

ENDNOTE 10

A MODERN USE OF THE *ROCKAMEECOOK* NAME

There is a **modern** use of the name **Rockameecook** for a shoreside neighborhood on Sebago Lake, off Route 35, at the very end of Thomas Road, in Standish, just southwest of St. Joseph uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposures College (which is on White's Bridge Road). A resident of that neighborhood tells me that he was told that the R-name supposedly means *sun on the water* or *bright water*. Inasmuch as I am not an Algonquian-linguistics specialist, I can say only *No Comment*. However, I am aware of two supposedly *expert* translations of Rocameca: 1) *hoe-land* or *hoeing-place*; 2) *at the land upstream*. Together they might just mean *garden-land upstream*. In any case, it's rather dull stuff, and certainly seems applicable to more than just one location in the Dawnland (a.k.a. Wabanakia / Wabanakiak).

The bottom-line is that Indian place-names are far more difficult to decipher than almost anyone ever expects them to be, for a number of reasons. Unless there has been continuity of residence & land-use by the Natives, even the Native oral traditions of the names of places probably have changed over time. Even speakers of the supposedly relevant Native languages often cannot decipher what Euramericans have written down as what they thought that they heard the *Old Names* were, because of **dialect-changes** over time on **both** sides, Natives and Newcomers alike. In the Colonial Period, the great variety of written versions of the supposedly-same name is striking. Not only did Frenchmen hear & write them differently than Englishmen did, but differences in regional dialects and occupational training led Frenchmen to differ among themselves, and Englishmen among themselves. What we are left with today may be impossible to decode, meaningfully. And, of course, if the mystery does translate at all, it may be to something so mundane as to lose charm totally.