

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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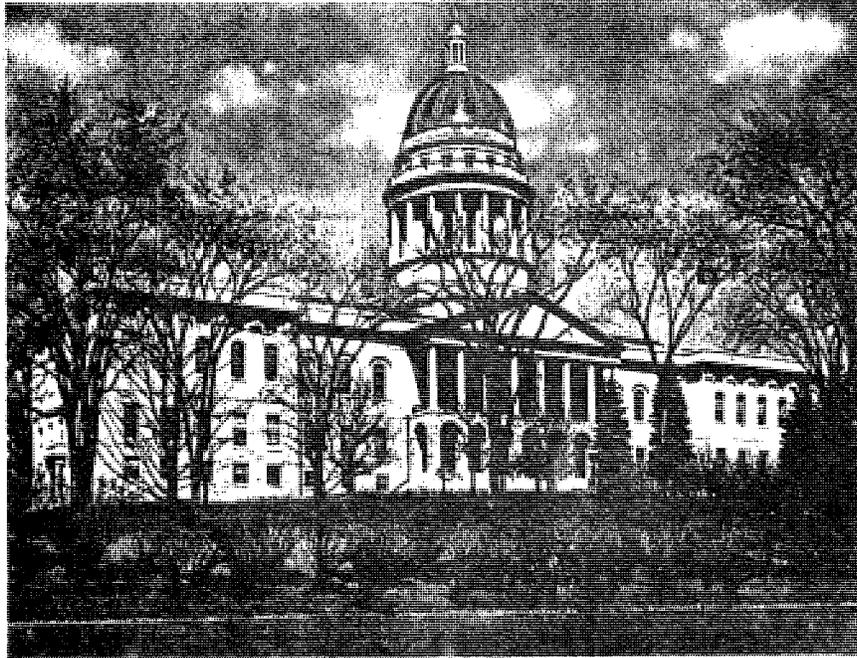
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Employment Series 1972

FARM LABOR  
AND  
RURAL MANPOWER REPORT



**MAINE**  
**1972**



*Annual report on farm labor and rural manpower services*

# MAINE

*The Pine Tree State*



236330

1972

F A R M L A B O R

AND

R U R A L M A N P O W E R R E P O R T

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AFFAIRS  
Employment Security Commission  
Published Under Appropriation No. 4444

1972

STATE OF MAINE

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

FARM LABOR

and

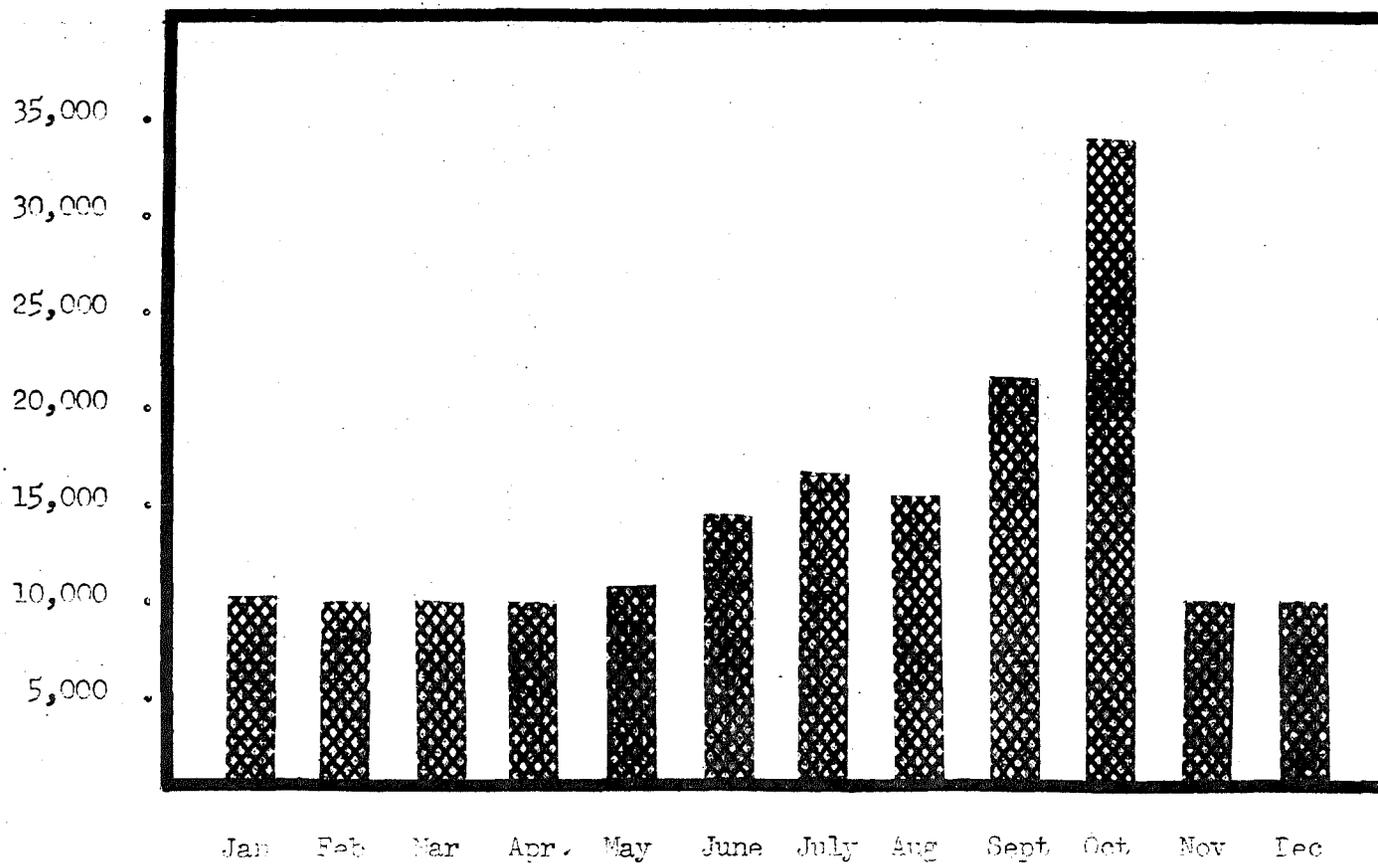
RURAL MANPOWER SERVICES

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AFFAIRS  
Employment Security Commission

JAMES C. SCHOENTHALER, Chairman

MAINE'S AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1972 BY MONTH



## FARM LABOR AND RURAL MANPOWER REPORT

### RURAL MANPOWER SERVICE

The two offices established in Maine's northernmost county, "Aroostook County", continue to efficiently serve the needs of rural inhabitants in the areas assigned. Although understaffed, the performances of these offices have more than justified their continued existence.

### MEETINGS

1. National Farm Labor Meeting, San Diego, California, January 1972.
2. Meeting with representatives of the Woods Industry regarding Wage Survey was held on October 3, 1972.
3. A training session for the Woods Wage Survey was held on October 12, 1972.
4. A meeting was held on June 7, 1972 for training on importation regarding the apple harvest.

### MAJOR CROPS

In order of importance, Maine's major agricultural crops consist of potatoes, apples, blueberries, and to a lesser extent corn, snapbeans, peas and hay.

It is estimated that commercial farming generates at least \$250,000,000 in the State of Maine. Of this total amount, potatoes and vegetables account for \$68,000,000.

There's No Substitute For Quality!



The Maine Department of Agriculture compliments the  
Maine Potato Commission for its Seal of Quality Program.

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Augusta, Maine

A. Potatoes

Because of weather and soil conditions typified by frequent rains, planting of the potato crop was approximately one week late. The growing season, however, although generally dry, was enhanced by timely showers which provided sufficient moisture for continued growth to maturity.

Total acreage amounted to 135,000 acres, seven percent less than the 145,000 acres during 1971 and the lowest in twenty-one years. Total production is estimated at 33,280 hundredweight, twelve percent below the 1971 production and the smallest since 1954.

Mechanical potato harvesters currently numbering at least 1,250 accounted for at least sixty-five percent of the potatoes harvested. The air principal harvester (vacuum type) although expensive is becoming more popular because of its more efficient performance and the accompanying fifty percent reduction in labor requirements.

By the end of October, approximately 5,000 acres of potatoes remained in the ground. Because of the onset of rain and extremely cold weather, these 5,000 acres were lost. Considering the fact that an average of 150 barrels is harvested per acre, this amounts to a loss of 550,000 barrels or translated otherwise 907,500 hundredweight, a serious loss. \*

During 1972, a total labor force of 19,912 workers were employed in the Aroostook County Potato Harvest as depicted below:

Local Adults, Male and Female	4,500
School Youth	14,500
Indians (Canadian and American)	400
Bonded Canadians, Male and Female	512
Total labor force	<u>19,912</u>

1. Aroostook County Survey for Supplemental Harvest Labor

During the period of July 10 through July 13, a labor survey was conducted in Aroostook County to determine the requirements for supplemental Canadian labor.

\* New England Crop Reporting Service November 1, 1972

A total of 54 growers were contacted and the results are as follows:

	<u>Ordered 1971</u>	<u>Ordered 1972</u>
Pickers	908	587
Barrel Handlers	127	83
Machine Operators	30	3
Cooks	20	17
Total	<u>1085</u>	<u>690</u>

2. Processing Plants

In line with rapidly changing consumer taste, more and more potatoes are being diverted to processing plants. This fact is graphically depicted by the following chart:

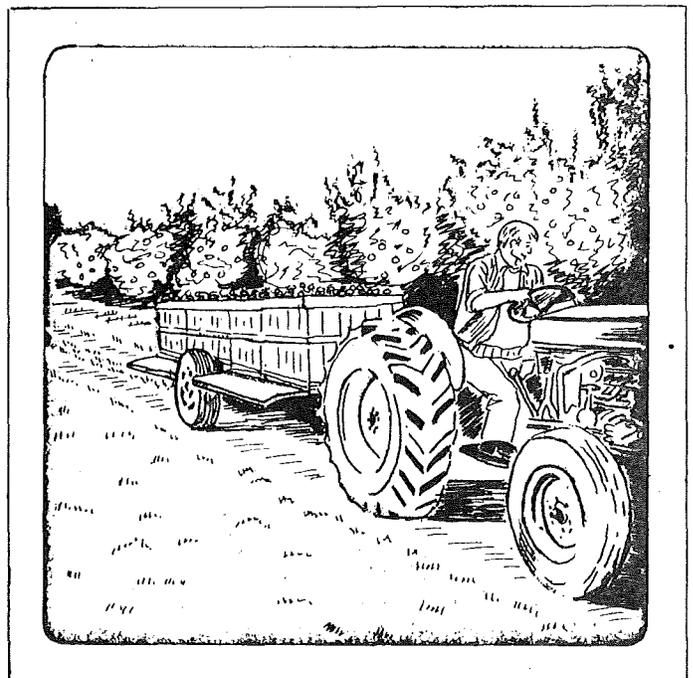
PROCESSING OF MAINE POTATOES BY MAINE PLANTS 1963-1972  
(Excluding chips and pre-peeled sold fresh)  
(1,000 Cwt.)

<u>To December 1</u>	<u>Food</u>	<u>Starch</u>	<u>Total</u>
1963	1,545	371	1,916
1964	2,216	218	2,436
1965	3,225	365	3,590
1966	2,521	102	2,623
1967	2,462	239	2,701
1968	2,925	107	3,032
1969	3,153	230	3,383
1970	3,508	203	3,711
1971	3,141	421	3,562
1972	2,890	398	3,288



MAINE'S APPLE HARVEST  
OCCURS DURING THE  
LATTER PART OF AUGUST  
THROUGH SEPTEMBER

TYPICAL SCENE OF APPLES  
BEING HAULED TO STORAGE



B. Apples

Although there are fewer orchardists today, they produce in excess of 2,000,000 bushels of apples annually including McIntosh, Delicious, Golden Delicious, Cortland and Northern Spy varieties. Improved regular storage and Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage extend the eating season from harvest to harvest for these top quality apples. There are many young trees coming into bearing and still more being planted, all of which guarantees a plentiful and increasing supply of good Maine apples.

Despite the fact that the unemployment rate during the 1972 harvest was running at slightly in excess of six percent, Maine's 167 orchardists had difficult problems in securing native workers in sufficient numbers to harvest their \$5,000,000 apple crop. A total of 378 bonded Canadians, 50 British West Indians, and 17 bonded Dutch exchange agronomy students were employed in the apple harvest.

The crop was of average quality but because of weather, did not properly size. Hail storms were another factor in the reduction of the crop. Because of these conditions, the number of bushels produced was not as great as that of 1971.

Maine is the biggest apple producing state in New England today, but according to the University of Maine Extension Service, states like New York, Connecticut, and even Michigan have one advantage -- labor. Those states employ migrant labor -- American pickers. Because those states raise many crops, migrant labor can come into the Hudson River Valley, for example, and stay, picking cherries, then peaches or beans and then the apple crop. But Maine has only two big crops requiring pickers -- apples and potatoes; and both are harvested at about the

same time during September and October. Therefore, migrant pickers do not come to Maine due to the short picking season.

C. Berries

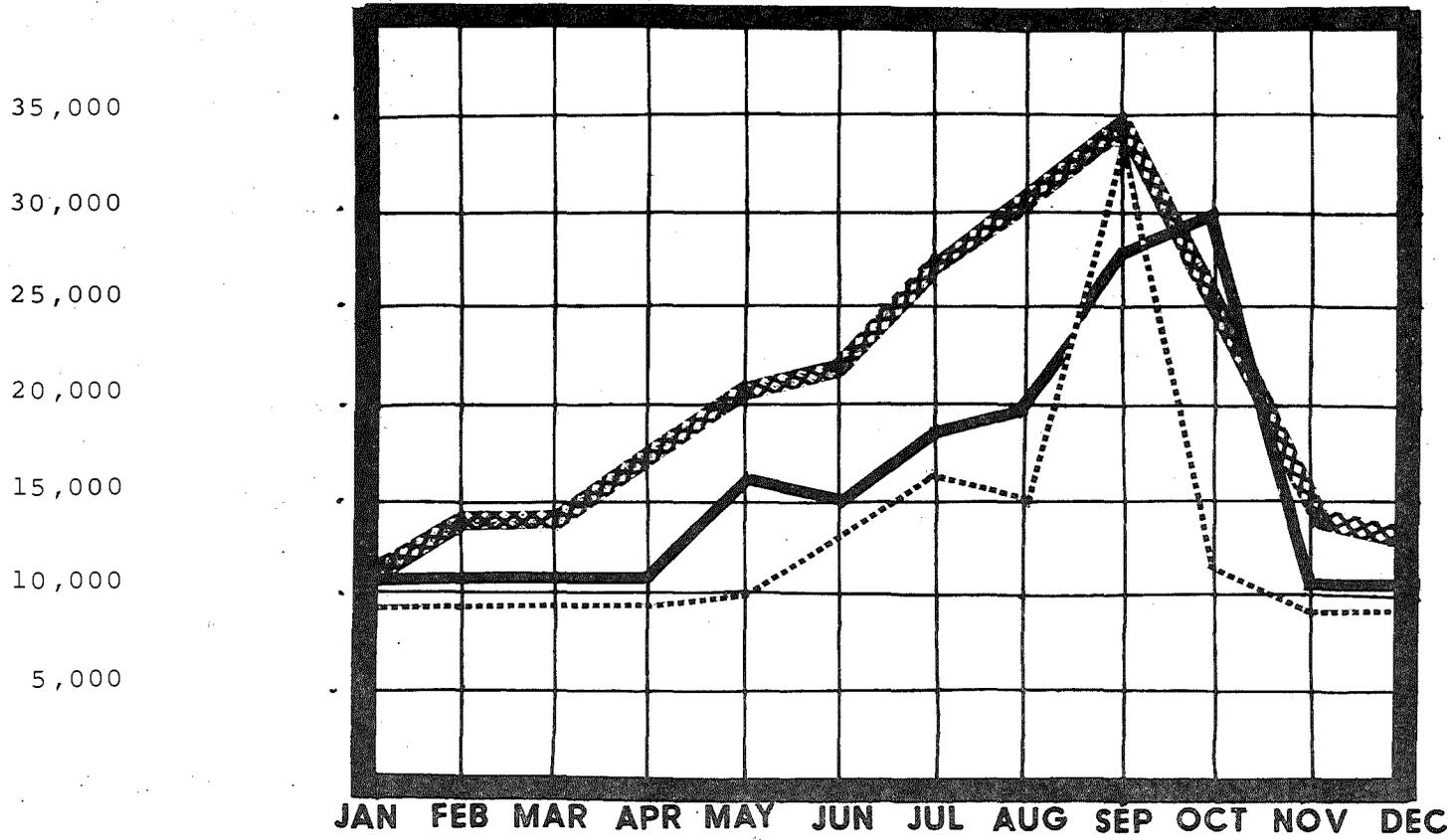
According to reports, this year's blueberry crop was of excellent quality with the size ranging from medium to large. The 1972 blueberry crop is reported at approximately 23 million pounds, up from the 19,154,000 pounds produced in 1971. As is the case with potatoes, a substantial portion of the blueberry crop goes to processing plants.

D. Market Gardens

Twenty years ago, there was approximately fifty market gardeners operating in the Cape Elizabeth area. One by one, these gardeners have dropped out. When a grower finds himself in financial difficulties, it is easy for him to sell land for housing development purposes. As a direct result of this reduction in market gardens, the Portland Day-Haul, once a well organized program, has entirely disappeared from the scene. Those gardeners that are left have a built-in labor force in the nearby housing developments.

MAINE'S AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

1962 - 1967 - 1972 BY MONTH



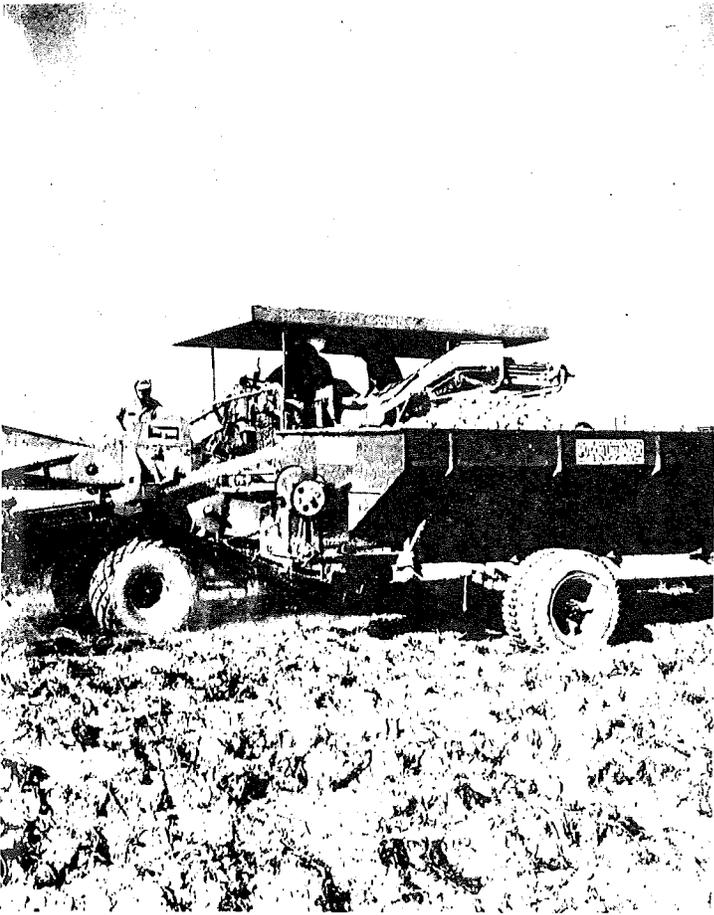
EFFECT OF MECHANIZATION AND ITS POSSIBLE FUTURE EFFECT ON LABOR REQUIREMENTS

The majority of Maine's crops at the present time are fully mechanized thus greatly reducing the number of workers required to harvest the various crops.

Although a prototype blueberry harvester has been developed by the University of Maine, it is reasonable to expect that it will be some time before this crop becomes mechanized.

Apples, particularly the delicate MacIntosh variety, still defy mechanization. To the best of our knowledge, a prototype mechanical harvester has not yet been developed.

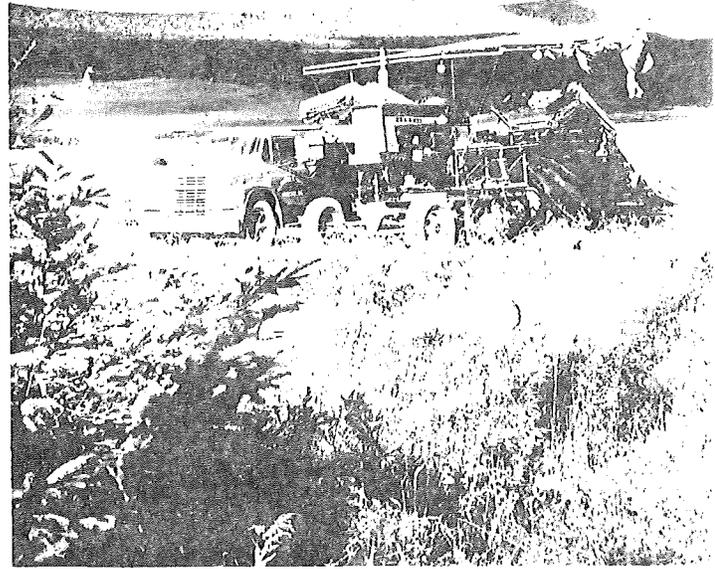




**THINGS HAVE CHA**



**NGED IN 25 YEARS**



## 1972 AGRICULTURAL WAGE SURVEYS

### A. Potatoes

Prevailing wage findings were made for six categories of potato harvest workers. The crop activities and their respective wage findings are as follows:

<u>Crop Activity</u>	<u>Wage Finding</u>
Potato Pickers	\$0.30 per bbl.
Truck Drivers	\$2.00 per hr.
Barrel Handlers	\$2.00 per hr.
Potato House Workers	\$2.00 per hr.
Tractor & Equipment Operators	\$2.00 per hr.
Harvester Machine Workers	\$1.85 per hr.

### B. Apples

The 1972 Apple Wage Survey was conducted from September 18th through the 29th. The principal counties in which farmers are engaged in commercial apple production are Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford, Somerset and York, all located in southern and western Maine. The survey was conducted mainly in these areas and wage findings were made for two crop activities.

1. Spot Picking (picking on a selective basis according to size, color, etc.)
2. Strip Picking (picking all the fruit on the tree at one time.)

During this year's survey, 43 employers were found to have 508 workers spot picking, and 14 employers had 160 workers strip picking. The prevailing wage rate for both activities was found to be thirty cents per bushel.

## AGRICULTURAL REPORTING AREAS

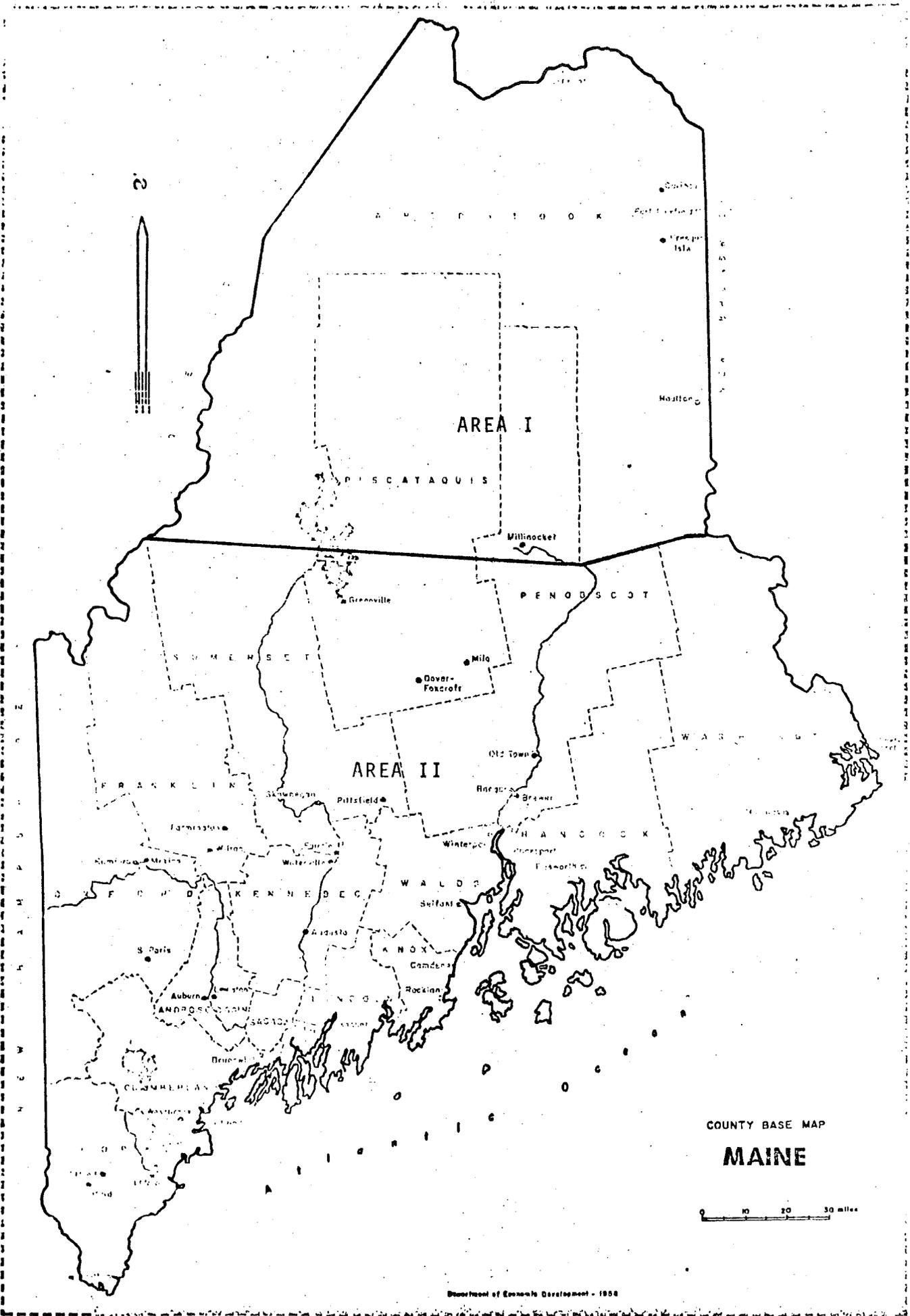
Our two reporting areas, as depicted on the attached map, are defined as follows:

Area I: All of Aroostook County and parts of Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Somerset Counties.

Area II: From the United States Boundary in Forest City, Washington County, following the County line through Danforth and the Aroostook County line to the Penobscot River and Route #157 in Penobscot County, due west to Norcross in Penobscot; due west to Lily Bay in Piscataquis County to Jackman in Somerset County.

## PEAK HARVEST PERIODS

Area I:	(See area map)	
	Potato Planting and Care	May 1 through Sept. 15
	Potato Harvest	Sept. 15 through Oct. 25
Area II:	(see area map)	
	Market Gardens	May 1 through Oct. 15
	Strawberry Harvest	July 1 through Aug. 1
	Blueberry Raking	July 15 through Sept. 1
	Apple Harvest	Sept. through Oct. 30



COUNTY BASE MAP  
**MAINE**

0 10 20 30 miles

Department of Economic Development - 1958



SELECTED DATA ON FARM PLACEMENT OPERATIONS

I T E M	N U M B E R
<b>SECTION A. DAY-HAUL ACTIVITIES AT POINTS OPERATED BY STATE AGENCY</b>	
1. Towns with day-haul points . . . . .	1
2. Number of day-haul points . . . . .	12
3. Sum of days day-haul points operated during year . . . . .	250
4. Total number of workers transported during year . . . . .	2000
<b>SECTION B. SELECTED SERVICES TO SCHOOL-AGE WORKERS (under 22 years)</b>	
5. Supervised camps <u>operated</u> for school-age farm workers . . . . .	NA.
a. Placements in camps . . . . .	NA.
6. Placements of school-age workers in supervised live-in farm homes . . . . .	NA.
<b>SECTION C. SERVICES TO INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS</b>	
7. Rendered by on-reservation local offices or at itinerant points	
a. Farm placements . . . . .	NA.
b. Applicant-holding acceptances . . . . .	NA.
8. Other farm placements of reservation Indians . . . . .	NA.
<b>SECTION D. OTHER SELECTED DATA</b>	
9. Number of local offices which hold farm clinics . . . . .	NA.
10. Sum of days on which farm clinics were held . . . . .	NA.
11. Total number of local offices participating in formal community service programs . . . . .	NA.
12. Peak number of volunteer farm placement representatives . . . . .	NA.

SIGNATURE

*Fulton B. Weed*

TITLE

Manager

COMPOSITION OF INTERSTATE FARM MIGRANT GROUPS

SECTION A. MIGRANT GROUP CONTACTS			SECTION B. REPORTING STATE'S RESIDENTS		SECTION C. GROUPS WORKING IN REPORTING STATE	
I TYPE	II BY REPORTING STATE	III WITH REPORTING STATE'S RESIDENTS	I TYPE	II NUMBER	I TYPE	II NUMBER
1. Total			2. Total persons		4. Families	
a. Crew leaders			3. Total workers		5. Unattached males	
b. Family heads					6. Unattached females	
c. Other						

SECTION D. COMMENTS

N. A.

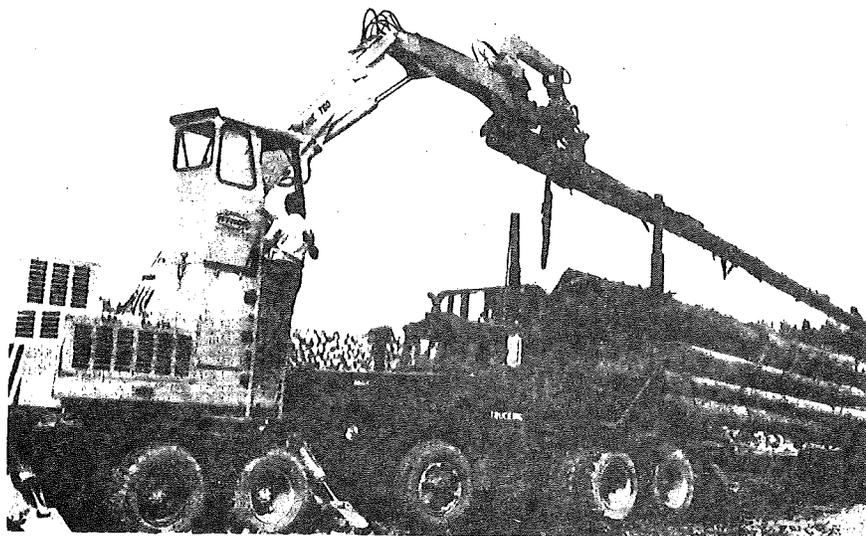
SIGNATURE  
*Fulton B. Wood*

TITLE  
 Supervisor



## PULPWOOD AND LOGGING INDUSTRY

Due to a change in the Unemployment Compensation Law during 1972, the Employer Register File now lists 556 logging and pulpwood operators in the State of Maine. The increase from 300 to the above figure is accounted for by employers employing one or more workers. Approximately 90 of the larger employers use between 1600 and 1700 bonded Canadian woodsmen. Although precise figures are not available, a substantial number of visa Canadians are also employed in the logging and pulpwood industry. Of interest is the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit men both in the United States and Canada as more and more of the youth are being attracted to industrial jobs. Again, approximately two hundred housing inspections were accomplished during the 1972 season. This figure includes both farm and woods housing.



UNLOADING TREE LENGTH LOGS WITH HOE BOOM