

For the Land We Live In.

Summer Vacations at Little Pushaw.

As one emerges from the great woods of Maine, leaving behind Moosehead Lake and Katahdin Mountain, and reaches the Piscataquis River, in the south rly course he pursues, he sees a ridge of land rising only a few miles in advance. This ridge is the last elevation before the hills of the ocean range, and when upon it they are distinctly seen, the Dixmont mountains, the Cauden mountain, and Bluehill mountains, all many miles away.

He sees too many brooks coursing down its side as he descends southward, and two lakes reflecting the sun's rays, one large and the nearest, smaller, but both bear the same name. They are Pushaw Lakes. The brooks he sees are the feeders of these lakes.

They reach Little Pushaw first, and then, by an outlet from Little Pushaw fill the larger. One of these streamlets sings at night as it goes by the dwelling of the writer, and whenever he wakes he hears the music it makes as it flows along. When you know that water flows constantly through and from your own soil to feed and make a lake you have a feeling of ownership in that lake.

So Little Pushaw has come to be to the writer the dearest of the two lakes as well as the nearer. But he could not justify himself to write an article upon it for distant readers by reason of a home attachment had it not a fame more than simply local.

These lakes we knew of as among the best waters of Maine for bass fishing, by the guide book, long before we saw them. Doubtless the inhabitants of Bangor have a stronger attachment for Big Pushaw than for Mt. Desert reached daily by boat and rail, or its salmon pool just by, and what big Pushaw is to that city, Little Pushaw is to almost the whole towns of the country lying back in the vicinity of Corinth, twenty miles westward.

Independence Day (4th of July) is observed in the States by the gentry in dining upon green peas and lamb, by the yeoman in having strawberries and lemonade with the usual daily fare, if they remain at home, but of course the true sportsman "goes fishing."

Such a day the first year of my residence here, the sun was to rise clear as the east showed, after two or three days of very heavy rain. I had never been to the little lake and took the day as an opportunity, and instead of taking a horse for the five mile trip, I took to my legs as I wanted to try some of the streams on the way, I had never heard called trout streams, being convinced that some had trout in them.

When four or five streams had been passed the sun was getting well up and I strike two streams at their junction forming the inlet stream of the lake, more than a mile from it. I decided to make the test on the left branch and almost at the first cast take a trout. I find it full of them and take many more.

Beyond the junction of the stream I take still larger ones, and all the way down till the meadows are reached half a mile this side of the lake. Not a trout was in the meadows that day, and leaving the stream I pushed on toward the lake by chance joining a dinner party at the house of the nearest boat man, which had come from our village without my previous knowledge. They were all going to sail after dining and had conveyance sufficiently large to take along the footman to the shore as well as "grub" to feed him.

I acknowledge not only that I had trout, but trout fever, and threw no line that day into the lake, but sat conversing with one and another till the favorable time to slip away as I had resolved to fish in returning, the other branch of the inlet. At three o'clock I was upon it. Trout were there and I added to my number till I had a number sufficient to weary on the home tramp, as I thought, in which I was not the least mistaken.

In these same streams a man caught sixty last year on one trip, but the heavy rains just before my visit gave me the greatest catch I have yet known in the streams of Little Pushaw inlet. Except in spring there is not a trout caught there unless a heavy rain has fallen.

Last summer I met the freckled faced and bare-footed boy, who snatched in the field by my side the day of my luck, and asked him how the catch was, and he replied "they had not run down this summer and it was not much." This summer I asked him the same question and he said "they have not run up this summer." We concluded it is not known which way they run. My opinion is, however, that they lie somewhere in deep holes in the stream in the summer time and only come out to infest the waters generally, when it is high and runs freely.

Gus Rogers, a boatman on the north side tells me of a stream a little to the east of the inlet stream containing much larger trout, but the way is much rougher to get to it. I expect however to fish it yet as brooks having pound trout are not plentiful in Maine.

My second summer here was not as busy as my first and my visits were quite frequent at the lake. One time I camped on the shore in my tent two nights in company with a man who delighted, after I went to blanket, to catch eels and eels he caught.

The next morning I tried for the first time there the amusement of catching the little frog that hops plentifully along its shore and found it paid. The same kind of bait lured both the bass and pickerel and till the leap peculiar to the bass, it was hard to tell just which had straightened the line. We remember now the twin bass of that first catch 3½ lbs in each, and 3 lb pickerel.

The small lad with us who indulged his juvenile taste by using the worm to catch perch, occasionally caught the white perch. But where we camped and fished by Pierce's Landing the last do not school, but are taken more numerous off Hedge Fence, toward Rocky Point. There one afternoon my company took off one hundred. There a party this summer captured a bushel the same day. Other tho' these school turn away from the hook in great disgust and I have been able to take but few with the fly. They show themselves more often than they bite, and sometimes "make the water boil," Rogers told me he had seen them at spawning time in the outlet when for number they were like the alewives of our fathers day which must must been true as "a fish story."

Pickerel fishing, through the ice, continues all through the winter at this lake but when July came this year I found the waters were not emptied of them as twenty were taken on the second day there as good pickerel as I have caught anywhere this side of Umbagog. Two bass were taken the same day and one more, the largest I had seen in a life time of fishing, being hooked, tore away in the downward plunge after the leap in mid air.

Now (October) the duck are coming in. Even earlier they are seen 3 or 4 together. In September a gunner from Medford, Mass. told me he got three out of a flock of four, the year before about that time in the year.

The voice of the loon is heard here. A Pennsylvanian was trying his rifle upon one, on one of my visits there which recalled Murray after the loon in the Adirondacks, and that one that wounded by a sportsman in this very lake, Landlord Hunting, of East Corinth, soon after secured.

A lone sea gull makes his abode here seeming ever content with a wave gentler than the ocean swell and never fearful that you will do it harm.

The growing interest in the Lake is manifest in cottages going up for the first time during the two summers past, one of which is Landlord Hunting's, who has the best of boats and lets both the

cottage and boats to those wishing to tarry for a day or more.

Davis and Clarks just completed on the opposite side from his was recently placed to our use for a day and a night, which we found more convenient by far than the tent we used on our first visit. Lots are being sold and others will soon go up near the three already there, and we regard it as a fixed fact that Little Pushaw has not seen its best days for summer visitors.

Having seeing seen names of Sherbrooke visitors in the Bangor papers during the salmon catch, take from the hotel registers, we have concluded that such were sportsman. If so, perhaps, in future trips they will remember the Pushaws are not far away and come to them see for themselves how enticing are our country lakes as well as rivers.

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