



Maine's Steamboating Past (ME) (Images of America)

Donald A. Wilson

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Maine steamboats existed in two different arenas: the ocean steamers that traveled up the coast and the inland steamers, which are the focus of this book. The Maine wilderness once witnessed an enormous movement of people, goods, and mail through steamboat traffic. Originally freighters provided supplies and merchandise for the lumber industry and, with the lack of roads, they were the only dependable transportation to many sporting lodges and resorts. Boat traffic also delivered indispensable goods to lakeside villages and outposts. Eventually sportsmen and vacationers discovered the beauties of the lakes and mountains, and steamboat companies formed early in the 19th century to serve the growing numbers of visitors and businesses. Thousands of families trekked from the southern cities to the interior to delight in a popular Northeast pastime. Getting to places was a chore as well as an adventure, and the railroads and the steamboats did the job. At one time, they facilitated the cycles of life in the Maine woods.

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