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History

In 1838, the Dace Farm, called Dacey Clearing, was located on the side of Lookout Mountain. Lunksoos Camp would later be built on the Dace site. The farm was the last outpost of civilization for travelers headed upriver into the Allagash wilderness. About a mile south of Dace Farm on the East Branch, William Hunt cleared land and built Hunt Farm. In the mid 1800s, the Hunt farmhouse was used as an inn by people traveling through the area.

Hunt's grandsons cleared the trail up to Mt. Katahdin that Henry David Thoreau used. It ran along Wassataquoik Stream, on the opposite side of the mountain from the Appalachian Trail, but, unfortunately, is no longer in use.

Henry David Thoreau



Transcendentalist and author Henry David Thoreau and artist Frederic Church each stayed at Hunt Farm during their travels in the "Ktaadn" region. During Thoreau's third trip to Maine in 1846, he traveled down the East Branch and on August 1, 1857, camped about a mile from where Lunksoos was built 24 years later.

The first Lunksoos Camp: an Inn

In 1881, one of the Katahdin Region's early settlers, C.R. Patterson, bought Dacey Clearing and built a road to it from Hunt Farm. That road is still here and is a gorgeous walk of about a mile along the river. Patterson built an inn at Dacey Clearing and named it Lunksoos after the Algonquian word lunkasoo, which means mountain lion.

During the 1890s Mr. Patterson leased out Lunksoos to Ayer and Rogers, a lumber company working along nearby Wassataquoik Stream. The team built the first large sporting (hunting and fishing) lodge here, and named it Lunksoos Camp.

Creating Baxter State Park

In 1920, Senator Baxter (Rep., Cumberland County, later Governor of Maine) advocated that the state create public parks from unproductive land. While on the train coming home from the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Baxter and the other Maine delegates heard lumberman Burton Howe of Patten extol the virtues of Mt. Katahdin as the place to form such a park.

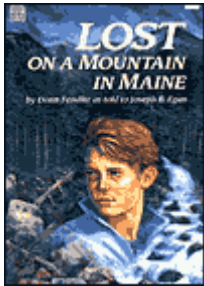
To prove his point about Katahdin to his colleagues, Howe led an expedition of politicians -- including Percival Baxter, businessmen, game wardens, newspaper and magazine editors and other state and local notables up the mountain. They all gathered at Lunksoos Camp, arriving on foot and by buckboard.

Mt. Katahdin in Baxter State Park, Maine

The group hiked to Katahdin from Lunksoos along the Wassataquoik Stream, the same route taken by Henry David Thoreau so many years earlier. They climbed what is now called Monument Peak, the Knife Edge, and Chimney Pond. When they came down, Baxter was committed to the concept of creating a park around Katahdin. He later purchased and donated the 200,000+ acres that became [Baxter State Park](#).

As the eagle flies, Lunksoos is about 13 miles from the peak of Mt. Katahdin, which is famous today as the start of the [Appalachian trail](#). We are proud that the group gathered here at Lunksoos before undertaking that historic expedition.

Donn Fendler: Lost on a Mountain



In 1939, Lunksoos Camp was the location of the rescue of then 12-year-old Donn Fendler of *Lost on a Mountain in Maine* fame. Mr. McMoarn, who managed Lunksoos Camps with his wife, spotted Donn collapsed yet waving to him from across the river. Donn had spent nine grueling days alone, hungry and bruised, struggling over Mt. Katahdin. He was brought across the East Branch to Lunksoos Camp, immediately cared for, and his parents contacted. Donn was brought down river in a canoe, hospitalized, and fully recovered his health.

Donn was lauded for his courage and persistence with a parade in Augusta, Maine, and with a visit with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Donn has graciously visited many schools and scout troops over the years, talking to the children about camping safety.

Recent times

During the 20th century Lunksoos Camp changed hands a few times and, from about the 1950s on, was leased to private parties for their personal use. In the 1990s the Camp was purchased by a Maine guide who added cabins exclusively for his hunters, and the name became Lunksoos Camps. In 2003 we reopened Lunksoos to the public, and are gradually becoming known as a great place to stay in the woods. Come see for yourself!

To learn more about Katahdin region history, we recommend:

- **In the Maine Woods**, Henry David Thoreau, Penguin Books, 1988.
- **Legacy of a Lifetime: The Story of Baxter State Park**, Dr. John W. Hakola, Baxter State Park Authority, TBW Books, 1981.
- **Lost on a Mountain in Maine**, Donn Fendler, William Morrow & Co., 1992.

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