

NORTH

*Explore the wonders
and stories that shape North America's
landscapes and people*

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Nellie
Burnham Allen

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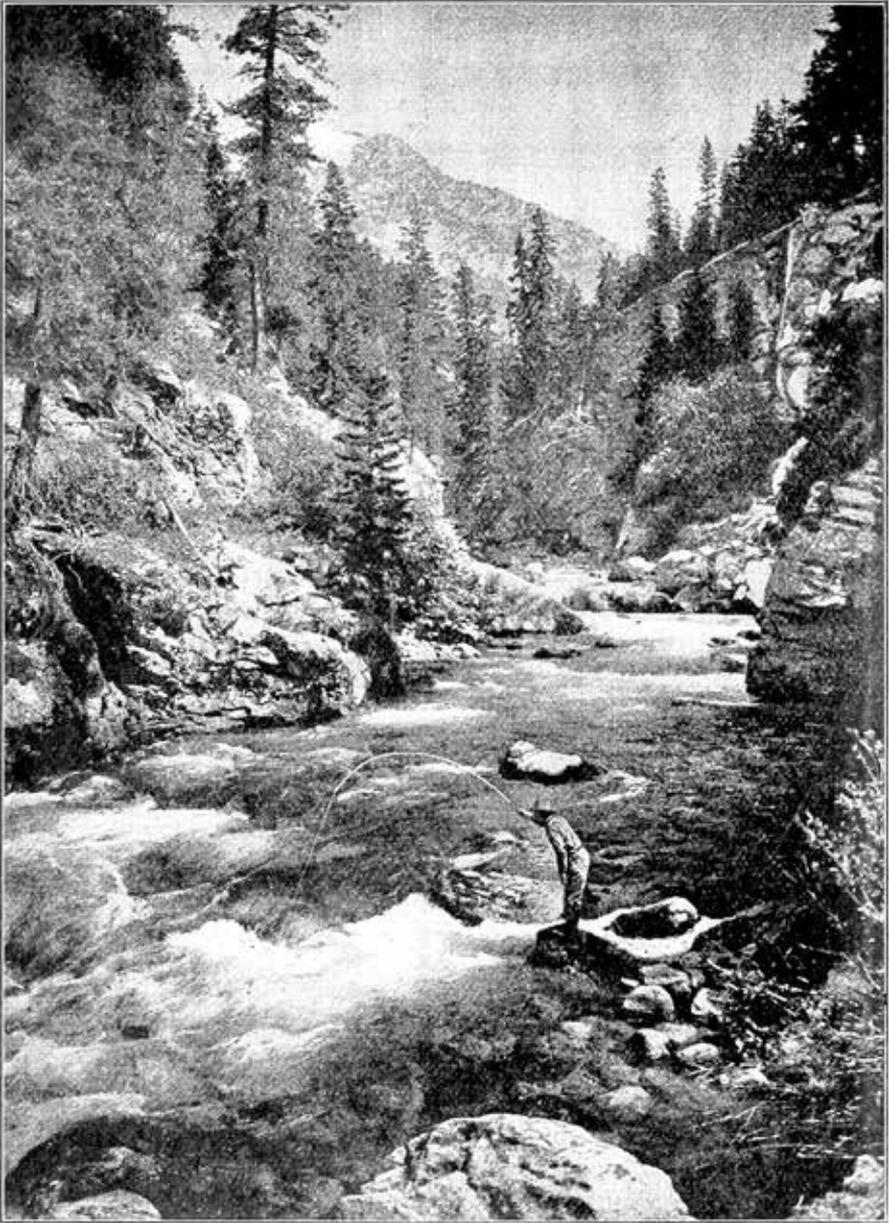
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North America

by

NELLIE BURNHAM ALLEN





FOR BEAUTY OF SCENERY, FOR ENJOYMENT OF NATURE, NO CONTINENT
EXCELS OUR OWN

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PREFACE

The socialized recitation, with its projects and problems, is doubtless the most democratic form of classwork that has ever been practiced in our schools. Geography lends itself more readily, perhaps, than any other subject to this method of teaching. In these pages, many problems are brought up, many subjects for class debate suggested, and many opportunities given for independent work on the part of the pupils. It is through such activities that self-reliance is developed and real strength and knowledge are gained.

In former days, people were accustomed to think of schools as places where children were prepared for real life. We know today that life and activities in a classroom are just as real to the child as any which will come to him later. With this thought in mind, the author has made many suggestions for doing real things, writing real letters, making real comparisons, building up a real reference library, using public-library facilities and reference books, and learning firsthand many of the lines of work of the various departments of government.

The people in the different countries of North America are our nearest world neighbors. We should know as intimately as possible their life and activities and the provisions of nature which govern them. There is a mutual dependence between people of different localities for many materials and products. If troubles and misunderstandings arise, the interchange of commodities is retarded, and inconvenience or suffering results. One of the best ways of preventing such troubles is by increasing our knowledge of peoples in other countries. The study of our

North American neighbors may well result in a greater confidence and a more intimate relationship between them and us.

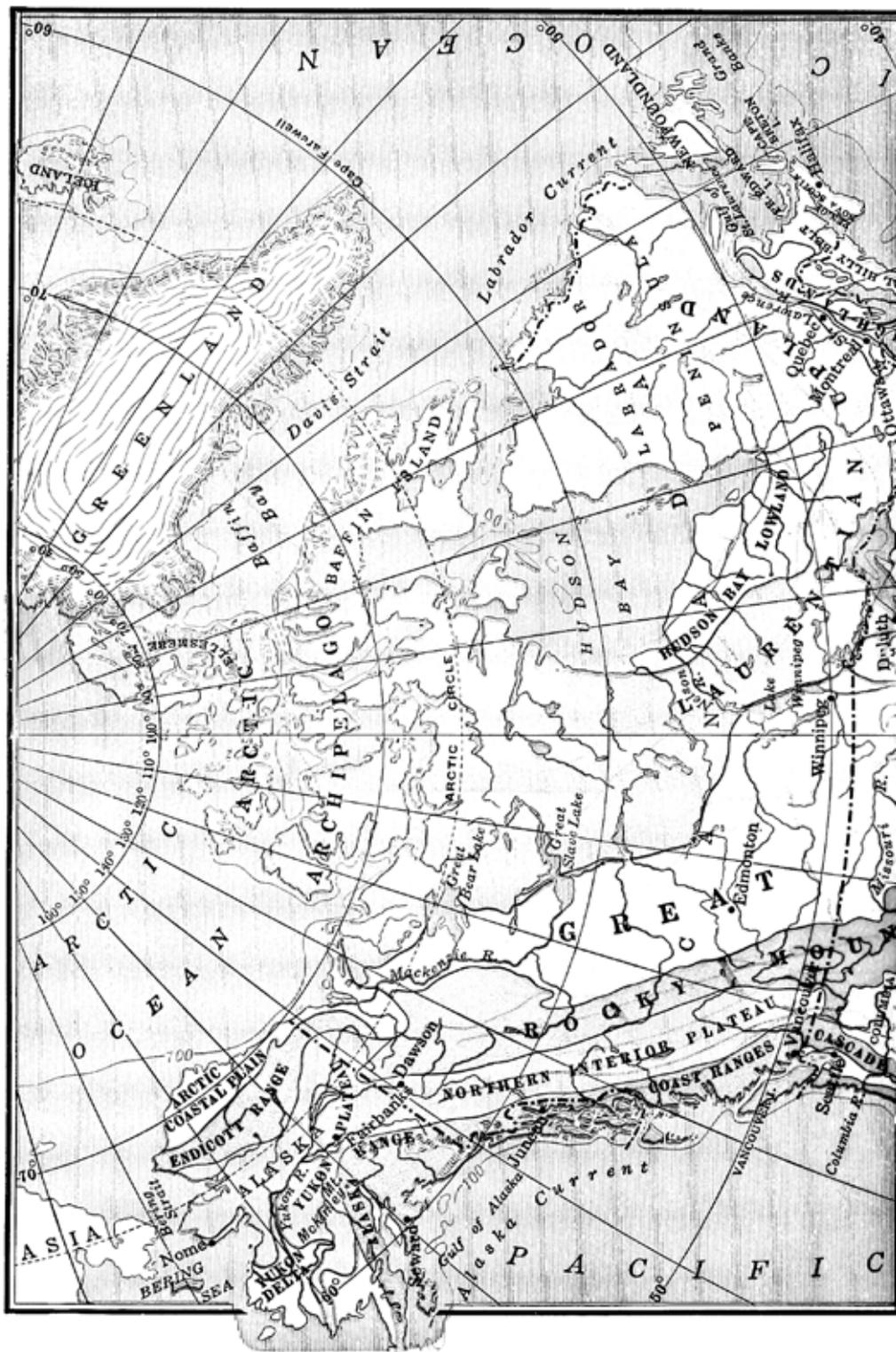
The effect of environment on the life and occupations of a people and the gifts of nature in soil, climate, minerals, power, and other resources should be emphasized as the underlying foundation of human activities. Therefore, regional geography has been made the basis of the various chapters in this book.

The value of locational geography is well known, and exercises for the location of places, sketching and filling in of maps, and other forms of handwork are included in the topics at the end of the chapters. From the names of places mentioned in the text of each chapter, the most important should be selected, and their locations and the most essential facts concerning them should be thoroughly mastered.

The subject of geography affords an opportunity for the teacher to stimulate the reasoning power of his pupils, broaden their outlook, develop their knowledge of and sympathy for other peoples of the world, create respect for our government among our girls and boys, and cultivate a love for our country, along with a sense of responsibility for its future growth and prosperity.

The author hopes that the teachers and pupils who use this book may find therein material that will help in accomplishing these ends.

NELLIE B. ALLEN



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We live in North America; that is one reason why we should know a great deal about this continent. It is one of the most important land masses on the earth. The countries of which it is composed supply many products and manufactured goods to other countries; their people are found in every country in the world; the influence of their schools, hospitals, churches, government, and other institutions has spread into every continent, country, and island on the face of the earth, - these are other reasons why we should know a great deal about the countries, people, and occupations of the continent on which we live.

Some of the countries of North America are much richer and more prosperous than others, and it is well for us to know the reasons for this. Our own country is rich and powerful. This



FIG 1. This is one of our Canadian neighbors. His father owns a fox farm.

is a fine thing, and we are glad that it is true; but this is not enough — we should know the reasons why it is so. We should know also how we are using our riches and strength. So, you see, this great wealth and power of our own United States become a responsibility which every man and woman and every boy and girl in the

country must share. We must always uphold the best things, or we shall put our country to shame.

In the chapters which follow, we shall see the people of the United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the neighboring islands at work and at play. We shall visit their farms, their factories, and their homes. We shall learn that the kind of region where they make their homes determines to a large extent what they shall do and how they shall live.

In the western part of North America, stretching from Alaska in the north to Panama in the south, lies the lofty Rocky Mountain Highland. To the west of it are great plateaus made dry and barren by the wall of mountains on either side: the Rockies on the east and the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains on the west. All through these western highlands, nature has stored treasures of gold, silver, and copper.

Still nearer the Pacific lie those wonderfully fertile valleys of California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Here



FIG 2. These Indian neighbors live in northern Canada, on the plains near the great Mackenzie River. Describe their home.

are raised delicious fruits which make one's mouth water to think of. In these regions, also, are vast stretches of deep forests wherein grow the largest trees on the continent.

East of the Rocky Mountain Highland are high, dry, treeless plains where cattle and sheep feed. Most of the rain that might be brought to these plains by the westerly winds is shut out by the Rocky Mountain wall. Here, as in the regions farther west, people have done wonderful work in irrigating some of these dry lands and transforming them into fertile farms.

To the east of the Great Plains lie the marvelous Central Plains of North America — fertile, level, rich beyond measure in their farms, pastures, minerals, and cities. Deprived of this region, we would suffer hunger, our factories would have little or no coal, our mills would lie idle, our railroads would lack freight, and our exports to other countries would cease.

Still traveling eastward, we should next climb the Appalachian Highlands, or, if in Canada, the lower hills of the ancient Laurentian Upland. How different these mountain regions



FIG 3. Here is a nestful of our Indian neighbors in the West. (Courtesy of the Department of the Interior)



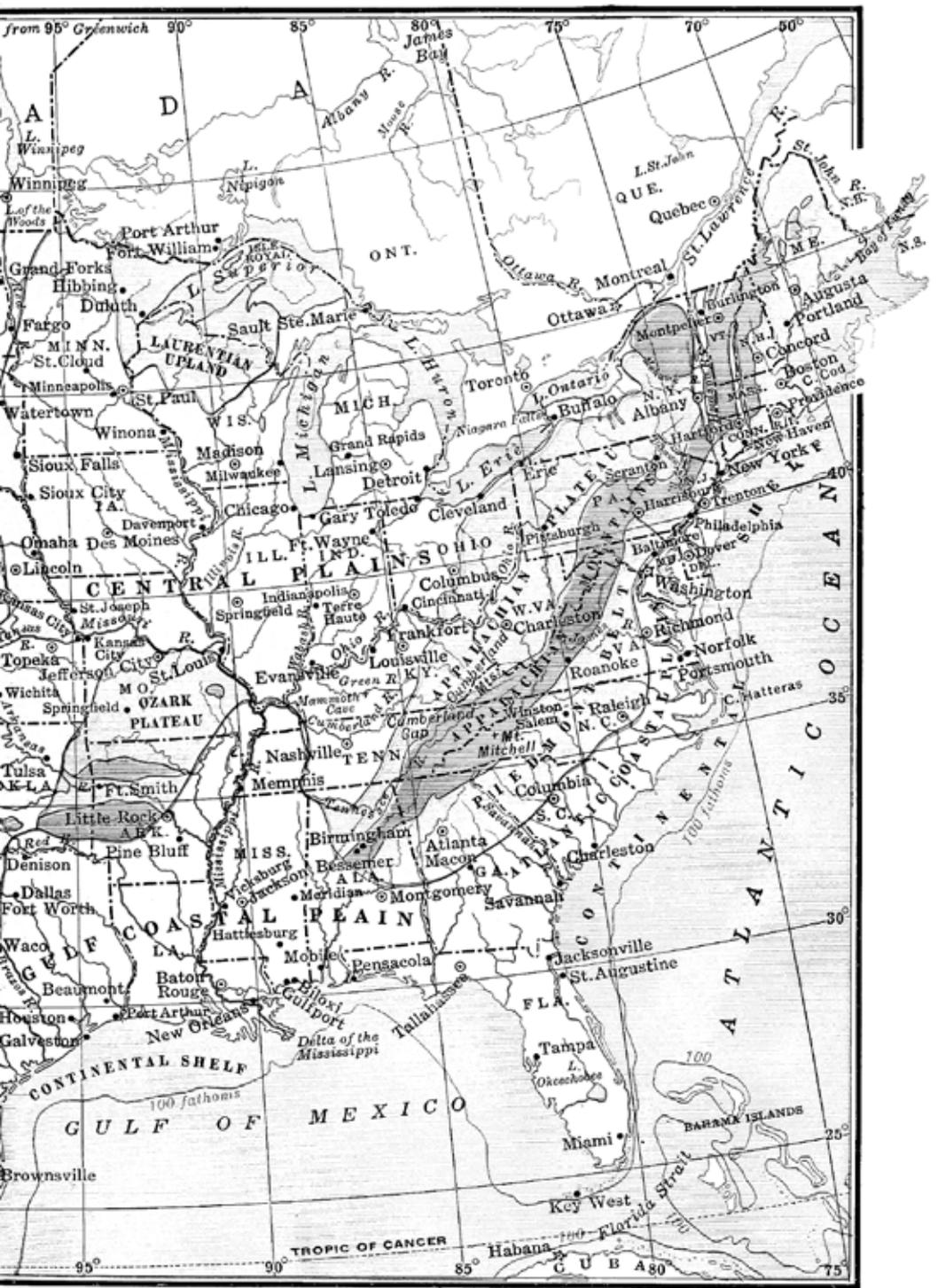




FIG 4. These are some of our little Chinese neighbors who live in the largest city of the world. Where is this city located?

are, with their low, rounded peaks and gentle slopes, from the younger, higher mountains in the West, with their sharp, jagged summits and precipitous sides.

In these eastern highlands, valuable minerals are found — not as much gold, silver, and copper as in the West, but coal, iron, nickel, and asbestos.

Beyond the eastern slopes of the Appalachians, the level Coastal Plain, with its clay beds, fruit and vegetable farms, pine woods, and drowned valleys, stretches down to the Atlantic Ocean. Here are situated great seaports, to which come all manner of necessities and luxuries from countries across the water. From these ports, and from those on the western and southern coasts, go the meat, grain, cotton, oil, furs, and lumber, as well

as flour, cloth, shoes, machinery, and hundreds of other things which the people of North America have worked to produce.

We must not forget that nature has had a great deal to do with filling our factories and stores and our ships. Her rich gifts make possible our products and manufactures, and therefore our exports to other countries. Her agents have accomplished wonderful things in building up, wearing down, and changing the face of this old earth of ours. Her book is an interesting one. She has written her stories in the soil, the rock, and the rivers, and anyone with sharp eyes, keen ears, and an alert mind may read and profit thereby.

The author wonders as she writes these pages what work in the world the boys and girls who read them will do. Some of them will doubtless be factory workers, helping to feed or clothe or make more comfortable, in some way, the lives of their world neighbors. Some will work in the great outdoors — in forests or fields — and their work will help in supplying materials which others must use. Some will help sail the great ships over the ocean, build bridges, dig tunnels, work in mines, in crowded cities with thousands of others, or alone on grassy plains or lonely mountains. Wherever you are, remember that your work always counts for something, that you are helping to make the world better or worse according to how well or ill your work is done. Neglect or failure to do your best hurts not only yourself but also others whom you may never have seen.

TOPICS FOR STUDY

1. Name the countries of North America. Which is the largest? the smallest? the most northern? the most southern? How many of them touch two oceans? Does any one touch more than two oceans?
2. Name all the reasons you can think of that have caused the United States to become rich and powerful. Name some of her riches. Why does she excel Canada and Mexico in these respects?
3. What have you done or what has your school done to make your hometown or city a better place to live? Can you think of any other things worth doing?

CHAPTER II

A TRIP THROUGH NEW ENGLAND

New England is an interesting section of our country — interesting in its formation, its industries, its history, and in the spirit of its people. Here in 1620, the Pilgrims first set foot. Here our earliest industries — fishing, farming, lumbering, and manufacturing — developed, and from here pioneers have traveled to all parts of the United States and to Canada and Alaska, settling new regions, building new towns, and developing new industries.

The six states in the northeastern corner of the country comprise only one forty-fifth of the entire area of the United States, yet they contain one fourteenth of its population. Nowhere else in the country are there so many cities and towns so closely clustered together. Nowhere else is there such a large proportion of the people living in mill towns and manufacturing centers, and nowhere else is there such an amount and so great a variety of goods manufactured in so small an area.

New England produces no coal for its furnaces, no gold and silver or iron and copper for its metal manufactures, no cotton and but little wool for its textile mills. Why is it, then, that New England has become so thickly populated and so important in manufacturing? Let us keep this problem in mind and see if we can find at least a part of the answer as we read of the position, surface, rivers, coastline, climate, and other factors on which the life and occupations of a people depend.

Look at the map and notice that New England lies nearer to European countries than any other part of the United States. This fact alone has tended to stimulate commerce between the

lands on either side of the ocean. Here, then, is the first part of the answer to our problem.

Look again at the map. Notice how many bays and inlets there are in New England. Can you find a coast as irregular as that of Maine? The sheltered inlets make excellent harbors. These are necessary before any region can develop to any great extent. Here is another part of the answer to our problem.

Perhaps you are wondering why it is that New England has such an irregular coastline while the South Atlantic coast and most of the Pacific is so much more even. We shall find the answer to this question in Mother Nature's storybook. Let us see what she has to tell us.

Ages and ages ago, this earth on which we live was an intensely heated ball. Through a longer period of time than you can imagine — even for millions of years — it has gradually been growing cooler. The outside, the part on which we live, has become cold and hard. This cooled and hardened crust is many miles thick. The hot water from geysers, the melted rock from erupting volcanoes, the heat in deep mines, tell us that the interior of the earth is still very hot. It is slowly cooling, however, and shrinking as it cools. The crust is constantly trying to adjust itself to the shrinking interior much as the skin of a baked apple wrinkles as it cools. In places, the earth's crust has been pushed up into huge wrinkles which we call mountains. In some places, the crust is slowly rising; in others, it is as gradually sinking.

These movements take place very, very slowly indeed, perhaps at the rate of only a few inches a year, but as the long centuries go by, great changes are wrought. The sinking of the crust is more noticeable along the shorelines, for there the ocean waters push up farther into the land, fill the river valleys, and change them into deep bays. Narragansett Bay, Buzzards Bay, and Penobscot Bay are drowned valleys made in this way.

In Maine, the hilly region came close to the shore. With the sinking of the land, the valleys were filled with water, and in many cases, the mountain tops appear as islands. The deep bays make excellent harbors, but many lighthouses are needed



FIG 5. This is a picture of a drowned valley. See how the ocean has filled the lowlands. Why do drowned valleys make good harbors? If the land along this coast should rise, how would the length of the inlet compare with the length as shown in the picture?

to warn vessels of the rocky isles. On the peninsulas, fishermen live, and on the islands and the mainland, there are pleasant summer resorts.

The larger part of New England is made up of a hilly belt which extends from the interior nearly or quite to the shore. It is a pleasant region of green, rounded hills and broad valleys, winding rivers, and sparkling lakes.

North of Cape Cod, the hilly region extends nearly or quite down to the water. Along the shores of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and southeastern Massachusetts, there is a narrow coastal lowland. In Rhode Island, this lowland region and the drowned valley of Narragansett Bay occupy the greater part of the state, and more than seven-eighths of the people live in this lowland area.

The Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire make up the chief mountain region of New England. The Green Mountain belt extends southward through Massachusetts, where the range is known as the Berkshire Hills, into northwestern Connecticut. Through the Hoosac Mountains



FIG 6. This is a scene on the Maine coast. Why is this coast so irregular?
Why are many lighthouses needed ?

in northwestern Massachusetts, the Hoosac Tunnel has been cut. This tunnel, the first of any great length to be built in the country, is about five miles long. It gives Boston direct connection across northern Massachusetts with Albany and the rich plains of the Middle West. The White Mountain belt extends in lower hills into Maine and southward through Massachusetts into northern Connecticut. Between the two mountain belts is the rich valley of the Connecticut River, and west of the Green Mountain belt, the land slopes down to the Hudson-Champlain Lowland. All these natural regions — the low coastal plain, the hilly belt, the mountain areas, and the river and lake lowlands — are important and have determined to a large extent the occupations of the people who live in them.

New England is a very old region. Its hills and mountains were once much higher than at present. Through long ages, the rains, the frosts, the streams, and the great glacier have been slowly wearing away the rock and soil and washing it into the valleys and the ocean. Therefore, the mountains of New England are not very high and the scenery is not so wild and grand as it is in some parts of the country, but it is restful and

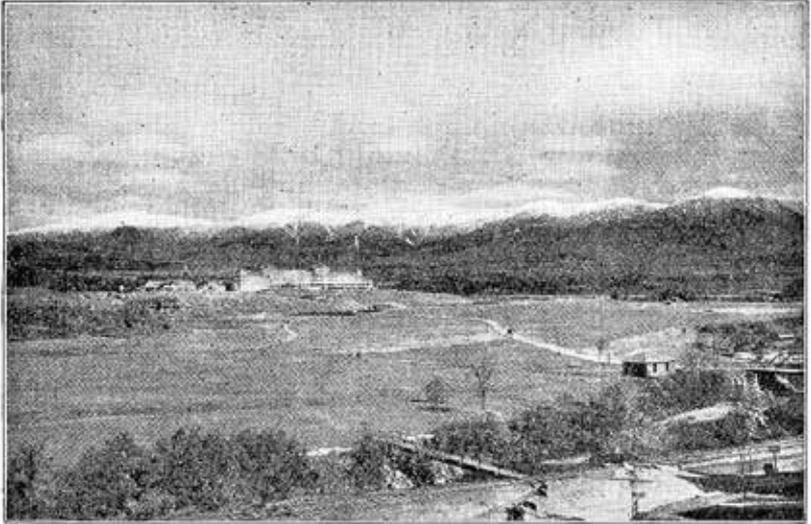


FIG 7. This is a view of the White Mountains. How do they differ in appearance from those in the West?

beautiful. Mt. Washington, the highest peak, is six thousand two hundred and ninety-three feet high. A railroad and an automobile road lead to the summit. Should you like to ride to the top in a train or automobile, or should you prefer to take your time and “hike” through the wooded trail?

Most of the rivers in New England have falls and rapids which furnish valuable power. This is one of the chief reasons why manufacturing developed so early in this section. Mills for grinding grain, for sawing lumber, and later for manufacturing cotton and woolen goods were located on the streams near the early settlements, and many of these places have since grown into important manufacturing centers.

In Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, the falls in the streams are near the coast. The cities situated at these power sites have a double advantage. They have become important not only in manufacturing but in commerce as well. They can easily bring their raw material and send away many of their manufactures by water. Can you explain now why Fall River has grown to be a large, important city and why more than half of

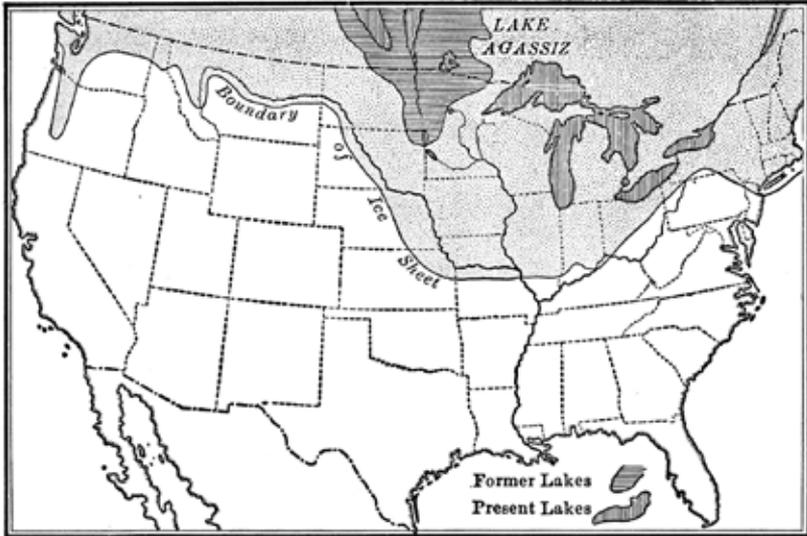


FIG 8. This map shows the part of the United States once covered by glaciers. Name the states which lay under its southern edge. What states were wholly covered by the glacier?

the people in Rhode Island live in the cities of Providence and Pawtucket?

The rivers of New England have been important lumber highways, and millions of logs from the forests of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont have come down the streams to the sawmills. Many of the rivers, as well as many lakes in New England, also yield a winter harvest of ice.

If you would like to know why it is that New England has so many falls in its rivers, so many lovely lakes and ponds, and such rounded hilltops, you must read another story in Mother Nature's book. Long, long ages ago, the climate of North America was much colder than it is at present, and all of Canada and the northern United States were covered with a great ice sheet hundreds of feet thick, just as Greenland is today.

The ice filled the valleys and rose higher than the tops of the highest mountains. Very slowly, it crept along from its home in the colder regions of the north, rounding the hilltops as it passed, scraping the rock waste from the land, carrying many

great boulders and much gravel and fine sand embedded in its mass, digging the beds for hundreds of lakes, and scouring out the valleys.

The New England rivers, clogged and dammed by the material brought by the glacier, were turned into new courses. Here they encountered rocks of varying hardness. The softer ones were, of course, worn away first. Where the stream leaped from the harder rock bed to the lower one worn in the softer material, falls occurred. Ever since the early settlers made use of this water power to grind their grain, it has been of tremendous value to the people of this section.

The Connecticut is the longest and most important river of New England. Not only the river itself but many of its branches have falls and rapids on which manufacturing towns and cities are situated. In several places, the falling water is used to generate electricity, which is carried on wires to cities many miles away. Some of the largest cities in western Massachusetts are located on the Connecticut River, and about half of the people in Connecticut live in its valley. Can you tell why this is so?

Besides the manufacturing cities, there are many fine farms in the Connecticut valley where tobacco is cultivated and dairy cattle are raised.

The Merrimack River turns more spindles in textile manufacturing than any river in the world. What important cities are located on it? In New Hampshire, nearly half of the people in the state live in or near its valley. The little Blackstone River is one of the best-harnessed streams in the country, and mill towns and manufacturing cities are located all along its banks.

On the map of New England, find the largest rivers of Maine and New Hampshire. These furnish power for the many manufacturing centers situated on them. They are the means, also, by which lumber is floated down from the forests to the sawmills, the paper and pulp mills, and other establishments.

The early settlers of New England were much influenced by the surface and the rivers of the region. Their first settlements were on the shore, where good harbors made landing easy and commerce with the homeland possible. Some of their