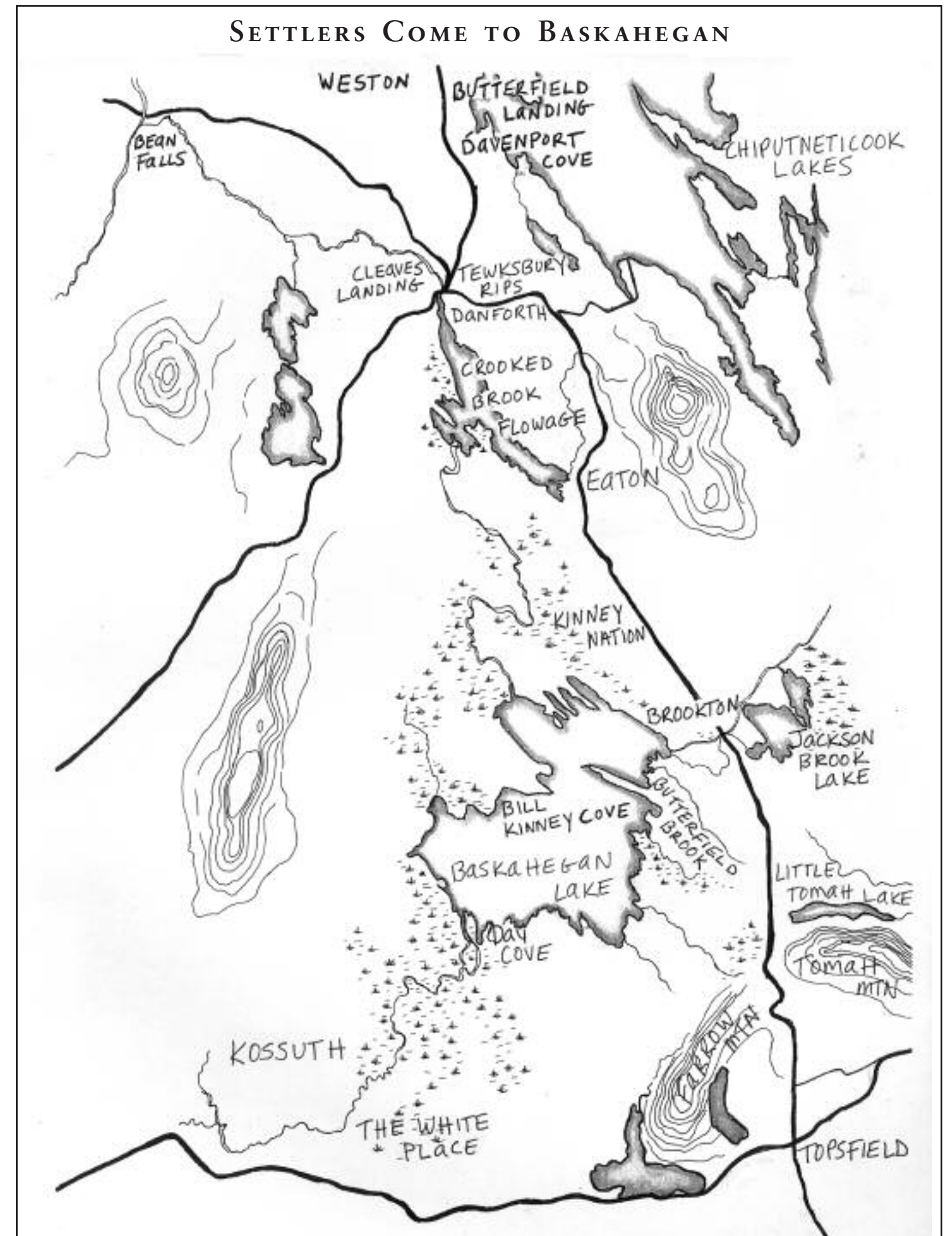


SETTLERS COME TO BASKAHEGAN



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Sing hey! for the route to
Churchill Lake,
But oh, for the chap who twists
the brake.
His buckskin gloves will save the
wear
On his good stout palms, you
know, but where
Will he find relief when his
throat is lame
With the wrench of a yard long
Indian name?
'Tis something, friend, of a lin-
gual trick
To say "Seboois" and
"Wassataquoik"
"Lunksoos," is tame and
"Nesourdnehunk,"
But what do you say to a verbal
chunk
To chew at once of the size of
this:
"Pok-um-kes-wango-mok-kessis?"

—Excerpted from "Board for
the Allagash" by Holman F.
Day, published in *In and
Around our Great Northern
Wilderness*, by Elinor Stevens
Walker, (1968, Lisbon Falls,
ME)

The Baskahegan region was an arduous four to ten days upstream from the city of Bangor. Because of its remoteness, it wasn't settled or lumbered heavily until the first half of the nineteenth century. By that time, there had been European families living permanently in Maine for two hundred years.

Like the Indian hunters before them, the original white settlers of Baskahegan used the Mattawamkeag/Baskahegan canoe route to access the dense, roadless wilderness. They usually arrived a single family at a time, to carve homesteads from forest. As they settled and established farms and lumbering operations, a whole new layer of place names was affixed to the landscape.

Places settled by Europeans have gone through many cycles of names. The first names given by explorers of the New World were often reminders of the country they had left behind, thus, New England. When the Revolutionary War won the independence of the Colonies from England, settlers renamed many places in patriotic spirit of the new nation. *Washington County* is but one example (there are, in fact 31 states with Washington Counties).

Many other places were named for locally prominent people and events. For example, Chief Joseph Tomah played an important role in helping American Colonists repel an English attack on Machias in 1777. It is in his honor that Tomah Mountain, Tomah Lake and Tomah Stream are named.

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The region's first permanent settlers were Thomas Gilpatrick, John Davenport, and Otis Smith. They came upriver in 1820, built rough dwellings, cleared land for fields, and named their settlement *Baskahegan*. Some years later, in 1835 the name was changed to *Weston*, the name of the first surveyor.

One of the first Baskahegan townships to be surveyed and sold at auction to farmers and timber investors was located along the water body now known as *Crooked Brook Flowage*. Early sources refer to this lake as *Long Pond*.

Another early land negotiation involved the site of present-day Danforth – named for Thomas Danforth who served as deputy governor of Massachusetts from 1679-1686, and was also appointed president of the Province of Maine when it was still a part of Massachusetts. In 1799, Danforth's descendants petitioned the Massachusetts legislature over a land claims dispute, and were granted a half-township on the Baskahegan as part of the settlement. Though he never set foot

From William Butterfield's
1827 memoir:
"June, 1827 . . . I shouldered
my pack and started to seek a
Better Country and by way of
Calais, Baring and Baileyville
then entered in to the wilderness
and steared for Baskahegan.
Thomas Scribner came through
with me he having a Brother
then at Baskahegan we was
about four days getting through
the wilderness Thomas
Gilpatrick Simon Scribner and
John Davenport had made
some small clearings at
Baskahegan and lived there."



The grave site of
William Butterfield,
one of the region's
early settlers, in
Weston, Maine.