

MAINE'S FIRST BUILDINGS

The Architecture of Settlement, 1604-1700

By Robert L. Bradley, Ph.D.

Architectural Historian

Maine Historic Preservation Commission



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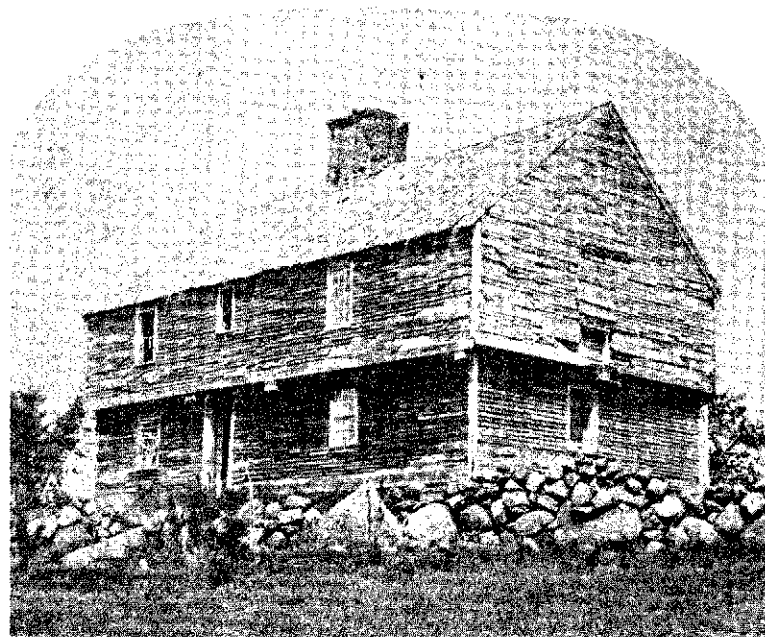
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EARLE G. SHETTLEWORTH, JR.
State Historic Preservation Officer

THE MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION was created by the 105th Legislature in 1971 to administer the National Register Program in Maine. The Commission is responsible for conducting a statewide survey of historic, architectural, and archaeological resources and the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Commission administers a 50% matching Federal Grants-in-Aid Program for the excavation of archaeological sites and the restoration of historic buildings.

CITIZENS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION is a state-wide historic preservation organization linking the efforts of local preservation groups and historical societies. Citizens publishes a quarterly newsletter covering local, state, and national preservation activities and since 1971 has sponsored annual conferences on preservation issues, including Historic Districts, Buying Antique Houses, and Maine Archaeology.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS IN YORK COUNTY, INC., is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of York's colonial heritage. The Society maintains Jefferds Tavern, the George Marshall Store, the John Hancock Warehouse, the Elizabeth Perkins House, and the Old Schoolhouse as historical museums. Landmarks such as the Old Burying Ground, Maude Muller Spring and Snowshoe Rock are cared for by the Society.

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Introduction

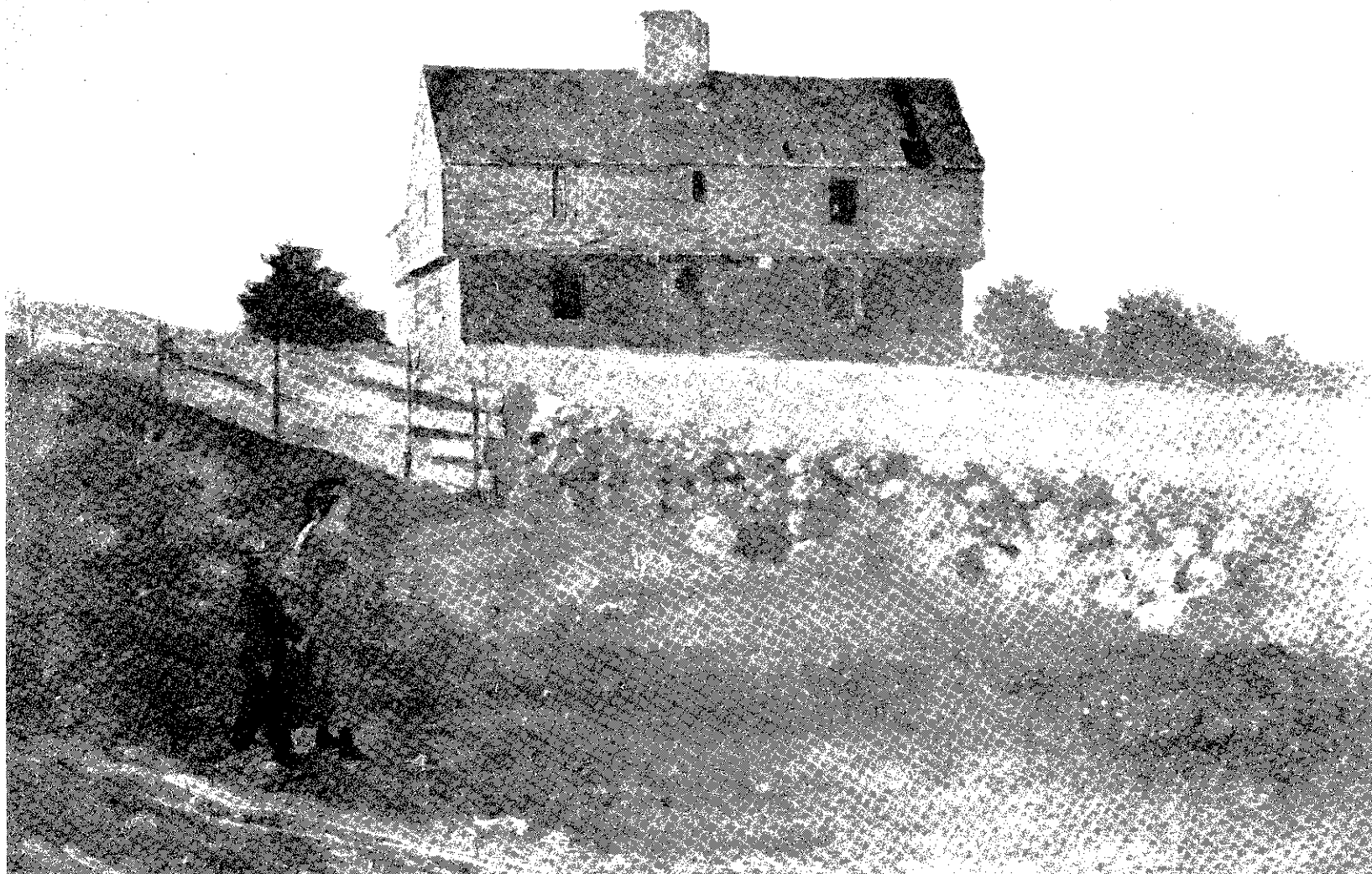
From the moment that European settlers first splashed ashore in Maine early in the 17th century, buildings of various sorts were constructed to meet their temporary as well as long-term needs. Those settlements which flourished quickly saw the appearance of dwellings, storehouses, barns, mills, taverns, jails, churches, smithies—in short, all of the structures which frontier villages and towns need to function as communities.

For several generations, from the 1620's to 1676, early colonial Maine thrived. And then disaster struck. King Philip's War raged throughout New England as the Indians made a futile effort to turn back the English tide. Most of Maine's settlements were completely destroyed or badly damaged in this conflict and, what is even worse, King Philip's War ushered in nearly a century of bloody strife in Maine between the English and the allied French and Indians. Due to this strife and the normal ravages of time, virtually no trace of Maine's 17th-century architecture survives above ground.

This booklet is intended to be a companion to Frank A. Beard's *200 Years of Maine Housing: A Guide for the House Watcher*, Second Edition (Augusta, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1977). Maine's architecture of the settlement period is little understood, but through research more is being learned about it every year. This booklet will attempt to bridge the gap in the study of architecture between the earliest colonization of our State and the re-emergence of prosperity in Maine in the 18th century. It will

try to reconstruct a century of building in Maine which is now all but vanished.

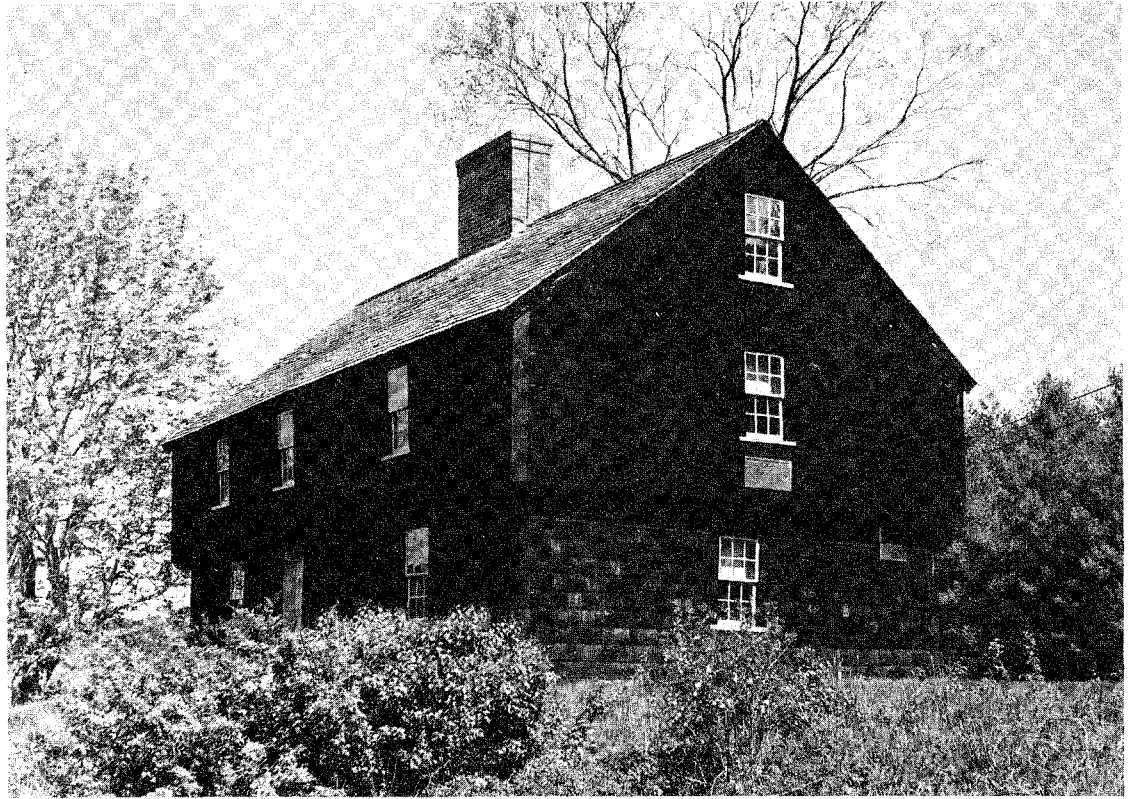
There are four principal sources of information in the study of Maine's 17th-century architecture: surviving structures or parts of structures, contemporary written records, contemporary drawings, and archaeological excavation of early remains. In approaching the subject from these four directions a remarkable amount of evidence can be collected to piece together a picture of Maine's first buildings.



Survivals

One of the most difficult problems in architectural history is the precise dating of buildings. This problem is particularly acute in dealing with buildings of the 17th and early 18th centuries, which were constructed before newspaper accounts and other published records became common; and long before the architect became a respected and established professional in the eyes of society. Often our earliest buildings can only be dated by interpreting deed transfers and stylistic details. Because of the not unnatural urge of owners to claim the earliest dates possible, the construction of many a building has been assigned to times which far predate the surviving structure. And often confusion arises when an early building is replaced by a later one, the earlier date being assigned to the present structure.

In this way numbers of buildings in Maine have been attributed wrongly to the 17th century. The McIntire Garrison in York, for example, was long thought to have dated from 1645. It now seems that it was built after 1707. Nevertheless, its form derives from 17th-century architecture and it is thus a valuable witness to its predecessors. The house is small by later standards and consists of two stories with a large central chimney (rebuilt in 1909). Clapboard sheathing hides walls of sawn logs which are carefully dovetailed at the corners. The most conspicuous feature is the overhang of the second story, a structural detail invented in Medieval Europe to compensate for crowded, narrow streets by increasing second-floor space. Contrary to popular thought, this overhang was



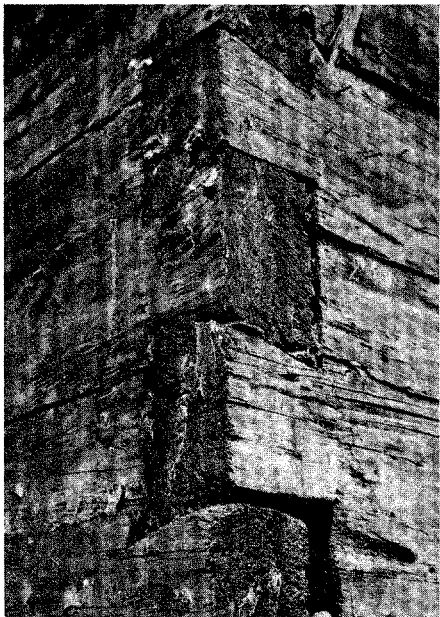
McIntire Garrison, York, c. 1707

not designed to allow settlers to pour boiling water onto hapless attackers huddling against the wall!

“Garrison” is a much misused word. In the 17th century the term did not refer to a specific type of building, but rather to houses which were refuges or bases for militia. While some of these

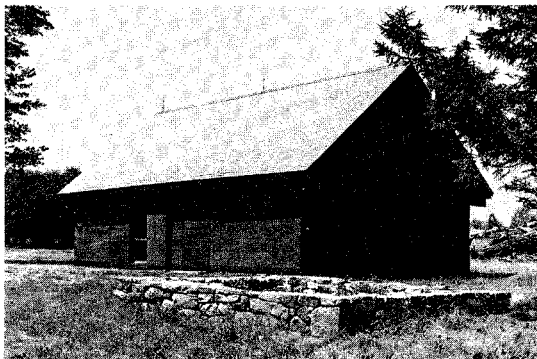
structures were built of hewn or sawn logs, others were of frame construction. In any case 17th-century log houses must not be confused with the log cabin famous on other American frontiers of the 18th and 19th centuries. The latter was introduced subsequently by central and northern Europeans.

The Mitchell Garrison in Kittery, again probably dating from the early 18th century, is also of log construction. This building, however, barely qualifies as a survivor since only its first story walls remain. These have been dismantled and moved to a safer location for reassembly and interpretation on the grounds of the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum.

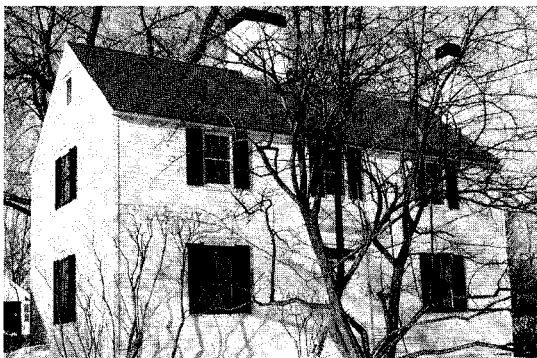


Mitchell Garrison, Kittery, detail, early 18th-century

The Frost Garrison in Eliot is the most military in nature of these early log buildings in Maine. This large, barn-like structure is of one and a half stories with an upper story overhang at the gabled ends of the building. Loopholes are cut into the first story log walls for musket fire. This was



Frost Garrison, Eliot, c. 1738



Fernald House, Kittery, c. 1700

never a dwelling (there was no chimney for heat and cooking); rather, it functioned as a barn and was intended as a refuge in times of peril. Although it dates from the 1730's, it might as well have been built much earlier.

The field-stone cell block of York's Old Gaol was once thought to date from 1653, but is now known to postdate 1720. The Storer Garrison in Wells

is misnamed, for it was built c. 1750 using parts of a late 17th century structure by that name. And while the earliest part of the Elizabeth Perkins House in York may have been built c. 1686, it has been submerged by numerous later additions and enlargements. However, the Fernald House in Kittery, possibly dating from the 1690's, is a fine example of a one room deep, two-story frame dwelling with large central chimney.

Viewing Maine's architectural survivals of the 17th century all too clearly indicates that they hardly exist. One has to look at structures of the early 18th century to gain an impression of earlier building types. In this regard Maine's oldest standing Cape Cod style dwellings hint at their humble ancestors of the 1600's—very small one-story frame houses with loft overhead, a chimney to one side and a single room downstairs. This type of house was easily expandable into the center-chimney cape so typical of Maine's later colonial period.

Written Records

An early but today anonymous visitor to New England wrote that Maine "will prove a very flourishing place, and be replenished with many fair towns and cities, it being a Province both fruitful and pleasant". This was a good prediction, but towns and cities take time to build, requiring efficient saw-mills and systematic brick-making. The first European residents of Maine and New England had to improvise shelter for a few months or longer after arrival. These earliest structures nowhere survive, were never pictorially represented, and seldom leave buried remains for the historical archaeologist to identify. However, they are liberally mentioned in contemporary journals and letters.

Edward Johnson, writing of the first settlement of the Boston area in 1630, noted that "The first station they took up was at Charles Towne, where they pitched some tents of Cloath, others built them small Huts . . ." In 1636 the first settlers of Concord, west of Boston, used a different type of shelter, according to Johnson, "They burrow themselves in the Earth for their first shelter under some Hill-side, casting the Earth aloft upon Timber; they make a smoakey fire against the Earth at the highest side." William Bradford, writing of the first weeks at Plymouth in 1620, was unfortunately far less specific: "After they had provided a place for their goods, or comone store . . . [they] begune some small cottages for their habitation, as time would admit."

In 1633 John Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay mentioned primitive shelters on the Maine coast: "News of the taking of Machias by the French. Mr. Allerton of Plimouth, and some others, had set up a trading wigwam there . . ." And again in 1643: "Mr Vines landed his goods at Machias, and there set up a small wigwam . . ." We can only imagine what an English 'wigwam' amounted to, since it was never precisely defined, though the term was used repeatedly by early eye-witnesses. Johnson wrote of New England in general in 1642, ". . . The Lord hath been pleased to turn all the wigwams, huts, and hovels the English dwelt in at their first coming into orderly, fair, and well-built houses."

Occasionally we get glimpses of construction details of the first generation of buildings. At Plymouth, Bradford mentioned in 1623 the loss of a "storehouse, which was wattled up with bowes, in the withered leaves whereof ye fire was kindled." The structure's walls were made of wattle and daub which consisted of branches plastered roughly with clay or mud. Winthrop, on the other hand, in 1632 noted a house near Boston "made all of clapboards".

Most, if not all, of early buildings in New England were covered with thatched roofs. We know this because of the frequent reporting of fires, many of which were incorrectly blamed on the roofing material (actually, wooden chimneys were the chief cause). Fires became so common in the early years that Thomas Dudley wrote in 1630 to Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln, "For the prevention whereof in our new town [Cambridge], intended this summer to be builded, we have

ordered that no man there shall build his chimney with wood, nor cover his house with thatch. . . ." Ironically, Dudley's own house burned in 1632, as reported by an eye-witness, Peter Force: ". . . The hearth of the Hall chimney burning all night upon the principal beam. River sedge and rye straw were used to thatch the roofs . . ." Thatch was clearly the simplest and most easily used roofing material for many years for all buildings. Winthrop reported that a thatched barn burned in Salem in 1647 (already an aged structure by them, presumably) and that the new Dorchester meeting-house of 1632 was thatched. Yet by 1646 Winthrop implied that thatched roofs were a thing of the past when he noted that a certain man "took up his lodging in a poor thatched house".

In general these roofs were of gabled form. For example, Winthrop cited an unfortunate incident in 1636: "One Mr. Glover of Dorchester, having laid sixty pounds of gunpowder in bags to dry in the end of his chimney, it took fire and some went up the chimney; other of it filled the room and passed out at a door into another room, and blew up a gable end."

Foundations clearly were of stone, not quarried granite as in the 19th century, but rocks gathered from the fields. The difficulty of building sturdy foundation walls with rounded New England field-stone was wryly noted by Johnson in referring to two men trying to build a church in Salem in 1629: "One of them began to build, but when they saw all sorts of stones would not fit in the building, as they supposed, the one betooke him to the Seas againe, and the other to till the Land."

Cellars are mentioned fairly frequently by early writers. This is hardly surprising, given the New England climate where frost-free winter storage and a cool larder in the summer are desirable. Increase Mather at Plymouth cited an Indian in 1621 "observing in one of the English Houses a kind of Cellar, where some Barrels of Powder were bestowed." And Winthrop wrote of a Boston house in 1648 equipped with a "well in the farther end of the cellar".

Most eyewitness accounts of early 17th-century buildings in New England concern eastern Massachusetts (e.g., Plymouth, Boston, Salem). However, one of the best contemporary references to a dwelling of the period comes from the pen of John Winter, agent for Robert Trelawny on Richmond's Island, off Cape Elizabeth, in 1634: "I have built a house heare. . . that is 40 foote in length and 18 foot broad within the sides, besides the Chimnay, & the Chimnay is large with an oven in each end of him . . . We Can brew & bake and boyle our Cyttell [kettle] all at once in him with the helpe of another house that I have built under the side of our house, [cellar?] where we sett our Ceves [sieves] & mill & mortar In to breake our Corne & malt & to dres our meall in, & I have 2 Chambers [upstairs bedrooms] in him, and all our men lies in on[le] of them, & every man hath his Close borded Cabbin [bunk]: and I have Rome [room] Inough to make a dozen Close borded Cabbins more, yf I have need of them, & in the other Chamber I have Rome Inough to put the ships sail into. . . , and I have a store house in him . . . & underneath I have a Citchen for our men to eat and drink in, & a steward Rome . . . , and every one of these romes ar Close with loockes & keyes vnto them."

This remarkable passage, although confusing in places, tells us a great deal about a first generation building on the Maine coast which was designed as the headquarters of a successful fishing station. The building, 40 by 18 feet in ground dimensions, was equipped with a single large chimney apparently containing two very large back-to-back fireplaces. A wing was evidently used for storage and the hand-milling of corn. At least two major rooms were serviced by the fireplaces on the first floor, a kitchen-mess hall and an office ("steward room"). Upstairs was a large dormitory, another bedroom used for storage, and a small store room. This was no wigwam.

Building contracts often contain information of value. For example, from the Biddeford Town Records come these 1686 specifications for a framed minister's house: "...shingled...ye sellare dug and stoned, ...ye chimbes made of brick".

While certain generalizations about the size, shape, and construction materials of early 17th century buildings in Maine and New England can be made on the basis of contemporary written records, it is well to remember that in any period there is great variation from the norm. A one-story house with a central brick chimney and a flat roof just nine feet high is hardly typical of early colonial architecture as we understand it. Yet Winthrop described just that in 1646: "A most dreadful tempest at northeast with wind and rain, in which the lady Moodye her house at Salem, being but one story in height, and a flat roof with a brick chimney in the midst, had the roof taken off..."

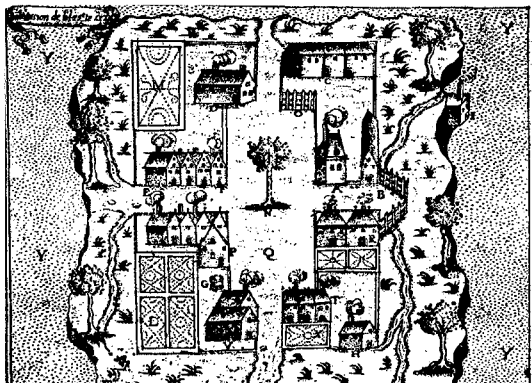
The tents, pit-houses, wigwams, huts, and hovels which served as improvised shelter for the first wave of settlers were soon replaced by far better, yet still primitive, thatched cottages, often with dangerous wooden chimneys. In due course larger buildings with brick chimneys appeared. By the mid-17th century Johnson's description of Boston suggests the rapid advance of architecture in New England within barely more than a generation of the first settlement: "The chiefe Edifice of this City-like Towne is crowded on the Sea-banks, and wharfed out with great industry and cost, the buildings beautifull and large, some fairly set forth with Brick, Tile, Stone and Slate..."

Pictorial Records

Because virtually no 17th-century buildings survive in Maine and because written accounts leave much to the imagination, early sketches and paintings depicting buildings of the settlement period are extremely valuable as a source of information.

The two earliest documented European attempts at colonizing the Maine coast have left us the most dramatic graphic records of the 17th-century. Ironically, each enterprise failed within a year, and it seems likely that the pictorial record of each is either an exaggeration of what actually was built, or a 'blueprint' for what was planned but only partially completed.

In 1604 France established a colony on St. Croix Island (Dochet Island) off of the modern Calais. The unfortunate combination of an exposed site, a very severe winter, starvation, and disease decimated the settlers, and in the following summer the colony was removed to Nova Scotia. The great explorer Samuel de Champlain was a participant in the effort, and his detailed drawing of the settlement in the St. Croix River was published in 1613. This charming drawing shows buildings and gardens at the northern end of the island. These range in type from a kitchen (I) of one story with a flat or shed type roof; to quarters and shops for smiths and carpenters (E, F) consisting of gable-roofed row-houses of one and a half stories; to the residence of the settlement's leader, the Sieur de Monts (A), a small hip-roofed dwelling of one and a half



St. Croix Colony, 1604

stories; to a pair of handsome residences (R), consisting of attached two-story buildings with central chimneys and hipped roofs. Whether prefabricated in France or built with local materials, it is known that these buildings were of frame construction. Some at least were dismantled and shipped in 1605 to the new site at Port Royal, Nova Scotia. While there is no reason to believe that all of these buildings were not constructed, Champlain's drawing almost certainly exaggerates their size and complexity. Archaeological excavations may yet resolve the issue.

In the summer of 1607 a party of Englishmen under the leadership of Sir John Popham established a settlement near the mouth of the Kennebec River. The site of the Popham Colony has for generations been disputed, but it may lie on the west side of the river at Atkins Bay in Phippsburg. Like the St. Croix settlement, this colony was defeated within a year of its foundation by poor morale and a severe winter. And as with St. Croix,

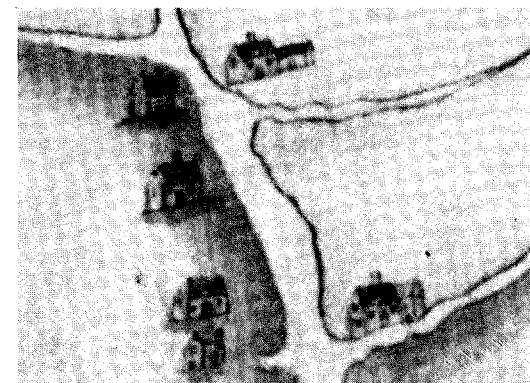
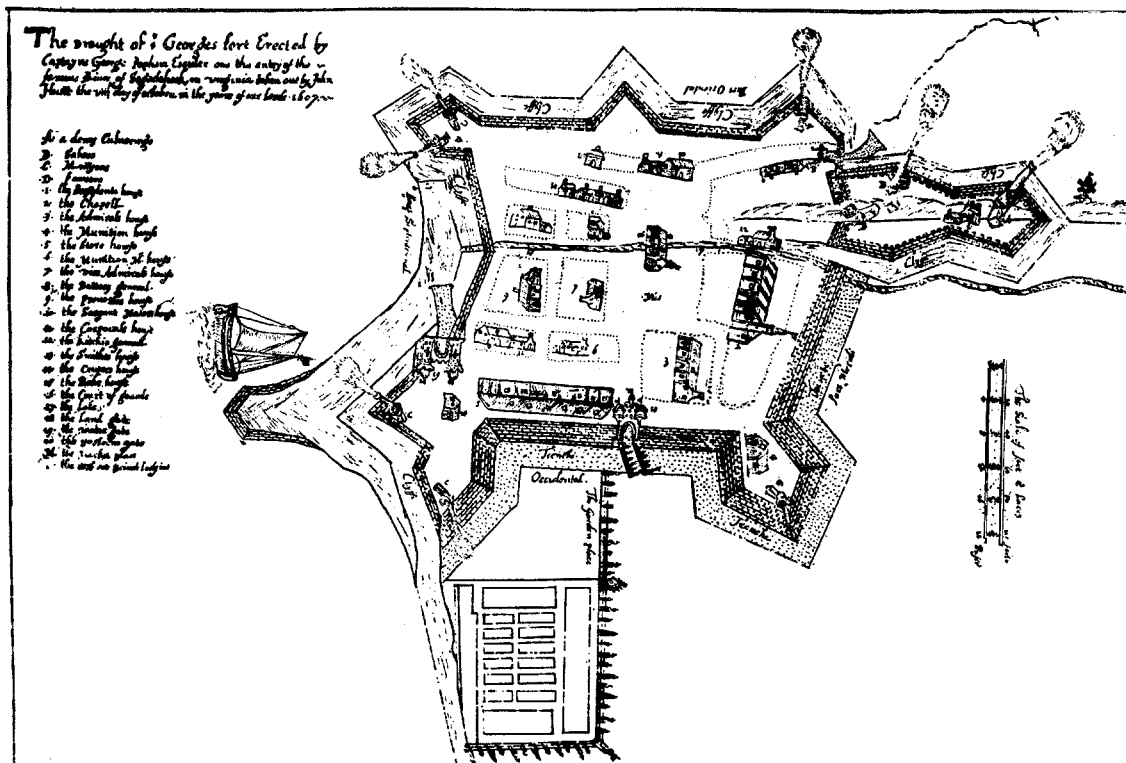
a detailed drawing survives showing an elaborate village within a massive fortification of irregular star form. This drawing by a John Hunt is dated October 8, 1607; and since it is known that the site of the settlement was not selected until August 18th, many details in the drawing must be critically viewed. Cannon of various calibers belch smoke from most of the bastions, and the land and water entrances are surmounted by elaborate turreted gates of medieval form. The buildings shown within Fort St. George (as it was named) include a chapel with a tower at one end, along with more than a dozen dwellings, storehouses, and workshops. There is more uniformity here than at St. Croix. All the buildings are one story tall and all have gabled roofs with central or end chimneys. Yet it is hardly credible that such a community could have been built in just over seven weeks.

While the St. Croix and Fort St. George drawings are both suspect in detail, they nevertheless give a good impression of the architecture of the first French and English settlements. And even if they were works of fiction, they would show, as in a blueprint, the intentions of the earliest colonists.

From the mid-17th century comes a map signed "I. S." of "The Piscataway River in New England". This depicts many individual houses dotting the coast and river banks of what are now Kittery and York. Practically all of the buildings shown are one-story frame dwellings with central chimneys and gable roofs. Occasionally a half-story facade dormer is present along with a low gable-roofed ell. No other source so graphically reflects how humble were most buildings in Maine even by about 1660.

By the 1690's circumstances had changed, partly because of continued development and partly because of the unsettled times which began in 1676 with the first of a long series of wars with the French and Indians. The Kittery Town Records for the end of the century contain sketches of buildings on maps by William Godsoe, "Surveyor for the Town of Kittery". These sketches, while crude, are the only contemporary representa-

tions of what were termed "garrison houses", along with houses not termed garrisons. Thomas Spinney's house on Great Cove is typical of the latter type and consists of a frame dwelling of one and a half stories, central chimney, and gable roof with central facade dormer. It appears that Godsoe's perspective has brought the gable-ends around to the facade, creating a false appearance of three facade dormers. Much larger at two or



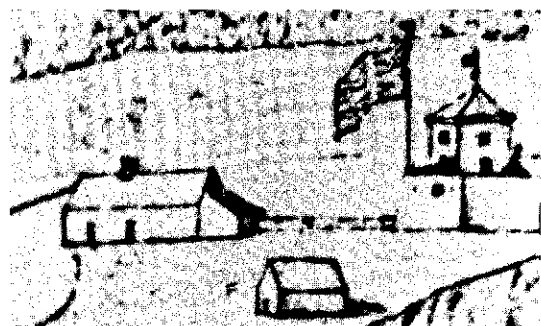
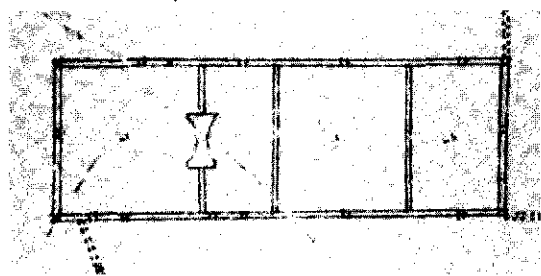
"Piscataway River in New England" detail, c. 1655-60

two and a half stories is "Mr. Wilson's Garrison" on Spruce Creek. This dwelling features a large central chimney, one (possibly three) gabled facade dormers, two large casement windows in the second story with diamond-shaped leaded glass panes, and what appears to be a palisade surrounding the building. A flagpole with a banner is attached to the left end of the building, probably as a warning mechanism. It should be noted that without the palisade and the flagpole, the Wilson Garrison is a thoroughly residential, non-military building.



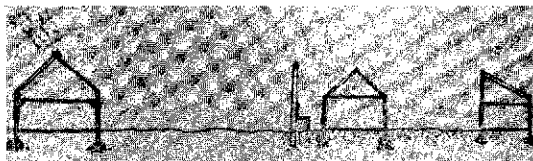
Spinney House, Wilson Garrison, Kittery, 16

In 1699 the great English military engineer, Col. Wolfgang W. Romer, drew precise plans of a number of existing forts on the Maine coast. One of these was Saco Fort, built in 1693 and commanded by Capt. John Turfrey, among others. Romer's plan and sketch of the installation shows Turfrey's house outside of the fort. This building was of frame construction, one story high, with a gabled roof. A small northern extension was covered with a shed type roof. In plan the house from south to north consisted of a major room and a smaller room divided by a partition and back-to-back fireplaces. A third room beyond was unheated, as was the shed at the northern end. There may have been a loft overhead for



Plan and Sketch, Turfrey's House, Saco Fort, 1699

additional sleeping quarters. This was frontier architecture of a basic nature. Yet it hardly differs from the smallest and earliest surviving 'capes' of the early to mid-18th century.

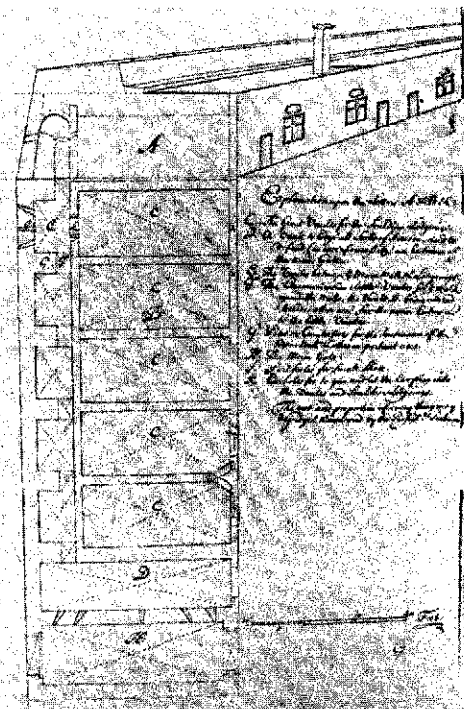


Casco Bay Fort, detail, 1705

Casco Bay Fort was built near the mouth of the Presumpscot River in Falmouth by Col. Romer in 1700 to replace Fort Loyal (located in present-day Portland and destroyed by the French and Indians in 1690). In 1705 Casco Bay Fort was greatly enlarged by Col. J. Redknap, another military engineer. Redknap's plan of the old and new forts survives and shows the internal buildings in plan and section. These include storehouses and barracks. They were frame buildings with posts set directly into the ground supported by buried rock footings. Both gable and shed type roofs were used.

Pemaquid was first established as a settlement about 1625 and became England's northeastern-most bulwark against French Acadia. As such, it was provided with a wooden fort in 1677 (destroyed by the French and Indians in 1689) and a stone fort in 1692 (destroyed by the same alliance in 1696). The loss of the second fort was a strategic blow to English Maine, and in 1699 Col Romer drew detailed plans of the lost fort and a much larger one planned to replace it. In 1705 Col. Redknap did the same. Although neither of the proposed replacements was built,

Redknap's plan and perspective drawing shows barracks ranged along one of the sides of the curtain-wall. These were to be covered with a flat roof rather than the more common shed roof. Heat was to be provided by at least one pair of back-to-back corner fireplaces. Paired casement windows and doors at regular intervals were to give light and access to the various vaulted compartments. While strictly military in character, this drawing depicts living quarters which were planned for the Maine coast shortly after the close of the 17th century.



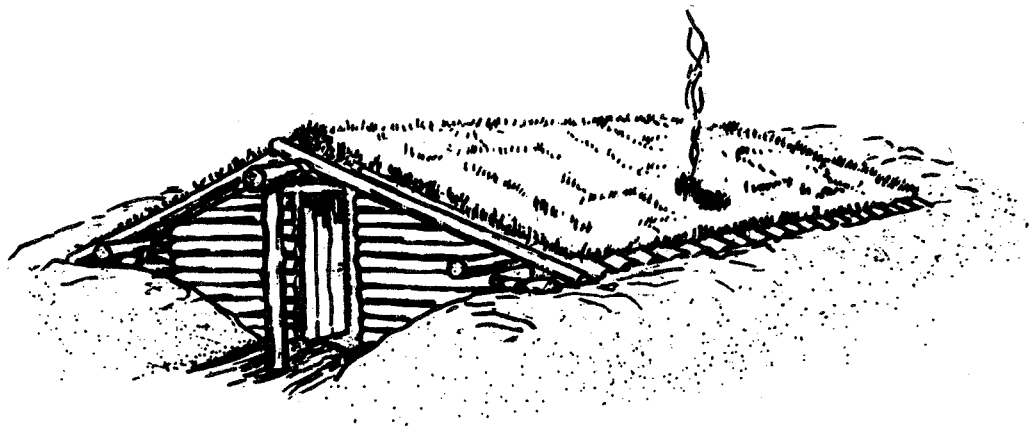
Pemaquid Barracks, 1705

Archaeological Evidence

The fourth valuable source of information on Maine's earliest colonial buildings is historical archaeology. This science, through careful excavation, closely analyzes the physical remains of individual buildings or whole settlements which have lain buried for three centuries or more. Areas of flagstone paving, cellar holes, stone footings, stone steps, post-holes, and certain types of artifacts, such as hinges, latches, and window glass, all contribute to the understanding of 17th-century architecture in a state where practically nothing of that period survives above ground.

Historical archaeology is a very young science in Maine, but it is now growing rapidly. This is important, since the state is richer than most in early colonial sites, given its low population density and the relatively small amount of heavy industrial development. In the past generation enough excavation has taken place on 17th-century sites to provide significant information about the lost buildings of the first settlement period. However, such field research has only begun.

In 1973 and 1974 excavations were carried out on the Shore of Spirit Pond in Phippsburg. The object of this work was two prominent depressions within small mounds which clearly seemed to be the work of man. These features turned out to be primitive shelters dug into the bank and roofed over with logs and turf. The larger of the two structures measured some 32 by 21 feet on the outside, enclosing an internal chamber of about 21 feet long by 7 feet wide, with a rock-lined entrance. Located near the middle of the chamber



Spirit Pond Sod House, Artist's Conception

was a fire-pit. Very few artifacts were encountered, but one of them was a bowl of an English white clay tobacco pipe which dates from the early 17th century. Recall Edmund Johnson: "They burrow themselves in the Earth for their first shelter under some Hill-side, casting the Earth aloft upon Timber ..."

In 1950 excavations were conducted by the National Park Service on St. Croix Island. In this, an attempt was made to locate the footings of one or more of the buildings of 1604 depicted by de Champlain. Only a small area was uncovered, suggesting substantial disturbance of the site by cultivation in the ensuing centuries. However, two parallel stretches of field-stone footings almost sixty feet long may represent the foundation of a storehouse (B, in de Champlain's drawing). Otherwise little was found in the way of architectural features. Clearly, more work needs to be done on St. Croix Island.

Sabino Head in Phippsburg, because of its close resemblance to the shoreline depicted on John Hunt's plan, has been tentatively identified as the site of Fort St. George and the Popham Colony of 1607. In 1962 and 1964 excavations were conducted at this location with disappointing results. Although several artifacts were found which could date from the early 1600's, no architectural features of the fort or its buildings were encountered. Perhaps the site has been mostly washed into Atkins Bay. Or perhaps the site of the excavations is not the site of the colony. More field survey and excavation in that part of Phippsburg will perhaps resolve the issue of the Popham Colony's location once and for all.

There is no such problem with the important plantation at Pemaquid. The location of this early settlement was never forgotten, and much research and field work on this site was undertaken in the last decades of the 19th century. In 1923

further excavations were conducted, but the principal archaeological effort has taken place since 1965 and continues at this time. Besides work on the site of Pemaquid's forts of 1677, 1692, and 1729, excavations have uncovered the remains of some fourteen village structures. These remains consist of clay-mortared field-stone foundations of rectangular or nearly square buildings, in most cases provided with cellars. In date these structures range from about 1630 to the early 18th century.

One of the earliest buildings uncovered at Pemaquid consists of the stone foundation of a structure roughly 40 by 24 feet with a cellar entrance and steps facing the harbor, as well as flagstone flooring at another entrance on the opposite end of the cellar.

A cache of 108 cannon balls of various calibers was found in one corner of the building, and artifacts definitely dated it to before 1676. The foundation facing the harbor was twice the thickness of the other three sides, suggesting fear of bombardment by a water-borne enemy.

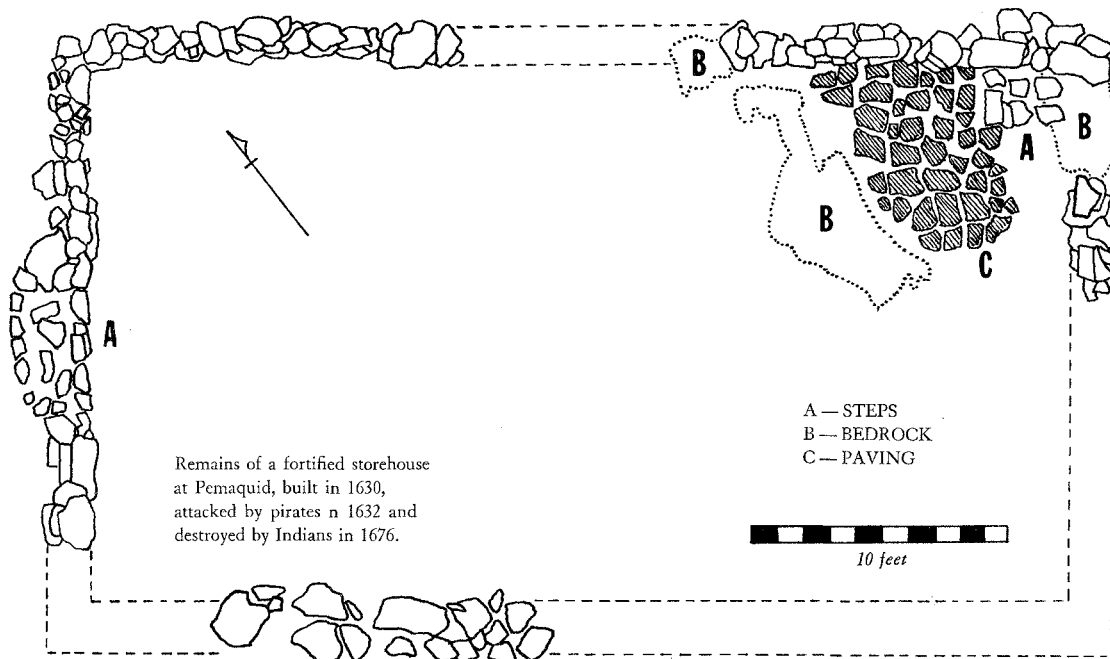
What we have here is almost certainly the remains of "Fort Pemaquid", actually a fortified trading post built about 1630 as a deterrent to piracy (the French and Indians at this early date were not yet a threat). The building failed in this purpose, since it is known to have been rifled by the English pirate, Dixy Bull, in 1632.

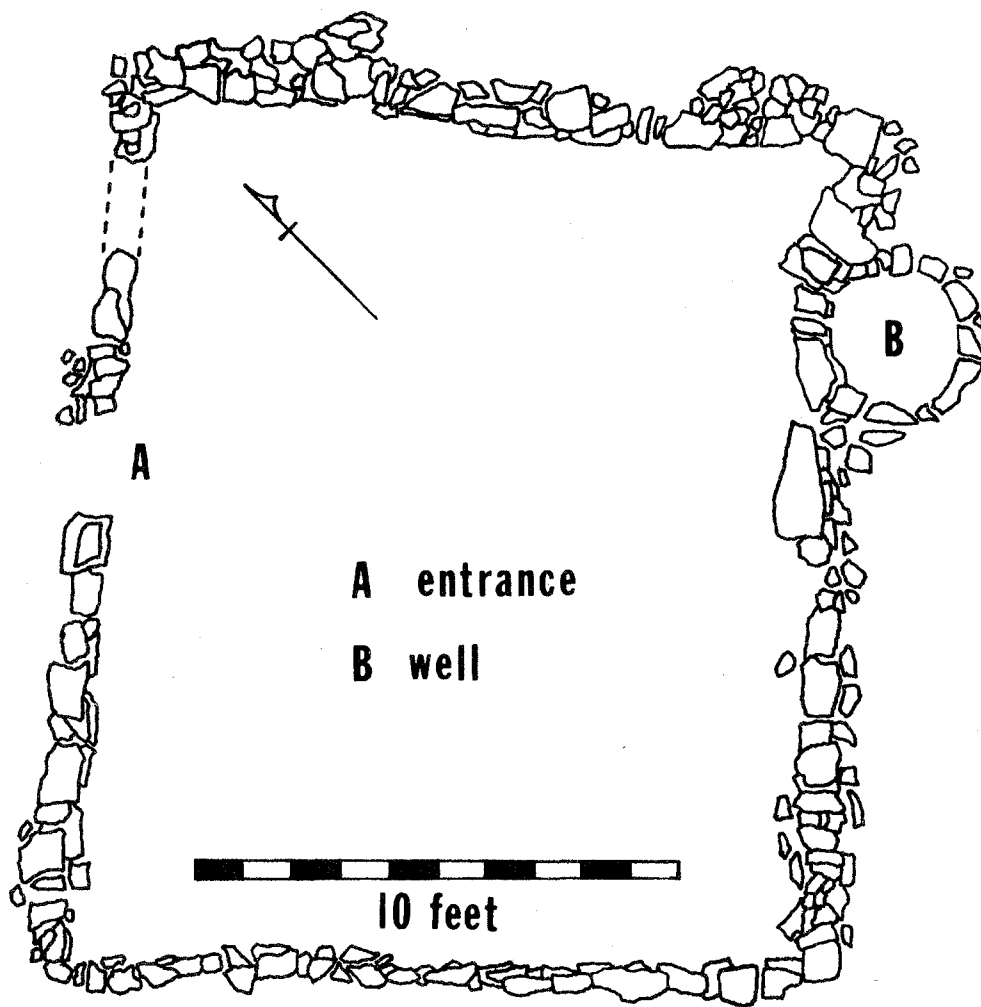
Historical records indicate that this building, which would have been of frame construction on stone footings, survived this raid and was demolished in 1676 by Pemaquid residents shortly

before Indians descended on the abandoned settlement in the first of the Indian Wars.

Another of the village structures excavated at Pemaquid is more residential in character and dates from the mid-17th-century. This dwelling measures 16 by 18 feet over its stone foundation. At about the center of the north-west side was an entrance to the cellar. Near the east corner and built into the wall was a shallow well about 3 feet in internal diameter which contained a wooden barrell as a lining. Recall Winthrop's mention in 1648 of a Boston house with a "well in the farther end of the cellar".

Many of the stone foundations at Pemaquid are very small in dimensions. One, for example, measures just 11 by 7 feet. This is not to say, however, that a frame building of that size occupied the site. Clearly many if not most 17th-century buildings were equipped with partial cellars, the balance of a building covering a crawl-space. Very careful excavation and a trained eye must search for post-holes and stains in the ground marking the positions of sleepers and sills. And rain water falling from a roof often creates a drip-line outside a building's walls, indicating to the archaeologist the extent of the roof overhang of a long-vanished structure.





14 Dwelling, Pemaquid, c. 1650

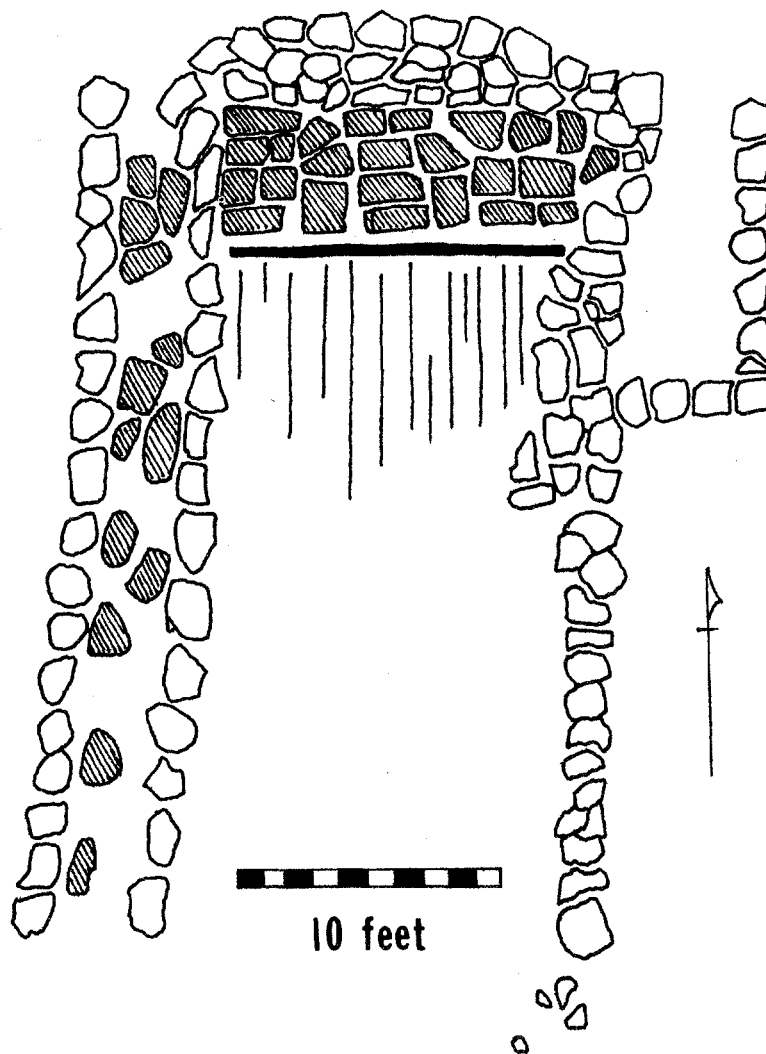
Since 1970 archaeological excavations have been conducted on the site of the Clarke and Lake Company on Arrowsic Island. This remarkable industrial complex which included a fort, a trading post, mills, foundry, and shipyard, was established by two prominent Boston merchants in 1654. In 1676, as with other English settlements, it was attacked and destroyed by the Indians. The investigation of this site has concentrated on one of at least half a dozen structures.

Excavation of this building, while not finished, has revealed more about the structure than everything written about the company's physical plant and operations. In all likelihood, it was the trading post or headquarters. What has been uncovered is the stone footings of a building rectangular in plan, some 40 feet long and 15 feet wide. The northern end of the structure is occupied by a stone chimney base and the stone-paved hearth of an enormous fireplace which was 12 feet wide and which faced south. Traces of sills and planks indicate that the frame building had a wooden ground floor. A lock and key found near the east end of the hearth suggest the position of an entrance. Fragments of window glass were not concentrated sufficiently to indicate fenestration, although there was a major grouping near the center of the east wall. Attached to the north-east corner is a projection about 5 feet wide which runs northward. This may represent an enclosed entrance or an attached shed. Its northern terminus has yet to be uncovered.

A curious feature lies to the west of the building. This consists of what may have been a narrow paved alley, only 2 to 3 feet wide, between the

west wall of the building and another wall farther to the west. Future excavation should determine the exact nature of this feature.

The tools of archaeology have only begun to be used at the Clarke and Lake Company Site, and even at Pemaquid much remains to be done. Whole villages, such as Sheepscot Farms, await excavation. In the coming decades historical archaeology should contribute invaluable data to the study of Maine's 17th-century architecture.



Residence, Arrowsic, 1654

Final Notes

Beware the Mainer who claims a home of the 17th century. It is not so. To study the architecture of the state's first European settlements one must examine early 18th-century buildings which reflect earlier construction methods. Contemporary written accounts and descriptions are invaluable. And archaeology is providing a fourth primary source of information. Archival and field research is producing new data every year. As this research proceeds, our view of Maine's earliest buildings is becoming clearer and clearer. This is important if we are to understand the entire history and evolution of Maine's architecture, an evolution now covering nearly four centuries.

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