

Magog



FROM the earliest times Lake Memphremagog and its outlet was one of the important highways of communication between the settlements of the St. Lawrence and those of New England. The first record of this route being travelled is in 1692, by a band of Iroquois Indians on their way to attack the Abenquais; again by Rogers and his rangers in 1759, on their return from burning the Mission village of St. Francis.

Ebenezer Hovey, with his family, settled a few miles from the outlet of the lake in 1793, and about the same time the early Bolton settlers erected the first mill, and built the first dam across the river, if we except what is called the old Indian dam, constructed presumably to afford assistance in the capture of fish. In 1796 or '97, Ralph Merry, a native of Lynn, Mass., purchased the mills, and in 1799, March 20th, came in from St. Johnsbury, Vt., with his family and thus became the first permanent settler of whom we have any account.

During the first quarter of the present century many of the older families came in from various parts of the New England States, forming a hamlet know as the "Outlet." It is interesting to note that a "forge" was in operation in 1809, on the shore of the lake, and that good iron was produced. There were no roads to speak of, and it was not until 1816 that the first wagon went from Magog Outlet to Frost Village, by way of the north side of Orford Pond. Before the bridge was built the river was crossed by fording at Merry Point. Ralph Merry, Jr., is entitled to the honor of teaching the first school in the year 1818, and in 1824 the red school house was built on the site now occupied by the Pepin block.

In 1820, John Wetherbee erected the first store, on the river bank, near the north end of the present bridge, and was probably the first postmaster; the first mail passed from Stanstead to Montreal, via Magog, on horseback, May 2nd, 1823. About this time also several industries were in operation—a saw mill, grist mill, carding and fulling mill and tannery being among the number.