

My debt to Maine 1

I owe a personal debt to Maine because of my association with certain staunch friends in Aroostook County, an association that helped and benefitted me ^{throughout my life} in more ways than one.

It is over forty years ago that I first went to Island Falls and stayed with the Sewall family. I repeated the visit ^{three or four times} and made a couple of hunting trips in the fall, with Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow; and one winter I spent three or four weeks on snowshoes with them, visiting a couple of lumber camps. I was not a boy of any natural prowess, and for that very reason the vigorous outdoor life was just what I needed. It was a matter of pride with me to keep up with my stalwart associates, and to learn to shift for myself, and to treat with indifference ^{whatever} ~~any~~ of the hardship or fatigue came our way. In their company I would have been ashamed to complain! And I thoroughly enjoyed it. ^{I was rather tired by some all-day tramps} ~~Some of the~~ walks, especially in the deep snow when my webbed racquets gave me "snowshoe feet" or when we waded to up the Munsungin in shallow water dragging a dug out, until my ankles became raw from slipping on the smooth under-water stones; and I still remember with qualified joy the ascent, and especially its descent, of Katahdin in moccasins, worn because, to the deep disapproval of my companions, I had lost one of my heavy shoes in crossing a river at a riffle. But I also remember such delicious nights, ^{under a lean-to} ~~in the cold fall~~

My debt to Maine

1

I owe a personal debt to Maine because of my association with certain staunch friends in Aroostook County; an association that helped and benefitted me (throughout my life)

^ in more ways than one.

It is over forty years ago that I first went to Island Falls and stayed with the Sewall family. I repeated the visit three or four times.

I made a couple of hunting trips in the fall, with Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow; and one winter I spent three or four weeks on snowshoes with them, visiting a couple of lumber camps. I was not a boy of any natural prowess, and for that very reason the vigorous outdoor life was just what I needed. It was a matter of pride with me to keep up with my stalwart associates, and to learn to shift for myself, whatever

and to treat with indifference ^ ~~any of the~~ hardship or fatigue came our way. In their company I would have been ashamed to complain! And I thoroly

I was rather tired by some all-day tramps — enjoyed it. ^ ~~all~~ Some of the ^ ~~walks~~, especially in the deep snow when my webbed racquets gave me "snowshoe feet", or when we waded to up the ~~W~~ Munsungin in shallow water dragging a dug out, until my ankles became raw from slipping on the smooth under-water stones; and I still remember with qualified joy the ascent, and especially its descent, of Katahdin in moccasins, worn because, to the deep disapproval of my companions, I had lost one of my heavy shoes

crossing

in ^ ~~wa~~ a river at a riffle. But I also

under a lean-to remember such delicious nights, ^ ~~in the cold fall~~

Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society
MMN # 5997

Date: 1918

Description: Theodore Roosevelt describes his visits to Island Falls in Aroostook County when he was a boy and the Sewall family with whom he stayed.

by stream or lake in ^{all} the clear fall weather, 2
 or ^{in winter} on balsam boughs in front of a blazing stump
 when we had beaten down and shoveled away the
 deep snow, and kept our ~~foot gear~~ ^{foot gear} away from
 the fire so that it should not thaw and freeze.
 And the meals of venison, trout or partridge;
 and one meal ~~which we~~ consisting of a muskrat
 and a fish duck which, being exceedingly hungry,
 we ^{heartily} ~~greatly~~ appreciated.

I was ~~ac~~ But the bodily benefit was not the
 largest part of the good done me. I was accepted
 as part of the household; and the family and friends
 represented ^{in their lives} the kind of Americanism ~~that~~ ^{— self-respecting, duty-}
 performing, life-enjoying — which is the most valuable possession
 that any generation can hand on to the next. It was
 as native to our soil as the "William Henry's Letters
 to his Grandmother" — I hope there are still readers
 of that delightful volume of my youth, even although
 it was published fifty years ago.

<sup>It was Mrs. Sewall, the mother, was a dear old lady; and Miss Sewall, the sister,
 was a most capable manager of the house. Bill Sewall at that time had two brothers. Sam
 was a deacon. Dave was not a deacon. It was from
 Dave that I heard an expression which ^{ever after} remained in
 my mind. He was speaking of a shifty
 local personage of shifty character who was
 very adroit in using fair sounding words which
 completely nullified the meaning of the other fair sounding
 words which preceded them. "His words weasel the meaning
 out of the words in front of them" said Dave, "just like
 a weasel when he sucks the meat out of an egg
 and leaves nothing but the shell"; and I always</sup>

by stream or lake in ~~fall~~ the clear fall weather, 2
 in winter
 or ^ on balsam boughs in front of a blazing stump
 when we had beaten down and shoveled away the
 foot gear away
 deep snow, and kept our ^ ~~outer~~ ^{outer} from
 the fire so that it should not thaw and freeze.
 And the meals of venison, trout or partridge;
 and one meal ~~which we~~ consisting of a muskrat
 and a fish duck which, being exceedingly hungry,
 heartily appreciated.
 we ^ greatly enjoyed.

I was ~~ac~~ But the bodily comfort was not the
 largest part of the good done me. I was accepted
 as part of the household; and the family and friends
 in their lives — self-respecting, duty-
 represented ^ the kind of Americanism ^ ~~that~~
 performing, life-enjoying — which is the most valuable possession
 that any generation can hand on to the next. It was
 as native to our soil as the "William Henry's Letters
 to his Grandmother" — I hope there are still readers
 of that delightful volume of my youth, even although
 it was published fifty years ago.

¶ Mrs. Sewall, the mother, was a dear old lady; and Miss Sewall, the sister,
 was a most
 capable manager
 of the house. } Bill Sewall at that time had two brothers. Sam
 was a deacon. Dave was not a deacon. It was from
 ever after

Dave that I heard an expression which ^ remained in
 my mind. ~~ever after~~ He was speaking of a shifty
 local personage of shifty character who was
 very adroit in using fair sounding words which
 completely nullified the meaning for the other fair sounding
 words which preceded them. "His words weasel the meaning
 out of the words in front of them" said Dave, "just like
 a weasel when he sucks the meat out of an egg
 and leaves nothing but the shell"; and I always

remembered "weasel words" as applicable to certain 3
forms of oratory, especially political oratory, which I
do not admire. ^{One while driving in a wagon with Dave up an exceedingly wet and Rocky rocky}
^{backwoods road with the water pouring down the middle, I asked him how in Aroostook County}
^{they were able to tell the roads from the rivers. "No beaver dams in the}
^{roads" instantly responded Dave. "At one of the logging camps I became}
good friends with a quiet, resolute-looking man
named Brown, one of the choppers; and afterwards
I stopped at his ~~wife~~ house, and was as much struck
with his good and pretty wife as I had been with
him. He had served in the Civil War and had been
wounded; his creed was that peace was a great-blessing,
but that even so great a blessing could be purchased
at too dear a price. I did not see him again for
until thirty seven years later, when he came to a
meeting at which I spoke, in Portland; he had shaved
off his beard, and was an old man, and I did not
at first ^{recognize} him; but after the first sentence
I knew him, and very glad indeed I was to see
him once more.

In the 80s I started a ^{cattle} ranch on the Little
Missouri, in the then territory of Dakota, and I got
Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow to ~~come out~~ ^{join me}. By that
time they had both married, and they brought out
Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow. There was already a little
girl in the Sewall family, and two babies, a small
Sewall boy and a small Dow boy, were born on the
ranch. Thanks to Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow we
were most comfortable. The ranch house and all the outbuildings
at the home ranch — the Elkhorn — were made of cotton wood
logs, and were put up by Bill and Wilmot who were
mighty men with the axe. I got them to put on a

remembered "weasel words", as applicable to certain 3
forms of oratory, especially political oratory, which I
do not admire.

Once while driving in a wagon with Dave up an exceedingly wet and ~~Rocky~~ rocky
backwoods road with the water pouring down the middle, I asked him how in Aroostook County
they were able to tell the roads from the rivers. "No beaver dams in the

^{one of the logging camps I became}
roads" instantly responded Dave. ¶ At one of the logging camps I became
good friends with a quiet, resolute-looking man
named Brown, one of the choppers; and afterwards
I stopped at his ~~wife~~ house, and was as much struck
with his good and pretty wife as I had been with
him. He had served in the Civil War and had been
wounded; his creed was that peace was a great - blessing,
but that even so great a blessing could be purchased
at too dear a price. I did not see him again for
until thirty seven years later, when he came to a
meeting at which I spoke in Portland; he had shaved
off his beard, and was an old man, and I did not
recognize

at first ^ know him; but after the first sentence
I knew him, and very glad indeed I was to see
him once more.

^{cattle}
In the 80s I started a ^ ranch on the Little
Missouri, in the then territory of Dakota, and I got
^{join me}. By that

Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow to ^ ~~come out~~
time they had both married, and they brought out
Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow. There was already a little
girl in the Sewall family, and two babies, a small
Sewall boy and a small Dow boy, were born on the

The
ranch. ^ Thanks to Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow we
were most comfortable. The ranch house and all the outbuildings
at the home ranch — the Elkhorn — were made of cotton wood
logs, and were put up by Bill and Wilmot who were
mighty men with the axe. I got them to put on a

veranda; and in one room, where I kept my books 4

and did my writing, ^{we} ~~he~~ built a big fireplace; and
a couple got ~~(one would only one would have made me feel too selfish)~~
I imported ^ a of rocking chairs ^ The veranda, the open fireplace,
the books

^ and the rocking chairs represented my special luxuries;
I think Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow enjoyed them almost as
much as I did. We had stoves to keep us warm in the
and bearskins and buffalo robes.

bitter winter weather; ^ Bill and Wilmot and I, and usually
one or two cowhands, worked hard. But it was enjoyable
work, and the hunting, on which we relied for all our
meat, was of course sheer fun. When the winter weather
usually made a

^{make}
set in we ^ would ^ ~~kill~~ regular hunt to get the
hung

winter meat, and we ^ would hang our game in the cotton-
wood trees which stretched before the house; I remember
once when we had a bull elk and several deer
hanging up, and another time when we had a couple of
prong antelope and a yearling mountain sheep. the
house of hewn

^ hewn logs made logs was clean and comfortable, and
we were all of us young and strong and happy.

Wilmot was from every standpoint one of the
best men I ever knew. He has been dead for many years.

^{present}
His widow is now Mrs. Pride; and her ^ husband is also
When I
one of my valued friends. ^ and one of was President the
Sewalls and Prides came down to Washington to visit

We
us. ^ and talked over everything, public and private, past
and

and present; the education ^ of future careers of our
children; the proper attitude of the United States in
external and internal matters. [crossed out] We all of us
at

looked ^ the chief really important matters of
from

public policy and private conduct ^ with substantially
the same viewpoint.

Never were there more welcome guests at the White House.
Sagamore Hill, March 20th 1918 Theodore Roosevelt

veranda; and in one room, where I kept my books 4
and did my writing, ~~he~~ built a big fireplace; and
I imported ^{a couple} ~~antelope~~ rocking chairs ^{the veranda, the open fireplace,}
the books
^ and the rocking chairs represented my special luxuries;
I think Mrs. Sewall and Mrs. Dow enjoyed them almost as
much as I did. We had stoves to keep us warm in the
bitter winter weather. Bill and Wilmot and I, and usually
one or two cowhands, worked hard. But it was enjoyable
work, and the hunting, on which we relied for all our
meat, was of course sheer fun. When the winter weather
set in we ^{would make} ~~would kill~~ regular hunt to get the
winter meat, and we ^{would hang} ~~would~~ our game in the cotton-
wood trees which stretched before the house; I remember
once when we had a bull elk and several deer
hanging up, and another time when we had a couple of
prong antelope and a yearling mountain sheep. The
house of hewn logs was clean and comfortable, and
we were all of us young and strong and happy.
Wilmot was from every standpoint one of the
best men I ever knew. He has been dead for many years.
His widow is now Mrs. Pride; and her ^{husband} ~~husband~~ is also
one of my valued friends. ~~When I was President the~~
Sewalls and Prides came down to Washington to visit
us. ^{We talked over everything, public and private, past-}
and present; the education and future careers of our
children; the proper attitude of the United States in
external and internal matters. ~~for~~ We all of us
looked at the ^{chief} really important matters of
public policy and private conduct - ~~from~~ substantially
the same viewpoint.
Never were there more welcome guests at the White House.
Sagamore Hill, March 20th 1918 Theodore Roosevelt