

at 5.15 a.m. every weekday, year-round. It arrives at the Village Green in Bar Harbor at 6.40. The tourist shops won't open for hours, but it's a good time of day to get breakfast at one of the two restaurants that cater to locals and to converse with some of the people who keep the engine of this famous resort town running.

Though the popular image of Bar Harbor is a tourist mecca full of crowds and traffic, it should come as no surprise that the town has embraced public transportation. Despite the glitz and kitsch, Bar Harbor may be one of Maine's most environmentally-conscious communities.

## HISTORY

Long before the Bar Harbor area had tourists, it had summer residents. For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, the Wabanaki people migrated seasonally from their inland homes to hunt and fish along Mount Desert Island's shores. The first documented European visit was by the Portuguese sailor Estevan Gomez, in the service of Spain, who charted the area in 1525. According to famed historian Samuel Eliot Morison, a summer resident of Mount Desert, the island first appeared on a European map in 1529.

A copy of this map was likely in the hands of Frenchman Samuel de Champlain, the explorer most closely associated with the island, when he coasted Maine in 1604. Arriving from the east, Champlain, according to Morison, spotted smoke from an encampment at Otter Creek, steered for it, and ran his ship aground on a ledge off Otter Cliffs, which today is marked by a bell buoy. He repaired his vessel, noted in his log that the island was "cleft into seven or eight mountains, all in a line." He named it "l'Isle des Monts-déserts," or "island of bare mountains."

The first French missionaries followed barely a decade later, and for the ensuing century and a half the area was contested between the French and the British. Though the Brits prevailed, the French left their names on many Bar Harbor landmarks, most notably the Sieur de Monts Spring, named after the French nobleman who was appointed governor of New France and was Champlain's patron. Not until the end of the French and Indian Wars in the 1760s was the island securely under British control, and at the end of the American Revolution it, along



Top: Bar Harbor was dotted with a few hotels, houses and churches, as shown in this 1880 picture. In the background are the Porcupine Islands in Frenchman Bay. Middle: The winding 3.5-mile Cadillac Mountain Road is paved today, but little else has changed since this souvenir view was taken around 1940. Bottom: A crowd of local people and summer visitors enjoys a Bar Harbor concert by the **Bangor and Chandler's** community bands in the summer of 1910.