

History of Tremont, Maine

From
A Gazetteer of the State of Maine

By Geo. J. Varney Published by B. B. Russell, 57 Cornhill, Boston
1886

Tremont, in Hancock County, embraces the south-western portion of Mount Desert Island. Tinker's, Moose, Hardwood, Gott's and Longley's Islands are also within its limits. The feature from which the town takes its name is the three contiguous peaks of Beech Mountain, and east and west peaks of the Western Mountains. Dog Mountain has been carefully prospected with spade and pick, for money hidden by Captain Kidd. The peak known as the "Lover's Scalp" has, on its eastern side, an almost perpendicular descent of 900 feet to the waters of Some's Sound. The other mountains of Tremont are Dog, Flying, Bald, Burnt and Mount Gilboa. Dog Mountain is 670 feet in height; Flying Mountain, 300; Bald Mountain, 250; Burnt Mountain, 175; and Mount Gilboa, 160. South West and Bass are the chief harbors, and the villages on these are the principal centers of business in the town. On Heat's Stream is a saw-mill, and upon the outlet of Seal Cove Pond is a grist-mill. Both streams empty into Seal Cove, which is a safe and convenient harbor. The production of the saw-mill is about 250,000 M. of lumber, and several hundred thousand staves annually. There is also a shingle-mill on Bass Harbor Stream. Some ship-building is done at both Bass and South West harbors. At the latter place is a factory for canning fish, and at West Tremont is a fish-curing establishment; also the large brick-yard of the Tremont Brick Co., and a boat-builder's shop. The "staff of life" to the people of the town is found chiefly in the sea.

Fernald's Point on Some's Sound near the northern border of the town is thought by many to be the site of the ancient "St. Sauveur," the settlement of the colony sent out by Madame de Guercheville in 1613. "About half across the isthmus and a little up the hill (Flying Mountain), so as to command the water on either side without losing its shelter, are two holes in the ground which are shown as the ruins of the Frenchmen's cellars. They are a few rods apart, running north and south, 10 to 12 feet long at present, from 2 to 3 feet deep, and of varying width. They seem to have been gradually filled in from the hill above, and overgrown with grass. On the very day of our visit (1866) a spruce, some eight inches in diameter had been cut down in one of them. The old man who was our guide said the cellars were there in the time of his grandfather, who was the first settler, and he always said that they were the remains of the French colony." Stories of the discovery of gold buried by the French are rife, like those of pirates' treasures further south. A bank of shells near North East Harbor, on the opposite side of the Sound, probably marks the neighborhood of an Indian village; and Indian relics of various sorts are not uncommon. Tremont was set off from Mount Desert and incorporated in 1848, under the name of Mansel, from Mount Mansel, the name given to the island by Winthrop's company of emigrants to Massachusetts Bay in 1630; it having been the first land discovered by them. See Eden.

Tremont has two churches, a Congregationalist and a Methodist. Thirteen public schoolhouses, and school property to the value of \$13,500, furnish the means of youthful education. The valuation of estates in 1870 was \$262,353. In 1880 it was \$361,419. The population in 1870 was 1,822. In the census of 1880 it was 2,011.