



Places – Sites – Monuments History

Indian Villages – Bar Harbor

Name: “Indian Village”

What: Indigenous peoples summer encampments

Bar Harbor Location 1st

Address: At the foot of Bridge Street off of West Street

Town: Bar Harbor

State: Maine

Map and Lot Numbers: Map 102 – Lot 001-009

Map: MORRIS 1886 – INDIANS – HAMOR WHF

Map: Also see: 1886 – Bar Harbor.jpg

"Along the shoreline and field near Hamor's wharf...a place some referred to as the "Devil's Half Acre". Two rows of sale tents (and booths) were located in the field above these wooden structures." - “Indians in Eden: Wabanakis and Rusticators on Maine’s Mount Desert Island, 1840s-1920’s” by Bunny McBride and Harlod E. L. Prins, published by Downeast Magazines and Books, 2009, p. 163.

Bar Harbor Location 2nd

Address: Indian Village was in the "U" shaped piece of land between Ledgelawn Avenue, Park Street, and Main Street, Bar Harbor, Maine - site of the ball field in 2009.

Town: Bar Harbor

State: Maine

Map and Lot Numbers: Map 107 – Lot 222

Map: CS 1887 – INDIAN CAMP BH

"The original summer people were, of course, the Indians, the Abnakis belonging to the Algonkian language group. After spring planting of corn, beans, and pumpkins, leaving the old folks and dogs behind, they went down to the sea in birch-bark canoes. Arriving at Pemetec ("range of mountains"), they set up camp near tidal flats. Here the men fished, placed weirs to trap eels, and harpooned porpoises, while their squaws (sic.) dug, shucked, and dried clams, gathered roots, berries and sweet grass, and peeled birch bark to make baskets. At the end of the summer, they returned to their villages for the harvest.

These early idylls came to an end with the English settlement; the first English settlers made no mention of Indians in the neighborhood. Their subsequent history on Mount Desert Island replicates their history elsewhere. Small numbers of Indians camped at the foot of Bridge Street, opposite Bar Island. An 1881 guidebook states that the "most accessible shell heaps are on the eastern end of Bar Island and at Hull's Cove." ..." - Lost Bar Harbor by G.W. Helfrich and Gladys O'Neil, p. 3 - 1982.

As more rusticators (summer people) began to visit Bar Harbor, the untidy camps at the edge of the water on West Street across from Bar Island began to seem like bad marketing to residents of Bar Harbor who hoped to profit from the new, elegant Bar Harbor. The indigenous people living here, always the last to profit from any situation, were moved inland (away from their canoes) to what is now (2007) the ball field at the junction of Main Street and Park Street. The result was the tidy row of vendor stalls shown in this picture.

"...Banished for a while from the island, the Indians returned to a marshy field known as Squaw Hollow (in back of the present athletic field). With the coming of the Village Improvement Association, they were forced to retreat still further to an area along a back road. In the early years of this century they were described as living in tents and tarpaper and bark shanties, reduced to selling basketwork, toy canoes, bows and arrows, and moccasins." - Lost Bar Harbor by G.W. Helfrich and Gladys O'Neil, p. 3 - 1982.

"The Indian Village was where the baseball field is today. We used to go from tent to tent buying sweet smelling baskets, and admiring the cunning children and papooses. [Sic] Lovely young Alice Shepard (later Mrs. Dave Morris) went every week to give the Indian children a Sunday School lesson." - "Only in Maine: Selections from Down East Magazine," edited by Duane Doolittle, foreword by John Gould, "Old Bar Harbor Days" chapter by Marian L. Peabody, Downeast Enterprise Incorporated, Camden, Maine, 1969, p. 238.

One of the town sights in its heyday was the "Indian village," a summer encampment where Indigenous peoples came to sell goods to tourists; it was cleared away in the 1930s to make room for a new ballpark. – Quote from an unknown source.

An Indigenous Folktale: "...Now Pitcher the Witch, being mad with shame and spite, fled from the face of man, and ran through the woods like a wild wolf. And so she came to Bar Harbor (Pes'sonkqu', P.), and sat down on a log and said, with her heart full of bitterness and malice, "I would that I could become something which should torment all men." And as she said this she became a mosquito (T'sis-o, P.), and so it came to pass that mosquitoes were made. And to this day men see that wherever the Black Cat is, there too is the Sable not far away..."

A footnote to the story: "The Passamaquoddy version relates that Pitcher in her flight pursued a moose to Bar Harbor, where, having killed him and drawn out the entrails, she petrified him. A Penobscot woman told me she had often seen the moose rock there, and the "inments." But she attributed the deed to Glooskap, to whom it properly belongs, his petrified moose and dogs and the print of his bow, etc., being still shown in Nova Scotia; and it is also said that it was at Freshwater, after returning from Bar Harbor (Maine), that Pitcher was changed into a mosquito.

Another story states that Pook-jin-skweess, having pursued young men all her life, changed into a mosquito that she might continue to prey on them." - The Algonquin Legends Of New England or, Myths and Folk Lore of the Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Tribes by Charles G. Leland Chapter: How the Story of Glooskap and Pook-jin-skweess, the Evil Pitcher, is told by the Passamaquoddy Indians - 1884

Accessed online 10/27/07; http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/ne/al/al11.htm#fr_32

The Native Americans were not entirely banished, however, "Founded in 1887 [the new club] was called the Canoe Club and had for its avowed purpose the "developing and perpetuating of birch

bark canoeing." In short order a clubhouse was established, first in a cottage in Albert Meadow and later in a boathouse on Bar Island, and, with the assistance of the resort's famed Indian canoeist, Mitchell Loring, as well as various other skilled members of Mount Desert's Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes, the club was soon a going concern." - The Last Resorts, by Cleveland Amory, p. 305 - 1948

Southwest Harbor – Indian Lot

See:

Indian Lot

Indian Lot Cottage

George Ashbridge Rhoads Cottage

Obbard Cottage

ME - SWH – Clark Point Road – 149

See: “When Bar Harbor Was Eden” compiled by Loretta M. Turner, p. 16-27 - 1995 for more pictures and information about Indigenous peoples in Bar Harbor.

See: “Indians in Eden: Wabanakis and Rusticators on Maine’s Mount Desert Island, 1840s-1920’s” by Bunny McBride and Harlod E. L. Prins.

See: See "Asticou’s Island Domain: Wabanaki Peoples at Mount Desert Island 1500-2000, Acadia National Park Ethnographic Overview and Assessment," Volume I & II by Harald E. L. Prins and Bunny McBride - Prepared under cooperative agreement with The Abbe Museum, Bar Harbor, Maine, Northeast Region Ethnography Program, National Park Service, Vol. I, p. 297, 2007