

## **Indians of Maine's Midcoast Before European Settlers**

It was after the last Ice Age, begun some 40,000 years ago, that the first known people, the Paleo Indians came to the coast of Maine. They were wanderers that roamed great distances - from Mexico, through the United States, and around Canada. Only a few traces of their presence have been found - mainly large sharp stone tips, hollowed out for long shafts and used for hunting the giant animals of the Stone Age (mammoths, giant bisons, mastodons, giant sloths,...). Some of these artifacts date back 11,000 years. These Indians lived and roamed in Maine for about two thousand years.

The next known people that archaeologists have found traces of are the early Archaic Indians, who lived about 8,000 years ago. Using smaller spear tips than their predecessors may indicate that the animals they hunted were smaller. With the warming climate, the giant animals may have become extinct.

About 4,000 years ago, the Red Paint (or Red Clay) People lived and flourished here. This name derives from the fact that in the graves along with their dead, clay stained red with iron oxide was placed. Nearly fifty grave sites of the Red Paint People have been found in Maine and each grave contained this clay. It is unknown whether the clay was put into the graves to preserve the bodies or whether it was part of a religious ceremony. It is widely thought that this clay came from Mt. Katahdin and that the Red Paint People traveled there to get it. Along with the clay, hunting stones and skinning knives have been found in the graves. There are indications that the Red Paint People may have been the first fishermen in Maine to go out into the choppy ocean. Few skulls or skeletons of the Red Paint People have been found because of the acidity of Maine's soil.

Approximately 2,500 years ago the Ceramic People arrived and established the first year round communities. They were the first people in Maine to make ceramics, or at least leave behind traces of their pottery. They were mainly farmers and lived inland but in the summertime, they would often travel in canoes to live on the islands. There they hunted seals and fish, drying the meat on the rocks for winter food. They're thought to be a social people because on some islands and various riverbanks, giant heaps of various shells were left behind. On the Damariscotta River, there is a huge pile of ancient oyster shells (measuring 45 million cubic feet) left in a giant heap. The shells are thirty one feet deep in some places. On their annual migrations up and down the river, it's thought that the Indians' various settlements would enjoy a huge reunion and that for thousands of years, families spent days, or even weeks together meeting at this very spot. It sounds very much like a clambake that might be held today!

## **Indians During European Settlement**

When the European settlers began arriving in Maine, there were five major Indian tribes who lived in here - the Abenaki, the Penobscot, the Maliseet, the Micmac, and the Passamaquoddy. The Abenaki and especially the Penobscot tribes occupied most of what is today known as Edgecomb and its surrounding areas. The name Penobscot means "the place where the rocks open out" The Penobscot and Abenaki tribes spoke the same language but with different accents - just like Americans and Canadians both speak English, but with different accents.

Penobscot Indian men were hunters and sometimes went to war to fight their enemies. The women were farmers and did most of the child care and cooking. Both genders took part in storytelling, artwork, music, and traditional medicine. The Penobscot didn't live in teepees. They lived in small birchbark buildings called wigwams. Each wigwam had a stove of stones, floors covered with colored and woven rushes. The sides of the wigwams were decorated with ornaments and furs. In the winter, each family would leave their village to go to their own winter hunting grounds, returning when spring came. Penobscot women wore long dresses with removable sleeves and men wore breachcloths with leggings. Penobscot Indians also wore cloaks with pointed hoods, moccasins on their feet, and nose rings. They did not paint their faces. Penobscot women wore their hair loose or braided on top of their heads and sometimes the men put their long hair in topknots.

The Penobscot tribe was well known for their birch bark canoes (which canoes today are patterned after) and on land, they used dogs as pack animals to transport sleds in the winter months. They fished in the Penobscot river and hunted deer and moose. Penobscot Indians also planted corn and beans, picked berries, and made maple syrup from tree sap. Like other Eastern Indians, the Penobscot crafted wampum out of white and purple shell beads and used them as currency as well as for artistic expression. The designs and pictures on wampum belts often told a story or represented a person's family. The Indians had a written language made up of symbolic drawings. Important records were written on the inside of birch bark, which served as a strong, durable paper.

The Penobscot traded with all the other New England Indians, and they often fought with the powerful Iroquois. Their most important neighbors were the Abenaki, the Passamaquoddy, the Maliseet, and Micmac tribes. These five tribes were not always friendly - in fact, they sometimes fought wars against each other. But these five tribes formed an alliance called the Wabanaki Confederacy in response to Iroquois aggression. Each tribe retained their own political leadership, but collaborated on broader issues such as diplomacy, war, and trade. Once this Confederacy was formed, they never fought again and are allies to this day, though the group officially disbanded in 1862.

Today, there are several archaeological sites in Edgecomb where an arrowhead or a cooking utensil has been found so keep your eyes open!

**A Brief History of Davis Island,  
Part of the Town of Edgecomb**  
*Settlement of Edgecomb*

In the southern part of Lincoln County is the town of Edgecomb, ME which was settled by Samuel Trask in 1744. It was known as Freetown until 1774, when it was officially incorporated as a town and the name changed to Edgecomb (spelled Edgecumbe in the Articles of Incorporation). It was named after Lord Edgecomb, who had been a friend to the colonists. Edgecomb encompasses approximately 20.8 square miles of land. Davis Island (1 mile in length x ½ mile wide) is a part of Edgecomb and is home to the Sheepscot Harbour Village & Resort.

## Settlement of Davis Island

Davis Island was first settled by a man named Job Lewis from Boston, MA in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. He allegedly began construction of a large, castellated house in the woods of the island. Lewis died in 1750 and the house was never completed, becoming a “monument of the extravagance and folly of the man who undertook to build what he was unable to finish.” As a result of this, the earliest recorded name of Davis Island was actually Lewis’ Folly or Folly Island.

In 1770, Moses Davis Esq. and his family moved to the island and made the first permanent settlement there, which is where the name Davis Island comes from. Moses Davis was a carpenter and after clearing the land, he and his family established a farm. He is one of the men largely responsible for having Edgecomb incorporated as a town. He served as the Town Clerk of Edgecomb as well as Treasurer and was a selectman for nineteen years. Moses Davis, Esq., died in 1824 at the age of 81. The Island passed to his son, Moses Davis Jr. and from there to his son Lincoln Davis. In 1881, Lincoln Davis and his wife Martha began to take in summer boarders. Perhaps that set the stage for future business endeavors to take place on the island!

## The First Ferry

About 80 acres in size, Davis Island is completely surrounded by water. In 1785, Moses Davis petitioned the Court requesting a public ferry be put in place to cross from Wiscasset to Edgecomb. The petition was approved and that same year, Moses Davis came to be in charge of the ferry landing for the town of Edgecomb. It was located in the cove in front of Fort Edgecomb until that land was sold to the US Government. The ferry was then moved to the western part of the island. In those days the ferry rates were as follows: 1 single person = 12 ½ c, 1 person & horse = 37 ½ c, sheep & swine = 5 c apiece.

## The Wiscasset Bridge

The bridge you cross today to come from Wiscasset into Edgecomb (specifically Davis Island), even with its backed up traffic, is a pleasure compared to the bridges that came before! By 1847, the ferry was insufficient for the amount of people traveling between Wiscasset and Edgecomb. A group called the Proprietors of Wiscasset Bridge were granted a charter to build a toll bridge across the Sheepscot River to Davis Island but not until an agreement was made with Moses Davis Jr., who then owned the Island. We don’t know what the agreement was but it must have been sufficient because a 3,333 foot long and 25 foot wide wooden bridge was erected with a draw bridge for boats to pass through. If you were a single person crossing the bridge, it cost 3 c to get to the other side. If you were riding a horse, it cost 15 c. This was the first bridge.

In time, this bridge became worn and required a lot of repair. Many spots became rotted and there are reports of persons, horses, and carriages stepping *through* the bridge rather than on top of it. There are also several reports about persons and horses falling through all the way into the Sheepscot River! In 1904 floating ice swept away three full sections of the bridge making it impossible to cross. It was taken over by the State of Maine in 1906 and repairs were made. This was the second bridge. It was no longer a toll bridge but it still had many of the safety issues of the first bridge. In 1931 more extensive repairs were made to the wooden bridge (now 2740 feet long). This was the third bridge and it held up fairly well but by the 1960’s and especially the 1970’s it was in bleak condition and in need of an extreme makeover. Thankfully, in 1980, approval was granted for a 13.4 million dollar bridge to be built. The bridge built *parallel* to the

wooden bridge. It was made of pre-cast segmental concrete and completed in 1983. Once in service, the old wooden bridge was disassembled. This is the fourth Wiscasset Bridge and its sleek design is the one you cross over today to get to Davis Island. It is seven-eighths of a mile long.

### **Fort Edgecomb**

The 3.15 acre parcel of land on Davis Island where Fort Edgecomb now sits was sold by Moses Davis to the US Government in 1808 for \$300. It was one of four forts built in Lincoln County to protect the Maine Coast and its shipping interests. Fort Edgecomb was built to protect Wiscasset, once the most important shipping center north of Boston. The watchtower of this two-story, octagonal building has a 360 degree view of the Sheepscot River and surrounding countryside. The blockhouse's watch tower, having musket ports and rectangular openings on eight sides, provided protection from every water and land approach. When the War of 1812 was declared on June 18<sup>th</sup> of that year, colors were hoisted at Fort Edgecomb and guns were fired. No major action was seen at Fort Edgecomb until 1814, when the English diverted their war forces to the American Atlantic Coast. Peace was declared between the United States and Great Britain in 1815 and the fort was garrisoned until 1816. The threat of war was over for Fort Edgecomb until the summer of 1864, when the confederate cruiser Tallahassee was seen in northern waters. Fort Edgecomb was quickly garrisoned and equipped to defend but never saw any action. Fort Edgecomb was purchased by the state of Maine in 1923 for the amount of \$501.00. It remains a historical site and is a popular place to visit and picnic in Maine.

### **Hannah Lewis Waterhouse**

In 1800, Hannah Waterhouse (the surviving daughter of the previous settler, Job Lewis) sued Moses Davis for the Island but Davis prevailed and wrote in his diary, "Went to Court, had my cause come to trial, the jury gave in their verdict that I was not guilty of the matters alledged against me in the writ, I therefore recovered cost against Hannah Waterhouse." The matter was then taken up with the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth where the verdict was upheld and the island remained in the possession of Moses Davis.

### **Development of Davis Island**

In 1926, what had been a sheep and cow pasture (now the Sheepscot Harbour Village & Resort) became a gas filling station and land was cleared for tenting sites. The first of the Davis Island Cabins were built by Irving and Moses C. Davis in 1928 and more cabins were added from time to time until there were thirteen of them. These early cabins had a bed, an inside toilet, cold running water, a stove, and a screened porch. Families traveled to Davis Island and enjoyed these cabins built right on the banks of the Sheepscot River. Some spent the summers, others spent weeks, or weekends at the cabins, enjoying time away from cities such as Portland and Boston.

In 1931, a building was erected next to the cabins and occupied by Lewis' Spa. This business was in place until it was sold 1947 to Stanley & Velma Dodge. They turned the building into a very successful 50's style carhop restaurant called The Dodge Inn. The Dodge Inn was torn down in 19 and a new restaurant called the Muddy Rudder was built. The building has had a few makeovers, as several restaurants have graced this same building since that time, most recently, Bintliff's Ocean Grille.

## **The Sheepscot River**

These original Davis Brothers Cabins have been renovated and refurbished to provide modern comfort for guests while at the same time maintaining spectacular views of the 58 mile long Sheepscot River. The Indian name for this river was Aponeg and its present name comes from the words "sheep's cote" from the early years when the principal occupation along coastal Maine was raising sheep. Many different varieties of birds such as blue herons, osprey, and eagles spend time on and near the water. Harbor seals can be seen playfully swimming in the Sheepscot and there are many species of fish living underneath these tidal waters. Shad, alewife, trout, and the protected shortnose sturgeon are among the many fish to be found. Also, the nearly extinct Atlantic Salmon is at home in the Sheepscot River and the Atlantic Salmon Run (when the salmon swim upriver to spawn) is a much anticipated event in the early fall season.

### **The Romantic Side of Edgecomb: The Story of Marie Antoinette**

In 1793, Captain Samuel Clough, who lived in nearby Westport Island, was a merchantman engaged in trade with France. He and his ship, the *Sally*, became involved in a plot to save Marie Antoinette from the guillotine and spirit her away to the coast of Maine, where she would find sanctuary in the home he shared with his wife. There are two opinions as to why he did this. Some believe he was simply hired by the Royalists to save the Queen. The more romantic notion is that he was enamored with Marie Antoinette, touched by her plight, and his rescue attempt was an act of chivalry. So that the Queen would not be too uncomfortable, many of her personal belongings such as dresses, cloaks, wallpaper, damask hangings, and priceless bric-a-brac were loaded onto the *Sally*. While captain Clough waited for the Queen, there was a sudden outbreak of violence where Marie Antoinette was seized and eventually beheaded. Captain Clough slipped anchor and fled (with the Queen's belongings) to avoid being arrested for his participation in the plot. Some say his heart was broken and legend tells that the Queen's young son, the Dauphin of France was on that ship and was a guest of the Cloughs for a time. After the Cloughs death, these items were auctioned off and many of them ended up in the private homes of those living in Edgecomb. The "Marie Antoinette House" as it has become known was moved to Edgecomb in 1838 and is currently a gallery house called MAH Antiques.

*\*As a side note, some legends tell that along with her belongings, six of Marie Antoinette's long haired cats were also on board the Sally. Her cats are said to have bred with American cats and that is where the beautiful Maine Coon Cat descended from.*

### **The Hesper and Luther Little**

From the time of the Davis Brothers Cabins until 1998, residents and travelers alike could look out across the Sheepscot River to Wiscasset and see a majestic reminder of the bygone days of the great New England tradition of seafarers; the four-masted wooden schooners the Hesper and the Luther Little. The Luther Little was 204 feet in length and registered at 1200 tons. The Hesper was six feet longer and rated at 1348 tons. Both schooners were built in Somerset, MA. Luther Little took to the water in 1917 and Hesper followed a year later in 1918. The two ships were primarily used to transport coal and lumber from one destination to the next. In 1920, the Luther Little ran aground in Haiti while loaded with a large cargo of logs and it took two weeks to work her clear! She was laid up in Portland in the 1920's. While headed for Virginia, the Hesper ran into a storm, lost her sails and was blown out to sea. She was laid up at Rockport, Maine until another storm in the Penobscot Bay region rolled into the harbor. Hesper strained against her

dock lines, demolished a wharf, and finally burst free. She ended up on a beach and was then towed to Portland Harbor, joining the Luther Little.

In 1932, a man named Frank Winter bought both schooners for six hundred dollars each and brought them to Wiscasset. He had also purchased the insolvent Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railroad with the idea of operating a Boston-to-Wiscasset coal and lumber business. Between his lumber, the railroad, and the schooners, he was ready to begin operation. Sadly, this business never came to pass because of Mr. Winter's untimely death and the two schooners were abandoned where they lay. There were several proposals to restore the ships, but for various reasons, these proposals were never followed up and time began to wear the old schooners down. Hesper's masts were cut down around 1940. Her aft deckhouse was burned to celebrate the end of WWII. The forward deckhouse met a similar fate in 1978 when kids playing near the schooners tossed lit sparklers onto the ships from the bank. Every year, the hulks were a bit more run down but were still recognizable as ships through the 1980's.

In the early 1990's the elements finally took control over the schooners. Hesper's hulk disintegrated into an unrecognizable mound of debris, the Luther Little's masts were lost to storms and her hull began to collapse. Serious talks of preservation began but before anything could be done, the Luther Little's hull finally gave up and collapsed. There was little choice left but to demolish the wrecks. This work took place in the spring and summer of 1998. Maine's most famous schooners had ceased to exist, except in fond memories.

### Notes of Interest

- ✦ Prior to 1846, the towns of Wiscasset and Edgecomb were given a large sum of surplus money from the state but both towns voted not to use it to build a bridge. It's unknown what the town of Wiscasset did with their money but in Edgecomb, the money was proportioned to its inhabitants.
- ✦ In 1827, the valuation of Edgecomb was \$ 103,310. In 2005 that valuation rose to just over \$178 million.
- ✦ In 1828, the valuation of Moses Davis land and property was as follows: 20 acres of improved land =\$240, 57 acres of unimproved land =\$228, 2 dwelling houses =\$600, 1 barn =\$97, 2 outhouses =\$75, 1 horse =\$40, 1 ox, 2 cows, 3 cattle, 2 swine, 1 chaise =\$15 for a total of \$ 1,375.00.
- ✦ Edgecomb mail came through the town of Wiscasset until the first Edgecomb Post Office was built in 1825. There were no postage stamps used and mail came to your door on a C.O.D. basis. Postage stamps made their debut in 1847 and until 1856, either stamps or C.O.D. collection for mail were considered acceptable. By 1856, only postage stamps were used.
- ✦ Some of the early industries on Edgecomb/Davis Island were farming, shoemaking, running saw mills, brick masonry, packing factories, shipbuilding, lumbering, quarry work, and lobstering factories.
- ✦ Between the years 1775-1900, paupers were sold off or put up for public auction. There was no social security and no food stamp program. You and your family had no rights once you became a public charge.
- ✦ In 1850, a Census was taken and it was found that Edgecomb was home to 1,238 people. The Census taken in 2000 reported 1,090 people living in Edgecomb.
- ✦ In 1870 a house in Edgecomb could be build for the sum of \$742.
- ✦ Hot water and showers were installed in the Davis Brothers Cabins during the 1950 season of business.

- ✦ - In the Wiscasset Library, a Tall Case Clock from the Federalist Era made for Moses Davis in 1807 can be found in the library's reading room.
- ✦ - At the town meetings in the late 1700's, people paid a sum somewhere between \$6.00 - \$16.00 for a ½ or whole pew to sit in. Once paid for, that pew belonged to a specific family for each town meeting and was passed down from generation to generation.

## **Maine's Watchable Wildlife**

You'll be fascinated, discovering the rugged beauty of Maine and it's amazing wildlife. Diverse creatures can be found in abundance anywhere in the state, including Maine's thousands of miles of coastline. See a moose. Hear the echoing cry of the blue heron. Watch seals playing in the harbors or see puffins on a rocky coastal island. Read more to learn about some of the incredible wildlife here in Midcoast Maine. Have your binoculars and camera handy while staying with us at the Sheepscot Harbour Village & Resort and remember to keep a sharp eye out for all of Maine's beautiful creatures!

### **Land Mammals**

#### ***Moose***

Thousand of visitors come to Maine each year hoping to catch a glimpse of a moose. Moose can stand over seven feet tall in height, the tallest land animal in North America. These huge animals range all over Maine, both in the forest and along the coast. Moose typically come to the water in early morning or at dusk to eat the tender shoots of vegetation that grow along the edges of lakes, ponds, and rivers. Moose will often swim across bodies of water and have been spotted majestically making their way across the Sheepscot River, in full view of the Resort!

**FUN FACT:** Mature male moose shed their antlers in Nov/Dec and replace them with new ones in the spring. Antlers are formed of living tissue supplied by blood through a network of vessels covered with a soft, smooth skin called velvet. Eventually the tissue solidifies, the velvet is scraped off, and the antlers become completely formed of mineralized dead matter.

#### ***Red Fox***

The red fox has rusty, reddish fur with a white chin, throat, and belly. The tip of its tail is also white. Red foxes have pointy ears and a bushy tail. They can measure about sixteen inches in height and three and a half feet deep. They only weigh p to fifteen pounds or so. Red foxes look very much like dogs, which they are related to. Red foxes are shy animals, so you will rarely see them. They are most active at night.

**FUN FACT:** When a red fox is tired, its scent weakens. When it is asleep, it gives off no scent. A female fox is called a "vixen."

### ***Porcupine***

Porcupines are visible throughout Maine, although they are typically more active at night. It is widely thought that porcupines can throw the more than 20,000 quills that adorn their bodies, when in fact they cannot. Porcupines are shy and non-aggressive.

FUN FACT: A porcupine's quills are soft when it is born and harden after about thirty minutes. It is a medium-sized rodent, related to mice, rats, and beavers.

### ***White-Tailed-Deer***

In the summer, the white-tailed deer is brown, changing to a grayish-brown for the winter season. It has white on its throat, around its eyes and nose, on its stomach and on the underside of its tail. The male has antlers and weighs between 150-300 pounds. Females weigh between 90-200 pounds. The white-tailed deer's home usually ranges less than one square mile. When a white-tailed deer is alarmed, it may stomp its hooves and snort to warn other deer. It may also "flag" or raise its tail to show the white underside. White-tailed deer are good runners, swimmers, and leapers.

FUN FACT: The stomach of a white-tailed deer has four chambers that allow it to digest plant foods. They gobble up their food quickly and hardly even chew. Later as they are resting, they cough up their food and re-chew it.

### ***Red Squirrel***

The red squirrel is a small squirrel with reddish to reddish gray fur on top and a white or cream underside. It has white around its eyes. Its tail is not as long or bushy as the tail of a gray squirrel. In the summer, the red squirrel may have a black stripe on its side. Its curved front claws and powerful hind legs make it a very good climber and jumper. A red squirrel is very vocal and chatters, growls, and screeches.

FUN FACT: The red squirrel drinks tree sap from maple trees. It bites a tree until the sap flows out and returns to drink it after the water has evaporated.

## **Marine Animals**

### ***Whales***

Maine's coastal waters are home to several whale species. Humpback, finback, and minke whales can be seen throughout the summer season. You'll never forget watching these giant creatures leap from the water and land on their backs with an incredible and playful splash. Keep your camera ready for a shot of a whale spouting from the blow holes in their heads which can be seen from more than a mile away.

FUN FACT: Although both male and female humpbacks are capable of song, the male is the main singer of the family. During mating season, males will sing complex, organized songs with distinct themes and melodies. These "whale songs" can go on for up to twenty minutes and can be heard over twenty miles away.

### ***Harbor Seals***

Virtually every harbor along Maine's coast is home to harbor seals. They are impossible to resist, with their big, brown eyes and adorable faces. They are playful creatures and can be best viewed from a boat if you want to catch them sunning themselves on the rock ledges. Harbor seals are

known to congregate around fish piers, looking for free snacks. You can see them swimming up and down the Sheepscot River, poking their dark heads out of the water, looking around, and diving back under the water to hunt for dinner.

FUN FACT: Harbor seals are very distant relatives of man's best friend - dogs! Their flippers used to be hind legs.

### ***Striped Bass***

Striped bass, are found in the Sheepscot River and in other shallow coastal waters and rivers throughout Maine. Colored light green, olive, steel blue, brown, or black, their name comes from the seven or eight continuous stripes marking their silvery sides. Mature stripers are known for their size - some have been known for their size - some have been known to reach 100 pounds and almost five feet in length. You may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of this powerful creature jumping out of the Sheepscot River and landing with a big splash.

FUN FACT: This continent's first public school in Massachusetts was financed in 1669 by profits from the sale of striped bass.

### ***Atlantic Salmon***

Although you may not get to see the Atlantic salmon, it is on the endangered species list and one of the few places it can be found in Maine is in the Sheepscot River. The Atlantic salmon belongs to the trout family. It starts out as a pea-sized orange egg deposited in a riverbed. As they get bigger (20cm-60cm when grown), Atlantic salmon move down the river and into the Atlantic ocean, where many of them migrate to Greenland. After one or more years at sea, they return to the rivers and swim upstream to spawn where they were born in an extraordinary journey that may span more than 40,000 kilometers of open ocean.

FUN FACT: Between April and November, the silver Atlantic salmon navigates upstream, leaping over obstructions up to ten feet high when necessary to return to the area in the river where they were born.

### ***Tidal Pools***

Tidal pools are the shallows left in rocks by falling tide. They exist along the entire Maine coast and are host to spectacular mini-ecosystems that teem with life: sea anemones, sea urchins, crabs, sea cucumbers, and small fish. Exploring tidal pools is a wonderful way to explore these fascinating creatures. A field guide book will help you to identify the plants and animals wriggling in tide pools. Those closest to the water's edge tend to offer the most diversity and life.

## **Maine Birds**

### ***Bald Eagle***

The bald eagle is the national symbol of the United States and is only found in North America. Bald eagles range over much of Maine, including the coastal region of the Sheepscot River. These majestic birds can be identified by their pure white tails and heads, which make a sharp contrast against their dark wings, yellow bill and feet. Bald eagles have about 7,000 feathers. They do not have to migrate to warmer climates in the winter although some choose to do so. Eagles are renowned for their excellent eyesight and are able to see both forward and to the side

at the same time. They are capable of seeing fish in the water from several hundred feet in the air while soaring, gliding, or in flapping flight. A bald eagle's eyesight is at least four times that of a human with perfect vision. It is not unusual to see this magnificent creature flying overhead on Davis Island.

FUN FACT: Bald eagles may use the same nest year after year, adding more twigs and branches each time. One nest was found that had been used for 34 years and weighed over two tons.

### ***Puffin***

The black and white Atlantic puffins are small, pigeon sized seabird which lives on the open ocean throughout the majority of the year, breeding in colonies on Maine seacoasts and rocky islands from April to mid-August. Puffins lay one egg that is incubated in turn by each adult for approximately 40 days. Puffins are well adapted to life on the sea, being excellent swimmers. They do not come to land outside of the breeding season. They have colorful orange beaks and feet and are absolutely adorable.

FUN FACT: On average, puffins catch around 10 fish per trip for food but the record is a whopping 62 fish at one time!

### ***Great Blue Heron***

The graceful great blue heron can often be seen wading in the shallows of ponds, lakes, and rivers, including the Sheepscot. Great blue herons always live near sources of water and nest in trees or bushes that stand near water. They are the largest herons in North America. They have long, rounded wings, long bills that taper to a point at the end, and short tails. They also have very long necks and legs. They are grayish blue in color with streaks of white, black, and brown on their necks. Great blue herons are mainly active in the mornings and at dusk when fishing is best. They are solitary predators and prefer to hunt alone.

FUN FACT: The great blue heron is the largest heron in North America. When grown, the great blue heron is about 38 inches tall with a 70 inch wingspan. After hatching, a great blue heron is full grown in approximately 42 days.

### ***Osprey***

Ospreys are also known as "fish hawks" and have a slender, M-shaped silhouette when flying. They are one of the largest birds of prey and feed almost exclusively on live fish. Osprey nests are huge piles of sticks that can be seen on the tops of utility poles, dead trees, and buoys. They are spectacular divers and it is a special treat to watch an osprey dive from high in the air and plummet straight into the water. Usually, they'll fly off with a fish clutched in their powerful talons. Osprey can be found on all continents except Antarctica.

FUN FACT: Ospreys allow songbirds to build nests on the lower level of their large nests, providing them with a secure home and protection from predators. Talk about good neighbors!

## **The History of Lobstering**

A long time ago, lobsters were extremely plentiful. Native Americans used them for fertilization of crops and as hooked fish bait. In colonial times it was considered a “trash fish,” used only as poverty food. Lobsters were harvested and served to children, prisoners, and indentured servants, who exchanged their passage to America for seven years of service to their sponsors. There was a group of servants in Massachusetts who rebelled, and had put into their contracts that they wouldn't be forced to eat lobster more than three times a week!

Lobstering was done by gathering them by hand along the shoreline until the early 1800's. As a trap fishery, lobstering came into existence in Maine around 1850 and today, Maine is the largest lobster-producing state in the nation.

In the 1820's, lobstermen called “smackmen” first appeared in Maine because of the increased demand for lobsters from the Boston and New York markets. Smackmen were named after their boats called smacks, which were small sailing vessels with a tank inside the boat that had drilled holes into it to allow sea water to circulate. These smacks allowed for the transport of live lobsters over long distances.

The demand for lobsters became so great that in 1836, Maine began to can lobster meat. One of the early canneries which sent lobster meat all over the globe was the Burnham & Morrill Company, now primarily in the baked bean business. Canning lobsters overcame some of the difficulties associated with shipping live lobsters so that by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the value of canned lobster surpassed that of live lobster. These canneries became so efficient at processing the lobsters that soon they were forced to work with smaller lobsters. In 1860, four to five pound lobsters were considered small and two pound lobsters were being discarded as not worth the effort. Twenty years later, canneries were stuffing meat from ½ pound lobsters into the tins for processing.

The first lobster pound appeared in Vinalhaven (a mid-coast Maine island) in 1875, followed quickly by others. Local land based buyers took the place of smackmen by the 1930's and served as the link between the harvesters and the public.

Lobster was considered a delicacy during WWII and so was not rationed. People were able to afford and obtain protein-rich lobster easily because of the war-time boom in the economy. In the years between 1950 and 1969, per capita lobster consumption almost doubled. As of today, lobster is still considered a delicious treat, especially to travelers visiting Maine.

## **Lobsters Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Are lobsters born live?***

No, lobsters lay eggs that are held together with strands of glue until they hatch. Of the 10,000 eggs that a female may release, only about 10% will survive beyond the first four weeks of life.

### ***Where do lobsters live?***

As young lobsters settle to the bottom of the ocean, they prefer to settle in rocky or cobble beds along the coast, mostly below the lowest tides. Research has found that when given the choice of

settling into mud, sand, gravel, or small stones, lobsters gravitated to the cobble bottom where they could hide from predators in the spaces between the rocks and still catch falling food. Adult lobsters are less discerning - they'll go anywhere and may migrate long distances.

***Are adult lobsters in danger from predators?***

Humans are probably the lobsters biggest enemy. After humans, cod are probably next, followed by flounder, sculpins, eels, crabs, and seals. Even raccoons have been known to raid coastal lobster pounds at low tide.

***What do lobsters eat?***

Most people think of lobsters as scavengers, and while it is true that lobsters will scavenge the ocean floor and feed on dead animals, they prefer fresh food. Its diet typically consists of crabs, clams, worms, mussels, clams, and even fish. Lobsters may occasionally eat plants as well.

***How does a lobster grow?***

Lobsters "molt," or shed their shells to grow new, larger ones. They can molt up to twenty five times in their first five years of life. As an adult, they molt about once a year, until they become quite large, and may go several years between molts. Molting is hard work - the old shell cracks along the joint that separates the back shell and the tail and a line down the middle of the lobster's back. The lobster lies on its side and flexes its body several times to pull itself from the cracked shell. The remaining old shell is a perfect double of the lobster - down to the claws, legs, mouth parts, and even the covering of the eyeballs! The lobster will often eat its old shell because the calcium will help harden the new one more quickly.

***How far do lobsters travel?***

So far, the record travel is 225 miles covered by a tagged lobster.

***How can you tell the age of a lobster?***

No one knows exactly, but aquarium studies suggest it takes 5-7 years for a lobster to gain one pound.

***What color is a lobster?***

Most live lobsters are a greenish-brown color, but sometimes (not very often) they are blue, white, yellow, or even more than one color, except red. A lobster of any color (except white) will only turn red when you cook it.

***How long do lobsters live? How big can they get?***

The lobsters that you see in the supermarket and in restaurants (1-2 pounds) are about 5-8 years old. The older a lobster gets, the bigger it gets. The largest lobsters ever seen were about 3 ½ - 4 feet long and the record weight for a lobster is 44 pounds. Lobsters have been known to live to be over 100 years old.

***Where are the lobster's teeth?***

A lobster's teeth are in its stomach.

***What do you call a lobster with one claw?***

A lobster that has lost one claw or has any missing appendage is called a cull. A lobster that has lost two claws is called a bullet. Lobsters can grow back new claws, limbs, or antennas.

### ***What is the nutritional value of lobster?***

Nutrition studies show that 3 ½ ounces of lobster meat (without butter) contains only 90 calories, compared to 163 calories for the same amount of chicken and 280 calories for sirloin steak. Lobster also contains omega-3 fatty acids, the “good cholesterol that seems to reduce hardening of the arteries and decrease the risk of heart attacks.

### ***How are female lobsters protected by lobstermen?***

It is illegal to harvest a female lobster bearing eggs. By convention, when lobstermen in Maine catch an egg-bearing lobster, they will put a V-notch in the tail flipper before putting it back into the ocean. This alerts other lobstermen that they have landed a female that should not be kept or sold. This simple conservation measure helps ensure the lobster population.

## **How To Eat A Lobster**

Eating a lobster can be difficult and intimidating. The diner must first overcome both the hard shell and the crustaceans’ creepy looks. Although it may look ugly, have faith. It’s DELICIOUS! In order to break into the shell, you should have some tools handy - a heavy knife for cracking the large claws, a nut-cracker for cracking the smaller bits, and a pick for extracting the tasty bits from tight corners. Lobster is now considered a delicacy, but that doesn’t mean you have to dress for the occasion. A lobster bib is highly suggested while eating lobster, especially for first time tasters. Until you get the hang of it, you can expect a mouth-watering, if messy, meal.

### ***Instructions***

1. Remove the large claws from the body by twisting them off at the joints.
2. Crack each claw and knuckle with a lobster or nut-cracker (or the back of a heavy knife) to remove the meat.
3. Bend the body back from the tail. It will crack and then you can remove the tail. Break off the small flippers on the tail.
4. Extract the meat from each flipper using a pick.
5. Insert a fork and push the tail meat out in one piece. Remove the black vein in the tail and discard it.
6. Separate the shell of the body from the underside by pulling them apart and discard the green substance called the tomalley (it is the lobster’s liver and some consider it to be a delicacy).
7. Open the underside of the body by cracking it apart in the middle with the small walking legs on either side. Extract the meat from the leg joints by using your pick or by biting down on the leg and squeezing the meat out with your teeth.
8. Use wet napkins to clean up!

*\*\*Maine lobster does not need to be fancied up with sauces or spices. Some melted butter for dipping or a squeeze of lemon will do!\*\**