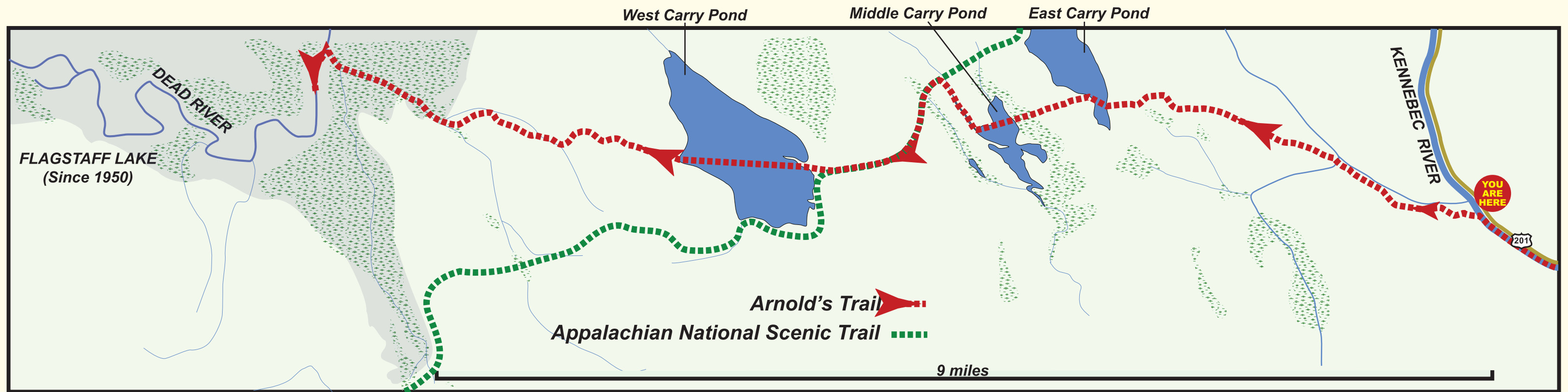


THE GREAT CARRYING PLACE



For thousands of years Native Americans traveling between Quebec and the Kennebec River region used a ten mile carry including three ponds to shorten the trip. Though it required steep climbing, the carry shortened the trip by 25 miles and allowed them to avoid treacherous whitewater where the Dead and Kennebec Rivers collided.

In 1775, a small Revolutionary War army of about 1,100 soldiers led by Colonel Benedict Arnold and under orders from General George Washington, traveled up the Kennebec River to capture the British stronghold of Quebec City. To pass along this water route they used 220 wooden boats called bateaux which could carry about four or five men plus the many tons of food and supplies needed.

Here, they left the Kennebec River, now swollen by the impoundment known as Wyman Lake. The small cove on the opposite shore is the mouth of Carrying Place Stream marking the beginning of the Great Carrying Place.

It was a terrible trail ascending over the high ridge you see before you. They had to torturously carry each 400 pound bateaux and tons of food and equipment. Some men had to make five or six trips. The elevation rose by nearly one thousand feet before reaching the Dead River. The route continued northward through the Chain of Ponds into what is now Canada, near Lac Megantic.

About 600 soldiers made it through the wilderness, encountering horrendous storms, flooding, disease and starvation before reaching the St. Lawrence River across from Quebec City. While their attack on the heavily fortified city of Quebec failed, this campaign continued until 1777 with the great American victory at Saratoga, in Northern New York which resulted in the defeat and capture of an entire British army and recognition of the American cause by the French government.

