

LONGWOOD GARDENS

Read the 1949 article from National Geographic that inspired Emma Gatewood to hike the Appalachian Trail

“She first laid eyes on the trail in a doctor’s office back home, inside a discarded National Geographic from August 1949, and the nineteen-page spread with color photographs was a window to another place. The photos showed a bear cub clinging to a tree by a trail blaze, shirtless men scrambling up lichen-speckled boulders above the tree line in Maine, teenaged hikers atop rocks at Sherburne Pass in Vermont, hikers on an overlook at Grandeur Peak, a “girl hiker” inching through a crevice near Bear Mountain in New York...The old woman had been captivated.”

Montgomery, Ben. *Grandma Gatewood's Walk : The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail*. Chicago, IL, USA: Chicago Review Press, 2014.



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THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

AUGUST, 1949

Our Vegetable Travelers

With 5 Illustrations
32 Paintings

VICTOR R. BOSWELL
ELSE BOSTELMANN

Skyline Trail from Maine to Georgia

With 15 Illustrations and Map
16 Natural Color Photographs

ANDREW H. BROWN
ROBERT F. SISSON

Gilbert Grosvenor's Golden Jubilee

With 9 Illustrations
Portrait

ALBERT W. ATWOOD
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With 7 Illustrations and Map
19 Natural Color Photographs

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Appalachian Trail Hikers Step Through the Gate to a Natural History "Life Class"

Plants and animals, as well as geology and history of the region, are displayed at Bear Mountain, on the New York stretch of the A. T. Youngsters registering in this section of Palisades Interstate Park receive a tag and a booklet teaching respect for nature and park property. Five tags win them a silver Park Ranger badge.

Skyline Trail from Maine to Georgia

BY ANDREW H. BROWN

Illustrations by National Geographic Photographer Robert F. Sisson

ON AUGUST 5, 1948, a certain shoe manufacturer missed the chance of a lifetime. He should have been on a bleak mountaintop to greet a tired but happy hiker in ragged footwear.

The weary walker was Earl V. Shaffer of York, Pennsylvania. On that day he reached the summit of Mount Katahdin, in central Maine.

Thousands had preceded Shaffer to that rocky pinnacle. But he had just walked more than 2,000 miles over the full length of the Appalachian Trail. He had left Mount Oglethorpe, Georgia, on April 4. He was the first, so far as the record shows, to traverse that Olympian footpath in a single continuous journey.

I asked the redoubtable hiker how many pairs of shoes he wore out in four months of "hoofing it" over rock and rubble, on leaf mold and pine needles, through swamp and stream bed.

"One pair of boots lasted the whole way," he replied. "But they were in tatters at the end."

Long, Long Trail A-winding

On his long walk Shaffer's durable shoes tickled the mountain backbone of the eastern United States. He spent 123 nights on the trail, several of them in fire towers. Traveling alone, he averaged 17 miles a day.

The only "enemies" Shaffer met were two copperheads and a rattlesnake. In his light pack he carried food, spare clothing, and a poncho. He slept when possible in lean-tos and ate corn bread he cooked in a pan.

The Appalachian Trail, popularly the "A. T.," is a public pathway that rates as one of the seven wonders of the outdoorsman's world.

Over it you may "hay foot, straw foot" from Mount Katahdin, with Canada on the horizon, to Mount Oglethorpe, which commands the distant lights of Atlanta (map, pages 222-3). Of course the route may be reversed.

On this fabulous footway you will sometimes cross a road or railroad, skirt a town, or cut through a farmer's fields. Most of the way, though, you'll be far from man and his works. In more than 2,000 miles of mountain-hopping through 14 States, eight national forests, and two national parks, the

Trail ties together long stretches of utter wilderness.

When I set out to see the Trail, I adopted a more modest plan than Mr. Shaffer's. I visited the high spots of interest and elevation, by-passing less noteworthy parts by car. On my north-to-south trek I still saw plenty of choice mileage at first hand from the vantage of my own two feet.

A Parade of Peaks and Ranges

Along the Trail peaks and ranges in a mighty parade hunch their great shoulders skyward.

What a majestic sweep of high country! Katahdin, Bigelow, Saddleback, and the Mahoosuc Range; White Mountains, Green Mountains; the Berkshires and the Taconic Range; the Hudson Highlands, Kittatinny Mountain, and the long, long Blue Ridge; the Unakas, Great Smokies, Cheoahs, and Nantahalas.

Viewed close by, they loom green or rocky-topped. In the middle distance they shade to blue. At the far-off limits of sight the endless ranges take on the purple, mauve, or misty-gray hues of a painted backdrop.

Though the Trail follows the direction of the mountains of eastern North America, it cuts across the main travel ways from the Atlantic Plain to the heart of the continent. Since early days, passes in these Appalachian uplands have funneled westbound feet, horses, wagons, barges, trains, and now even airplanes.

In Maine, west of the Kennebec River, I followed in the footsteps of Benedict Arnold. He passed that way on his ill-fated winter attack on Quebec in 1775. In Virginia I came upon Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road that took pioneers over the mountains to Kentucky and Tennessee.

I crossed major rivers of the Atlantic seaboard—Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Potomac, and James.*

I paralleled the age-old Indian trail, the

* See, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE: "Long River of New England (the Connecticut)," April, 1943; "The Mighty Hudson," July, 1948; "Potomac, River of Destiny," July, 1945, all by Albert W. Atwood; and also "Henry Hudson, Magnificent Failure," by Frederick G. Vosburgh, April, 1939; "Down the Potomac by Canoe," by Ralph Gray, August, 1948; "Approaching Washington by Tidewater Potomac," by Paul Wiltach, March, 1930; "Great Falls of the Potomac," by Gilbert Grosvenor, March, 1928.



At Bear Mountain, Naturally, There's a Bear

This five-month-old youngster lives only an hour or so from Broadway. He's an attraction at the Trailside Museums of the Palisades Interstate Park, 45 miles from New York City (page 218). Born in the winter, a bear cub can take care of himself by the second spring. He eats both vegetable and animal food. In the fall, Park naturalists set free most of the living turtles, snakes, raccoons, muskrats, flying squirrels, skunks, and foxes exhibited all summer. The Appalachian Trail crosses the Hudson via near-by Bear Mountain Bridge.

Great Indian Warpath, which once reached from Pennsylvania to Alabama. But my course writhed along ridge crests a half-mile or more closer to the sky than the redskins' old-time "through way."

My path was within 150 miles of half a dozen of the country's biggest cities; one part or another of the Trail lies in easy reach of more than half the population of the United States. Yet people were novelties along much of the route.

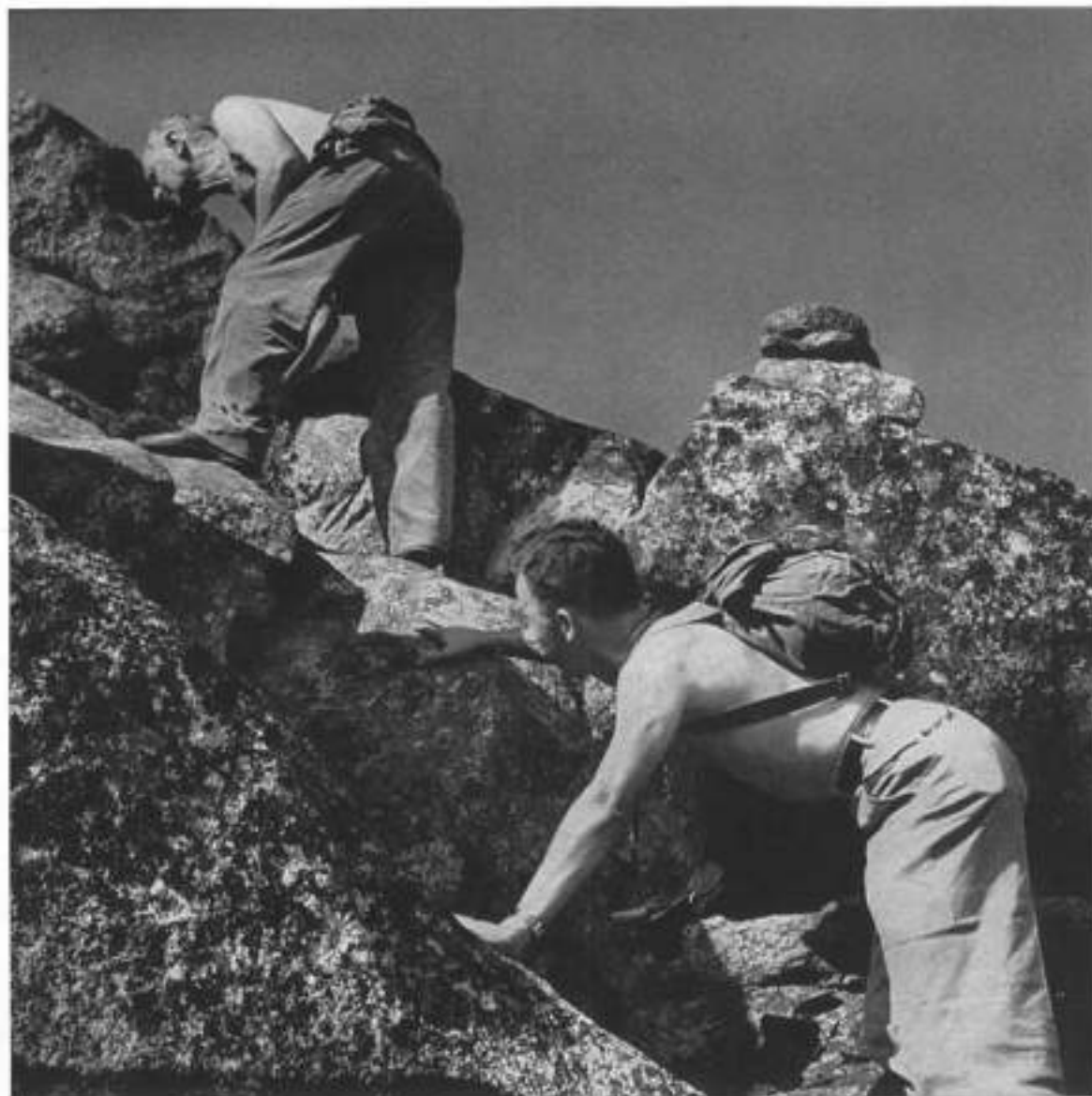
Unspoiled mountain reaches support a numerous array of plants, animals, birds, and insects, and hold almost all the kinds of minerals found in the eastern United States.

Maine to Georgia— 2,050 Miles

The Trail started in 1921 as a dream of Benton MacKaye. It is only 12 years since the last two miles of the Trail, a stretch in western Maine, were cut out and marked.

On a sunny summer noontide I bestrode the tiptop of Mount Katahdin, zero milestone at the north end (pp. 238, 239). There a sign told me that my Georgia goal, Mount Oglethorpe, was 2,050 miles away. Below spread a panorama of a third of Maine, splashed with dozens of lakes.*

* See "Maine, the Outpost State," by George Otis Smith, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, May, 1935.



Scaling Steep Slopes, Climbers Become Men Who Walk Like Bears

Camera, filters, and finder dangle below the photographer's chest as he clammers cautiously up the Dudley Trail on Pamola peak, Mount Katahdin, Maine. Ahead of him crouches John W. Webber (page 239). Lichens speckle boulders in a bleak world far above tree line.

I turned west—and started walking!

Ahead were thousands of A. T. rock cairns, white blazes, and metal markers challenging pursuit like the chalk arrows in a boyhood game of cops and robbers.

The Trail led me first through the Maine woods Thoreau explored. The second evening I put this in my notebook:

"After filling my canteen in a brook, I legged it through a swamp, angled up a ridge, and followed blazes through a maze of abandoned lumber roads. Ferns and berry bushes grew rank through rotted logs of ancient corduroy.

"From dense hardwood groves I clambered

up ledges where dwarfed spruces and pines grew in cracks. Clouds masked the sun.

"A bear, a dim blur of black, started away up a gully. There were wheezing and the crashing of branches until he topped the ridge; then silence and aloneness more complete than ever. Thunder muttered far away. A rising wind sighed through the pines."

Lumbermen Made Maine History

At Nahmakanta Lake I stopped at one of Maine's countless "sporting camps." The porch of the lodge fronted on a white sand beach. In the living room mounted trout and salmon hung on the walls.

Where the Trail in Maine skirted water, I took to boat or canoe.

Muscle men of the Maine woods wrote fabulous history. Scot and Indian, Irishman and Finn, French Canadian and Pole, they played nursemaid to rafts of floating timber. In their big double-ended bateaux they "rode herd" on the spring log drives. They blew jams with one part dynamite and two parts "guts."

I jumped to western Maine to traverse rugged Bigelow Mountain. In a lean-to I found this notice: "Due to nonpayment of bills, telephone and electric light services have been discontinued. But on payment of \$4.37 these services will be restored."

Next I headed for Old Speck. On the crest of that lofty peak I met a Vermont postman who had spent each of the last five of his 71 years camping along the Trail.

John, a New York friend, joined me in New Hampshire's White Mountains, hikers' paradise. During a ten days' trip traveling light from hut to hut of the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Dartmouth Outing Club, we covered the whole A. T. in the White Mountains.*

We topped the Carter Range and the Presidential, circled the Pemigewasset Wilderness, and looped through the Franconias to Lonesome Lake and Mount Moosilauke.

The longest exposed section of the Trail is in the White Mountains. For 19.5 miles it is above tree line, wide open to all the storms that blow. This stretch is notorious for sudden, dangerous, and fickle weather changes.

In a hundred years, 25 persons have perished on Mount Washington. Scores more have been rescued.

The Appalachian Mountain Club's *White Mountain Guide* spotlights the hazards on Mount Washington: "Caution: The appalling and needless loss of life on this mountain has been due largely to the failure of robust trampers to realize that wintry storms of incredible violence occur at times even during the summer months. Rocks become ice-coated, freezing fog blinds and suffocates, winds of hurricane force exhaust the strongest trampler, and, when he stops to rest, a temperature below freezing completes the tragedy.

"If you are experiencing difficulty from the weather, abandon your climb. Storms increase in violence with great rapidity toward the summit. The highest wind velocities ever recorded were attained on Mount Washington. Since *the worst is yet to come*, turn back

* See, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE: "From Notch to Notch in the White Mountains," by Leonard Cornell Roy, July, 1937.

without shame, before it is too late. . . ."

These words were not written about Mount Everest, but about a peak only 6,288 feet high! (Page 240.)

We Fight a Blizzard—in Late June!

We learned the soundness of this advice during a climb on a spur of Mount Washington in late June. On that trip John and I were backpacking up the Davis Path, bound for the Appalachian Trail at the Lakes of the Clouds Hut (page 243).

As we pushed above tree line, blue sky swiftly grew gray. A knifing gale brought a smother of snow.

We faced into the blast, climbing stubbornly from one rock cairn to the next. It grew colder. We decided it would be safer, as long as we could grope from cairn to cairn, to make for the Lakes Hut. There we would find warmth and food. Here we could only huddle in the lee of thin scrub—if we could get down to it.

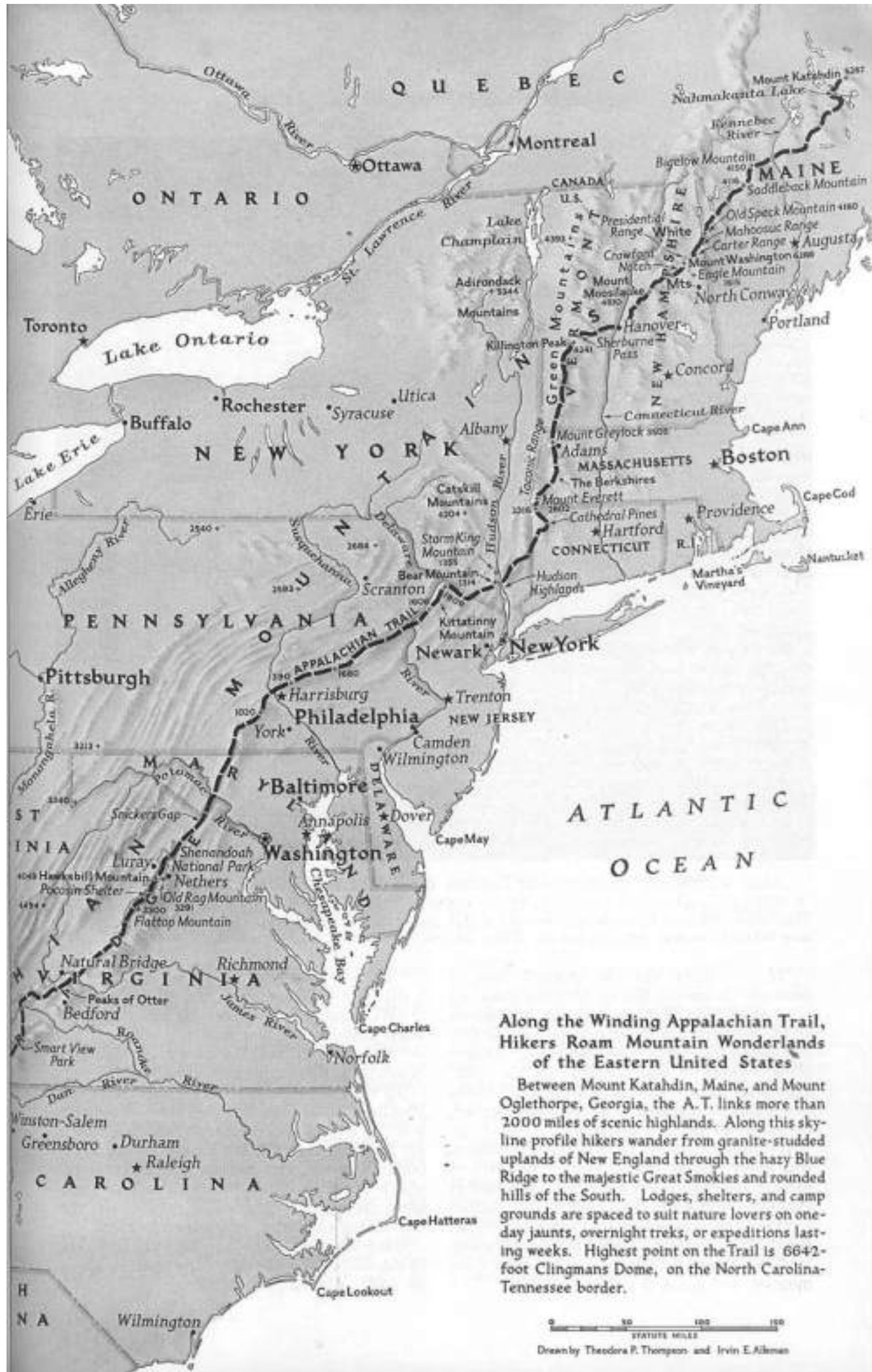
Battling the storm made us gasp for breath. Two hours behind us was a bright and breezy summer day.

An hour later we pushed open the door of the Lakes of the Clouds Hut, two frosted ghosts with aching muscles.

For 36 hours we were marooned with seven other impatient hikers. The temperature dropped to 22° F., three inches of snow fell, and icicles fringed the cabin eaves.

It was January in June on the A. T.





Along the Winding Appalachian Trail, Hikers Roam Mountain Wonderlands of the Eastern United States

Between Mount Katahdin, Maine, and Mount Oglethorpe, Georgia, the A.T. links more than 2000 miles of scenic highlands. Along this skyline profile hikers wander from granite-studded uplands of New England through the hazy Blue Ridge to the majestic Great Smokies and rounded hills of the South. Lodges, shelters, and camp grounds are spaced to suit nature lovers on one-day jaunts, overnight treks, or expeditions lasting weeks. Highest point on the Trail is 6642-foot Clingmans Dome, on the North Carolina-Tennessee border.



After a 2,000-mile Jaunt, Sisson Reaches the Trail's South End, Deep in Dixieland

The photographer reads the sign on Mount Oglethorpe, Georgia, southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. The 3,290-foot mountain was named for Maj. Gen. James E. Oglethorpe, 18th-century English officer who founded Georgia. Markers put up by the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club read, "Georgia to Maine!"

"If you don't like the weather, wait a minute!" is an old White Mountain saying.

At the Lakes Hut we had our first lesson in the mysteries of "goofers." Some city folk are surprisingly mountain-wise. Others come wide-eyed and helpless to the hills. The latter mostly are first-time visitors to the mountains. "Goofers," as they are called, are prone to ask silly questions.

Hutmasters, always ready to help beginners, still enjoy poking fun at them. Answers to some of the commonest questions are posted at Pinkham Notch and the Lakes of the Clouds:

"Yes, the fellows on the hut crew do all the cooking and they would make fine wives.

"The little sacks on the gasoline lamps are mantles, and break if you poke them.

"The big rock piles are cairns to mark the trails, and we leave them out all winter.

"We have no fireplaces because so little wood grows above tree line.

"No, there is nothing to see in Pinkham Notch; the mountains get in the way."

To tease goofers, Joe Dodge, the "laird" of Pinkham Notch, has invented a whole menagerie of frightsome creatures. Among them are "dingmahauls," green-whiskered "cumatabodies," and treacherous "cumnearyers," which are born either with long left or right legs, depending on whether they circle the mountains clockwise or counterclockwise.

Once a hutful of novice hikers at the Lakes of the Clouds saw the door blow open to admit an oddly garbed mountaineer.



North Anchor of the A. T. Is Away "Down East" atop Mount Katahdin

National Geographic cameraman Bob Sisson (left) and a friend unfurl The Society's flag on the barren summit, where it seemed to Thoreau "as if some time it had rained rocks." Sisson and the author did not hike the whole Appalachian Trail, but leapfrogged along its length.

He wore full-dress tails, starched shirt and collar, and a tall silk hat!

The eccentric visitor asked for a cup of coffee, paid for it, and went out again into the windy night. He volunteered nothing, and everyone in the hut was speechless.

As we roamed the heights of the Presidential Range, John and I shared the feelings of the tramp who said: "I consider a hiker with a pack on his back as a self-sufficient individual, with all the petty entanglements of his life brushed aside like cobwebs."

We dropped down through spruce scrub on the slopes of Mount Pierce to the Mizpah Spring Shelter and slid gratefully out of packs.

While I unrolled the sleeping bags, John built a fire. The big pack basket gave up

tin plates, silverware, nesting kettles, frying pan, folding reflector oven, small bags of tea, sugar, salt, and jars of butter and jam.

While we ate our dessert of raisins and chocolate, our kettles bubbled with washing water. We chopped some wood, then showered each other with dipperfuls of warm water.

Mountain Breezes Whisper Lullaby

The fire threw nervous shadows on the encircling woods. We watched the flames die down, dipped a last drink from the bucket, and took a long look at the starry sky. A breeze rustled the treetops and caressed us with the spruce-scented breath of the forest. Blissfully tired, we slipped into the snug cocoons of our sleeping bags.

This was the life! Rude but adequate shelter, the warmth of fire and blankets, food to satisfy urgent hunger, cool water to quench thirst.

From the White Mountains I went to Sherburne Pass in Vermont's Green Mountains. Then, walking southward, I was on the Green Mountain Club's Long Trail, with which the Appalachian Trail coincides from that point to the Massachusetts border.

I pushed up Killington Peak, second highest summit in Vermont. In the hush of dense spruce woods there was no sound save the chirp of juncos, and no movement but the flick of a nuthatch through a sunbeam on a brown tree trunk.

Moving on south, I topped Mount Greylock, pinnacle of Massachusetts.* Next milestone was Mount Everett. A fire lookout tower spiked the summit. The old warden described the piece of New England within his view and the folk who visited his eyrie.

"We're probably bein' watched," he said. "There's an old geezer who sets up his tent over in that pine grove. He picks ginseng and watches passers-by through an old nautical spyglass. He's 78 years old."

"One day I found a young chap campin' on that little lake down there. Said his family offered him a trip round the world when he got out of college, but he told 'em he'd rather come up here and camp out for six months and study birds; and he did."

"Week or so back, a girl came through hikin' on the Appalachian Trail all by herself. Packin' her sleepin' bag and food, too. I told her to be careful with fire and to look out for snakes, an' she went on down the trail."

"You have plenty of visitors up here," I said.

"Yes, indeedy! The railroad brings lots of hikers up to this country. Then there've been ski trains, foldboat trains, bicyclin' trains. They even used t' have a mystery train. When you got on that one, you didn't know where you was goin'."

"Once a big bunch clum up here in the rain wearin' city clothes and nice shoes. After that the railroad people decided folks like to know what's ahead of 'em, and gave up them mystery trains as a pore job."

Trail Crosses Hudson at Bear Mountain

From Connecticut's** majestic Cathedral Pines I jumped to the Bear Mountain Section of the Palisades Interstate Park, in New York State. Between hikes on the A. T. and its offshoots I visited the Trailside Museums and nature trails (page 218). A zoo exhibits wild animals of the region (page 220).

From subarctic summits of Katahdin and the White Mountains to Georgia's mountain hollows that grow corn and tobacco, the Trail is a laboratory for the naturalist.

It is a continuous "life class" of animals, birds, and insects, of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Geology is always underfoot.

You may see deer bounding away through the brush anywhere along the Trail, but they are most common from Pennsylvania north.† Black bears explore the berry patches, both North and South. They're such a problem at parking places in the Great Smokies‡ that Park officials have erected signs like those in Yellowstone National Park cautioning motorists not to feed them.

Club "For Beating Porcupines Only"

Porcupines are amusing pests along the Trail in New England. A shelter on Bigelow Mountain in Maine once displayed this cryptic notice one occupant had affixed to a stout stick: "This club to be used for beating porcupines only."

Rattlesnakes may crawl across the Trail anywhere from New Hampshire to Georgia, copperheads from Massachusetts south. Many hikers carry snake-bite treatment kits. But trampers can avoid trouble by keeping their eyes open for the reptiles.

Snake-wise Charlie Dodson of Virginia told me: "A copperhead—he's bad ef you don' see 'im, but crowd a copperhead an' he'll sell out fast."

One hiker, primed to meet snakes, deer, bear, and coons, was hardly prepared for the "wildlife" he nearly ran into around a bend of the Trail in Virginia.

There in the path stood an elephant! It seems the venturesome pachyderm had escaped from a circus truck in Snickers Gap.

Mid-point of the Trail is in southern Pennsylvania. From that State the Trail crosses the western "handle" of Maryland, "touches base" in West Virginia, and enters Virginia. One fourth of the Trail lies in Virginia.§

*See "Northeast of Boston," by Albert W. Atwood, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, September, 1945.

**See "Connecticut, Prodigy of Ingenuity," by Leo A. Borah, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, September, 1938.

†See "Penn's Land of Modern Miracles," by John Oliver La Gorce, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, July, 1935.

‡See "Rambling Around the Roof of Eastern America," by Leonard C. Roy, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, August, 1936.

§See, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE: "Appalachian Valley Pilgrimage," by Catherine Bell Palmer, July, 1949; "Maryland Presents—," by W. Robert Moore, April, 1941; "West Virginia: Treasure Chest of Industry," by Enrique C. Canova, August, 1940; "Roads from Washington," July, 1938.



New England's Green Glory Holds These Hikers Spellbound. Vermont Boulders above Sherburne Pass Make a Fine Grandstand

College students and summer hotel workers gaze afar from Deer Leap Mountain overlooking a lovely rolling countryside. South from this peak the Appalachian Trail coincides with Vermont's Long Trail.

In my years of living in Washington, D. C., I've spent many week ends in the closed shelters in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park. They are maintained and operated by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

A visit to Pocosin Shelter was typical. Ten of us—four girls and six boys—drove from steaming Washington to the Blue Ridge for a week end 3,000 feet up in the cool hills.

We parked the cars just off the fire road close to the Skyline Drive. The enclosed cabin, built of squared chestnut logs, had a stone-flagged front porch; in one corner was an open fireplace. All hands pitched in to get supper on the table in a hurry.

One couple grilled sizzling steaks. Rolls crisped in tin plates tilted toward the flames. The lid of a huge gray coffeepot fluttered.

Against the fading sky a whippoorwill swooped. We moved a table from the porch to the hard-packed ground in front. Everyone pounded the table with tin plates. Soon the "chef" slapped down a red-hot steak

before each famished customer (page 234).

One of the girls forked out steaming ears of corn. Taunts and chatter gave place to brief demands mumbled through busy jaws: "Butter, please!"—"Pass the rolls!"—"Who's got the salt?"

Someone handed out apples, and we watched the peels curl in the coals. The yellow disk of the full moon lifted in the east. One of our party softly played a harmonica.

Cabins Provide Everything but Food

Pocosin, like the other three closed shelters in Shenandoah National Park, has double-deck bunks with mattresses and blankets. It contains a stove, cooking utensils and dishes, adequate tableware—everything for the hiker's comfort except food.

All these cabins are near enough to roads so that it's easy to tote in grub, even for several days' stay. Each hut is kept locked. To the reserving party the key is lent for the period of use.

Mountain Grandeur Dwarfs Hikers Enjoying the View from Charles Bunion

In this Great Smokies section, the Appalachian Trail is carved from the rocky flanks of a 5,400-foot peak. This pinnacle, stripped of trees by a forest fire, was named for a guide's sore toe.

The mountains seem to "smoke" like volcanoes in the hot June sun. Gray mists rise from valleys and swirl in billowy patterns around the summits. Over all hangs the blue haze that gave the Great Smoky Mountains their name.

Walkers on the A. T. in the Smokies follow the ridge-crest boundary between Tennessee (in this view) and North Carolina (behind the camera).

Clouds partly veil Mount Le Conte, 6,593-foot "Grandstand of the Smokies." Atop this third highest peak in the Smokies is a lodge for visitors.

Red spruce and balsam fir clothe the saddle and form "comb teeth" on distant ridges.

Andrew H. Bevent





White Blazes on Trees Guide Appalachian Trail Hikers

Regularly, volunteers like this girl take paintpot and brush into the woods to freshen A. T. markers. On winding sections, blazes are placed within sight of each other. Blue blotches mark side trails. Double blazes warn of abrupt changes in route.



A Hiker Gulps Cold Water from a Rocky "Cup"

Robert Bumstead, of Philadelphia, drinks from a clear spring beside the Appalachian Trail near North Conway, in New Hampshire's White Mountains. This section of the A. T. follows the old Crawford Path, once a popular bridle trail from Crawford Notch to Mount Washington.

Andrew H. Brown



Guidebook, Maps, and Trail Signs Point the Way

The girl reads signs at the foot of Beaver Brook Trail to the summit of Mount Moosilauke, New Hampshire. Dartmouth Outing Club and A. T. symbols share space on the top marker. Tree growth and storms rapidly undo the trail makers' work. Constant labor keeps the pathways from reverting to wilderness.

On the east side of the Blue Ridge, in northern Virginia, five miles by side trail from the A. T., the pathway merges with a rutted country road leading to the tiny mountain community of Nethers.

Lady in a Blue Poke Bonnet

In a green dooryard beside the gurgling Hughes River we met gray-headed Mrs. Carrie Dodson. When she pulled off her big blue poke bonnet and smiled, the sun lighted a friendly face.

"Water? Why, sure. Come down to the spring."

A man was daubing tar on her cabin's sloping roof.

"That's my son, Charlie. I have four sons. Only two of them are still with me."

At the edge of the woods gushed a cold spring. We washed away our thirst and sat on the mossy ground. As we talked, it developed that Mr. Dodson was "daid."

"He was shot 28 year ago," Mrs. Dodson told us. "Right up the holler a piece. My baby boy was one year old."

"How did it happen?"

"I was sittin' in the yard peelin' apples for apple butter. It was a dark, rainy day. I was goin' down to the store later, so I asked my man for a little money. He gave it to me and went off down the road. I never saw him again.

"It was midnight when they come and told me my husband was shot. They never told me much about it. They was a whole passel of 'em. Maybe they was fightin'. I don't know. Some said the bad man aimed to shoot another one and hit my man."

Mrs. Dodson showed us her two beehives and two black pigs. Her sturdy cabin was more than 80 years old, she said.

So must all pioneer homes have looked. Squared logs, much patched with planks. A stone chimney held together, not with cement,



By Leaps and Bounds He "Rides the Rope" Down a Cliff

This climber kicks away from the rock face as he descends the Needle on Eagle Mountain, New Hampshire. In alpinist lingo, he is "rappelling." Friction of the rope passing over shoulder and around right thigh prevents too swift a drop. Doubled line runs around a tree or boulder above. At a safe stopping place the climber pulls the rope down and loops it around a new anchor point.



When Violent Rains Sweep the Mountains, Even the Hardest Hikers Take Shelter

These five wait for a letup under an overhanging rock along the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire. One girl holds out a cup to catch a drink. Her companions register resignation, curiosity, disgust, and despair.

but with hard-caked clay that had washed out of the upper courses. A good tin roof was the only modern touch.

We sat outside on a bench against a picket fence, shaded by a grape arbor older than the Dodsons could remember. Under a few plum trees a rooster herded his hens before him. Beyond the fence were rows of tomatoes, squash, string beans, potatoes, and corn.

Charlie Dodson came down off the roof. He told of a big trout he'd been stalking in a near-by pool "for years." And then if a friend he took fishin' didn't catch it right from under his nose!

No Better Eating than "Snappin' Turklies"

A country delicacy, Charlie said, was "snappin' turklies." He caught them by wading sluggish streams and running a hand gently under overhanging banks.

"I git bit now and then, but a man wouldn't want better eatin' than them turklies. 'Course, coon and squirrel is good, too."

We said good-bye and went up the path. Charlie came after us, holding something in his hand. We thought of "snappin' turklies," but it was a hummingbird.

"He got caught between the kitchen rafters and couldn't git out."

Charlie stroked the tiny creature's neck, then opened his hand. The bird did not fly.

"Is it hurt?"

"Just playin' possum. Watch!"

Charlie touched it, and it whirred away.

Mr. W. L. Lyle, a booster for Virginia's pyramidal Peaks of Otter, talked to me in his drugstore in Bedford. I had just left his beloved peaks, visible from the town.

"An old pioneer pass to the West led over the saddle between the Peaks of Otter, Sharp Top and Flat Top," he said. "People from under the Peaks fought against Chief Cornstalk and his fierce Shawnees in 1774 in the Battle of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, sometimes called the 'first battle of the American Revolution.'"



A Nylon Tent, Made to Sleep Two, Adds Only 10½ Pounds to a Pack

Victor Howard, president of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, greets the new day at Big Meadows campground in Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. One side of the Army mountain tent is green, the other white. Thus, for military use, it blends with either a dark setting or snow. At both ends are net-covered ventilators, like the one above Howard's head. Mosquito-bar entrances, closed with drawstrings, keep insects out.

"From the fire tower on Sharp Top you can see into North Carolina and West Virginia, and can even pick out one point in Tennessee. At night you see the lights of every car passing over Natural Bridge.

"George Washington used Sharp Top as a base mark for one of his surveys. The highest boulder on Sharp Top was rolled down the mountain, hauled out by ox team to the railroad. Cut to size, it's now in the Washington Monument."

In southern Virginia the Appalachian Trail has been rerouted where it overlapped too closely with the Blue Ridge Parkway. The relocation prevents conflict between the interests of hikers and highway travelers.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, 70 percent completed, eventually will provide a spectacular high-country road linking the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Park-

way is a part of the National Park System. When completed, it will be 477 miles long.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, like the Skyline Drive, helps the A. T. walker by giving him easy access to scenic sections of the Trail.

It was in these once-remote highlands that a pioneer worker on the Trail met a mountain man who explained why his hill home was of raw wood.

"Ah'm too pore t' paint, an' too proud t' whitewash."

John Barnard, King of the Pinnacles

As I pushed deeper into the South, mountain farmers along the Trail looked me closely up and down when I asked a night's lodging. Once they took me in, however, their hospitality was liberal and kind.

The Appalachian Trail crosses southern Virginia's Dan River gorge at the Pinnacles of Dan.



At Such a Moment, Tired Backs and Aching Feet Are Forgotten

These two hikers tackle steaks broiled over open fires at the Big Meadows campground. On summer week ends and holidays, scores from Washington and other cities flock to this Shenandoah section to pitch camp and prowls the Blue Ridge wilds. National Park Service provides free tent and trailer sites here.

"Going to the Pinnacles? Well, be sure to find John Barnard."

I discovered Barnard's house beside a curving country lane.

I knocked. A tall man with gentle eyes answered. John Barnard said I might stay the night. Yes, he would take me to the Pinnacles tomorrow. He indicated a chair on the front porch, said he had a few chores to do, and left.

I tipped gently back and forth in a rocker. Black clouds banked up. It was quiet as a desert night. The shower broke and drenched the well-trimmed lawn, the round bed of geraniums ringed with pansies, and the rose-bushes along the fence. A spate of water gurgled down the drainpipes.

Barnard appeared again, carrying a pair of slippers. He sat down and began to unlace his high-top work boots. Out of my pack I pulled an old pair of tennis shoes.

Mrs. Barnard brought to the porch soap,

a towel, and a tin basin of hot water. Presently came the welcome word that supper was ready.

Bowls of vegetables and stewed fruit, platters of meat, plates piled high with hot biscuits and corn bread, pitchers of milk and cream, jars of honey and homemade jam crowded the big table.

There were squash, string beans, and mashed potatoes; hot veal and cold ham; applesauce and pears; and quantities of sweet, farm-fresh butter to slather on the hot breads. What a feast!

After dinner Barnard lit the parlor lamps. Our acquaintance ripened in their yellow glow. At bedtime I climbed a narrow flight of stairs to my room. It held a bed, a chair, a chest, and an old spinning wheel. The rumble of a distant thunderstorm soothed me to sleep.

Next morning, we scrambled up the Pinnacles. John Barnard himself maintains about 12 miles of the Trail in this section. The

Pinnacles are three rocky spires that shoot straight up out of the Dan River gorge.

The A. T. route lay over and around huge cracked and broken rock masses intertwined with trees and shrubs. From the summit the Trail drops a precipitous 1,000 feet to the stream.

The Trail led out of Virginia into Tennessee,* where dwellers in remote cabin homes are more familiar with airplanes than with automobiles.

A tale tells of a hiker who looked down into a deep canyon and saw a lank fellow hoeing a corn patch. Steep cliffs seemed to make the hollow inaccessible. The trail walker shouted, "How do you get down there?" Came the reply, "Don't know. I was born yere."

From Rich Mountain I had my first view of the Great Smokies. In billowing majesty they loomed ever higher to the southwestern horizon. Among those piled-up peaks I presently found some of the finest trails on the whole A. T.

On Mount Le Conte (page 228) were rhododendrons thick as my leg, mountainsides carpeted with flame azalea and laurel, monumental hemlock and red spruce trees thrusting skyward like Jack's giant-reaching beanstalk.

Clingmans Dome Is High Point of Trail

At Clingmans Dome I reached the highest point on the Appalachian Trail—6,642 feet above sea level. Over an ocean of purple peaks a red sun sank into a turbulent immensity of boiling clouds.

The trees and shrubs of the Great Smokies and the Nantahalas offer sharp contrast to the hardy, dwarfed mountaintop growth of New England. Vegetation burgeons there with prodigal richness (page 251).

*"Highlights of the Volunteer State," by Leonard Cornwell Roy, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, May, 1939.



Knapsack's a Nuisance in the "Lemon Squeezer"

This girl hiker inches cautiously through a rock crevice in Bear Mountain park, New York. The Hudson Highlands holiday area is dotted with 26 natural and artificial lakes, many with fine bathing beaches. Scattered throughout are stone shelters for hikers. The forest playland forms part of the 48,500-acre Palisades Interstate Park. Featuring scenic and historic spots, the Park extends from the Palisades, opposite New York City, to Storm King, 50 miles up the Hudson River.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park now protects forever mountains spired and shaded with towering virgin evergreen forests. On the slopes and in the valleys rich soil feeds a lush profusion of flowering shrubs, huge tulip trees, and record stands of splendid native hardwoods. The multitude of wild flowers includes 26 kinds of orchids.

In the Nantahala Mountains in North Carolina,* I walked by moonlight down Wayah Bald to the famed Nantahala Gorge. No breath of air stirred in that majestic trough. The full moon flooded the valley with a soft and magic light.

Wisps and scarfs of mist draped peaks and canyon walls. The Nantahala River sparkled far below.

The A. T. crosses the gorge, which is so deep and steep-walled the Cherokee Indians called it *Nantahala*—"Land of the Noonday Sun."

Throughout its length the A. T. and its side trails offer a feast of tempting names. Most musical are the old Indian names, like Matagamon, Kokadjo, Kennebago; Ammonoosuc, Moosilauke, Popolopen, Menomini; Amicalola, Chattahoochee.

English meanings of some are obscure. Who cares, when they sing so sweetly?

Many place names along and near the Trail are simply descriptive: Sugarloaf, Saddleback, Hawksbill; Pulpit Rock, Hangover Mountain; Ice Water Spring, and Lonesome Lake.

Many others have a homely, vernacular tang as American as hot dogs, apple pie, or corn on the cob: Chunky Gal Mountain, the Lemon Squeezer, and Hogwallow Flat; Raccoon Run, Turkey Tail Lake, Dish Pan Ponds; Horse Heaven Mountain, Fodderstack Road, Devils Tater Patch; Jinny Grey Fire Road, Sweet Anne Hollow, and Fishin' Jimmy Trail.

Mount Oglethorpe, Southern Bastion of A. T.

South of the Nantahalas there was Georgia at last†—and trail's end suddenly very close. I walked up from Jasper to Mount Oglethorpe, goal of my journey.

The filmy veil of a shower drifted in from the west as I reached the summit. At this 3,290-foot dome the Blue Ridge ended, cut off with hardly a southward foothill. Below spread Piedmont Georgia.

I laid both hands on the white marble finger of the monument to General Oglethorpe, a beacon visible for miles from land or air.

In the clearing stood a sign bearing the

* See "Tarheelia on Parade," by Leonard C. Roy, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, August, 1941.

† See "Marching Through Georgia Sixty Years After," by Ralph A. Graves, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, September, 1926.

simple notice: "Mount Oglethorpe, southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, a mountain footpath extending 2,050 miles to Mount Katahdin in Maine. Georgia Appalachian Trail Club" (page 224).

Nailed to the sign was the last (or first, if you're heading north!) metal A. T. marker of the thousands that identify the soul-cheering, foot-tempting trail.

I had arrived.

Trail a Hobby for Thousands

Often I have been asked: "What is the Appalachian Trail?"

Essentially, it's a hobby for thousands of hiking fans. It's a voluntary recreational project.

Twenty-six major hiking groups and many individuals up and down the Appalachian region are responsible for the existence and maintenance of the Trail. Together they form the Appalachian Trail Conference, which is "the court of last appeal" in matters concerning the Appalachian Trail as a whole.

The A. T. Conference has no salaried employees. All the labor they do is done for love of the Trail and what it offers of intimacy with the out-of-doors. The work gives purpose to strenuous hours on mountain paths.

National and State park and forest services laid out and now maintain much of the Trail in the stretches passing through public lands. Boys of the former Civilian Conservation Corps built much of the pathway.

About half the Trail is over publicly owned lands (State and National parks and forests). The rest traverses private holdings.

Planned for the enjoyment of anyone in normal good health, the A. T. doesn't demand special skill or training to traverse. The only requirements for those who follow it are:

Exercise caution over rough or steep parts.

Wear clothing suitable to the latitude, elevation, and time of year.

Plan where to pitch your tent, or find other shelter along the way.

Carry enough food, or know where meals may be had.

For an extended A. T. trip, thorough preparation should be made. The condition of Trail stretches to be traversed should be carefully checked.

From many sections of the Appalachian Trail blue-blazed side trails lead to canyons and cascades, groves of giant pines or hemlocks, abandoned mountain homesteads, and breezy ledges that are sightly lunch spots. Sometimes these detours reach remote settlements where life goes on much as it did 200 years ago.