

A LETTER FROM MAINE

L M I

The Jewish Messenger (1857-1902); Aug 23, 1901;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger (1857-1922)

pg. 1

A LETTER FROM MAINE

To the summer tourist Naples has a seductive sound. Everybody hopes to go to Italy, and most people plan and calculate the details of their trip long before they see the actual prospect of it before them. Like Mrs. Blimmer in "Dombey & Son" each one thinks if he could only get to Italy he would die contented. But, if Europe and Italy are out of the question, there is **Maine**. It is not a foolish device to name a summer resort after one of Italy's famous watering-places. The landscape and the surroundings need contain little that recalls Italy, but the name counts for much. Everything's in a name! And so when Sorrento or Naples is mentioned, ears are pricked up in pleasurable anticipation.

The trip from Portland to Naples is unusually interesting. After a half-hour's run in the train, passengers are transferred to a little steamer that plies between Sebago and Long Lakes and the intermediate water-ways. Sebago Lake is a broad expanse of water, framed in with green-foliaged shores of a more or less mountainous character. About half way across, the steamer passes Indian Island, from which a rugged boulder, some sixty feet in height, juts into the water. As the boat glides by, an Indian in feathers and war-paint suddenly appears, executes a war-dance, fires off a gun, and darts back with a wild whoop into the thicket.

This bit of local color is not to be destroyed by the explanation of some knowing one that it is only a farm lad hired to give this performance daily. Other smaller islands are dispersed here and there over the water, lending variety and picturesqueness to the view.

After about an hour and a half, the mouth of the Songo River is attained. This stream, celebrated in song and story by Longfellow and Hawthorne, has the most amazing way of doubling on itself. The boat points now one direction, and a few moments later in an exactly opposite course, until to the bewildered observer all points of the compass seem merged into one. The channel through which the steamer is guided is of the narrowest. The outstretched hand seems ready at every moment to meet one bank or the other. As the boat agitates the water it causes it to splash up most musically against the low-lying shrubbery along the shore. About five miles of this serpentine winding brings the steamer to Songo Lock—a delightfully primitive affair. Here there is a delay of ten minutes while the lock is filling sufficiently to allow the boat to proceed on its way. There is a difference of almost five feet in the height of the water, and it is one of the most interesting sights of the trip to observe the working of the lock.

This passed, it is but a short sail to the mouth of the river and the Bay of Naples, as the lower end of Long Lake is called. As the water gradually broadens out on either side a beautiful picture is unfolded ahead. Exclamations of surprised delight are heard on all sides, and they are redoubled as the boat nears its destination. There, perched on a slight eminence, a flourishing forest its background, is the Bay of Naples Inn. It is a neat structure, simple in outline and glad some to the eye in its new coat of paint.

Naples is situated among the foothills of the White Mountains. From the broad veranda of the Inn they are seen in the distance,

Mt. Washington easily the most prominent. One of those peaceful stretches of water that serve to lighten up and set off the surrounding landscape spreads out before the eye. Reflecting in its clear, unrippled surface the clustering foliage of the further shore and the ever-changeful sky, a more picturesque foreground could scarcely be devised. It is a scene of which one never wearies. Toward evening the lake reproduces with faithful accuracy all the colors from Nature's palette. The most delicate pink as it tinges a fleeting cloud, the richest hues of purples and orange—all are there in the splendor of a sunset scene, rehearsed, as it were, in the water at the moment of its actual representation in the sky.

There is an enticing pine grove a few paces from the hotel. Hung with hammocks, which give forth the healthy odor of the pines, carpeted thick with the needles brown in their fall from the trees, soothed by the gentle lap-lap of the water as it caresses the shore, and the slight hum of the leaves murmuring Nature's own language—surely it is a spot fit for the gods!

All the diversified pleasures which summer offers are to be had here. There is an excellent tennis court, a golf links of nine holes within five minutes' walk of the hotel, good bathing, abundant fishing, promising walks, and, above all, canoeing. The remarkable placidity of the water, and the close proximity to one another of numerous lakes and rivers, invite canoeing trips of unsurpassed excellence. The mere list of possibilities would be too long to mention. Naples is but five hours from Boston, but its natural advantages cannot be excelled by places three times that distance from the Hub. L. M. I.

NAPLES, August 10th, 1901.