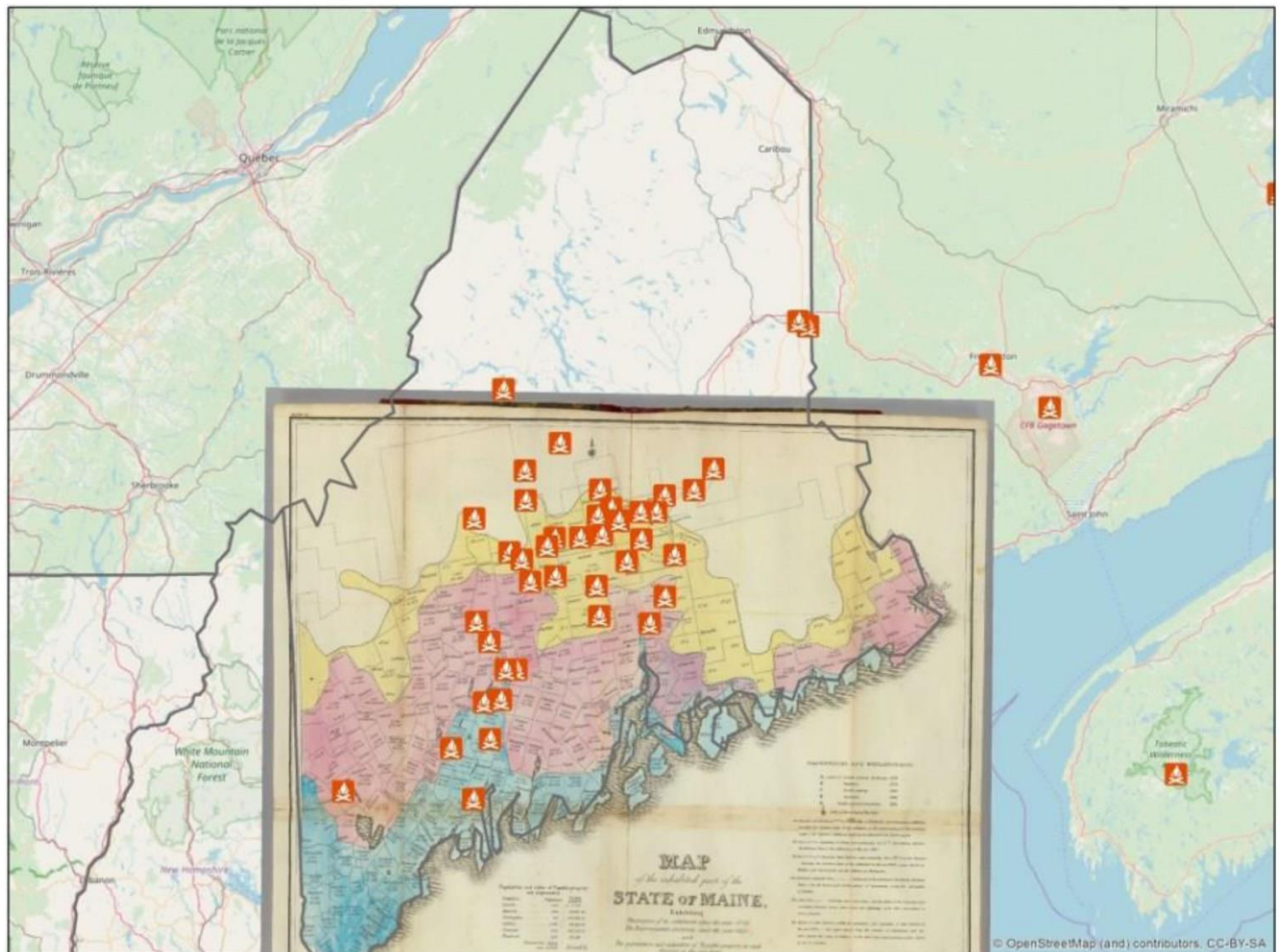


Incident Summary Page for the 100 Fires Project

Incident Name: The Great Miramichi Fire	Incident Date & Time: 10/07/1825
Incident Location: Maine and New Brunswick	Incident Size: 3,000,000 acres (estimated)
Type of resources involved: Civilian pioneers	# of Fatalities/injuries: 160 fatalities (some estimates are higher)
Reasons this fire was selected for the 100 Fires list:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fire is historically significant ➤ Civilian mass casualty event 	
Conditions leading up to the event:	
The exact cause of the fire was never determined and, at this distance in time, is unknowable. But extreme weather ensured the fire's apocalyptic size and rapid spread. A prolonged heat wave in eastern North America had spilled into the fall of 1825; by that October, the region's parched forests were baking under what one newspaper termed "the burning sun of a second summer." With even one spark, hurricane-strength winds were enough to do the rest.	
Brief description of the event:	
In October of 1825 a series of fires burned through more than three million acres in Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. A surfacing gale force wind on October 7 pushed many of the fires together and through scattered communities and logging camps without warning. It is estimated that the fires covered a swath of almost 100 miles before ceasing to burn. At least 800,000 of those acres burned in Maine destroying great swaths of forest. Though largely forgotten today, the collective blaze is one of the largest fires in North American recorded history.	
Fire behavior factors that were present during the event:	
Long duration drought. Gale force wind exceeding 60 mph.	
Operational lessons available for learning from this incident:	
Not applicable	
Notable impact or historical significance for the wildland fire service from this incident:	
Early example of the conflict between human activity and wildland fire. Early example of mega-fire phenomena.	
Links to more information on this incident:	
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1825_Miramichi_fire https://foresthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FHT_2020_MacEachern_Firebreak_Miramichi_Fire.pdf https://www.lcgsc.org/the-great-miramichi-fire/	
Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>The Miramichi Fire: A History</i> ~ by Alan MacEachern 	
Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FxQOG6zHNA&t=449s 	
The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center offers an excellent site which provides information on many wildland incidents. Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center's Incident Review Database (IRDB) (wildfire.gov)	
This summary page was provided by: Jim Cook & Kurt La Rue	September 2023

Incident Summary Page for the 100 Fires Project

The standard estimate is that 3400 square kilometres burned in central and eastern Maine that day, making it the most extensive fire in the state's history. Author Alan MacEachern researched contemporary Maine newspapers and diaries for references to where the fire raged, compiled them in the Google map below, and overlaid them on an 1829 map documenting the northward spread of white settlement in the state. The map's yellow band represents places first settled between 1800 and 1820, so it is clear that the fire centered on recently settled or largely unsettled areas. Because remote locales contain fewer potential witnesses, and fewer newspapers to witness to, we may reasonably wonder if the fire's range was actually underreported, and burned unobserved in other parts of the 1829 map's blank northern portions, or beyond it.



Reports of forest fires in Maine on & around 7 October 1825, overlaid on Moses Greenleaf map "Maine, inhabited part," 1829, courtesy of David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, goo.gl/jrVuy4. Thanks to Josh MacFadyen for assistance with this.