

Deconstruct



ing

Acadia

You may have been told what **Acadia** is, but it's **much more vast** and **much more inclusive** than many of us imagine.

Your Guides: Christina Baker Kline,
Sarah Moore & Colin W. Sargent.



1. What many think Acadia is:

“It’s the Roosevelts’ backyard, the most beautiful attraction in the world. It’s completely inside the borders of Acadia National Park, celebrating its 100th birthday this year!”

2. What Acadia really is:

Mi'kmaq suffix: *akadie*. French: "La Cadie."
 "Acadia (French: Acadie) was a colony of New France in northeastern North America that included parts of eastern Quebec, the Maritime provinces, and modern-day Maine to the Kennebec River."

—William Williamson *The History of the State of Maine*. Vol. 2. 1832

Translation: 1) Acadia is the coastal sweep from Bath and north to embrace all of maritime Canada. Seen this way, Acadia is an undiscovered part of yourself.

EVENTS

VISIONS OF ACADIA NATIONAL PARK: July 1-29 Visions of Acadia National Park at Southwest Harbor Public Library shows how artists saw or were interested in the same magnetic vistas, portrayed them differently, or strayed to another area of the park for a stunningly different experience. Includes drawings, engravings, paintings, and photographs from 1864 to this very second. **244-7065**

ANIMALS OF ACADIA IN BRONZE

July 1 Bronze sculptor David Smus shares his love of Acadia in his presentation, "Animals of Acadia in Bronze" at ART on West Gallery. Included will be his latest, entitled "Kit and Caboodle" in a limited edition of only 30: a red fox vixen and kits mounted on Deer Isle Granite that was quarried near Acadia National Park. **288-9428**

MINIATURES FOR THE CENTENNIAL

July 1-31 Guest artist Michael Chesley Johnson, noted painter, workshop instructor, and arts writer, has spent the winter creating two dozen small oils of Acadia National Park to commemorate this special year. On show at Argosy II. **288-9226**

Acadia

Exclusive, inclusive.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

Most Mainers and visitors think of Acadia as simply Acadia National Park near Bar Harbor. It's an exquisite jewel parkland of 74.15 square miles, underwritten by the Rockefeller family (mindful of the sweeping views, environmental benefits, and infinite tax-write-off possibilities). In today's relaxed geography, a softer definition of Acadia might venture to the borders of Mount Desert Island. That's because that larger sense of "Acadie" has been endangered for over 400 years. That's right, Acadia is shrinking.

The earlier, more cosmopolitan sense of Acadia has been diminished summer by summer, year by year, because of English conquest and, frankly, Francophobia.

Before there was a Bar Harbor, the lost settlement of Saint-Saveur, a Jesuit mission, was the dreamy capital of Mount Desert Island.

In the deadly raid of 1613, English forces swept over the Jesuit mission. Samuel Argall (who captured and imprisoned Pocahontas) led the bloody attack, resulting in the murder of Saint-Saveur founder

Brother Gilbert Du Thet (1575-1613), killing many others in the process.

The vanishing of Acadia had begun. Conquering historians are experts at forgetting.

Best not to say *Acadie* above a whisper. It sounded so French, an unpleasant reminder of what the English did to wrest control of the area. Faster than quicklime erases the traces of a dead body, Acadia began to lose traction. But rest assured, before this attack, Acadia was a real and not a fabled place, its incomprehensibly vast dominions extending "roughly between the 40th and



50th parallels," according to period documents from the French government. Its inhabitants included tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy and French settlers, the Acadian people who would later be deported by the British during the French and Indian War. Some of them made it to New Orleans, where they would become known as "Cajuns," the very term Cajun a bastardization of "Acadian."

URNS OUT, WE'RE ALL ACADIANS
When you talk about the 40th parallel and



north, you're including a sweep from New Jersey right up the coast into Canada. This was New France, more particularly *Acadie*. Turns out, Acadia isn't just a park, it's a mind-dazzling coastal spirit.

Going through the Portland public school system, I was never told about the English raid on Saint-Sauveur. Instead, we learned how horrible it was for the English to have expelled the fictional Evangeline from her home, which thankfully was in Canada, so we United

States survivors of the British narrative didn't have to feel guilty about it. This shrinking maneuver kept Acadia out of Maine entirely, but for the nominal coincidence of tiny Acadia National Park.

This wiping out of Maine's Frenchness, not to mention its pre-existing Wabanaki identities, is at the bottom of this feature story. At the top of it is fun, because to understand Acadia is a chance to know the place you love as never before.

First Contact

Meet Mark Hedden, 86. He's the archaeologist who discovered new petroglyph sites in remote corners of Machias Bay that surprise with images of European ships. Inspired by these carvings, he has written exquisitely about "first European contact" between the first Mainers and the trading vessels of the early 17th century.

To those who first saw them from Maine's cliffs and shores, these ships must have seemed more alarming than space ships.

Hedden's vision: With every peck and scratch these shamans made into the stone to create these startling ship pictographs, they were losing magic themselves by documenting that such a thing existed.

The concept of "contact," a precise term for historians and archaeologists, must be particularly dear to Hedden now. He was in the news three years ago for having lost contact himself as he hiked in his 118-acre wilderness tract behind his house in Vienna, Maine, disappearing for hours. He independently found his way home—just ahead of the Warden Service dogs, firefighters, and ATVs that had been called in to comb the woods for him. More recently, he broke his hip and has struggled with a lengthy stay in the hospital, fighting to come home. "I'm getting his study ready and trying to order his materials, in the hope he'll get back to work here soon," his wife, Carol, says.

What Hedden has already given us is precious. In "Contact Period Petroglyphs in Machias Bay, Maine," published in the journal *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, Hedden describes "two previously unrecorded petroglyph sites in Machias Bay containing Native American representations of 17th-century sailing vessels." They are his discoveries. "To a cultural historian the sites are important because the ships and associated designs give clues to what was going on in the minds of the Native Americans."

Hedden believes the Machias stone engravings are part of an unbroken artistic tradition going back to 3,000 years. Of this "lost picture show starring the European ships," he writes: "There are good matches for the su-

(Continued on page 107)

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with help from the
Natural Resources Council of Maine

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bike, swim, paddle, and more?



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Protecting the Nature of Maine



Wrapped in History

You know you’ve made it when Pendleton designs a blanket after you. Celebrate the centennial of Acadia National Park in style. Pendleton Mills created their first National Park blanket in 1916, the same year the Park Service was born. Today, each national park has its own design. Acadia boasts a striking red and black combination. Blanket: \$259; Tote \$199.

A Stringed Gift

A proposed donation of 87,500 acres of land to the federal government from Burt’s Bees co-founder Roxanne Quimby has sparked an increasingly heated debate. The gift, if accepted, would secure national monument status for a parcel of land east of Baxter State Park. During his time in The White House, President Obama has used his executive power under the 1906 Antiquities Act to grant several million acres of land monument status across Nevada, Texas, and California, tapping the brakes on development and environmental degradation in the area. The issue has highlighted a divide between those who wish to preserve the area around Baxter from deforestation, and the owners and employees of local mills who rely on the lands for their resources. We’ve heard from rusticators, environmentalists, sportsmen, local businesses, mill-dependent local families, and more who desire their voices to be heard on this issue. Isn’t democracy great? We welcome your opinion. Watch this (87,500-acre) space to see if it does indeed become Maine Woods National Park.

Arcadia vs. Acadia:

WHAT’S IN A NAME

To chart the evolution of popular understanding, consider: “The origin of the designation Acadia is credited to the explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, who on his 16th century map applied the ancient Greek name ‘Arcadia’ to the entire Atlantic coast north of Virginia...” according to Wikipedia.

“Arcadia derives from the Arcadia district in Greece which since Classical antiquity had the extended meanings of ‘refuge’ or ‘idyllic place.’ The site goes on to quote

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE; KRISTI RUGG; INSET FROM LEFT: COURTESY PENDLETON; PENOBSCOT CULTURE.COM; MAINEENCYCLOPEDIA.COM; BIBLIORARE.COM; STORY SOURCES: ABBE MUSEUM, WIKIPEDIA, PENDLETON WOOLS.

The sense of a 'lost Acadia' is romantic, but the threat of a shrinking Acadia is dangerous.

First Contact (continued from page 105)

perstructure in English, Dutch and Flemish galleons constructed between 1585 and 1590, all of which are marked by forecastles set back from the bow, curved up beaks and bowsprits which rise forward and out from the forecastle. On these large, three-masted ships, details of the stern castle, hull and rigging differ from those of a single-masted vessel. Perhaps the best overall match among the illustrations in the sources consulted is a smaller ship, called the *Cromster* by the Dutch, with a main mast and smaller mizzen, a fore-stay sail and sprit-sails from the main and mizzen masts. In this variety, a ship used in Elizabethan England and the Netherlands into the beginning of the seventeenth century, the rounded hull had a sharply raked stern castle that extended forward somewhat less than half the length of the main deck. The short, turned-up beak that gave the *Cromster* its Dutch name (from *cromsteven*—a bent or crooked stem) is much closer to the beak represented in the petroglyph than to the far more elaborate beaks featured on larger ships of the period.”

Building his case spar by spar, Hedden allows himself an educated guess:

“A review of historical accounts of European voyages from the sixteenth through the first half of the seventeenth century shows that documented voyages to Machias Bay fall into two periods when French or English vessels are likely to have visited during the first half of the seventeenth century...The earliest may have occurred between 1604 and 1606 when Sieur de Monts, with Champlain as his lieutenant and cartographer, explored the coast from the St. Croix River southward as far as Cape Cod. They sought potential settlement locations that were more amenable than their initial (1604) wintering site at the mouth of the St. Croix River. Champlain, who was a meticulous draftsman, made charts of the coast and all suitable harbors he visited...Machias Bay is not among them, and Champlain may never have visited the upper reaches of the bay. However, de Monts and Champlain also operated independently. The petroglyph representation of a small, single-masted vessel with a square sail associated with a large Christian cross before the bow at site 62.1 may refer to a separate visit by de Monts at about this time.” ■



Three Penobscots with *m'teoulin*, supernatural powers. From left: Governor John Neptune, Molly Molasses, and Molly Spotted Elk. Mystical reading: *Old John Neptune and Other Maine Indian Shamans*, by Fannie Hardy Eckstorm; *Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris*, by Bunny McBride; *Orphan Train*, by Christina Baker Kline. A sculpture you must visit: *Molly Molasses*, a bronze on view at Jud Hartmann Gallery, Blue Hill.

from *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*: “Another interesting note is the similarity in the pronunciation of Acadie and the Mi'kmawisimik suffix *-akadie*, which means ‘a place of abundance.’ The modern usage is still seen in place names such as Shunacadie (meaning: place of abundant cranberries) or *Shubenacadie* (meaning: place of abundant wild potatoes). It is thought that intercultural conversation between early French traders and Mi'kmaq hunters may have resulted in the name

‘l'Arcadie’ being changed to ‘l'Acadie.’”

Just as a river has a portage, this story has a takeaway: The magic of Acadia and its original geography sweeps across time and culture to include a coastal region extending far beyond Acadia National Park. Originally, this sense of Acadia extended all the way to Virginia. It's a bit mind-bending to ponder that you can be both “from away” and still from Acadia at the same time. Acadia is a beautiful word, a growth stock. The term is yours to chase if you want it. ■