

# Dams Built 145 Years Ago; First Cottages About 1900

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Mills Brook which runs off from Togus stream.

The main dam was built of granite blocks onto a narrow ledge and packed in with clay and gravel. It was 175 feet long, six feet wide, twelve feet deep. The gates were lifted by gears and heavy iron wheels which slid up and down. The old grist mill stones which were left on the Moulton property were moved to the cottage formerly belonging to Frank E. Barrows, in 1931, and are still in front of the camp.

The back dam was made of rocks, boulders and sod. It is about 100 feet long on top and about four feet wide. Today water is going underneath the old structure which seems permanently imbedded and looks as though it had grown there. Three or four trees, six to eight inches in diameter, are now growing inside the dam. At high water, the stream between pond and dam covers a wide area, but when the water level is drawn down, the brook dwindles to a narrow trickle. Leakage on the north side of the dam is indicated by a small whirlpool. In 1947, sandbags were placed at this point but are now out of the water about 12 inches and are partly broken up. Visible out of water is about 5 feet of the structure.

### Form Game Association

In 1928 the Worromontogus Fish and Game Association was organized mainly to acquire ownership of the dams, to repair them and to secure the right of way on Togus stream. In 1931 Frank E. Barrows, attorney in the law firm of Pennie, Edmonds, Morton and Barrows in New York City, and formerly a native of Bolton Hill, bought the dam, all the property connected with them and the right of way on the stream as far as Randolph, in order to allow the association time enough to re-purchase from him the dams and property for their own use. With this generous assistance, the Fish and Game Association was encouraged to earn money with which to repay him by holding entertainments, giving suppers, using membership dues, and by the generous contributions of the property owners themselves who gave heavily at a time when the country was in a financial crisis.

In 1933 the main dam leaked to such an extent that the water level of the lake fell five or six feet lower than usual, which exposed mud flats and stumps, seriously affecting sanitation and all water sports. Total cost of repair was estimated to be about \$1500 plus a great amount of donated material without which the estimated cost would have been about \$3200. The Fish and Game Association, by selling nine acres of land surrounding the dams, obtained the greatest portion of the expense of repair. The remainder was earned by giving suppers and entertainments by soliciting contributions, and by using membership dues.

Maurice B. Dow was in charge of the whole construction and volunteers from the organization gave whatever services to the project they could, saving the association many hours of expensive labor. A new sluiceway was built as well as a new flume. Fifteen stop-logs, 6 inches square, were placed in back of the fish screen in channels at both ends and were later braced at the top. Each stop-log is bored and pinned at each end so that hooks can be inserted to move the log. The surface of the dam was wholly refaced with cement to the width of about two feet at the bottom and approximately one foot at the top. The cement work was all reinforced with iron.

A five-foot excavation was dug under the dam and filled with concrete so that the whole construction rests on a solid foundation.

Two cement wings measuring 8 feet 9 inches by 6 feet 8 inches on top, and running out from the dam 7 feet with a depth of 13 to 15 feet, were connected on the top by two cement slabs 18 inches thick and on the bottom by a solid 36 inch base.

A fish screen measuring 7 1/2 feet and made up of 3/4 inch by 2 1/2 inch oak slats, bolted together, was set into a recess in front of the stop-logs. The two wings were connected in front with concrete, starting at the bottom of the iron penstock and running down to the same depth as the side walls of the dam. The wings were also reinforced with iron.

The top side of the dam was back-filled with clay and gravel, making a sloping surface under water to resist water pressure with the least impact.

The fish screen, consisting of three sections and measuring 27 feet in width, was installed over the spillway. Above it is the cement foot-bridge measuring 18

inches wide and in front of it is a slanting cement slab. The rock walls constituting the main part of the dam are connected by this foot bridge. The penstock measures 3 1/2 feet in diameter.

Throughout the entire undertaking, Frank E. Barrows was most helpful, with legal advice and with his generous contributions. His sincere interest and genuine desire to help in the improvement of the lake was both felt and appreciated by every member of the association.

### Try Stocking Lake

The second objective of the original Fish and Game Association was to stock the lake with game fish every year. A fish weir was built for \$400 and the lake experimentally stocked with about 7000 landlocked salmon on July 7, 1931. It was found that the lake was not deep enough to give the salmon the cold temperature which they needed so they next tried brook-trout, which did not show good survival. By survey of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, it was found that brown trout were the most successful in Togus Lake. Several times the state stocked the lake with brown trout which proved successful. For instance, in 1947, 10,000 six-inch brown trout were put into the lake.

Proof of their survival lies in the fact that brown trout were caught weighing 3 1/2 to 3 pounds 12 ounces. Further proof that the last-mentioned catch is no fish story is the fact that it may be seen, stuffed, in the home of George F. Giddings.

Excerpts from the minutes of the meetings of the Association give an idea of its growth and activities: "September 27, 1928—About 25 men met in Augusta City Hall to organize Worromontogus Fish and Game Association. George F. Giddings chosen president. . . . June 20, 1929 — Investigation begun to find out how many cottage owners would take electricity provided Central Maine Power would transport the power. . . . August 22, 1929 — Voted to make Frank E. Barrows honorary member on account of assistance given in building of screen. . . . April 1, 1930 — Commissioner George J. Stobie stated that pheasant eggs donated by the state would be available soon to be bred, reared and liberated. . . . June 18, 1930—80 pheasant eggs hatched under the good care of the late Herbert Brown. . . . July 17, 1930—A site of land south of Spofford Giddings cottage with 80 feet waterfront accepted as the location of a new clubhouse. . . . April 28, 1931—Frank E. Barrows bought the dams and surrounding property to hold for later purchase by the Association. Subscriptions taken by members to pay Mr. Barrows. . . . June 24, 1931—Land site for clubhouse rejected for business reasons. . . . July 8, 1931—10 cans of landlocked salmon received from United States Government and placed in Worromontogus Lake. . . . New site for clubhouse accepted on Robert Hayden's property. . . . September 29, 1931 — Incorporation of Worromontogus Fish and Game Association at 249 Water Street by Robert L. Hayden and 11 other men. . . . August 23, 1931—First annual Field Day held. . . . August 3, 1932—Nine acres of land surrounding dams sold. . . . December 1, 1931—Clubhouse floor laid and concrete pillars constructed. . . . September 26, 1934—Clubhouse voted to be sold. . . . September 27, 1940—Last meeting of the Association until 1947. . . . August 24, 1947—Worromontogus Fish and Game Association reorganized by Donald S. Savage. First meeting since World War II. President chosen, Paul K. Radsky. . . . September 26, 1947 — Baked bean supper, beanhole style, cooked by William E. Bubar, held at his camp. About 200 attended. Beano party afterward. Large iron kettles used. Deep holes dug in the ground and stoned up. A fire made in this cavity and kept going half a day until live coals were made. The kettles then sealed and buried in the hot embers, after which the kettles were covered with earth and allowed to bake this way for 24 hours. . . . April 7, 1948—Johnson outboard motorboat bought by the Association for contest to earn money for Blue Vitriol. . . . May 13, 1948—\$488.65 in treasury of the Association. . . . State Department of Sanitation sampled water and prescribed four pounds of Blue Vitriol to 1,000,000 gallons of water. Purpose, to destroy water algae which form an odorous, unhealthful scum on surface of water in mid-summer. . . . June 15, 1948—Worromontogus Fish and Game Association joined the State of Maine Fish and Game Association. . . . July, 1948—Field Day planned for August 22 with Clifford W. Taber, Chairman. . . . February, 1949—Minstrel known as the "Downeasters" planned for last of March to

raise funds for general upkeep of lake and dam repairs. Cast of 20 will perform in Bolton Hill Schoolhouse. . . . March 31 and April 1, 1949 — Performance of "Downeasters" given twice before enthusiastic audiences and full houses. . . . In 1939 the Veteran's Administration Center at Togus tried to obtain legislation enabling them to divert the water from Togus Lake for drinking water. Through the letters and personal appearance of Frank E. Barrows, Maine native and New York City attorney, the proposition was defeated. Had the measure been accepted, all cottage owners of the lake would have been unable to use the water for recreational purposes because the water level would have been lowered to such an extent as to depreciate

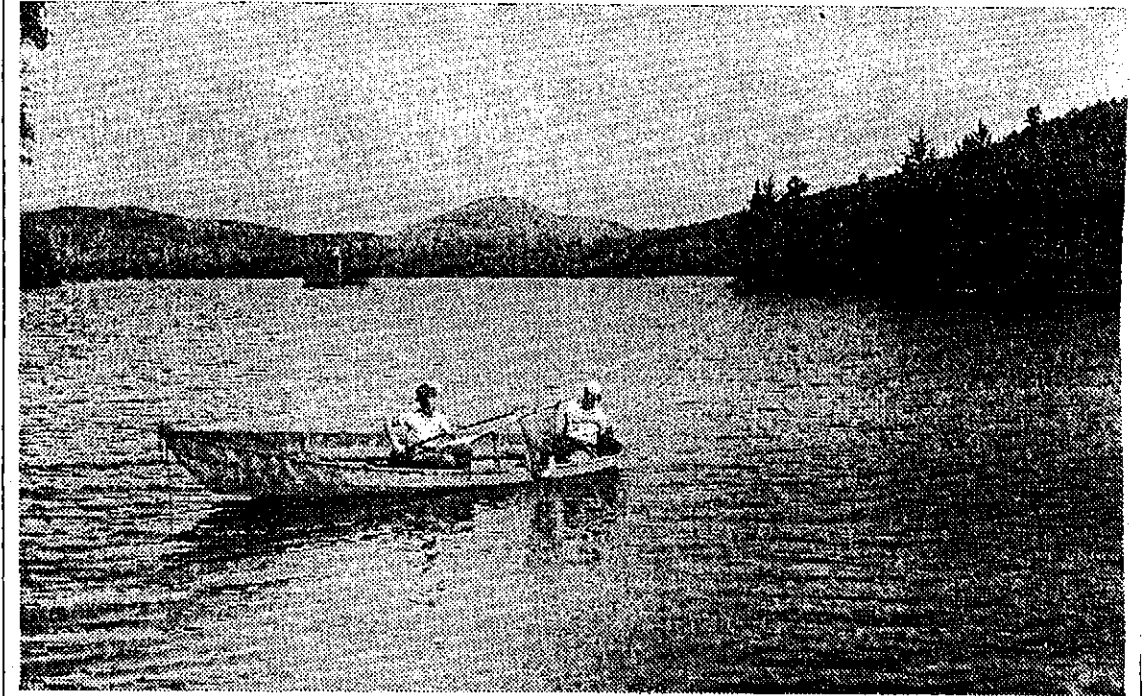
property values and to make fishing, boating and swimming impossible. If the State Legislature had consented to the Veterans Administration control of these waters, then the Federal government would have had complete and exclusive jurisdiction over the property acquired. The result would have been to deprive all property owners affected by the legislation from the protection of State laws and State courts, and subject them to control by the Federal government, acting through administrators of the Veterans Administration, and with recourse only to the Federal courts in case of disagreement.

### 40 Year-Round Families

Today, out of about two hundred privately owned cottages on the lake, approximately forty families

live there the year around. Thirteen children from the north shore and seven from the south shore commute on the school buses with their reliable and popular drivers, John Chase and "Bill" Howard. Roads are now city-owned and plowed all winter. Mail is delivered once a day and the friendly postman, Roy Whitten, acts as local postmaster as well, by taking back letters and packages to be mailed; selling stamps and the like. Telephones are found in the majority of year-round houses and most of the families have cars, which makes it convenient for the men, most of whom work in Augusta.

Two grocery stores — Hayden's and Hisler's—are on the lake shore but neighbors are thoughtful



NET NEEDED—The cry frequently heard on one of Maine's 2,500 lakes and ponds is: "Get the net! I've got a big one!" Particularly at this time of year, fishermen by the hundreds heed the call to their favorite pastime.

enough to accommodate each other when shopping must be done in town.

As yet, there are no year-round resident doctors, but in emergencies, the trip into the heart of Augusta may be made in only ten minutes.

The housing shortage may be the reason why many people first moved out or winterized their summer cottages into permanent lodgings, but from all the year-round residents who were asked, the same loyal answer was given: "We live on Togus Pond all year because we like it." Some of the reasons for liking it are that they are close to Nature; that it is a child's playground; that the neighbors are sociable. Card parties, sociables and dances held by the Fish and Game Association in the old Bolton Hill Schoolhouse, which is their recreation hall; skating; ice-fishing; all combine to make year-round living on Worromontogus Pond different, challenging, serene, yet exciting.

(Grateful acknowledgment is hereby extended for the generous co-operation of cottage owners — and relatives of past owners, in giving information which could not have been otherwise obtained for this article. Appreciation goes to the following: Frank S. Savage, Mrs. Clyde C. Reynolds, Frank E. Barrows, who deserves special mention for the thorough attention given the history of the lake; Charles W. Poor, William E. Bubar, Frank E. Hewins, Jr., Herbert E. Gay, George F. Giddings, Mrs. Raymond E. Cunningham, Clifford W. Taber, Daniel S. Young, Sumner Glazier, A. Anita Smith.)