

**A SURVEY OF  
HANCOCK  
COUNTY, MAINE**

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A Survey of Hancock County, Maine by Samuel Wasson

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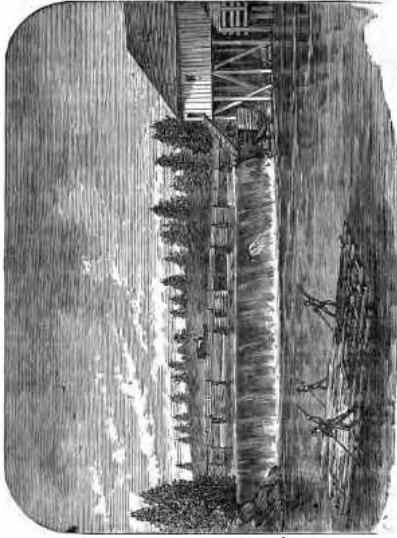
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**SAMUEL WASSON**

**A SURVEY OF  
HANCOCK  
COUNTY, MAINE**





Upper Dam, Uilon River, Ellsworth.

A SURVEY

OF

HANCOCK COUNTY,

MAINE.

Compliments

S. L. BOARDMAN.

*Augusta  
Maine*

BY SAMUEL WASSON,  
MEMBER OF STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

AUGUSTA:

SPRAGUE, OWEN & NASH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1878.

## PREFACE.

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At the meeting of the Board of Agriculture held at Calais, a resolution was passed, urging the importance to our agricultural literature of the publication of surveys of the different counties in the State, giving brief notes of their history, industrial resources and agricultural capabilities; and directing the Secretary to procure such contributions for the annual reports. In conformity with this resolution, and also as carrying out the settled policy of the Board in this respect—evidences of which are found in the publication of similar reports in previous volumes—I give herewith a Survey of the County of Hancock, written by a gentleman who has been a member of the Board of Agriculture, uninterruptedly, from its first organization, and who is in every way well fitted for the work, which he has so well performed. It was originally published in the *Ellsworth American*, during the summer of 1876, but has been especially revised for the present report. In many respects the history of Hancock County is a most interesting one; some of its industries are important, and quite distinct from those of other counties, and its agriculture, though not so important as that of some other sections in the State, is such as to present many interesting features and practices. The survey is full and satisfactory, and will be welcomed by the people of the State in the complete and permanent form in which it is now given to them.

SAMUEL L. BOARDMAN,

*Secretary State Board of Agriculture.*

AUGUSTA, ME.





## SURVEY OF HANCOCK COUNTY.

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### INTRODUCTION.

1. Those who are familiar with ancient mythology, will recollect the story of the good Isis who went forth wandering to gather up the parts and fragments of her murdered and scattered Osiris, fondly, yet vainly hoping that she might recover and recombine all the separate parts, and once more view her husband. With equal assiduity, has the writer of this Survey been for years engaged, at intervals, in collecting the "scattered fragments" of information relating to Hancock County, and has arranged his imperfect materials in the form which they now exhibit.

2. *Position.*—This, one of the seaboard counties of eastern Maine, occupies a geographical position, mainly between the parallels of  $43^{\circ} 58'$  and  $45^{\circ} 20'$  north latitude, and between  $67^{\circ} 47'$  and  $68^{\circ} 30'$  west longitude. Its northern parallel crosses the State, very nearly within its geographical centre.

Its boundaries are Washington county upon the east, the Atlantic upon the south, Penobscot bay, river and county upon the west and north. It is of very irregular shape. From north to south it measures about eighty-five miles, and in width varies from six to forty miles.

3. *Divisions.*—It has one city, thirty-one incorporated towns, and twenty-nine inland and island townships. There are hundreds of islands within its civic limits, the largest of which is the most conspicuous of any upon the whole Atlantic coast.

4. *Incorporated.*—This, the fourth county, was organized in 1789, with Penobscot for its shire town. It included portions of Penobscot and Waldo counties, and extended northward to the Canada line. No county in Maine has undergone more changes in territorial limits. In 1791, a part was set off and re-annexed to Lincoln. In 1816, a portion was taken to form Penobscot county. In 1827, a part was taken off for Waldo. In 1831, a change was made in the partition line between Hancock and Washington. In 1844, another change, and in 1858 Greenfield was set off and annexed to Penobscot. The west and north lines are still as awkward as possible, while none but a skilled scientist can project the zigzag moulding of its coast-line.

5. *History.*—The early history of Hancock county, as now formed, is a part of the earliest history of the State, and forms an unbroken historical chain, extending back hundreds of years before "Columbus crossed the ocean blue." Presumptive,—if not conclusive—evidence is to be found at Mt. Desert, that the Northmen who peopled Greenland, also visited this part of our coast, caught fish in its waters, and cured them upon its shores. Although the coast was frequently seen, and landings made by European voyagers for some six hundred years, nothing came of it until the explorations of Pring in 1603, and Weymouth and De Monts in 1605. (There is a tradition that Rosier the historian of Weymouth's expedition, explored Deer Island Thoroughfare, making a halt at a bold promontory in Brooksville, known as Cape Rosier.) They found the country inhabited by a nation of "canoe-men," now known as the Tarratine or Penobscot Indians. De Monts, who seemed to know of the "nine points" in possession, claimed the "newly" discovered country, in the name of the king of France, in true Catholic style, by setting up a cross and calling the country "Acadia," by which name it was known for 150 years, or until Gen. Wolfe, in 1759, waved his banner in triumph over the Plains of Abraham. The year following De Monts claim, Weymouth took formal possession of the same country, in the name of

his king, James I. of England. Thus the two leading Powers of Europe became adverse claimants to our soil. France, by virtue of explorations of Cartier in 1534, and possession of De Monts in 1602. England, by virtue of discovery of Cabot, in 1498, and claims of Weymouth in 1603. The wars which these counter claims occasioned, kept this county an almost unbroken wilderness during the provincial history of Maine.

In point of fact, the county of Hancock was a part of the French Province of Acadia, for a period of 180 years; and France did not fully relinquish her claim until after the War of the Revolution. The first official effort of the Government of France to "enter possession," was a patent of Acadia, granted to De Monts, which, two years after was surrendered to a Catholic French lady (Madame De Guercheville), who was desirous of making the experiment of converting the natives to the Catholic faith. She immediately sent over her agent (Suussaye), with twenty-five colonists, to take possession of Acadia. Suussaye and colony landed May 16th, 1613, at Mt. Desert, built a fort, erected a cross, celebrated mass, and called the place "St. Sauveur," which is supposed to be the locality now known as Ship Harbor, Tremont. About the "pool" at Somes' Sound, is supposed to be where the French missionaries, Biard and Masse, located themselves in 1609. Frenchman's Bay is supposed to have acquired its name from a peculiar incident which occurred to a French ecclesiastic who encamped somewhere between the Union and Narraguagus rivers, during the winter of 1603. At Trenton Point is supposed to be where Madam Deville lived.

The first English possession was a trading post at Pentagoet (Castine), in 1625-6, which soon fell into the hands of the French, and the flag of France floated over it during nearly the whole of the 17th century.

The appearances of the old French settlements have been found at Castine, Newbury Neck, Surry, Oak Point, Trenton, East Lamoine, Crabtree's Neck, Hancock, Butler Point, Franklin, Waukeag Neck, Sullivan and upon the "Desert