

Northern Maine, 1873.
Our story begins...

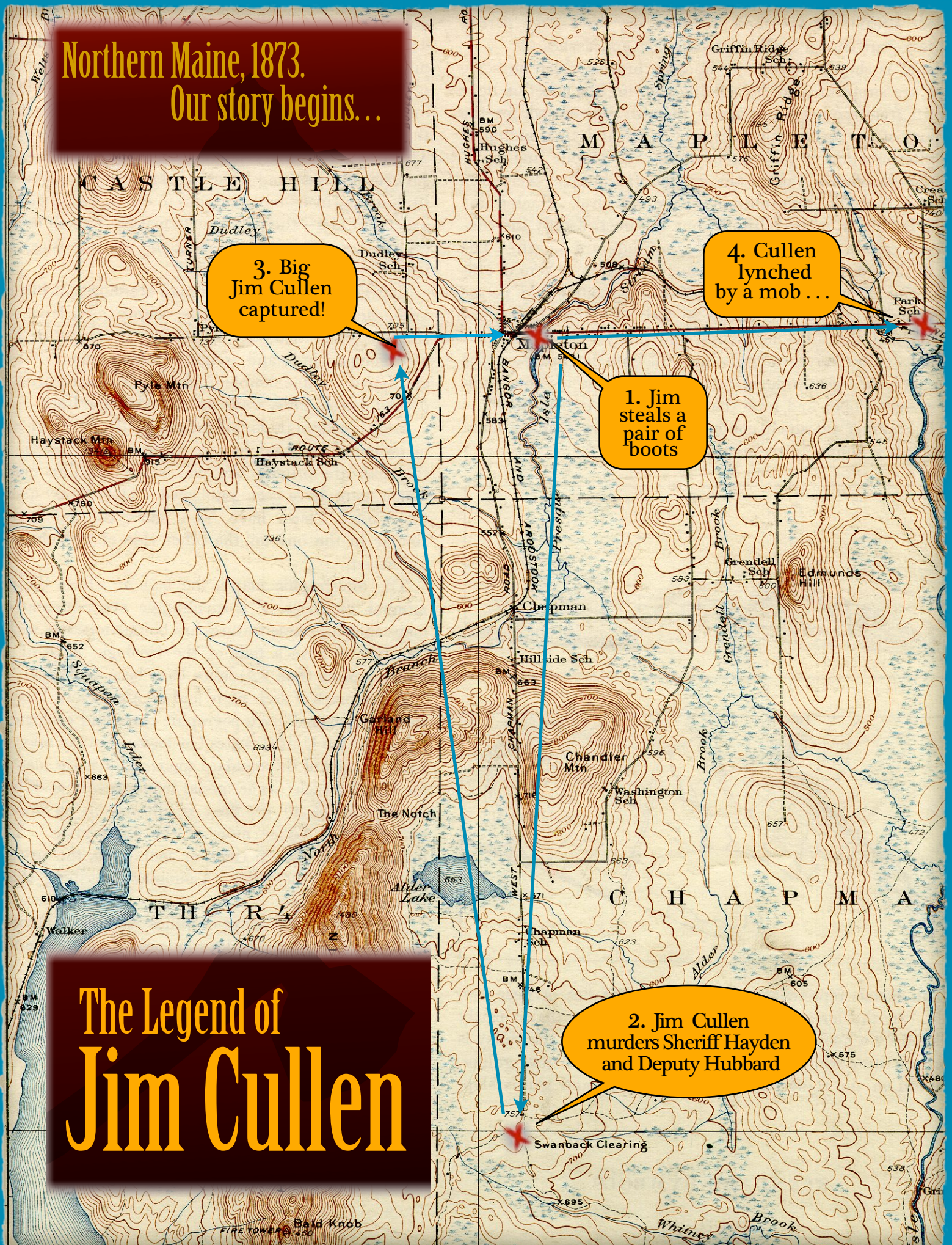
3. Big
Jim Cullen
captured!

4. Cullen
lynched
by a mob...

1. Jim
steals a
pair of
boots

2. Jim Cullen
murders Sheriff Hayden
and Deputy Hubbard

The Legend of Jim Cullen



The Story

In 1873, Jim Cullen leaves his family farm in Peel, New Brunswick and walks to Ball's Mills (now Mapleton) to find work between the lumber seasons.

Cullen lives in a tiny shack with his wife, Rosellah, and their child in Castle Hill, just above Mapleton, on the road to Ashland. Times are difficult, Jim is ill equipped to support a family and begins to steal for a living. In the late winter, Rosellah, takes up with a newcomer, Hubbard, and they throw Jim out of the house. Cullen, in a fit of anger, breaks into the general store, and steals a pair of boots, with the intent to walk home and leave Aroostook County behind.

When the robbery of Dave Dudley's store is discovered, Sheriff Granville Hayden is called from Presque Isle to track down the culprit. He deputizes Hubbard, and with his horse minder, a young man named Minot Bird, they track Cullen to Chapman on a black night, in an ice storm. Cullen, hunkered down in the hut of a grizzled old hermit named Swembeck, is confronted by the Sheriff and they agree to let Cullen go in the morning, take the boots, and not return to Mapleton.

In the night, Cullen rises up and murders the Sheriff and Hubbard. Minot Bird and Swembeck plead for their lives, help Cullen burn the shack and bodies, and escape the scene at dawn, running eight miles bare foot over the ice and snow. Cullen, delirious and confused, rushed back to his former home, where Rosellah hides him till a posse comes to capture him and take him to the general store, where he is tied up and a plan is made to take him to Presque Isle.

In the mid-evening, fearing a revengeful mob, the town fathers hustle Jim into a wagon and head for Presque Isle, but just inside the town line, he meets his fate at the hands of a hooded mob, mostly Sheriff Hayden's friends and fellow Masons. Jim is lynched and his body is carried to Presque Isle, where an inquisition follows.

Later, Luther Bateman, a newspaperman and phrenologist, arrives in town and exhumes Jim's body in order to study his skull. He keeps it for the purposes of lecturing for many years.

The story of Jim Cullen has been passed down for 140 years. With the aid of many writers and researchers, as well as versions in the oral tradition, the story is ready to be dramatized and set to music. *The Legend of Jim Cullen* is a unique presentation of this material.