

Chapter 6

VALLEYS OF LAKE GEORGE AND WOOD CREEK

The Champlain and Hudson valleys are connected by three narrow defiles beginning on the west with that of Lake George; next east comes that of the southern end of Lake Champlain via South Bay; then that of the Wood creek depression. These depressions, evidently preglacial, have been more or less modified by glacial erosion and deposition. For a time after the ice disappeared from these defiles, water appears to have stood over all but the highest of the cols (Harrisina hollow), on the eastern base of French mountain at the southern end of Lake George.

Lake George. The narrow valley occupied by Lake George is heavily choked with glacial drift at the southern end. The deposits from the ruins of old Fort William Henry southward along the old military road past Bloody pond bespeak deposition in front of a mass of ice filling the lake valley. Subsequent waters appear not to have risen as high as Bloody pond, a kettle hole in the drift, at an elevation of nearly 570 feet above sea level. The more open pass at the east base of French mountain appears to have been the line of the main preglacial valley. This pass is called Harrisina hollow on Fitch's map of 1850. There are here two apparently water-swept passages one at 393, the other at 349 feet in elevation.

Professor Kemp has called attention to the islands in Lake George as indications of an old divide, from which he infers that a stream once flowed north in the northern part of the lake and one south in the southern part, glacial deposition at both ends having brought about the existing ponding of the waters.

In the diagram, plate 28, it will be seen that the upper stages of glacial waters in this area following the retreat of the ice entered the northern part of the lake but the Harrisina channels could not have controlled the height of any but those preglacial lakes which may have existed in the Lake George valley prior to the melting out of the ice from its northern end, for the reason that lower passes exist to the east in the Whitehall district.

No detailed examination of the valley was made in the present survey either for the history of the ice retreat or for shore lines.