



Vermont

Swanton Harbor Navigation Project

Swanton Harbor in Swanton is located in Maquam Bay, which indents the eastern shore of Lake Champlain and is seven miles south of the United States-Canada border.

The project consists of a 300-foot-long breakwater and has an interesting history. In 1872, officials from the Portland and Ogdensburgh Railroad Company informed the Corps of Engineers that the company would be expanding into Swanton Harbor and constructing depot buildings and wharves in the harbor's upper end. After a survey, the Corps recommended the construction of a breakwater in the upper harbor to protect the railroad company's proposed buildings and other anticipated business development in the upper harbor. It was suggested by the Corps that the breakwater be constructed in sections; as harbor development grew, the breakwater would be extended to protect additional commerce. To completely protect the proposed structures in the upper harbor that the Portland and Ogdensburgh Railroad Company planned to build, the Corps calculated that the breakwater should have a final length of 1,900 feet.

Initial construction of the breakwater began in the mid 1870s. When the railroad company expanded into Swanton Harbor in 1877, however, its buildings were constructed in the lower harbor, far removed from any protection provided by the breakwater in the upper harbor. Although the first section of breakwater, 300 feet long, was completed in 1883, the railroad company's change of business location made the matter of extending the breakwater questionable, since the structure at that time was not protecting any development.

During the ensuing years, anticipated commerce failed to materialize and the breakwater was not extended. No commerce has been reported in the harbor since 1889.



Aerial view of Swanton Harbor, Swanton, Vt., which is located in Maquam Bay, which indents the eastern shore of Lake Champlain and is seven miles south of the United States-Canada border. (Click photo for high-resolution version)

