Settlers Come to Baskahegan
The Baskahegan region was an arduous four to ten days upstream from the city of Bangor. Because of its remoteness, it wasn’t settled or lumbered heavily until the first half of the nineteenth century. By that time, there had been European families living permanently in Maine for two hundred years.

Like the Indian hunters before them, the original white settlers of Baskahegan used the Mattawamkeag/Baskahegan canoe route to access the dense, roadless wilderness. They usually arrived a single family at a time, to carve homesteads from forest. As they settled and established farms and lumbering operations, a whole new layer of place names was affixed to the landscape.

Places settled by Europeans have gone through many cycles of names. The first names given by explorers of the New World were often reminders of the country they had left behind, thus, New England. When the Revolutionary War won the independence of the Colonies from England, settlers renamed many places in patriotic spirit of the new nation. Washington County is but one example (there are, in fact 31 states with Washington Counties).

Many other places were named for locally prominent people and events. For example, Chief Joseph Tomah played an important role in helping American Colonists repel an English attack on Machias in 1777. It is in his honor that Tomah Mountain, Tomah Lake and Tomah Stream are named.

The region’s first permanent settlers were Thomas Gilpatrick, John Davenport, and Otis Smith. They came upriver in 1820, built rough dwellings, cleared land for fields, and named their settlement Baskahegan. Some years later, in 1835 the name was changed to Weston, the name of the first surveyor.

One of the first Baskahegan townships to be surveyed and sold at auction to farmers and timber investors was located along the water body now known as Crooked Brook Flowage. Early sources refer to this lake as Long Pond.

Another early land negotiation involved the site of present-day Danforth - named for Thomas Danforth who served as deputy governor of Massachusetts from 1679-1686, and was also appointed president of the Province of Maine when it was still a part of Massachusetts. In 1799, Danforth’s descendants petitioned the Massachusetts legislature over a land claims dispute, and were granted a half-township on the Baskahegan as part of the settlement. Though he never set foot from William Butterfield’s 1827 memoir: “June, 1827... I shouldered my pack and started to seek a Better Country and by way of Calais, Baring and Baileyville then entered in to the wilderness and steared for Baskahegan. Thomas Scribner came through with me he having a Brother then at Baskahegan we was about four days getting through the wilderness Thomas Gilpatrick Simon Scribner and John Davenport had made some small clearings at Baskahegan and lived there.”

Sing hey! for the route to Churchill lake, But oh, for the chap who twists the broke. His buckskin gloves will save the wear On his good stout palms, you know, but where Will he find relief when his throat is lame With the wrench of a yard long Indian name? ‘Tis something, friend, of a lingual trick To say “Seboois” and “Wassataquoik” “Lunksoos,” is tame and “Nessourdrehunk,” But what do you say to a verbal chunk To chew at once of the size of this “Pokumkes-wango-mok-kessis?” --Excerpted from “Board for the Allagash” by Holman F. Day, published in In and Around our Great Northern Wilderness, by Elinor Stevens Walker, (1968, Lisbon Falls, ME)