

## Otter Creek Cliffs



### Places – Sites – Monuments History

#### Otter Creek Cliffs Acadia National Park

Map: US Geo 1922  
GPS (Global Positioning System) Latitude, Longitude: 44.310841, -68.189054

Visiting Otter Cliffs was one of the early sites on Mount Desert Island that was considered an essential experience by early rusticators and is still considered so today.

"Guidebooks and Promotional Brochures in the 1860s and '70s.

In the late 1860s and 1870s recreational walking, boating, and buckboard rides were the most fashionable activities for visitors. Advertisements printed by steamship and railroad companies promoted island scenery, particularly the interesting rocky coast. Touring the island's rock formations and climbing along the shore, also known as "rocking," was a popular pastime. Many of the rocks were named, some with more than one name.

Walks to rock formations as well as inland mountains and lakes were described in travel guides for the island. Guidebooks written in the 1860s and 1870s harkened back to the pre-Civil War era of mountain tourism by combining poetry written during this earlier period and frequently emphasizing the visual qualities captured in paintings by Cole and Church. Clara Barnes Martin published her first guide to Mount Desert Island in 1867, and other writers, including Benjamin Franklin DeCosta, Samuel Drake, Albert Bee, Moses Sweetser, and William Lapham, soon followed. Though these authors perpetuated the romance of exploring pathless mountains, they also provided detailed directions to these destinations. Many routes were still "scrambles," but others, such as the Duck Brook Path and the ascent of Newport (Champlain) Mountain, were well-developed, marked trails. Tourists typically hired guides to lead them to the more remote destinations such as the summits of Sargent and Western Mountains." - Brown, Margaret Coffin. *Pathmakers – Cultural Landscape Report for the Historic Hiking Trail System of Mount Desert Island: History, Existing Conditions, & Analysis* (Olmstead Center for Landscape Preservation, 2006) p. 26-27. - Listed as prepared by Margaret Coffin Brown.

The Pathmakers book is the bible for all things to do with the history of Acadia National Park. Particularly see:

Mountain Scrambles by Artists and Rusticators, 1830s-60s.  
p. 20-26

Rocking, Walking Guides and Hiking Clubs, 1860s-1890  
p. 26-33

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