

WILSON MUSEUM BULLETIN

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Travel On The Penobscot

PART II - 1860 TO 1935

By mid-nineteenth century steamboats were beginning to replace sailing vessels along the New England coast. Most of these steamboats, taken for service in the Civil War, never returned, as the war closed however, others were built and were soon operating on scheduled runs.

The "Katahdin", a side-wheeler, 241 foot long, was built in 1863 and ran for thirty years. Operated by the Boston and Bangor Steamboat Company she ran between these cities, stopping at town landings on the way. Hosea B. Wardwell of Penobscot who taught school for a time in Vinalhaven, noted in his diary for February 14, 1874 - - "Took stmr Katahdin from Rockland to Belfast. Took the packet Spy at Belfast for Castine and arrived there at 2 p.m.

The "Spy", successor to the Castine packet "General Washington", provided scheduled service between Castine

Belfast from 1855 to the 1870's or '80's. An advertisement in the "Castine Monthly News", April 1872, states that the "Castine & Belfast Packet, Schooner Spy, Capt. Jerry Hatch, Master, will sail from Castine every other day to meet the Boston Steamers. A further announcement will be made later in the season." One such sail across the bay is described in "Laura, an American Girl" by Elizabeth E. Evans, published by Lippincott in 1884.

On the same page of the "Monthly News" which carries the advertisement for the "Spy" is a notice for the "City of Richmond" - "Steamer City of Richmond will leave here for the present, on Tuesday afternoon for Portland and on Saturday afternoon for Machias." The "Richmond" was built in New York in 1865, she was 227 feet long and ran between Portland, Bangor, and Machias stopping at intermediate landings. She was still on the Penobscot in 1892 but was soon replaced by the "Frank Jones."

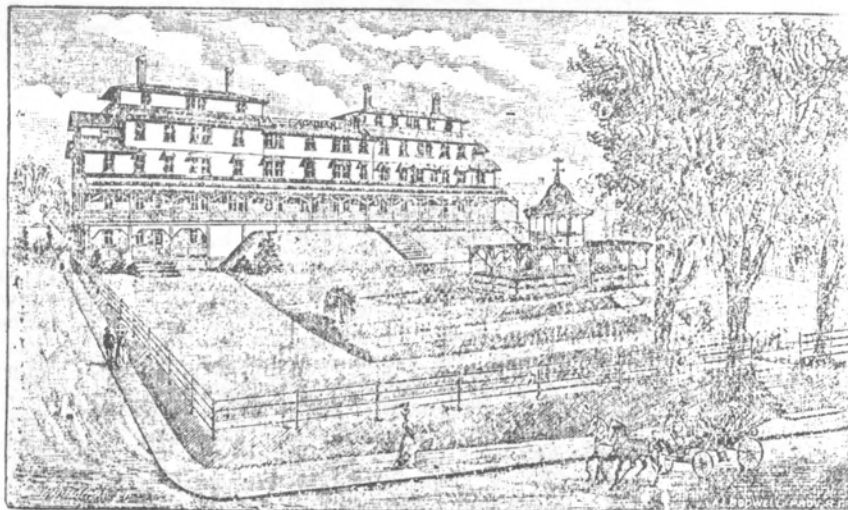
The "Lewiston", built in New York, came to the Penobscot in 1867 when she was about ten years old. For a time she ran between Rockland and Mount Desert but from 1886 to 1894 between Boston and Bangor.

The "May Field", built in 1875 in Brewer, was 73 feet long and operated in local waters, serving Bucksport, Sandy Point, Belfast, Camden, Rockland and Vinalhaven.

There had been a granite quarry on Vinalhaven since early in the nineteenth century and, in the 1870's it, like other quarries along the shore and on coastal islands, was shipping granite to cities south and west. The large Vinalhaven quarry, no long active, is now a unique wild flower garden with a spectacular pool beneath vertical cliffs and immense views above. Just west of Vinalhaven is "Hurricane", a small granite island where, in 1870, quarrying began. The business quickly expanded, boarding houses, private homes,, a store, church and school were built and nearly two thousand men employed. In 1871 the 70 foot screw propelled steamboat "Hurricane" was built for service between Hurricane Island, Vinalhaven and the main land. The "Hurricane" was also sometimes chartered for excursion parties, as was the "Arrow" which charged \$30.00 for "two trips to Castine & Islesboro in Aug. 1975 ***"

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WILL OPEN JUNE 1, 1884 E. P. WALKER, M WEBSTER, Proprietors.

ROUTES OF TRAVEL TO REACH

CASTINE and the ACADIAN HOUSE.

STEAMER LEWISTON, Via Portland and Rockland, TUESDAYS & FRIDAY

BOSTON STEAMERS, Via Belfast, TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS

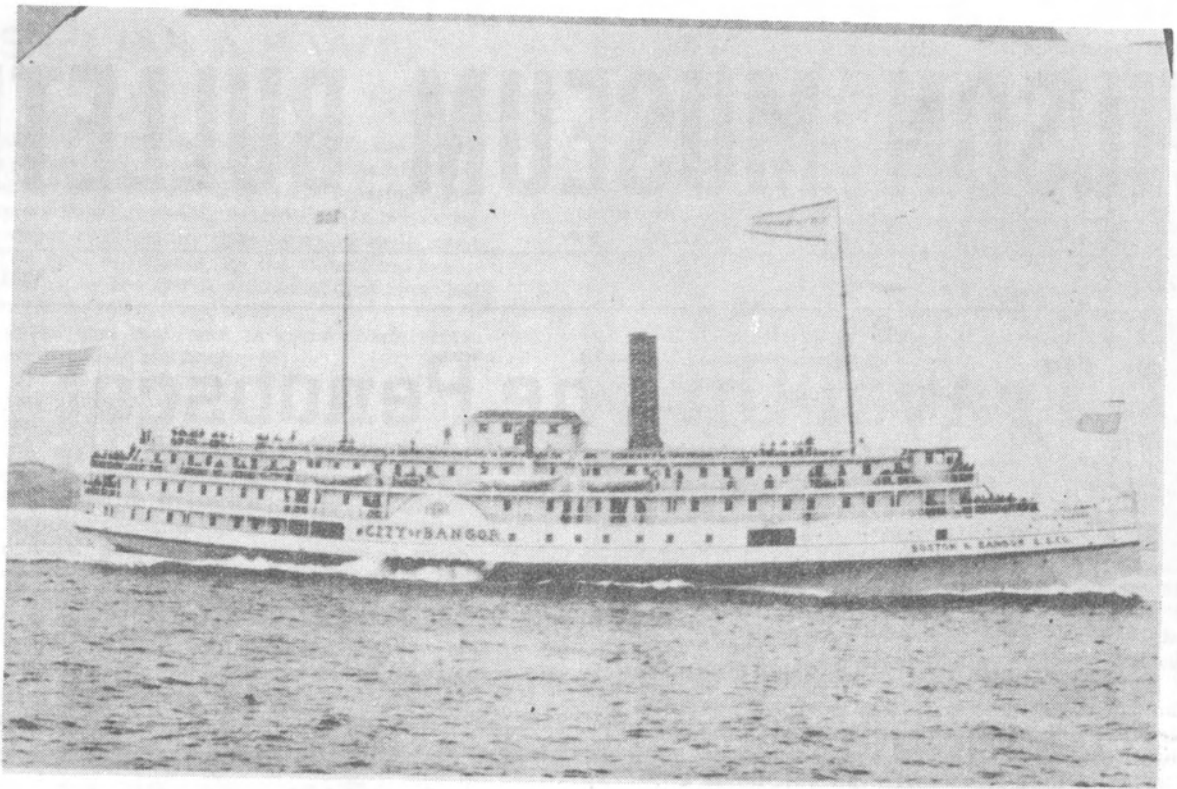
and SATURDAYS.

BANGOR STEAMERS, TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS and

SATURDAYS.

Daily Mail Via Bucksport.

Telegraph Office, Etc.



Other vessels also provided service for Hurricane Island. R. P. Walker wrote on October 22, 1876 "We want to charter Str. Pioneer to go from Hurricane to West Brooksville Saturday Nov. 4th leave here at 6 o c A M and return Wednesday Nov. 8th leave West Brooksville at 12 M let me know your lowest possible price . . ." The quarry closed long ago, the buildings are gone, Hurricane is now the site of an Outward Bound camp. The "Pioneer", operated by the Fox Island and Rockland Steamboat Company, ran between Vinalhaven and Rockland from 1867 to 1892. She was slow and was, for a time, replaced by the "Clara Clarita", speedy but expensive to operate. The packet "Greyhound" was also on the Fox Island-Rockland run. She was built in 1855 - twenty years later, on January 21, 1876 when she was "owned by Capt. Willard A. Mills and commanded by Edward Quinn in attempting to beat out of Pulpit Harbor (she) mis-stayed, was driven ashore and became a total wreck."

In 1875 Hosea B. Wardwell of Penobscot who had been teaching school in Vinalhaven wrote "Mar. 24, . . . Embarked in the Str. Clara Clarita bound to Rockland. Had much difficulty in getting into Rockland on account of ice. Stopped all night at the Thorndike Hotel. At thirty minutes past six next morning took the stage for Belfast. For traveling companions had two drunken Irishmen which added greatly to the discomforts of the journey. A fierce storm of wind and snow was raging. After a long ride, arrived at Belfast and put up at the American House. Here I found Dr. John Homer whose genial face revived my drooping spirits. Made the acquaintance of Russel Dyer and Dr. Lewis Pendleton to whom I sold an Indian axe for a Maximilian dollar." The next day he wrote "Snow six feet deep in many places in the streets. Travel much impeded. Started for Bucksport at 1 p.m. Harvey Abott and Mr. Goode, first engineer of the Stmr. Katahdin, for traveling companions. Crossed the Penobscot River afoot at Bucksport and Prospect Ferry." Four days after leaving Vinalhaven Mr. Wardwell reached home - "Stopped last night with William G. Smith (Bucksport). Took passage on the stage for Penobscot at 2 p.m. (Hiram Whitten, driver) and arrived home at 6 p.m. after an absence of five months."

At times during the 1890's the steamboats "Emmeline," "Forest Queen", "Juliette", and "Viking" ran between Vinalhaven and the main land, the "Juliette" also substituted for the "Frank Jones" when the latter was disabled.

The "Cimbria," nearly 117 feet long and screw driven, was built in Brewer in 1882. An advertisement in a summer issue of the Castine Gazette for 1884 gives her schedule - - "Bangor & Bar Harbor. Three Trips Per Week. The New and Elegant Steamer CIBRIA (Captain Barbour) Leaves Bangor for Bar Harbor every TUESDAY, THURSDAY, and SATURDAY at 8 A.M., touching at Hampden, Winterport 9.15. Bucksport 9.45. Fort Point 10.45. Castine 11.15. Islesboro 12. Deer Isle 1.30. Sedgwick 2. S.W. Harbor 4. Bar Harbor 5 P.M. RETURNING Leaves Bar Harbor every MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY at 7 A.M. touching S.W. Harbor 8.15. Sedgwick 10. Deer Isle 10.30. Islesboro 12. Castine 12.30. Fort Point 1.38. Bucksport 2. Winterport and Hampden, arriving in Bangor at 4 P.M. Meals served on board. These Steamers leave Bangor after arrival of all morning trains, and arrive from Bar Harbor in season to connect with all evening trains over Maine Central R.R. East and West."

The small steamboats "Castine" and "Electa" were also built in Brewer. The "Castine", built in 1889, was about 71 feet long and ran between Castine, Rockland, Camden, Belfast and Bangor, though, for a period about 1890 she was rented by the Blue Hill Line for service there. She was also chartered and while on such a run, June 8, 1935, near Vinalhaven, was wrecked with the loss of four lives.

The "Electa" was "the first steamboat to make regular trips to Penobscot for passengers and freight. .. Capt. Edward True (master). The "Electa" made her first trip October 10, 1887" landing at South Penobscot.

The second or "little" "Rockland" was built in 1883 in Boston. She was nearly 100 feet long, screw driven. In 1891 J. Howard Wilson wrote in his diary "Sat., July 11 (having reached Portland by train) We took the 1.20 P.M. train for Rockland . . . arrived at Rockland about 5 P.M. and took the stage 8 miles to Camden where we went to the Bay View Ho. . . . Mon. July 13, In the afternoon we took the little steamer Rockland at about 1 o'clock and

went to Belfast where we changed to the little steamer Electa & came to Castine where we arrived about 5.30 P.M. Stopped at little landings on the way. Went to the Castine House."

By 1893 the "Frank Jones" had replaced the "City of Richmond". The "Jones" was built in Bath, 263 feet long, had steam heat, electric lights and a hundred thirty two staterooms. She was much admired along the Penobscot during the twelve years she operated here.

The "City of Rockland", sister ship to the "City of Bangor", was built in 1900, she was 274 feet long and her 1,600 HP engine drove paddle wheels. She had two hundred staterooms but could carry two thousand persons. During the twenty three years she ran between Boston and Bangor she seems to have been accident prone. Arthur E. Wilson was on the "City of Bangor" when one of these accidents occurred, he wrote, June 6, 1906 - - "Wednesday - In the afternoon took the Golden Rod (from Castine) to Belfast where I got the City of Bangor for Boston. I retired to my stateroom rather early and slept well until just before midnight when I was awakened probably by the fog whistle for I heard a blow just after I awoke & then I noticed that the engine had stopped - I jumped up & looked out of the window & saw the Str City of Rockland running at full speed across our bow. We struck her on the Port side toward the steam (stern?) & carried away perhaps 25 feet of the several decks. Two holes were stove in our bow, one above & one below water line so that I heard afterward that at one time we were leaking badly but they stopped up the holes as best they could, moved a good deal of freight aft to lighten the bow & got the other steamer whose hull was uninjured to stand by us. We drifted there from midnight until dawn (3-30 A.M.) when we started at reduced speed for Portland."

The "Sieur de Monts," 155.5 feet long, twin screw, had almost the same period of service on the Penobscot as the "City of Rockland". The "Sieur de Monts" ran from Rockland to Mt. Desert, stopping at Islesboro and Castine.

The "Pemaquid", built in Philadelphia in 1893 came to Maine after 1900, succeeding the "Frank Jones" on the down

east run. For over thirty years she was well known in Rockland, Dark Harbor, the Fox Islands, Deer Isle, Castine, Sedgwick and Bar Harbor.

During the first twenty or thirty years of this century small vessels, the "Corinna", "Tremont" and "Golden Rod" provided local service to and from Castine. The "Corinna", owned by Mr. Devereux of Castine and Penobscot ran for a short time after 1910. The "Tremont" built in 1895 in Brewer was owned and operated in 1918, the year for which we have a freight bill, by the Brooksville & Bangor Steamboat Company. The "Golden Rod", also built in Brewer in the 1890's, was one of the last of the little steamboats to operate here. She ran into the 1930's. The "Golden Rod" was 75.4 feet long and was sold, in 1906 to the Eastern Bay Steamboat Company, Charles W. Smallidge of Castine, General Manager.

About 1900 the Acadian Hotel of Castine informed prospective guests how they might reach Castine: - by the Boston and Maine Railroad and the Maine Central Railroad to Bangor. Bucksport, Rockland or Belfast; by the Eastern Steamship Line to Rockland or Belfast, from Bangor to Castine by the steamer "Castine", daily; from Bucksport by stage or private team; from Rockland by the steamer "Sieur de Monts", twice daily; from Belfast by the Steamer "Golden Rod", twice daily.

For years "more people came and went by steamboat than by any means" but steamboat transportation ended in the 1930's. The last "Boston Boat" sailed December 28, 1935, the "Castine" was wrecked that year, the "Golden Rod" was retired and the "Pemaquid" had gone south to another service - - travel on the Penobscot was past.

Sources

Journal of Hosea B. Wardwell

Journal of J. Howard Wilson

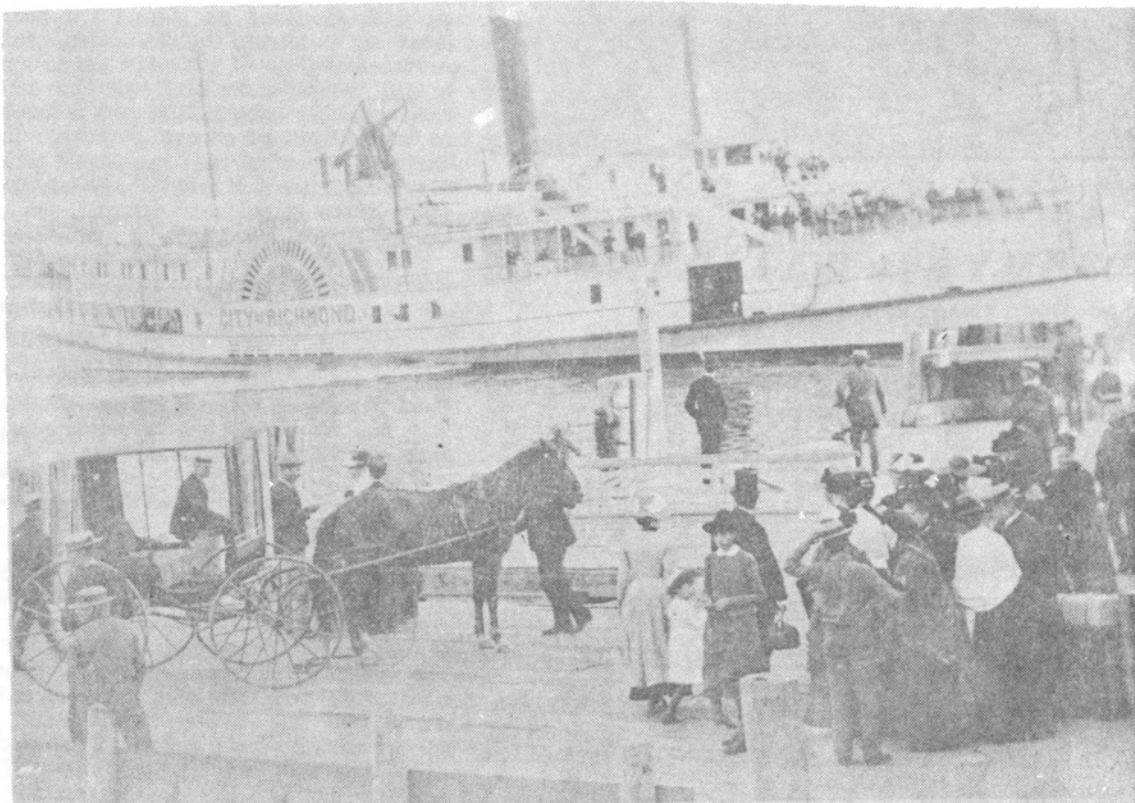
Journal of Arthur E. Wilson

Freight bills and other items in the Wilson Museum

"Penobscot, Down East Paradise" by Gorham Munson

"Steamboat Lore of the Penobscot" by John M. Richardson

"Penobscot Bay Steamboat Album" by Allie Ryan



The City of Richmond leaving Castine. Illustration from "Majabigwaduce"

MUSEUM NEWS

Our work room, the only area used and heated in the winter has been for the past few winters, when we have tried to save energy, too cold for comfortable work or for meetings. But even this inadequate heat has been expensive and is becoming more so. In December 1977 the ceiling and outside walls were insulated with two inch styrofoam, at the same time heavy shelves were built along the north wall providing over 400 square feet of much needed storage space.

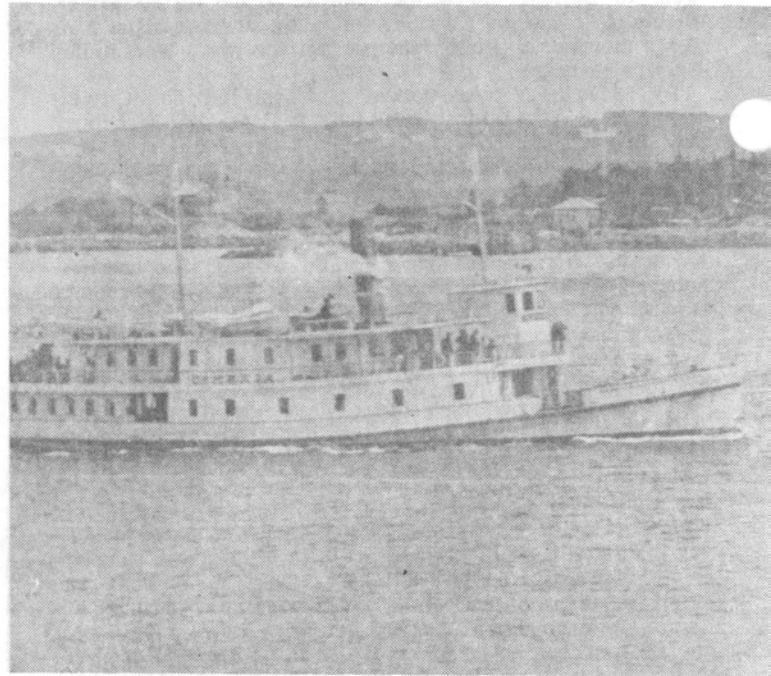
Already we notice that the room is more comfortable although less energy is used for heating.

NEW HISTORY OF CASTINE, PENOBSCOT & BROOKSVILLE

In January 1978 the Castine Scientific Society issued "Majabigwaduce - Castine, Penobscot, Brooksville" a history of the three towns which were once one. "Majabigwaduce", by Ellenore W. Doudiet, is illustrated with more than a hundred maps and pictures and contains much previously unpublished material from the files of the Wilson Museum. It may be obtained at the Museum this coming summer or at any time by writing the Castine Scientific Society. "Majabigwaduce" is \$30.00 plus (Maine) 5% tax, 10% reduction is allowed Libraries and Historical Societies. If mailed add \$1.50 to partially cover postage, insurance and handling.

FITZ HUGH LANE'S CASTINE AND THE "RAILROAD MAP"

Reproductions of Fitz Hugh Lane's 1855 lithograph of Castine and of the "Railroad Map" of 1889 will be available this summer. The reproductions are nearly full size and of excellent quality.



The "Cimbria" leaving Castine Harbor. Above bow and wheel house is the wharf and freight house on High Head.



Castine, Maine 04421

Castine, Maine
Museum Bulletin
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