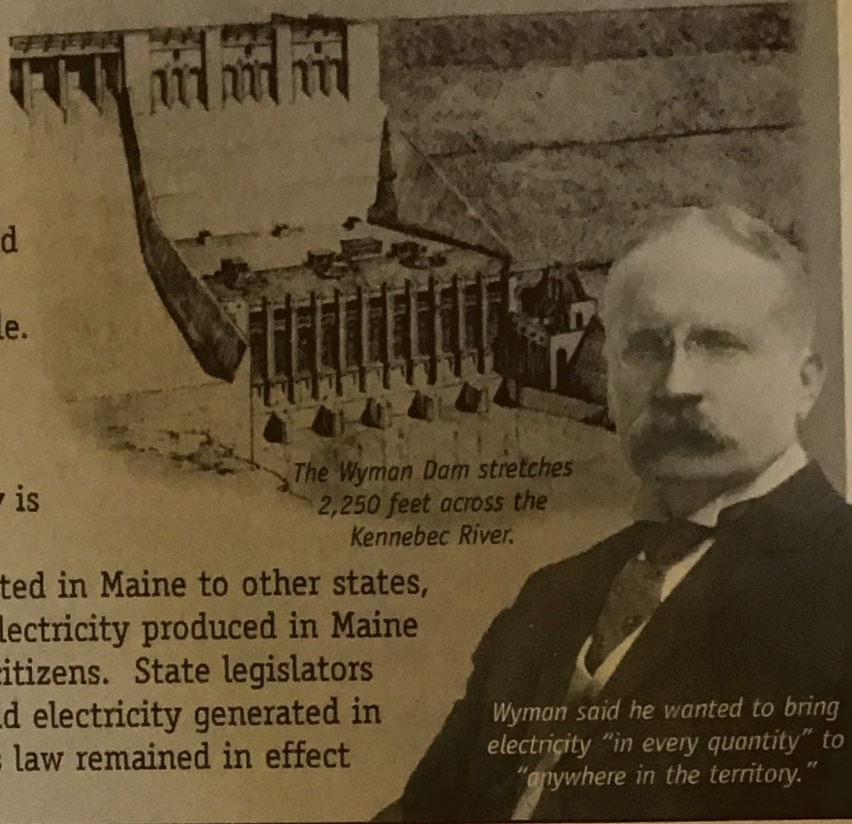


The Central Maine Power Company

An entrepreneur from Oakland recognized the nation's changing economy and decided to find a way to make money and help his home state at the same time. His name was Walter Wyman. He knew electricity would be the most important energy source in the 20th century and was convinced that Maine could prosper as an industrial state if electricity was readily available. He bought small electric companies and set up new hydroelectric plants throughout the state. He then organized all of his holdings into the Central Maine Power Company. **Hydroelectricity** is electricity produced by water.

Wyman wanted to sell the electricity generated in Maine to other states, but many people disliked the idea. They said electricity produced in Maine should stay in Maine for the benefit of all the citizens. State legislators passed a statute called the Fernald Law that said electricity generated in Maine could not be sold outside the state. This law remained in effect until 1955.



The Wyman Dam stretches 2,250 feet across the Kennebec River.

Wyman said he wanted to bring electricity "in every quantity" to "anywhere in the territory."

New People Come to Maine

Maine was changing in other ways at the dawn of the 20th century. Before 1900, most Mainers could trace their ancestry back to the original English settlers who had come here in colonial times. But as Maine became more industrial, people came to the state from all over the world. They hoped to create a better life for themselves and their families. They also wanted to enjoy the many freedoms guaranteed to citizens of the United States.

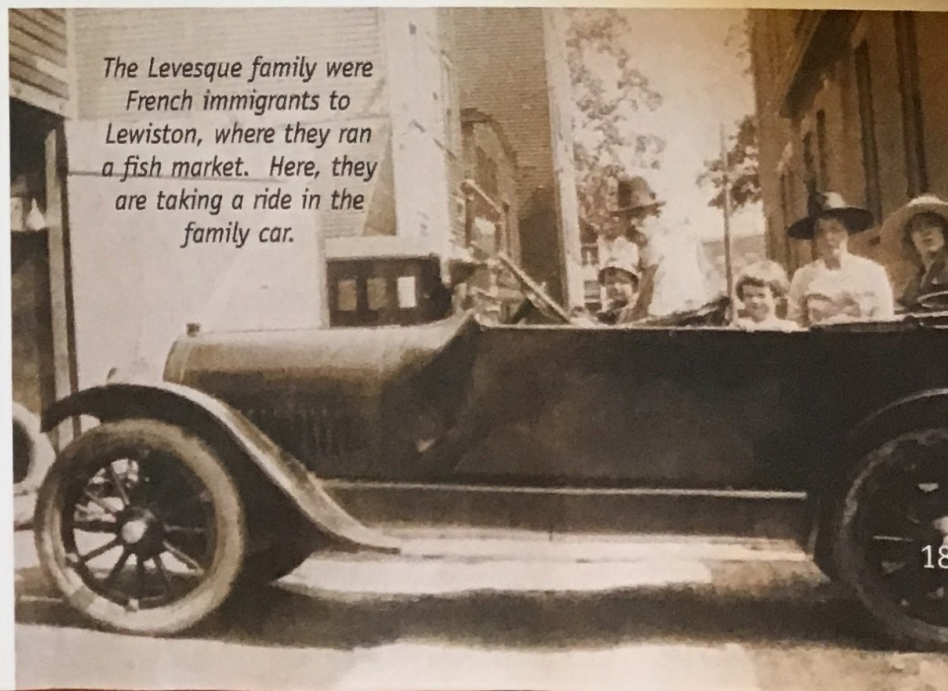
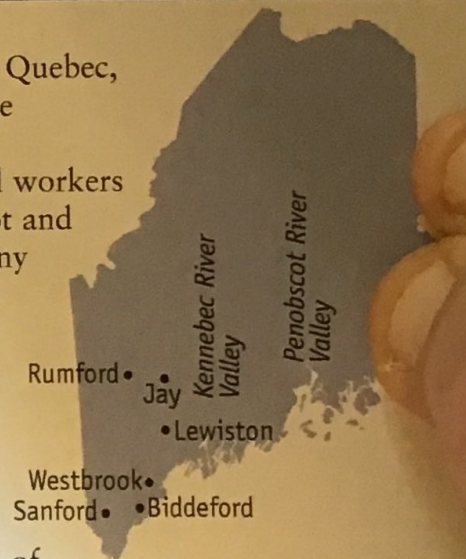
Before the Civil War, people from Germany, Ireland, and Sweden immigrated here. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, people from many more places came to live and work in Maine.

The French

Some Acadians who were exiled from Nova Scotia in the 1750s settled in Maine about 30 years later. They had moved first to New Brunswick before settling along the St. John River in Maine. However, most French-speaking people who came to the

state after the Civil War were from Quebec, Canada. They called themselves the Quebecois.

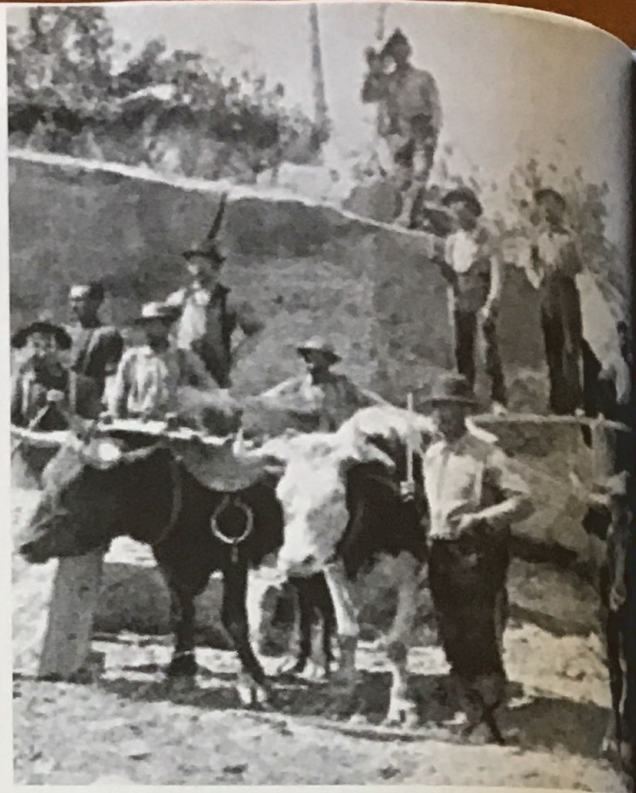
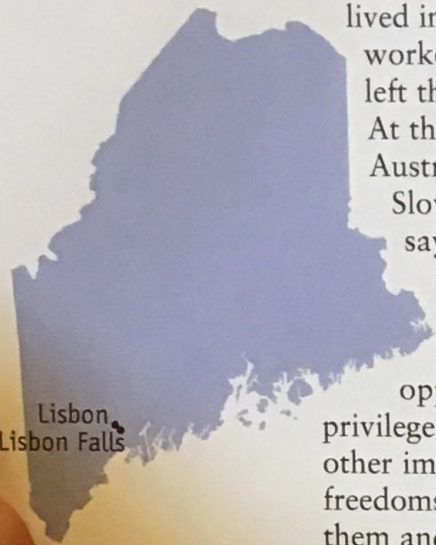
At first, many came as seasonal workers in the lumber mills in the Penobscot and Kennebec River Valleys. Later, many came to work in the textile mills in Lewiston, Biddeford, and Sanford and in the paper mills in Rumford, Jay, and Westbrook. Today, about 20% of Mainers are descendants of either the Acadians or the Quebecois. Lewiston is often called the Franco-American capital of New England.



The Levesque family were French immigrants to Lewiston, where they ran a fish market. Here, they are taking a ride in the family car.

The Slovaks

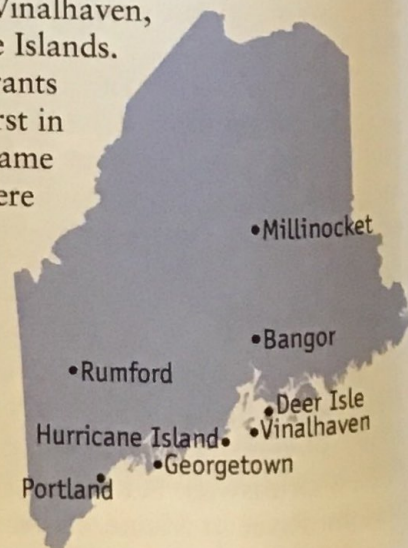
In the last two decades of the 19th century, many people from a small country in central Europe called Slovakia immigrated to Maine. Most of the Slovaks lived in Lisbon and Lisbon Falls and worked in the local textile mills. They left their homeland for many reasons. At this time, Slovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most Slovaks were poor farmers who had no say in their government. The young men lived in constant fear of being drafted into the Austrian army. There was little economic opportunity in a country where all the privileges went to the nobility. Like most other immigrants, the Slovaks welcomed the freedoms and opportunities available to them and their children in the United States.



The Italians

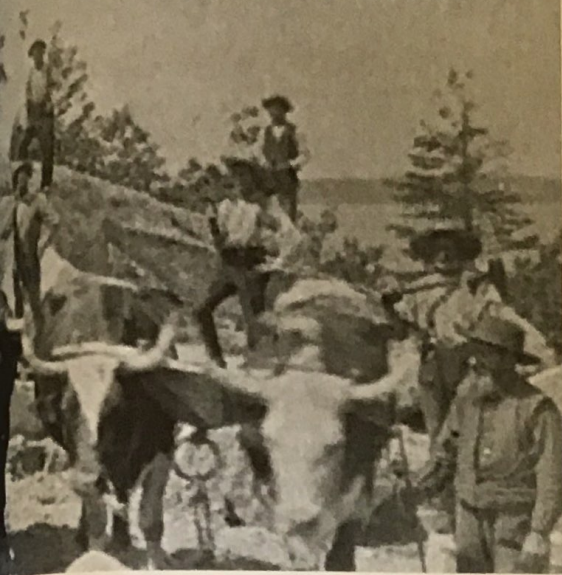
The first Italian settlers in Maine came in the 1820s. They were men like Charles Nolchini, a language professor who became a close friend of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. For a time, Mainers were fascinated by Italy and named the towns of Rome, Naples, Palermo, Etna, and Verona after places in Italy. After the Civil War, however, it was no longer wealthy Italians who immigrated to Maine but poor peasants looking for work. At first, many headed to the mills in Rumford, but soon most headed to Portland, where they settled in a part of town called "Little Italy." Others headed to Bangor. Many worked on the railroad for just 10 cents a day. Others found jobs along the docks or as fishermen. Some also worked in the quarries at Georgetown and on Deer Isle, Vinalhaven, and Hurricane Islands.

Italian immigrants who settled first in Boston later came to Maine, where they helped build the town of Millinocket for the Great Northern Paper Company.



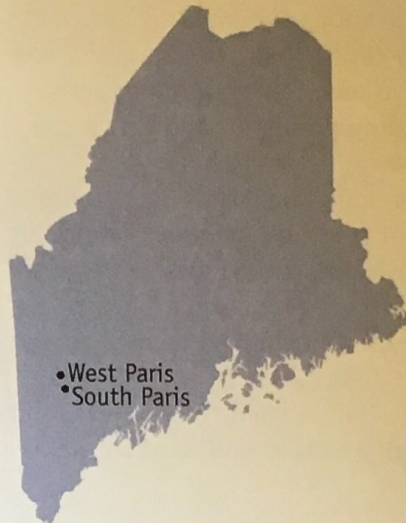
In Portland, many Italian men found work at the fishing docks. This boy learned how to repair fishing nets at an early age.

Many immigrants worked as stonecutters at quarries like this one on Mount Desert Island.



worked as woodcutters for the Great Northern Paper Company, one of the largest manufacturers in the state.

The young men saved their money so they could bring the rest of their families to the United States. Many families settled in West Paris and South Paris. The Finns were always trying to make their lives better. They worked hard and put money aside little by little until they were able to buy farms of their own. One Finnish minister said, "Prepare now floors that are wide, fetch windows that are bigger, raise walls that are new, and build a whole cabin that is better."



Have you ever seen someone driving in Maine with a bumper sticker that says "SISU"? If you have, you have probably seen a car belonging to a person of Finnish descent. SISU means "courageous and stubborn" in Finnish. Does the term fit the character of the many Finns who came to Maine more than a century ago?

SISU is a short term, but it means many things. What term would you use to describe yourself on a bumper sticker?



The Finns

After the Civil War, people started immigrating to Maine from Finland, a tiny country in northern Europe that was then part of Russia. Poor economic conditions and the fear of being drafted into the Russian army sent many young Finns westward to Maine. Usually the young men came first and found work as stonecutters in quarries throughout the state. Others

A Lesson About Last Names

When immigrants from central and eastern Europe came to the United States, they wanted to be part of their new country. Many thought one way to do this was by making their family names sound more English and less foreign.

A modern writer in Maine named Rebecca Cummings wrote a short story about Finnish immigrants to Oxford County who argued about whether or not to change their last names once they became American citizens. Matti Kilponen wanted to change the family name to Kilton. His wife, Kaisa, was very upset by this. She could not understand why their Finnish name wasn't good enough for their new country. Matti became angry with his wife and stormed off to the courthouse to be sworn in as a new citizen. When he returned later that day with the certificate of his citizenship and a small American flag, he was no longer angry. He said he was happy that he could now vote for Theodore Roosevelt for president, and if Teddy Roosevelt's father didn't change his name, then neither would Matti. He thought if a man could become president with a Dutch name like "Roosevelt," then a man could become a good American citizen with a Finnish name like "Kilponen."