

Gotts Island, Maine by Jane M. Holmes

GOTTS ISLAND, MAINE

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Ellsworth, Maine
February 8, 1953

In 1940 when my husband and I went to live on Gotts Island, many people spoke of our venture as pioneering. In the three years that we lived there, I often contrasted our life—with our comfortable farm house, running water, stoves and a powerboat—with the isolation and primitive living conditions of the first settlers, and took off my hat to the pioneers.

I have given a great deal of thought to those early Gotts and have read all the material I could find on the first Daniel Gott, the history of the island and of the nearby mainland. I have talked with some of the older residents of the island, and from it all I have pieced together picture of the island's settlement and development.

Gotts Island lies one mile south of Bass Harbor Light at the end of Bass Harbor Bar, but it is three miles from the landing at Bass Harbor to the only real harbor at the island. When the French visited Mt. Desert in 1604 and named it and many surrounding islands, it was heavily wooded and uninhabited, though there is evidence that bands of Indians visited it and camped there to fish and clam. The French called it "Petite Plaisance," but in 1688, when Sir Edmund Andros took a census of settlers from Castine to Calais, we find it corrupted to "Petit Pleasure." This census, a copy of which is still in existence at the Massachusetts Historical Society, records sixty-two people living in this vast area, and on Petit Pleasure it lists Lowry and wife, Hind's wife and four children, English. It can only be presumed that Lowry and Hind were spending the summer fishing. Many lumbermen and fishermen from villages far to the westward are known to

PDF: <https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/files/original/16437/2029-001.pdf>

Identifier: 16437

Accession #: 2029

Title: Gotts Island, Maine by Jane M. Holmes

Type: Publication, Literary, Article

Subject: Places, Ocean

People

Creator: Holmes - Jane M. Holmes

Place: Tremont, Great Gott Island

State: ME

Country: USA

Date: 1953-02-08

Source: Donation of Virginia Holmes

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