

Chapter 2

The Manuscript

This hand written, bound book manuscript, dated 1869, was written by John K. DeLaski, M. D. and presented to The Portland Society of Natural History in Portland, Maine, probably between 1871 and his death in 1874, presumably for publication by the Society. Sometime in 1923 the manuscript was typed and submitted for review by Dr. Arthur Norton, Secretary of the Society. At that time it was deemed to be out of date and of very little scientific value. The original book manuscript and the typed version were returned to the Society's collection, and were not seen again until 1972.

In 1972 the trustees of the Portland Society of Natural History voted themselves out of existence. Subsequently, the Maine Audubon Society presided over the disposal of the museum building and its contents; the rather unorganized dispersal of its eclectic collections and an exceptionally large and valuable library. The building, on Elm Street in Portland was sold, then demolished and replaced by a paved parking lot.

The University of Maine in Presque Isle was the recipient of a wide assortment of items from the collection , including some books. Professor William Forbes, since deceased, transferred several truck loads of material to Presque Isle. Subsequently, several books dealing with glaciers were given by Professor Forbes to Professor Harold W. Borns, Jr., a glacial geologist at the University of Maine in Orono, for his interest and disposal. Included in the books given to Professor Borns was the handwritten and bound 700 page book manuscript, dated 1869, entitled "Foot Steps of the Ancient Great Glacier of North America" by a member of the Portland Natural History Society (John K. DeLaski). The manuscript currently resides with Professor Emeritus Harold W. Borns Jr. and Professor Kirk Allen Maasch of the University of Maine.

PHILIP W. MESERVE
BRUNSWICK, MAINE

September 8, 1923.

Mr. Arthur H. Norton,
Portland Society of Natural History,
22 Elm Street,
Portland, Maine.

Dear Mr. Norton:-

I am returning to you by American Express the manuscript of "Foot-Steps of the Ancient Great Glacier of North America" by John DeLaski. I have gone over the manuscript thoroughly and it seems to me that expense of publishing such a book greatly out of proportion to its value. The manuscript contains some interesting and valuable data: I doubt if much of it could be called an important contribution to our present day knowledge of the geology of Maine. The manuscript is of more interest as an historical than a scientific document,

Yours very truly,

Philip W. Meserve.

Foot Steps of the Ancient Great Glacier of North
America

A Long Lost Document of a Revolution in 19th Century
Geological Theory

Borns, Jr, H.W.; Maasch, K.A.

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