

**ACADIA**

**NATIONAL  
PARK**

*Maine*

# Acadia National Park

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Oscar L. Chapman, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • Newton B. Drury, *Director*



ACADIA NATIONAL PARK is a unit of the National Park System, owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. In these areas the scenery and objects of historic, prehistoric, and scientific interest are carefully preserved and displayed for public enjoyment.

Surrounded by the sea, Acadia is dominated by the bold range of the Mount Desert Mountains, whose ancient uplift, worn by time and ice erosion, remains to form the largest rock-built island on our Atlantic coast.

The coast of Maine has been formed by the flooding of an old and water-worn land surface, which has turned its heights into islands and headlands, its stream courses into arms and reaches of the sea, its broader valleys into bays and gulfs. The Gulf of Maine itself is such an ancient valley, whose broken and strangely indented coast, 2,500 miles in length from Portland to the St. Croix River—a straight-line distance of less than 200 miles—is simply an ocean-drawn contour line marked on its once bordering upland.

At the center of this coast, the most beautiful in eastern North America, there is an archipelago of islands, island-sheltered waterways, and lakelike bays. At its northern end, dominating the whole with its mountainous uplift, lies Mount Desert Island, where the national park is located. The park contains approximately 28,310 acres of federally owned land.

## THE STORY OF MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

The island was discovered by Champlain in September 1604, more than 16 years before the coming of the Pilgrims to Cape Cod, and by him named "Isle des Monts Déserts," Mount Desert Island. He had come to St. Croix Island the previous spring with the Sieur de Monts, a Huguenot gentleman, soldier, and governor of a Huguenot city and refuge in southwestern France, to whom Henry IV had entrusted previously the establishment of the French dominion in America. The King's commission to De Monts directed him "to represent our Person in the . . . confines of Acadia, to commence at the fortieth degree of latitude and extend to the forty-sixth degree."

A few years later Mount Desert Island again appears as the site of the first French missionary colony established in America.

The wrecking of the mission in 1613 by an armed vessel from Virginia, commanded by Capt. Samuel Argall, was the first act of overt warfare in the long struggle between France and England for the control of North America.

In 1688, private ownership began, the island being given as a feudal fief by Louis XIV to the Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac—later the founder of Detroit and Governor of Louisiana. He is recorded as then dwelling with his wife upon its eastern shore and still signed himself in his later documents, in ancient feudal fashion, Seigneur des Monts deserts.

In 1713, Louis XIV, defeated on the battlefields of Europe, ceded all of Acadia, except Cape Breton, to England. Mount Desert Island, unclaimed by Cadillac, became the property of the English Crown. Warfare followed till the capture of Quebec in 1759, when settlement from the New England coasts began. To the Province of Massachusetts was granted that portion of Acadia which now forms part of Maine, extending to the Penobscot River and including Mount Desert Island, which it shortly thereafter gave "for distinguished services" to Sir Francis Bernard, its last English governor before the Revolution. Title to it was later confirmed to him by a grant from George III.

With the outbreak of the Revolution, Bernard's stately mansion on the shore of Jamaica Pond and his far-off island on the coast of Maine were confiscated, as he took the King's side and sailed away from Boston Harbor. Thus, Mount Desert Island became once more the property of Massachusetts. But after the war, when Bernard had died in England, his son, John, petitioned to have his father's ownership of the island restored to him, claiming to have been loyal himself to the colony. A one-half undivided interest in it was given him.

Then came the granddaughter of Cadillac, Marie de Cadillac, and her husband, M. de Gregoire—French refugees—bringing letters from Lafayette. They petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts to grant them her grandfather's possession of the island in return for the assistance which France had given in the Revolution. The General Court, honoring their claim, gave them the other undivided half. When the surveying of the island had been completed, the western portion was in the hands of Bernard, who promptly sold it and went to England; the eastern portion, now the property of Marie de Cadillac and her husband, was gradually sold by them, piece by piece, to settlers on the island.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Mount Desert Island still remained remote and inaccessible, except to coasting vessels; but fishing hamlets gradually grew up along its shore, the giant pines whose slowly rotting stumps one comes upon today among the lesser trees were cut and shipped away, town government was established, roads of a rough sort were built, and the island connected with the mainland by a bridge and causeway. The coming of steam brought about a complete transformation of Mount Desert Island. The Boston & Bangor Steamship Line was established, a local steamer connected Southwest Harbor with this line, and summer life at Mount Desert began.

After the Civil War, many people began to learn of the great beauty of Bar Harbor. Although steamers did not come until 1868, and the nearest railroad terminal was at Bangor, 50 miles away, with a rough road between, the summer population grew by leaps and bounds. Soon the native cottages and fishermen's huts were filled to overflowing, and visitors were forced to live in tents, feeding on fish and doughnuts, and the abundant lobster. The cottages expanded and became hotels—simple, bare, and rough, but always full. The life was gay and free and wholly out-of-doors—boating, climbing, picnicking, buckboarding, and sitting on the rocks. All was open to wander over or picnic on; the summer visitor possessed the island. Then lands were bought and summer homes were built. Life of a new kind began, one patterned after that of city society, and the informality of the early days passed.

## A NATIONAL PARK IS BORN

It was from the impulse of that early summer life that the movement for public reservations and the national park arose, springing from pleasant memories and the desire to preserve in largest measure possible the beauty and freedom of the island for the people's need in years to come.

In the summer of 1901, a small group of long-time summer residents on Mount Desert Island met for the purpose of forming a corporation to "acquire and hold for public use lands in Hancock County, Maine, which by reason of scenic beauty, historical interest or other like reasons may become available for such purpose." The corporation received its charter from the Maine Legislature in 1903; it received its first gift of land, one square rod in area, soon after; and, all unconsciously, a national park was in embryo.

By 1913, the corporation had acquired about 6,000 acres of land. That year it was subjected to a local political attack which, if successful, threatened its existence. The attack was withstood, but the threat of future attacks remained. It was then that the corporation conceived the idea of offering its land as a gift to the Government for a Federal park. The offer was made in 1914, but much needed to be done to perfect title to the land to meet the Government's legal requirements. Two years later,

perfection of title having been achieved, the offer was accepted and on July 8, 1916, President Wilson signed a proclamation creating the Sieur de Monts National Monument.

On February 26, 1919, President Wilson signed an act of Congress by which the national monument became Lafayette National Park, the first national park east of the Mississippi River and the first to be donated to the Government. In 1929, the name of the park was changed from Lafayette to Acadia to preserve the name given to the region in the de Monts commission of 1604.

Acadia National Park well illustrates the adage "mighty oaks from little acorns grow." From an idea in 1901, and a donation of one square rod of land in 1903 has grown a national park now over 28,000 acres in area—a gift to the Nation and to its people.

## THE PARK A SANCTUARY

Like all national parks, Acadia is a sanctuary for wildlife—plant and animal. Land and sea, woodland, lake, and mountain—all are represented in remarkable concentration. Here, too, the flora of the Northern and Temperate Zones meet and overlap, and land climate meets sea climate, each tempering the other. The sea possesses a rich biologic field for research, and the sea beach and tidal pools provide a source of interest and study. Under park protection all these features will be preserved for future generations.

## THE ACADIAN FOREST

Mount Desert Island is a singularly rich botanical area. The natural growth, protected and cared for within the park limits, and restored when necessary, will in time represent, as in a wild botanic garden, the entire Acadian Region. Wildflowers are abundant from early spring, when the trailing-arbutus, or mayflower, puts forth its blossoms, until the witch-hazel blooms in fall, scattering its seeds as it flowers.

In trees and forest growth Mount Desert Island represents the wide territory comprised in eastern and northern Maine, the Maritime Provinces, Labrador, and Newfoundland. The forest of this region, best described as the Acadian Forest, since it is in the old Acadian region that it finds its best expression, is the boreal extension of the ancient Appalachian forest of mingled coniferous and hardwood trees, which range northward along the mountain folds from Tennessee and Georgia.

## GEOLOGIC HISTORY OF MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

Mount Desert Island, on which the park is located, is a land mass that has been battered by geologic forces for many million years. From this conflict between the agencies of land building and those of land destruction the present landscape has evolved.

The visitor traveling about the island is attracted at every turn by the land forms which have been made in geologically recent time, the most notable being the great sea cliffs. These are produced by the ocean waves cutting and undermining the rocks which tower above their reach.

The noisy waves touch only the coast line, but the silent forces of rock disintegration also accomplish much work. The summit of Cadillac Mountain, now slowly crumbling away, still possesses in sheltered spots the smooth, polished surfaces which were produced by the great ice sheet as it moved over the rock. The combined attacks of frost, expansion, and contraction by temperature changes, chemical disintegration, prying by plant roots, and even the solvent power of rain water, little by little break down the solid granite. Chemical rock decay, due to the ever present mosses and lichens, is an example of the geologic relationship with living things. Down the mountain slopes loosened blocks slide, crumble and erode into smaller boulders, and are rounded. Smaller and smaller grow the rock fragments until they are merely sand and clay, which the rain washes or

the winds blow into the sea, the ultimate destination of all rock waste.

Recently, as measured by geologic time, an enormous ice sheet passed over the land, rounding its features and deepening and broadening the river valley which it invaded. During the early stages of its advance, the direction of flow was controlled largely by the southward trending river valleys. As the ice became thicker, it covered the entire island and its direction of movement shifted more to the eastward.

While moving southward the ice smoothed all the northern slopes, but tended to pluck out loose rock on the southward facing slopes so that there was produced a surface having a notched appearance. At many places on the island there are polish scratches, or crescent-shaped marks, produced by the scouring effect of the fragments of rock and boulders held frozen in the ice.

The weight of the ice is thought to have depressed Mount Desert Island possibly as much as 600 feet. The ancient sea cliffs and beaches, some of which are now 250 feet above sea level,

Jordan Pond and the Bubbles



are evidence of this action. As the ice melted away, the land rose slowly, but not to its former level. This is shown by the present drowned mouths of the river valleys.

Thus we may summarize the geologic history of Mount Desert Island as two periods of deposition, each terminated by mountain-building forces and each subsequently reduced by erosion almost to a plane. The final uplift initiated a new cycle of erosion and permitted the sea to cut the rocky cliffs which are now its greatest scenic asset.

#### SCHOODIC POINT

Several years ago the bounds of Acadia National Park were extended to include Schoodic Point, enclosing the entrance to Frenchman Bay on the eastern side as Mount Desert Island does on the western. It was a splendid acquisition, obtained through

Thunder Hole



generous gifts and made possible of acceptance by an act of Congress. On it the waves break grandly as the ground swells come rolling in after a storm at sea. Back of Schoodic Point a magnificent rock headland rises to over 400 feet in height. It commands an unbroken view eastward into the entrance of the Bay of Fundy, southward over the open ocean, and westward across the entrance of Frenchman Bay to the Mount Desert Mountains in Acadia National Park.

A park road branching from Maine's coastal highway to New Brunswick follows the rock-bound shore of Schoodic Peninsula to its surf-beaten extremity upon Moose Island, thence along the eastern shore of the peninsula to Wonsqueak Harbor. There it connects again with the coastal highway, making a magnificent detour for motorists on their way to our national boundary and the Maritime Provinces of Canada.

#### NATURALIST SERVICE

Free naturalist guide service is available to the visitor in Acadia during July and August. The park naturalist and his staff conduct a program designed to acquaint the visitor with the geology, plant and animal life, and history of the area.

Each day, except Sunday, there is a different feature on the program. Nature walks, strenuous hikes, sea cruises around Frenchman Bay, and trips to the museum on Little Cranberry Island are included among the activities.

The campfire programs at the public campgrounds 2 nights each week are of great interest. Impromptu entertainment by the campers themselves, group singing, and lectures illustrated by slides and movies compose the programs.

The auto caravans, where the visitors drive their own cars, guided by the naturalist, are of interest. Stops are made at the Abbe Museum, Thunder Hole, Otter Cliffs, and Cadillac Mountain.

Announcements of this free service are available at all information booths on the island as well as at the park office, the public campgrounds, the office of the naturalist, and at the leading hotels.

#### MUSEUMS

The Abbe Museum of Archeology is located near Sieur de Monts Spring. It contains relics of the Stone Age period of Indian culture in this region, as well as books and maps. This museum is open 7 days a week through July and August.

The Islesford Historical Museum is located on Little Cranberry Island. Here is found a unique collection of prints and documents relating to the settlement and early history of the region. This museum is reached by a half-hour motorboat trip from Seal Harbor, Northeast Harbor, or Southwest Harbor. Information as to the days and hours this museum is open may be obtained at park headquarters and at the various information stations.

#### ROADS AND BRIDLE PATHS

A motor road system through the park connects the lake and mountain area with the seashore and touches the villages of Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor, and Northeast Harbor. Connecting with this system, another road leads to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, the highest point on our eastern coast. Entrance to these roads is equally convenient from Bar Harbor or Seal Harbor. On Schoodic Peninsula a shore-line drive follows closely the rugged coast. State Highway 186 may be left at Winter Harbor and reentered at Birch Harbor.

In addition to the park roads, more than 200 miles of State and town roads encircle and traverse Mount Desert Island. Reaching every point of interest, they exhibit a combination of seashore and inland scenery not found elsewhere on the eastern coast.

For those who do not have their own automobiles, there are cars for public hire in the various villages adjacent to the park.

Connected with the town road system and leading into and through the park is a fine system of some 50 miles of roads for use with horses or on foot.

#### TRAILS AND FOOTPATHS

There are at present some 100 miles of trails and footpaths in the park, reaching every mountain summit and traversing every valley. Broad lowland paths offer delightfully easy walks, and winding trails to the mountain summits are provided for those preferring a moderately strenuous climb. Rough mountainside trails give opportunity for hardy exercise to those who enjoy real hiking. The system is so laid out that there is no danger of becoming lost.

#### HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Acadia National Park may be reached by railroad, bus, or automobile.

The railroad terminus for the park and Mount Desert Island resorts is Ellsworth, Maine, on the line of the Maine Central Railroad. Comfortable motorbuses transport rail passengers from Ellsworth to Bar Harbor. Information regarding rail connections between principal eastern cities and Ellsworth can be had on application at any railroad ticket office.

Through daily bus service is available during the summer season between Boston and Bar Harbor via the Boston & Maine and Maine Central Transportation Companies' bus lines. Complete information on schedules and rates may be obtained from any bus agent in the United States or Canada.

By motor the park is accessible from all eastern points over good State highways. The island is connected with the mainland by a steel-and-concrete bridge.

#### PARK SEASON

The park is accessible all the year, but the season when the campgrounds, picnic areas, and other facilities are operated extends from June 15 to October 1. The road system is open from May 1 until closed by ice and snow, usually about December 1.

#### FREE PUBLIC CAMPGROUNDS

Two campgrounds, one near Bar Harbor and one at Seawall, near Southwest Harbor, are maintained by the National Park Service for motorists bringing their own camping outfits. Each is equipped with running water, modern sanitary conveniences, and outdoor fireplaces. Camping is limited to 30 days.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS OUTSIDE THE PARK

In the various villages on Mount Desert Island excellent accommodations for visitors are to be had at reasonable rates. The National Park Service exercises no control over these accommodations, which range from high-class summer hotels to good rooming houses and restaurants. Information concerning these facilities may be secured by addressing the Chambers of Commerce at Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, and Southwest Harbor, Maine.

**Information Booths.**—At all villages on the island are booths where information concerning train and bus service, motor routes, fares, hotels, rooming houses, and eating places may be obtained. A similar booth is maintained jointly by the several island towns at the south end of the bridge which connects Mount Desert Island with the mainland. Maps and informational literature may be obtained at any of the information booths.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The officer of the National Park Service in immediate charge of the park is the superintendent, whose address is Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor, Maine. Comments regarding service in the park should be addressed to him.

The headquarters of the park are in Bar Harbor, at the corner of Main and Park Streets. The business office is open daily, except Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. The information office is open daily, June 10 to September 10, from 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. For the remainder of the year the information office is open the same hours as the business office.

#### PROTECTION SERVICE

Park rangers constitute the protection organization for the park and are responsible for law enforcement, traffic control, forest fire detection and suppression. They handle lost and found property, information, visitors' suggestions and complaints, and render numerous other services to the public. All

accidents, fires, and lost or found property should be promptly reported. *Consult the men in uniform—they are at your service.*

#### HELP US PROTECT THE PARK

The park regulations are designed "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Please help the National Park Service in its duty of enforcing park regulations by abiding by the following rules:

**Fires.**—Fire is one of the greatest dangers to the park. Fires may be kindled without permission only at established picnic areas and campgrounds and then only in the fireplaces. Otherwise no fires shall be kindled except on express authorization issued by the superintendent. All fires shall be completely extinguished before leaving.

The setting off of firecrackers or fireworks in the park is prohibited.

**Trees, Flowers, and Animals.**—The park is a sanctuary for all living things. It is a violation of the law to destroy, injure, or disturb trees, shrubs, flowers, birds, animals, or any natural feature in the park.

**Camps.**—Camping is permitted only in the regular campgrounds.

**Refuse.**—Please help keep the park clean and orderly. Do not throw paper, lunch refuse, or other trash on the roads, trails, or elsewhere. Deposit all such debris in the receptacles provided for the purpose.

**Automobiles.**—Consideration of other drivers is especially important on mountain roads. Drive carefully at all times and obey the park speed limit and other traffic regulations.

**Accidents.**—Accidents of whatever nature should be reported as soon as possible to the superintendent or at the nearest ranger station.

**Advertisements.**—Private notices or advertisements shall not be posted or displayed in the park, except those which the superintendent deems necessary for the convenience and guidance of the public.

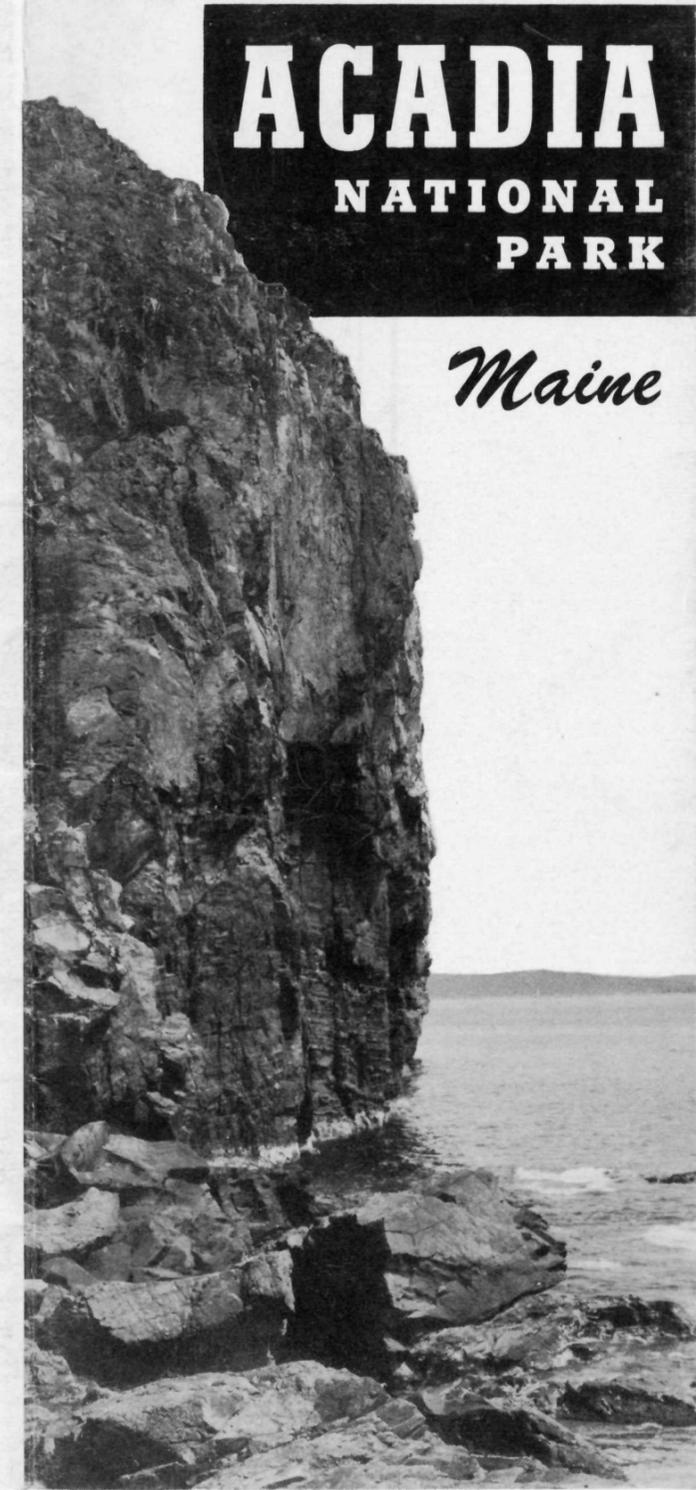
**Sale of Articles.**—No person, except those especially authorized to do so, shall offer for sale any articles or commodities. The soliciting of contributions by any method is not permitted.

**Disorderly Conduct.**—Persons who render themselves obnoxious by disorderly conduct or bad behavior are subject to penalties, and may be summarily removed from the park.

Please study the regulations. They will be enforced by park officials as courteously and liberally as possible, but deliberate infraction of them may bring penalty of fine or imprisonment or both.

# ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

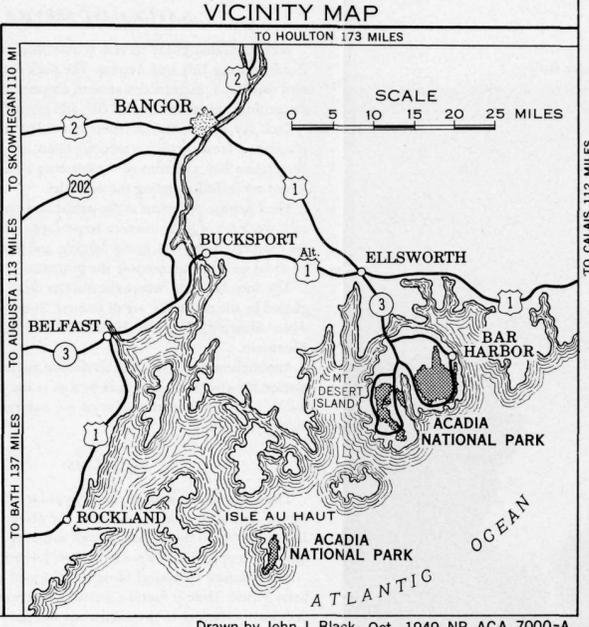
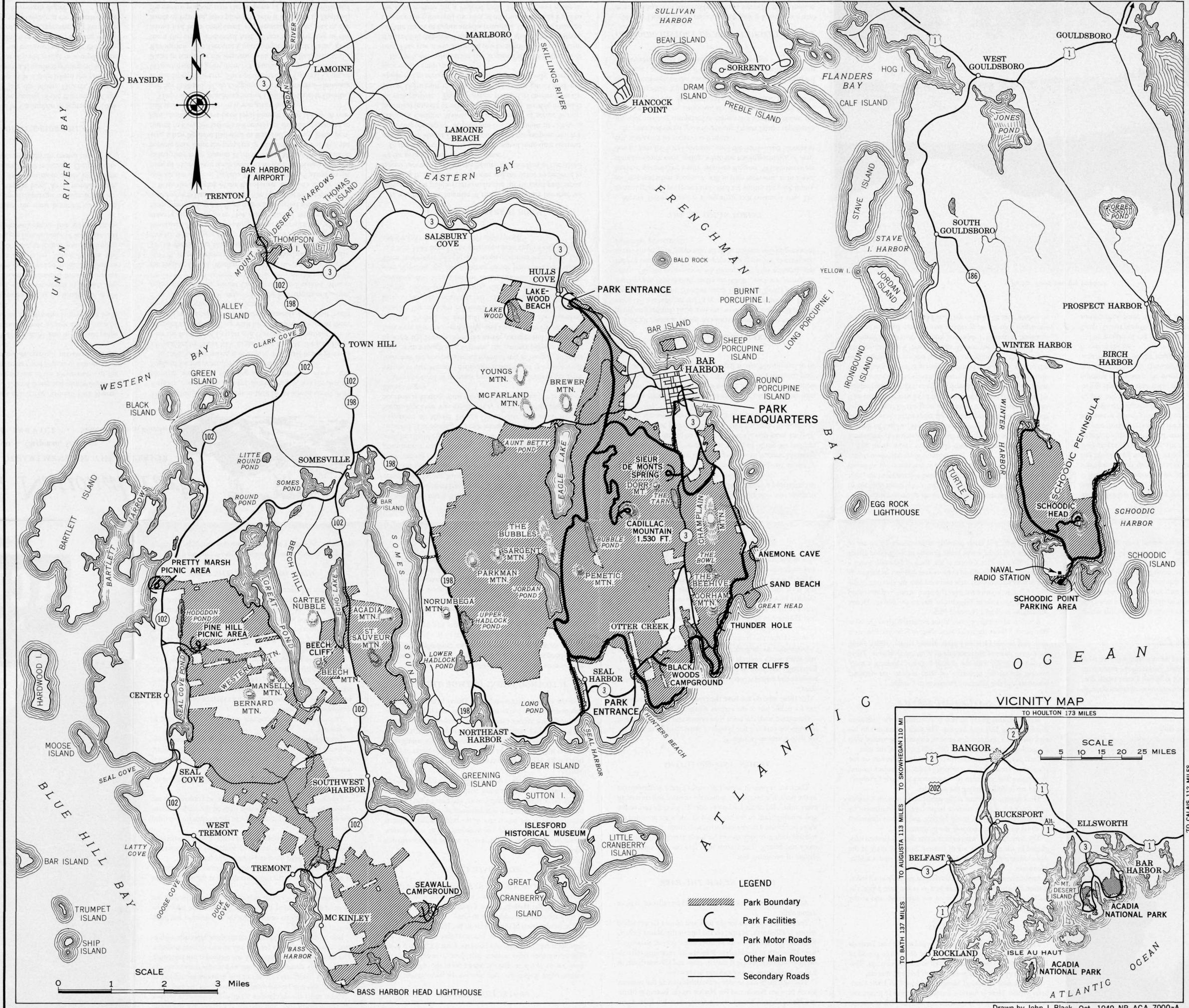
Maine



TO BANGOR 46 MILES FROM PARK HEADQUARTERS

TO ELLSWORTH 31 MILES FROM SCHOODIC POINT

TO CALAIS 112 MILES FROM SCHOODIC POINT



Drawn by John J. Black Oct. 1949 NP ACA 7000-A

HELP US PROTECT YOUR PARK  
OBSERVE ALL RULES

# GUIDE MAP OF ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

**FIRE IS OUR GREATEST ENEMY**  
**BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE IN THE WOODS**