the East Line of the State. This entire township is shown as is the northerly half of Township 4 Range 9.





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