
The Search for New Businesses

As the wider American economy grew through industry, so did the economy of Maine. Businesses found ways to make new products in factories. This was especially true in two of Maine's oldest trades, lumbering and farming.

A New Use for Wood

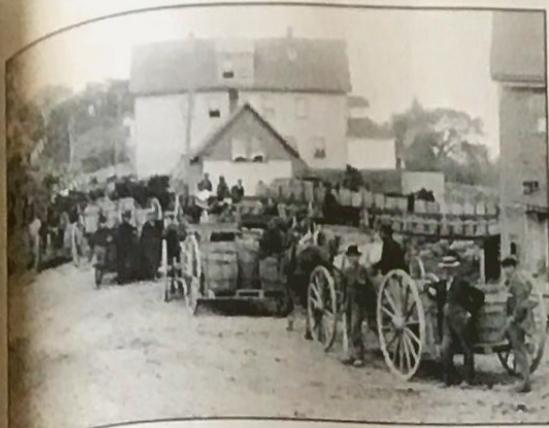
After the Civil War, Maine's lumber industry continued to produce important items for the American people. These items included lumber for buildings, railroad ties, ships, barrels, and shingles. Paper was a new item from the Maine woods after the Civil War. Before this time, paper had been made from rags or straw. Scientists discovered how to make *pulp* from wood. They treated wood with chemicals to make it soft. Then they matted the wood fibers into sheets and dried them.

Americans loved reading books and newspapers, so there was a huge market for pulp and paper from Maine. The first wood pulp mill was started in Topsham in 1868.

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These wagons are carrying barrels of potatoes waiting to be sold to a starch factory in Aroostook County.

manufacturers realized corn could be canned in factories and shipped all over the country. Cooks in Maine also made a specialty called creamed corn that soon became a favorite of American families.

Potatoes were even more important to Maine's economy than corn. Manufacturers found a way to extract the *starch* from potatoes. Boxes of starch were packaged in Maine's factories and used in homes and laundries throughout the United States. Starch made the collars on men's shirts and the *petticoats* under women's dresses very stiff. This was the fashion of the day, and Maine's potato crop helped make it possible.

Soon, more were built in Brewer, Cumberland Mills, and Yarmouth. There were 35 paper mills in Maine by 1900. The state led the nation in producing newsprint for newspapers.

As pulp and paper became major products, the small lumber companies and mills of early Maine disappeared. Big corporations took control of the forests. Large businesses manage most of Maine's woods today. Some of the big businesses are Katahdin Paper Company, Domtar Industries Inc., Sappi Fine Paper North America, and Wausau Paper.

Farm Products for Industry

As more people moved into cities throughout the nation, the need for canned foods and other useful items, like ready-made clothes, grew. Americans could now buy all the food and clothes they needed from stores.

Corn had been one of the most important crops in Maine for over two centuries. Most of the crop had been sold as feed for livestock. But now

*Do you like to eat corn?
Search the Internet to
find other uses for corn
besides food.*

An Ice-Cold Business

Enterprising businessmen in Maine saw how the American nation was changing after the Civil War. Mainers could see that technology was changing the way people lived. People living in cities had to keep their food in iceboxes. These were small boxes with shelves for food and a place to store ice. The ice preserved the food by keeping it cool.

This change in living led entrepreneurs to establish the ice industry in Maine. Companies sent teams of men and horses out onto Maine's frozen lakes and rivers to cut blocks of ice. The ice was then packed into sailing ships and taken to ports around the world. This important new business lasted until the early 20th century, when refrigerators were invented.

Men cut huge ice blocks from the frozen Kennebec River. The demise of the ice industry is a good example of how technology affects industries.

