

# Togus Pond, Developed As Resort, Now Year-Round Colony

## Dams Built 145 Years Ago; First Cottages About 1900

By FRANCES ALLEN SAVAGE

How many of you remember when your family took the horse and buggy, packed the fishing poles and travelled seven miles to spend Sunday fishing in Togus Pond? Do you recall the generous fish-chowder dinners for thirty-five cents at the old Barrows cottage? Or did you eat at the Lakeview House? Did you realize then, that in fifty years a fast-growing colony of year-round homes and summer cottages would be developing into what may become a new community—namely, Worumontogus Lake?

### Began In 1895

In 1891, when Ralph G. Johnson decided to Andrew Rising the land covering the north shore of the lake, he probably considered it a transaction of little import on the future. The development began on March 9, 1895 when Andrew J. Rising sold the land to William E. Barrows, who later deeded it to Frank E. Barrows.

The Barrows cottage was the first dwelling to be built on Togus Pond. For several years the family rented boats and served dinners to local fishing parties. Those were the days when fish could be bought, cleaned, for ten cents a pound.

As time went on, the two ice houses adjoining the cottage were set back and made into camps for two Civil War veterans, Leander S. Frost and Richard Symms, both of whom lived there the remainder of their lives.

In 1900, the land was surveyed for the first time and sold to five

men: Frank E. Smith, Charles M. Taber, Frank S. Savage, Sumner Pullen and Harry Stoddard; all of whom built their cottages by holding all-day building bees, in which neighbors of all trades volunteered their labor. The camps were completed by about 1902. Following soon after, and built in the same way were the cottages of Ira Shorey, Charles Newcomb and Walter E. Porter (joint owners), Lem O. Fullen, A. W. Foster, all on the north shore.

On the south shore at about this time, Lakeview House was built by William W. Shaw, who also rented boats and served dinners to fishing parties. George Rockwood and John Thompson built a camp at this time, which was later sold to Edwin H. Gay in 1910.

Two and one-eighth miles of new and repaired roadway on the west shore built by Daniel S. Young practically started the camp development on this side of the lake. Before 1932 there was hardly more

than a footpath along this shore and only a very few camps. Mr. Young created one mile of entirely new road through the woods between Lambert's Point and the north shore. He cut down trees, removed stumps, blasted rocks, leveled the ground and gravelled the road, all as his own expense. One and one-eighth miles more were cleared of brush and given the same treatment as the new road. The city plans to take over the road in the near future. Today, approximately 24 camps share the convenience of a fine road and beautiful shore line. Mr. Young's cottage is a model of the ideal summer home and attracts many a passerby.

### Poor's Island

C. Walter Poor, on the west shore, was the first to build in 1904 on what is now called Poor's Island. On the east shore of Hayden's Cove Earle Harvey and Omar Pomerleau built cottages in about 1900. On Lambert's Point William Jackson built a cottage in about 1900 which was sold in about 1902 to the Rev. Malory Kearney. Levi Brown and George Ricker bought it jointly in 1906.

Years ago, on this shore, Alvah Howe made his living by making charcoal for commercial use for L. Wyman Weaver's Restaurant which was formerly located near the present Depositors Trust Company. Weaver's Restaurant specialized in charcoal-broiled steaks, and had the distinction of serving the best

steak dinners in this part of Maine. Mr. Howe made his charcoal by laying birch poles in double cone formation, one set of poles upon the other, allowing only a slight vent at top and bottom, so that the smoldering fire could be controlled at all times. The wood had to char but not burn. Layers of sod completely covered the outside of these birch cones and after due time, the sod was shovelled off, leaving charcoal in sizes a little larger than egg coal. Even today some charcoal may still be found.

Frank Hewins was the first to build on the east shore in about 1908. Contrary to general custom, he allowed no building to take place on Sunday. For years, the only other cottage on the east shore was that of Wesley W. Albee, built between 1910 and 1912. After the building of the Albee Lumber Mill in 1926, other cottages began to appear. It is interesting to note that tenting was common in about 1929 on Snake Island which is near the east shore.

The name Worumontogus is from the Abenaki Indian language and has been corrupted enough from the original to cause numerous differences of opinion as to its meaning. Among the many versions offered are: "Spring under mountain", "brook cove", "small vermilion inlet". No one agrees. Since the lake is entirely fed by spring water, it seems likely that the name may be associated with the word "spring".

Worumontogus Lake is a scenic

one with coves, islands, woods and farms varying the panorama. The shore line is rocky, the woods still quite dense, the coves deep. There are six sizable islands and other smaller ones. North Belfast Road bounds the lake on the north and South Belfast Road on the south. It is three miles long, approximately, from the northernmost tip of Hayden's Cove to the southernmost shore of Little Togus Pond and is a mile or under in width. Little Togus Pond is separated from Togus Pond by the lower Belfast Road which crosses the marshland between the two ponds. At high water, it would be a part of Togus Pond if not for the road. At lower levels, there is swamp land separating the two ponds.

### Noted For Fishing

The lake has always been well known for its fishing as far back as anyone can remember. White

perch, pickerel, bass, brown trout and even hornpout have been caught there. Ice fishing for pickerel has also been popular. Deer hunting, as well as rabbit and partridge, and duck hunting on the lower end of the pond and on Togus Stream are still popular. According to seasoned fishermen, it was common to catch 50 to 100 white perch in one day and 25 pickerel in a day. Twenty-five years ago there was a tiny stream near Hayden's Cove where brook trout were found and some say that they are still there. Mink and muskrat have been seen on the lake shores and the height of the muskrat huts was an indication of the forthcoming weather. If the walls were high, there would be a bad winter; if they were low, an ordinary winter and spring would be expected. Togus Pond is dependent upon

two dams—the main and the back or back run dam, so called. In the History of Kennebec, the following is found: "About 1850 Franklin Stevens erected a sawmill on the Little Togus, about where the Kennebec Central railroad strikes the street. It was built for Door Bullen, who ran it several years, and then sold the business to Franklin Stevens. When the civil war began, Mr. Stevens sold the machinery at a large price, and the business was discontinued.

"On the Togus stream, was an old carding and fulling mill, on what is now Samuel Stevens farm. It had disappeared before the recollection of the present generation. There was a saw mill built in 1808 on the Togus stream, called the Cooper mill. It stood just above the present mill of Oliver Moulton. A portion of the dam only remains. Oliver Moulton built a saw mill in 1841 on the Togus stream, a short distance above the river road, but it was burned ten years afterward. Another mill was at once erected, a little lower down the stream, and is now leased and run by Henry

and Warren Moulton, sons of Oliver. It contains a rotary saw for long lumber, planers, lathe and shingle mills, and employs twenty-five hands. This mill controls the stream up to the reservoir at Togus."

It was that the Moultons dammed the water of Togus Pond for commercial use at Randolph. They closed the gates in winter and opened them in spring, thus controlling the water level in the pond. Togus stream starts in Lower Togus Pond and ends in the Kennebec River at Randolph, and it was here that Moulton erected his sawmill.

**Dams Built In 1804**  
The dams were built in 1804, making them 145 years old. Some say that they were built by Charles Sylvester who ran a quarry business on South Belfast Avenue. The main dam is located just off the Rockland road on Togus stream in Chelsea. The back dam is located about twelve minutes' walk from the Mud Mills road on Mud Brook. (Continued on Page B-10—Col. 1)