



Aug 9 , 1983 Tuesday (605.9 mtg)

The descent from Greylock to Massachusetts route 2 was five miles of downhill. The last bit after the Wilbur Clearing Lean-to was particularly steep, dropping 2000 feet in two miles. The trail passed through the outskirts of North Adams and crossed over the Hoosic River on a concrete footbridge made for pedestrian traffic. The trail ascends following Sherman Brook for about a mile.



*Hoosic River flowing thru N. Adams, Mass.*

Four miles of climbing out of the river valley brought me to the Mass/Vermont State line. Not only did this mark the end of Massachusetts and my eleventh state, but it marked the beginning of the "Long Trail", a trail that runs 200 plus miles to the Canadian border. The Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail run together for the next ninety-eight miles before the A.T. veers off to the right and heads toward New Hampshire. At the border I met Bob, from Knoxville, Tennessee on a short outing. We talked for a while before I hiked on to Congdon Camp ten miles farther on.

Now I was entering porcupine territory. Story has it that in this area you have to hang your hiking boots and backpacks because the "porkies" will search these items out in their nightly raids looking for food. Boots and pack straps have a buildup of salt from your sweat that they really go for. And just like the bears down in the Smokies, the porkies have figured out where the shelters and hikers are. Some of the shelters in the northeast have caretakers to help protect the areas from overuse and abuse. This happened to be one of them. I met Chip, the caretaker, and paid my \$1.50 to spend the



night. The shelter is roughly at an elevation of 2000 feet - not extremely high, but now that I was in Vermont, the weather had

suddenly gotten cooler and tonight was quite cold. Cool enough that I made a note in my journal. Chip happened to be celebrating his birthday today and his sister and niece were up the mountain for a visit. Later on "Fish" and the "Awesome Robots" showed up. I hung up my boots and pack, which was nothing new, I just placed my boots in my pack and suspended the pack with the usual screwhook and cord.



*Footbridge over the Hoosic River.*

*Looking back on the mountains of Massachusetts as I begin the climb into Vermont.*



Aug 10 , 1983 Wednesday (573.1 mtg)

Woke up to a cold 40 degree temperature around the shelter. Two and a half miles past the shelter, at Harmon Hill, the trail began to drop down to Route 9 and began the major ascent that would last the majority of the day. Passing Nauhiem Shelter along the way, the trail took me up Maple Hill and several other unnamed peaks on it's way to Glastonberry Mountain, an elevation change of about 2500 feet. The change sounds like a lot, but actually happens over roughly ten miles of trail. This does not mean that it was a piece of cake, there were areas where the climb was more severe, such as the initial climb out from route 9. I enjoyed the view from the old firetower on top of Glastonberry Mountain, and the wonderful weather that I was treated to that day. The cold front that had chilled me last night made for bright, crisp non-hazy skies. Glastonberry was covered in Spruce trees and the smell of Christmas filled the air. I could see for miles over the Green Mountains of Vermont and back into Massachusetts, where I had just come from.

Four miles of descent from Glastonberry brought me to the first of two shelters situated within one-quarter mile of each other. The Kid Gore Shelter was very nice and I had intended to stay the night there until a group of YMCA boys showed up. I then decided to move on to Caughnawaga Shelter where there were a few less bodies. Seems as though I am running into more outing groups the farther up the trail I go. Water supplies in Vermont seem to be a lot better than those in Massachusetts and just south of there. The temperature in the evenings seemed to be more on the cool side as well. Probably due to the higher altitude.



*A clearing in the forest near Glastonberry Mountain.*



*View from Glastonberry Firetower.*



*Chipmunks were always looking for something to eat.*



*Green Mountains of Vermont from the firetower.*



Aug 11 , 1983 Thursday (554.3 mtg)

I woke this morning knowing that I would be facing wet conditions on the trail sometime today. I could feel it in the air. It was a little warmer this morning, probably about 50 degrees Fahrenheit. I began hiking about six, and didn't really stop much at all. The terrain was easy going with not much change in elevation. At one time I believe the Appalachian Trail had gone over the summit of Stratton Mountain, which would have put a nice uphill climb in the routine, but this year the trail did not go to the summit unless I chose to take the blue-blazed Stratton Mountain Trail. I chose not to take the alternate route, the skies were not going to allow for any views today, and the rain had begun to fall. Instead, I continued on the A.T., but did stop for a short break at Stratton Pond to visit with the caretaker of Stratton View Shelter. I spent only seconds there, enough to get a drink of water and say a few words to Jeff, the caretaker. There was no view of Stratton Mountain from the lake as I had suspected so I boogied on. By that time the rain began to fall harder and the wind began to pick up. Three or four miles quickly passed as my pace had quickened in the inclement weather. I began looking for Douglas Shelter, where I hoped that I would be able to get out of the rain and get warmed up. The weather was the worst I had experienced so far. The problem was that the temperature had dropped, the rain was cold rather than warm, and the cool temperature and wind combination were the recipe for hypothermia. I had to keep on the move. I also had no other clothes to keep me warm besides my wool sweater.

I somehow missed the side trail to Douglas Shelter, so I kept going even though I had begun to develop a shiver from the cold rain and windy conditions. Rather than go back to find the shelter, I continued on thinking that maybe I had not even reached it yet. Eventually I knew that I had missed it, but by then there was no sense in turning back, so I continued on down the mountain. I then began to ascend gradually once again to Vermont 11 and 30, where I could hitch a ride into Manchester Center. The ride into town would be almost six miles. The nearest shelter was only seven tenths of a mile up the trail. I chose to go to the shelter.

I arrived at Bromley Camp at 12:36 in the afternoon with 21.6 miles already under my belt for the day. I had taken no breaks with the exception of the few seconds at Stratton Pond. That's one mile every twenty minutes! I sure could cover ground if I really wanted to. I was in luck, the shelter was still there. The shelter had been slated for dismantling since its location too close to the road had proven detrimental to the area due to over use. This place was totally enclosed and had a wood-burning stove. Just what I needed as I got myself out of the elements and tried to warm up. I had no long pants to put on. I had sent them and my rain pants home some time back when it was warm. I put on all my layers of clothing: t-shirt and wool sweater, and shorts. Just the fact that I was inside, dry, and sheltered from the wind warmed me up somewhat.

A while later four guys came in carrying two cases of beer (now you know why they wanted to tear the place down). They were Tom, Ed, Bruce (Mountain Man), and Mathew (Zuzuka). I had met most of them a few days back at Bond Shelter. It was nice to have some company, but why had they not bought me any rootbeer? They had just returned from a trip to Manchester Center to get "supplies." They should have known I would be there waiting for them with a craving for the "root".

Later, a guy named Malcom came up from the road to see if "the Awesome Robots" had arrived.

Apparently they were scheduled to arrive there also, but so far we had not seen them. He was traveling by car, so we selected Ed to go into town with Malcom to get Pizza for the evening festivities, and some Peanut Butter and Jelly as supplies for me. Everything worked out great. I got my supplies, we all ate pizza, and began to transform the dreary, nasty afternoon into a rollicking fun time with the help of the food, beer, and a simple game called Pigmainia.

Pigmainia brought the idea of a dice game to a new level. The "dice" were actually a pair of small plastic pigs no larger than one inch long that were rolled like dice and depending on how they landed, were assessed various point values. They could land on their sides, on their feet, balancing on snouts and front feet, etc. The highest value was if one landed standing on top of the other, this was known as "makin' bacon" and practically ensured your win of the game. I played like a professional, and blew everyone away. Luck continued coming my way as we played long into the night with light supplied by candlepower, while beer supplied the party.



*Boggy areas that the trail crossed were spanned with hewn logs that got you "safely" to the other side. If you fell in you may sink up to your knees in muck! During rainy weather, the bridges were extremely slick in places where no treads had been cut, or where moss had begun to grow. (Photo 1989)*



Aug 12 , 1983 Friday (532.7 mtg)

The weather change continued today. I did not feel like subjecting myself to the cold, windy, rainy environment over some of the Vermont peaks providing supposedly great views, so I decided to stay at the shelter for another day and night, and perhaps defend my pigmainia championship title.

During the day, Malcom gave me a ride into Manchester Center where I found a cheap pair of lightweight pants, and long sleeved shirt, and a few groceries. I was certain that the fall weather had arrived in the north-east. Most of the other hikers moved on, but I would not be alone as a new batch moved in later that afternoon. Ed decided to stay also. He was a weird "motorcycle rider looking" kind of guy. Along with the chaplain from an Ohio college, two others and myself, the crowd was very diverse.



Aug 13 , 1983 Saturday (532.7 mtg)

Over the night the weather had cleared, and we awoke to a mostly cloudless sky. Perfect for my ascent of Bromley Mountain this morning. Within two miles I was at the summit where the summit station of the Big Bromley Chair Lift was located, along with an observation tower with splendid views in all directions now that the weather had cleared. These were some of the best views I had encountered in a long time.



*Ski slope on the way up the side of Bromely Mountain.*

Continuing on, I passed Mad Tom Shelter soon after Mad Tom Notch. The term "notch" is used in the northern three states rather than "gap." Usually the term "Notch" refers to something more deep and severe than some of the "Gaps" of the south. The 1000 foot climb up Styles Peak from the low point in the gap was difficult, but provided equally good views, as did Peru Peak. What a glorious day to be hiking! Although there were many views today, the best views came at Bromley Mountain, and Baker Peak.

After Baker Peak, I descended gradually for four miles to the Danby-Landgrove Road and then began the very gradual ascent to Little Rock Pond. Along the way I passed the Lula Tye Shelter, and Little Rock Pond Shelter. A nice level section for a mile then turned into a steeper ascent up an area known as White Rocks Mountain. Along the descent from the highest point on White Rocks Mountain I took the short side trail to White Rocks Cliffs for the view over the valley where Otter Creek lay, and US Highway 7 paralleled. The town of Wallingford could be seen as well. The view reminded me of the Bob Newhart show about the Inn located in Vermont somewhere. The day could not have been any better. I was glad I had chosen to spend the extra day at Bromley Camp during yesterday's nasty weather. That was something unusual for me, I usually hike no matter what. More downhill off of White Rock Mountain lead down to Vermont 140, and then up the opposite side of the highway ascending the side of Button Hill. Descending for another mile bought me to Minerva Hinchey Shelter, formerly Sunnyside Camp, where I ended the day after 28 miles of beautiful hiking. At the shelter I met Richard Kozon from New York City.



*View from the firetower on Bromely Mountain.*



*Tram Building on Bromely.*



*Mad Tom Shelter. (photo 1989)*



*Stream near Little Rock Pond.*



*View from White Rocks Cliff.*



*Clarendon Gorge Suspension Bridge. (photo 1989)*



Aug 14 , 1983 Sunday (504.7 mtg)

The first few miles of the day were mostly downhill to Clarendon Gorge where the Mill River runs through the valley. The trail crosses the river on a high suspension bridge over the gorge. At the middle of the bridge there is but a thin cable high enough to be used as a handrail - the only thing keeping you from going off the side. The view into the gorge below is scary, and breathtaking as a result. The climb out of the valley is somewhat steep, but lasts only about three miles before descending just over a mile to Cold River Road where I noted that there was a small grocery store located just off the trail. The establishment had quarts of ice cream, but did not have pop tarts.

From Cold River Road the trail climbed for the next six and a half miles toward the summit of Mt Killington, famous in Vermont as a ski area. Although the climb looks steep and long on the profile, I did not think it was that bad. I took the steep .2 mile side trail to the summit of the mountain and looked at the view. Although the sky was clear and the view panoramic, I failed to take any pictures. Sometimes when on top of a mountain that dwarfs the surrounding mountains, the view becomes less impressive. I met some folks from Canada while on the summit. I ate lunch at the nearby Cooper Lodge, a shelter with



*View from Killington toward Pico Peak.*

a caretaker, before beginning the long six mile descent towards Sherburn Pass at Route 4. I found the trail poorly marked from Killington to Pico camp a few miles beyond. From there the trail continued the descent, sometimes using the grassy, "treeless" ski runs on their way to the road. I chose not to stop at any of the establishments located at Sherburn Pass, and continued up the side of Deer Leap Mountain, where I soon found the split between the Long Trail and the Appalachian Trail. The long trail continues with white blazes North to Canada, while the Appalachian Trail turns toward New Hampshire, and for about a mile is marked with blue-blazes. This is the only part of the A.T. where it is

actually a side trail. The long Trail is the older trail and therefore takes priority as the main trail. The white blazes return as the trail reaches Kent Pond near Gifford Woods State Park just over a mile beyond. Also near Kent Pond is located Mountain Meadows Lodge, where a hiker can get a "Bed, Breakfast, and Bath" for only \$6.00! The lodge is used mostly in the winter as a ski lodge, but during the off season is offered to hikers and bikers at a reduced rate. I cleaned up and selected my bed in the bunkhouse. Twenty-two miles for today.



*View from White Rocks Cliff.*



Aug 15 , 1983 Monday (482.5 mtg)

The breakfast part of the "bed, breakfast, and bath" this morning was very filling. I had four bowls of cereal, orange juice, milk, eggs, toast, bacon, and five pancakes. Only trouble was that the breakfast did not get started until 8 o'clock. By then I usually have almost two hours of hiking under my belt. We did not get rolling until a little after 9 am!

Some of the hiking this morning followed roads until we arrived at the Ottauquechee River, and crossed the River Road just beyond. For the remainder of the day the trail followed old woods roads and streams. Richard and I got lost on one of the roads once. Richard was one of the fastest hikers that I had come across yet, I am really surprised that I even caught up to him in the first place. I guess in the long run my mileage was higher, so even though he might be able to hike faster than I did, I was able to move toward the final destination faster. While crossing one pasture, he quickly became far ahead of me and I became angry and yelled at him to wait up for me. Boy, could he move out!

We ended our hike today at Gulf Shelter after only 14 miles. A short mileage day, but it seemed long. A couple of other hikers were at the shelter for the night as well.



*Mountain Meadows Lodge.*

*Early morning tranquility over Kent*



*Self Portrait.*



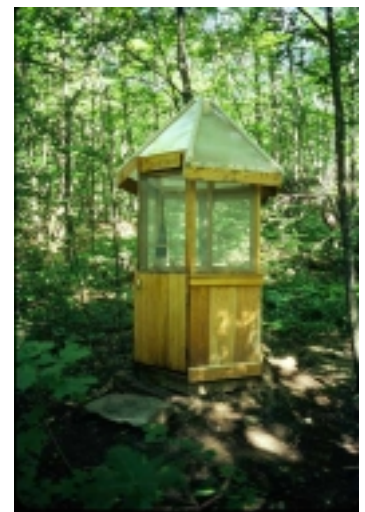
Aug 16 , 1983 Tuesday (469.1 mtg)

A Little bit of road walking this morning to start the day off brought us down to Vermont highway 12, and the new relocation around Mr. Johnson's land. The relocation made the trail another six miles of road walking if we had chosen to go that route. Rumor had it that you could still go through, the blazes were still there and Mr. Johnson would allow it. Rich and I found the old trail after I oriented him to turn left instead of right. The old trail saved four miles over the new trail. Along the way I talked to a guy living in an old bus with electricity coming into the place on an extension cord. Talk about roughing it! Farther on we stopped at Cloudland Shelter, a shelter maintained by the Dartmouth Outing Club.

Today marked the beginning of the section of trail maintained by the DOC. The Dartmouth Outing Club, based at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, an Ivy League college for those who are "really smart" and have lots of money, at least that is what I thought. With all their money they were able to construct some of the nicest outhouses on the trail. The outhouse at Gulf Shelter showed the club at its finest. It sported six walls, was shaped like a turret, and was made of varnished hardwood and had a bulletin board on the inside to post messages. The upper section was screened in to allow ventilation and provide a view of the surrounding forest. The attention to detail was uncanny. I just wish that their attention to trail marking was as detailed. The markings came sometimes as frequent as every quarter mile. A lot can happen in that distance, and frequently it did. On those old woods roads like the one Rich and I got lost on yesterday, their markings were terrible.

The cool days experienced just a few days ago vanished and the warm weather had returned, but not quite as bad. It was warm enough that when we rolled into West Hartford, Vermont situated on the White River, we found some of the local youth swimming in the river. We immediately headed for the post office after crossing the bridge over the river, where I proceeded to package up everything that I felt was unnecessary for travel through the White Mountains of New Hampshire. I had heard that they were so tough that your daily mileage would drop in half. This influenced my decision to drop as much weight as possible from my pack, which also included my Log book. At the time it was just extra weight. Off it went. Both Rich and I then hit the general store for ice cream and soda, then back to the river for a quick dip to help cool us off. The remainder of the afternoon was a three and a half mile gradual ascent up Griggs Mountain to Happy Hill Cabin, which was a real "house" with a porch, and the inside was equipped with a fireplace. Tonight we would spend our last full day in Vermont.

You might wonder how this story could go on since I had sent my journal home. Like I mentioned earlier, I used to be able to tell on a day to day basis the names of the places that I had stayed. I did make small notes in my data book, which I continued to carry, but the remainder of the journal entries were made after returning to Illinois. I believe that these entries are more informative and contained more information than those made on the trail. I did not feel much like writing while on the trail, but once I was not on the trail any longer, I felt that I had the time and had to do it before I forgot everything. While at home, the dimming light of approaching evening was no longer a factor in when I had to stop writing.





Aug 17 , 1983 Wednesday (450.7 mtg)

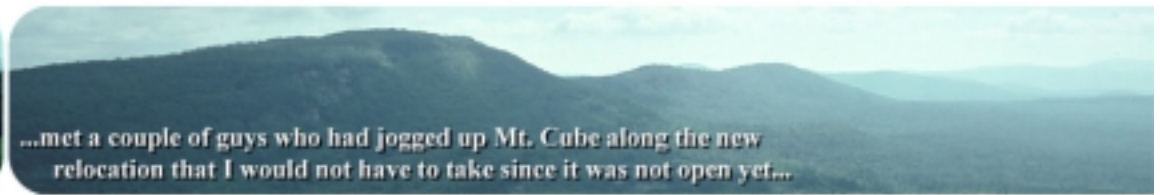
A gradual downhill brought us out of the woods and into the outskirts of the town of Norwich, Vermont this morning. Norwich seemed like a surprisingly large town, but not as large as Hanover, New Hampshire just on the opposite side of the Connecticut River. The trail followed a road out of Norwich down to the interchange on Interstate 91, under the Interstate, past the merging traffic from vehicles exiting the Interstate, and finally over the bridge into New Hampshire that was shrouded in a fog rising from the river during the early morning hours.

The trail went up the road and straight to the center of town. I followed the blue-blazed trail to the DOC building and checked it out. Found out that I could take a shower at the Alumni Gym and was welcomed by those in the group who knew what we were - thru-hikers on The Appalachian Trail. I then made my way to the Talbard House, one of the fraternities on Greek Row that supposedly accepted hikers. Dropping my gear off there, I then headed back to the legendary Thayer Hall for lunch. The college cafeteria was known as the place to eat for hikers in town. For one price you could go in and eat all you wanted from a wide selection of foods. I got my share, and then went for supplies and a visit to the post office. At the post office I sent some food to the Summit of Mt. Washington, many days down the trail in the heart of the White Mountains.

Not really being comfortable sleeping at the Frat house (if I was indeed able to sleep at the house), and examining my schedule for the next few days, led me to realize that I probably should move on so I could get my maildrop at Glencliff on Saturday. I packed up my gear and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon walked out of Hanover and ascended toward Velvet Rocks.

Somewhere near the Etna-Hanover Center Road I ran into Wade Skelton going southbound! I had met him in the Smokies while I was still with Jim. We had spent the night at Mt. Collins Shelter together. He had continued on, but decided to "Flip Flop" - the term used to describe those who hitch to the northern terminus midway through their hike and begin hiking south. This usually is done to allow the hiker to finish the trail by avoiding the cutoff day for climbing Mt Katahdin. If you do not happen to climb Katahdin by October 14, you may not be allowed to since they close the park to campers after that day. I was under the impression that you could not finish if you arrived after that date. Apparently that is when they consider bad weather time. Now I know that the park is only closed to overnight camping after that date, but hikers can climb if the weather is good.

At some unspecified spot between the Etna-Hanover Center Road and Moose Mountain is where I camped for the night. I more or less just plopped along the trail, and set up my tarp, hoping it would not rain...it didn't. Mileage today between 12 - 15 miles.



Aug 18 , 1983 Thursday (434.4 mtg)

The new relocation up Moose Mountain was not open yet, so there was not a lot of climbing today other than the climb up Holt's Ledges and the climb up Smarts Mountain. Holt's Ledges was the shorter climb of the two. From Lyme-Dorchester Road, after the descent from Holt's Ledges, the trail ascended five and three quarters miles with an elevation gain of almost 2500 feet to Smarts Mountain summit. Once near the summit I took the short side trail to Smarts Mountain Shelter to check the place out and read the register. I noticed in the register that John Smart had made an entry, and was only a few days ahead. I had met him, I believe, at Plumb Orchard Shelter way back when in 1981. I decided to eat lunch at the firewardens cabin at the summit only because there were no views from the nearby firetower. The descent off of the mountain was much steeper than the climb to get there. It dropped steeply for about a mile and a half and then became more gradual as I approached the Quintown Road. The trail followed the road for a while until just before the point where the trail left the road near Mt. Cube Shelter. At that junction I met a nice family with a young boy who were just on their way to the beach on Lower Baker Pond. I had no idea where this was, but they were going swimming and invited me to go along. I decided that sounded like a good idea so I hopped into their vehicle. We drove down route 25a for what seemed like a long ride, and then pulled off next to the the lake on the right side of the road. The beach was small, but the water was refreshing, and allowed for a bath as well. Later that afternoon we returned to the spot I had met them and was invited to have supper at their small cabin right next to the trail along the roadwalk. That evening, I proceeded up the side of Mount Cube, and made my camp among the rocks on the south summit as far as I could tell. While there, I met a couple of guys who had jogged up Mount Cube along the new relocation that I would not have to take since it was not open yet. A hazy sunset ended the day, and once again I was lucky that the rain did not fall during the evening.

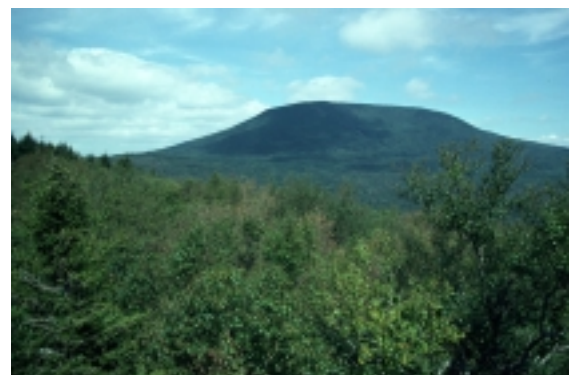


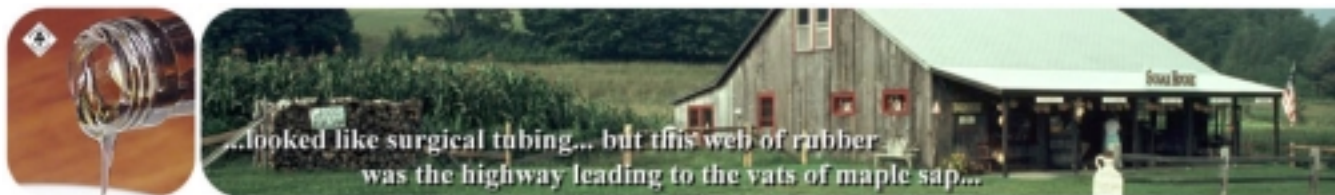
*Unkown view of either Moose mountain or Holt's ledges.*

*Moose Mountain or Holt's Ledges (photo 1989)*



*Smarts Mountian. (photo 1989)*





Aug 19 , 1983 Friday (413.8 mtg)

I became aware this morning that the descent from Smarts Mountain, and the descent from Mt Cube are probably what the rest of the whites would be like: steep and rocky, no switchbacks, just down. Or up as the case might be. Mt. Cube's descent was worse than Smarts, being a little longer in the steep part. As I began hiking more towards the base I ran across many rubber tubes strung from tree to tree. It looked like surgical tubing, and it might very well have been, but this web of rubber was the highway leading to the vats of maple sap that the folks at the Mt Cube Maple Syrup Farm collected each spring to boil and produce Pure Maple Syrup. At route 25a, I made a detour to the right to visit the restaurant at the farm where the wife of the ex-governor (Mel Thompson) of the state of New Hampshire was known to serve some of the best pancakes in the world - with real maple syrup of course. I arrived at the Cube House before eight, and had to wait a while before being served. As I waited, I talked with an old gentleman whom I thought was a counselor at Camp Moosilauke, just down the road. He asked me if I had ever considered being a camp counselor. I responded that I would like to be, but I really thought that only those with recreation majors were chosen for that. He assured me that was not true, and that if I could do something in particular, such as hiking, I could get a job. I took a name and address and tucked it away in my pack for later use to try for a job. I must have looked hungry as I received five rather than the four pancakes that I ordered. The rumors were correct, these are the best pancakes on the trail. I managed to consume a piece of homemade pie and ice cream as well after my pancake breakfast. A good stop.

I walked back up the road one quarter of a mile to the trailhead and turned right into the woods began to make a gradual descent toward Upper Baker Pond a few miles north. I remember this particular section as being the most mosquito infested area along the entire trail! I hiked as fast as I could and still the little buggers were able to land on the exposed parts of my body and suck my blood. I had never seen anything like it, and hoped that I never would again. I drew a mosquito on my map in that area so I would never forget where it was. For the remainder of the day the trail rambled through the woods mostly, with gradual ups and downs and no real climbing. I passed Walt Witman boys camp as I traveled on one of the back roads that the trail followed. I reached Glenclyff post office on route 25 before two o'clock. Post offices along the trail in small towns are amazing and unpredictable. Because I had gotten there when I did I had to wait until they opened! I met a couple of other hikers named Ray and Lyle at the post office while we waited for it to open. They informed me that they intended to hike on to Beaver Brook Shelter, while I chose to move on only to Jeffers Brook shelter. I had already traveled 17 miles by the time I arrived at the shelter, and moving on to the next shelter would include climbing up Mt Moosilauke, and going down the other side, adding another 7.6 miles and a big climb at the end of the day. I was in no hurry, I saw the profile of Mt Moosilauke - the altitude change involved 3000 feet practically straight up! Welcome to the White Mountains of New Hampshire!

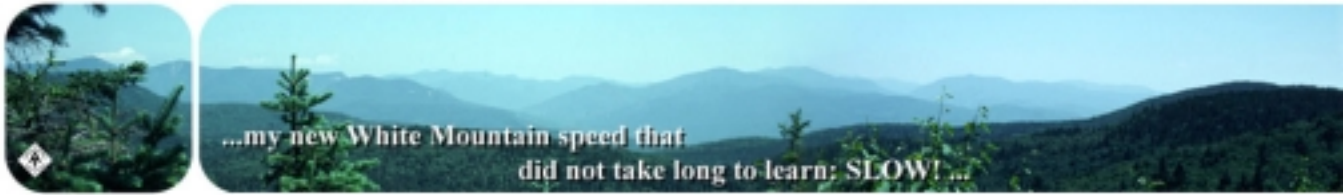
While at the shelter I read an entry stating that anyone was welcome to walk down the trail a bit, follow a road off the trail for a short distance and visit Appalachian Al, a burly, plump fellow who had a great interest in hiking and particularly in the area around Mt. Moosilauke. I visited with Al for a while, after all he had the same name as I, before returning to the Jeffers Brook Shelter for the night. Four southbound hikers spent the night at the shelter with me. Jeffers Brook shelter had one of the weirdest outhouses that I had seen so far. Almost like an obstacle course, the user had to open the door, walk up two or three steps, then down two or three steps, and then turn around and sit on the ledge. Interesting.



*View from Mt. Cube. (photo 1989)*



*The Sugar Shack ... Pancake heaven!*



Aug 20 , 1983 Saturday (396.7 mtg) From Gonzo's Appalachian Trail journal

Not sunny at all this morning. As a matter of fact, it was foggy. Hopefully the fog was only resting in the valley waiting for the sun to burn it off. Today I officially enter the White Mountains, the land that hikers hear about on the trip north as being tough, but really worth it. From the look of the profile, I am sure it will be tough. The climb is almost five miles and involves a change in elevation of almost four thousand feet! Sounded like the toughest climb yet! The trail followed a road for a while just past the shelter, and the map indicated a state sanitarium just a little farther up the road. Probably populated by hikers who lost their minds after attempting such a climb. I turned from the road into the woods and the climb began. There were water flows everywhere on the trail and I tried to go up as fast as I could in my usual manner, but soon learned that that is not the way things are done in the Whites. I learned that I had to go more slowly if I wanted to make the ascent in one shot without breaks. No switchbacks, just up, up, up. The trail also made use of large rocks as "steps." My new White Mountain speed that did not take long to learn: SLOW!

The trail began to become even more rocky and vegetation became more of the scrub variety. Low growing evergreen type trees. The smell of the holidays was back. About a mile from the summit, the trail joined the Old Carriage Trail coming in from the right that years ago, near the turn of the century, was used to transport vacationers to the Summit House on top of Mount Moosilauke. With the size of the boulders sunk in the trail, I could only imagine how bumpy that horse drawn carriage ride must have been.

As I neared the summit I broke out of the scrub growth and entered the "above treeline" section. At this point the combination of weather, altitude and latitude produce a situation where no trees are able to survive, and what grasses and other small plants do survive there do so precariously. Stepping off the trail can possibly kill a plant, therefore it is recommended that hikers stay on the trail to minimize damage and prevent erosion. Above treeline there was nothing but fog. I could only see a few feet in front of me as I watched for white blazes painted on the rocks under my feet and occasionally some of the larger boulders. The guide book mentions that there are ruins of the summit house on the summit, and goes on to say "from the summit the trail descends...." I found the ruins of some building, but not at the highest point. Of course I could not really see the highest point and so I looked for blazes descending



*Panoramic view probably from East Peak of Mt. Wolf.*

from that point. I found none. I followed what few white blazes I could see and finally located a small weatherworn sign that indicated .1 miles to what turned out to be the actual summit. Near the summit the wind and fog were severe, with moisture condensing upon the lenses of my glasses, not helping the visibility any. I decided I had better get down to a "safer" altitude. I had my rainjacket over my wool sweater to keep me warm, but my legs were exposed. I could tell there were trails leaving the summit, but the markings were so poor that I could not tell which one was the A.T. - if any were. I backtracked back to the summit house. I found no trails leaving from there, so back to the summit I went. I picked one of the trails from the summit and began the descent. I went down following rock cairns and just about got blown off the mountain by a strong blast of wind along an open area. I found no white blazes after a ¼ to ½ mile, so to keep from getting lost I backtracked to the summit once more through the blowing wind and drizzle. I frantically got out the guide and read it again. I chose another trail and did the same again. Still not the right trail. I was beginning to become somewhat scared, I did not want to go back the way I came. I needed to find the trail to the north and move on. My next attempt was the last trail that I

could have chosen and I soon found my familiar white blaze, very faint, off in the fog. I headed down the mountain and quickly ducked into the shelter provided by the low scrub growth several hundred feet farther down the side of the mountain. The descent was not so bad for about a mile and a half, and then, well - all I can say is that it was practically straight down, at least it was some of the steepest trail I had encountered yet.

I passed several "tourons," a name given to those other than thru-hikers in the Whites, on the way down the steep, quite vertical section. I had difficulty scrambling down some of the sections over slanting rock slabs. The combination of the steepness and the water flowing all around, together with the mud between the rocks, made the conditions less than desirable.

Just before Kinsman Notch, I took a break at Beaver Brook Shelter Lean-to where I thought about staying, but decided to push on. Today was Saturday, and the shelter was too close to the road for comfort. Besides, I had only gone just under ten miles - even though they were some of the toughest hiking that I had ever done. On the way out of Kinsman Notch I passed some boy scouts, and then two girls from New York. The skies began to clear as I made my way toward the summit of Wolf Mountain and eventually I did get treated to some "views." There was a section of new trail near a major powerline intersecting the trail just before Eliza Brook Shelter. At the shelter I finally caught up with John Smart and his dog Smokie. Another hiker, "The Trail Walker" was in residence too, but both finished their breaks and tried to convince me to move ahead to the Kinsman Pond Shelter. I declined, even though I had now caught up with John, a friend from way down south. Fourteen point seven miles for the day as an introduction to the Whites was enough for me! Just past the shelter began another steep climb up Kinsman Mountain. I would save that for tomorrow. They left, but soon after the two girls from New York arrived and decided to spend the night. The boy scouts also made their home by the stream. I tuned my radio in to the Saturday night program on PBS, which included A Prairie Home Companion, and introduced the girls to the show that I always tried to pick up on Saturday nights. Listening to Garrison Keillor weave his stories about Lake Wobegon while high in the New Hampshire Mountains made the evening special. The clouds pulled back and left a bright moon flooding the landscape with light. Maybe tomorrow the sky would be clear and provide some of those great White Mountain views.

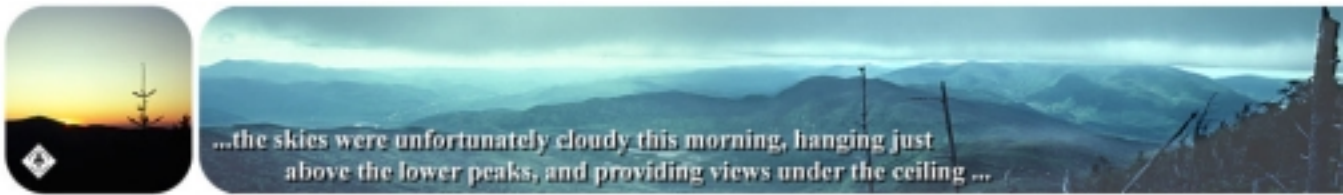


*John Smart & Smokey.*

One of the girls carried a Sierra cup. I saw potential in having one of them, so I convinced her to lend it to me tomorrow after she made the distance to Liberty Springs Campsite, where I planned on spending the night.



*A view of what was to come in the Whites!*



Aug 21 , 1983 Sunday (382 mtg)

The first two miles of the trail today involved climbing up the south peak of Kinsman Mountain. After that there was a dip before ascending to North Kinsman Peak. I remember that a few places along the trail I encountered trail that was more kin to rock climbing than trail walking. The trail came to an abrupt vertical wall of stone, with the trail continuing from the top of the ledge sometimes more than ten feet above. Some areas like this had wooden ladders constructed of pine trees nailed together, while others actually involved some rock climbing, perhaps because the ladders were destroyed. The skies were unfortunately cloudy this morning, hanging just above the lower peaks, and providing views under the ceiling of the clouds, but no bright blue sky.

Upon reaching Kinsman Pond Shelter I found a couple of packs, but no bodies to go with them. The owners must have been out on a day hike and would return later. Perhaps they belonged to John Smart and "The Trail Walker." By this time the skies had begun to clear and the makings of a brilliant day were on the way. I descended off the mountain toward the first of the White Mountain huts run by the AMC at Lonesome Lake. I decided to check the place out and see how they run things. Upon entering the hut, I was informed by a chalkboard sign that there was lasagna for sale. These were left over from the previous evenings meal, but I decided to have some. I was given a large helping and then treated to some free left over pineapple upside down cake. I hung around the place waiting for the girls from New York, but they never showed up. So much for my Sierra Cup. I guess the hut crew must have decided that there

was no sense keeping the rest of the lasagna around any longer and offered me more for free. I gladly took it off their hands.

I moved down the trail a short distance to the shore of Lonesome Lake where the view of Mt Lafayette rising as a backdrop behind the lake took my breath away. The scene was one of the most amazing I had seen up to this point. The stories were correct - the Whites did kick ass!

I left the serenity of the lake view and headed back toward the daily regime of hiking as I began to descend toward Franconia Notch. While crossing one of the brooks whose bridge had been removed, I became momentarily lost and followed a blue-blazed section of trail for a couple of yards. I backtracked and rejoined the correct route on it's way down to the road crossing at US 3.



*A view from South Kinsman.*

Once across the highway the trail began a gradual uphill climb for say - "a very little distance" before heading practically straight up for two and a half miles. In that span, the elevation changed two and a half thousand feet. Now that is a climb! The trail did not wind here and there either that I recall, just a straight line up the side of the mountain to a campsite called Liberty Springs. To be able to camp here, in an area that was in no way level, the AMC has built tenting platforms to allow a level surface. The platforms also minimize the impact of camping. There is a fee for utilizing these spots that is paid to the caretaker who lives in a tent also. The spring at Liberty Springs provided great water and helped ease the pain of the long ascent. I rested by the spring before choosing a tentsite.

A couple of other northbounders, Mike Patch and a friend of his, showed up a little later. We all chose platforms and set up our tarps in anticipation of rain, then went to a spot on the right side of the trail to watch the sunset from a large boulder. As the evening fell, the temperature at our altitude of almost 4000 feet began to get quite chilly. "The



*Typical forest in the high White Mountains of NH.*

Trailwalker" came by, ripped several bellowing farts without even being the least bit embarrassed, fixed his grub, and then being as cheap as he looked and smelled, went up the trail to find a spot outside the quarter mile boundary from the trail to spend the night free. He had been unable to convince the caretaker to allow him to stay free at the campsite. What a character.



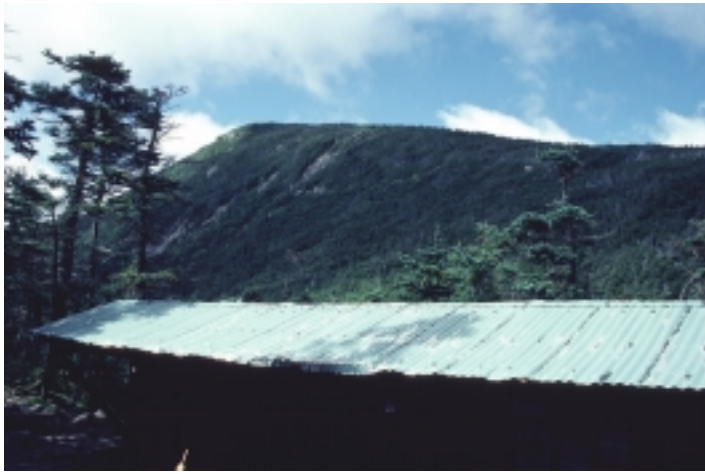
*The trail in the whites is definitely steep and rocky.*



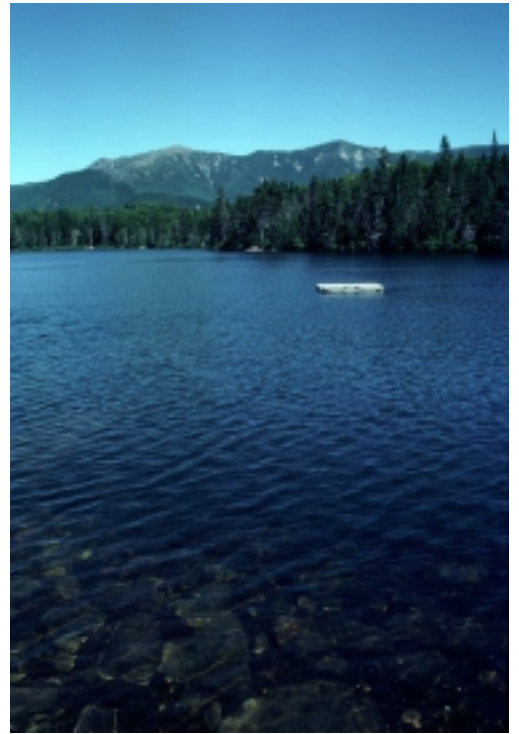
*Cloud Covered Mt. Lafayette and more steep, rocky trail!*



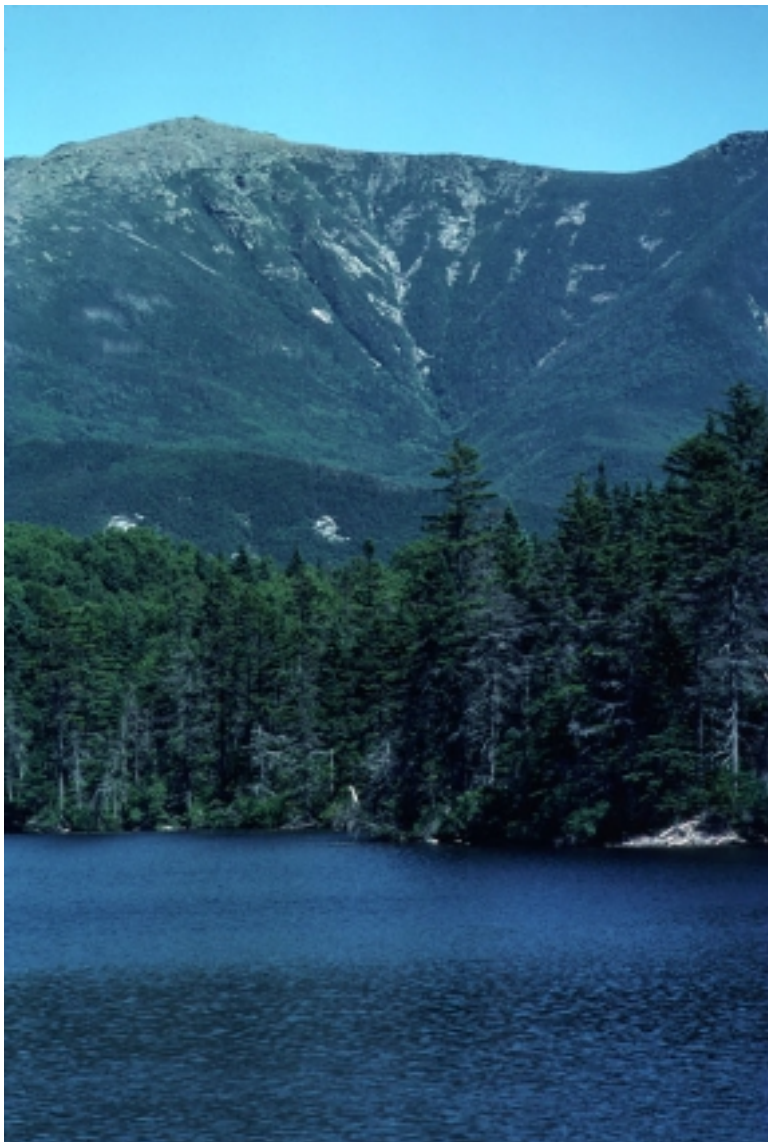
*Panorama from North Kinsman.*



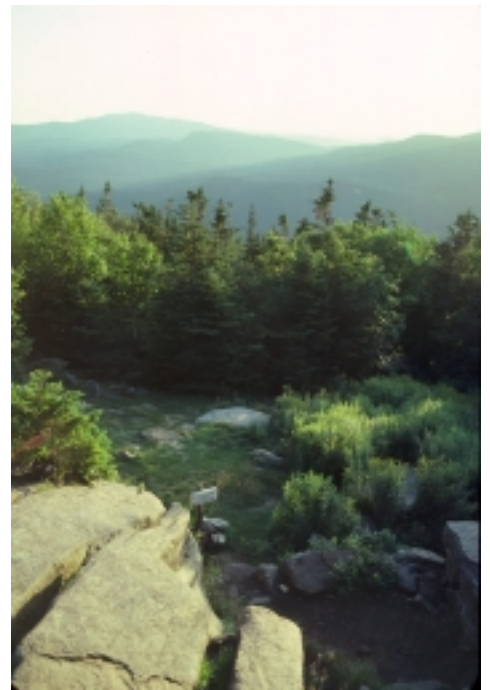
*Roof of Kinsman shelter.*



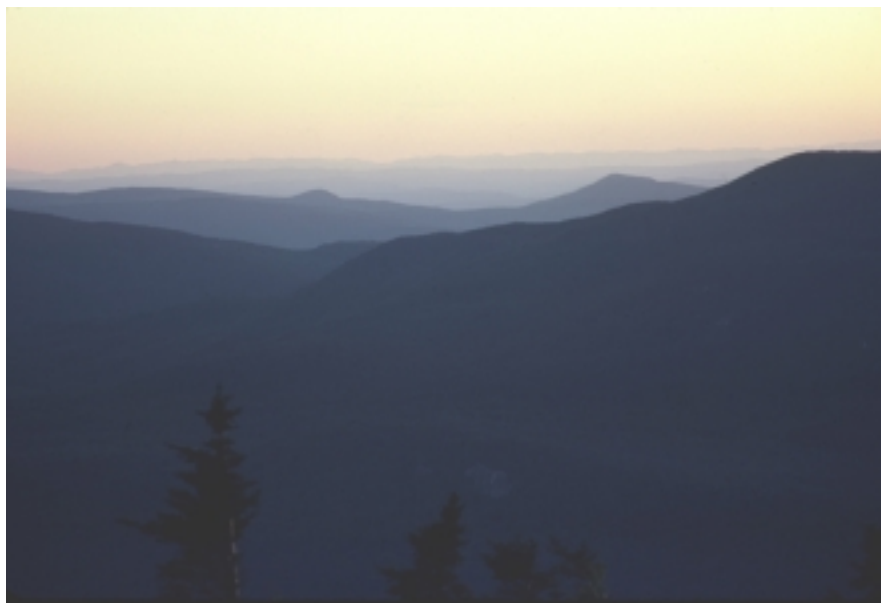
*Mt. Lafayette seen from the edge of Lonesome Lake.*



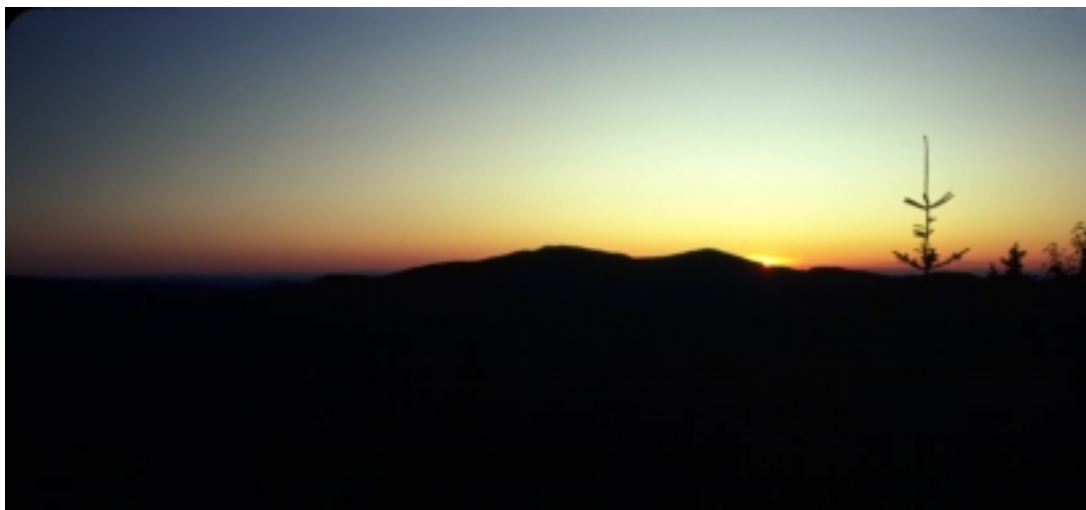
*The Grand Mt. Lafayette, part of the Franconia Ridge.*



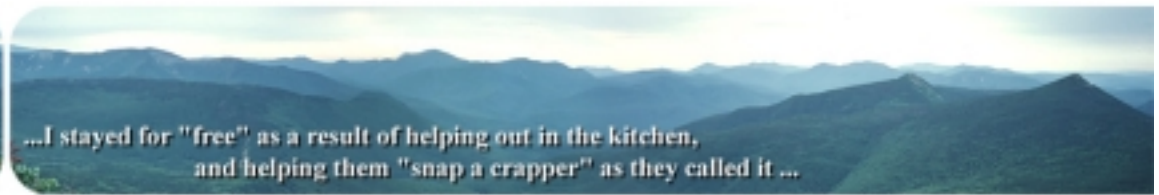
*Clearing by the spring at Liberty Springs Campsite.*



*Dusk nears as we await the sunset at Liberty Springs.*



*Sunset from Liberty Springs.*



Aug 22 , 1983 Monday (370.9 mtg)

Up early to beat any rain if I could this morning. Within a mile I made a sharp left and began traversing the long Franconia Ridge. Most of the hiking would be above treeline and exposed to the elements. I did not get up early enough to catch the sunrise, but the morning was beautiful none-the-less. The sky was just clear enough to get a view, but it looked as though bad weather was on the way.

From the point of attaining the ridge, the trail dipped for about a mile in a slight descent before continuing on a climb culminating at the summit of Mt Lafayette, the mountain I had photographed in all its' splendor over Lonesome Lake. But first the trail took me over Little Haystack, and then up to the summit of Mt. Lincoln. Although the clouds remained at a low ceiling, the views were more spectacular than any so far on the trail. The clean, crisp mountain air invigorated my spirits as I made my way across the open mountaintops. I prayed for the rain to hold off. Near the summit of Lafayette, I met a couple of hikers who had spent the night at Greenleaf Hut a mile down the mountainside on a different trail.

Descending off of Lafayette across the Garfield Ridge, I became concerned that I had gone the wrong way since I had not seen any blazes lately. I backtracked a bit and met the previous hikers again, and discussed the situation with them. There had been clear trail, but no blazes. Figuring that we were still on the trail I continued and eventually found a very old, faint blaze at a junction farther down the trail. I was on track. Views back toward Franconia Ridge from the Garfield Ridge and Mt Garfield itself were equally stunning despite the low clouds. At least I could see something, unlike when I went over Mt Moosilauke.

The descent off of Mt. Garfield involved yet another steep grade, but the distance was only about one mile. From there the next couple of miles were much more tame. As I approached Galehead Hut, one of the huts located directly beside the trail, tiny raindrops had begun to fall. I met a couple of southbounders on their way out after a hearty breakfast of pancakes - the leftovers that I would not get from the mornings meal. I just entered the premises at Galehead when a cold downpour developed in the mountain skies. The wind picked up and the trail was quickly transformed into a climate not fit for man nor beast. I really did not want to go on in this kind of weather, yet I had only come just over ten miles. But hey, what is the rush? Finally decided to stay after finding out that they had room for the night. I stayed for "free" as a result of helping out in the kitchen, and helping them "snap a crapper" as they called it. Snapping the crapper involved using a couple of sturdy poles to lift a 55 gallon can of human waste from the toilet area and hauling it over to an area where at some point down the road a



*Still at least a mile away, Lafayette looms behind Mt. Lincoln.*



*Mt. Liberty and Mt. Flume can be seen at the right.*

helicopter would come and transport it down to the valley - never to be seen again.

All in all I ate well, kept dry, met many nice people, including Bruce Emerson and his gorgeous daughter and her girl friends. I also met someone who claimed to have hiked the Continental Divide Trail.



*The massive rock mountainside where “the Old Man of the Mountain” profile is located.*



*Ridgeline trail along Franconia Ridge.*



*Looking back at Mt. Flume. from Mt. Lincoln.*



*The trail to Mt. Lafayette.*



*Wilderness of the white Mountains from Garfield.*



*Looking back at the Franconia Ridge from Mt. Garfield.*



...stopped at Ethan Pond to check it out  
and read the register...

Aug 23 , 1983 Tuesday (360.6 mtg)

Took my time getting going this morning after the big breakfast. Most guests had left by the time I got around to leaving. This was something quite unprecedented. Usually I was one of the first ones out. The trail woke me up with its three quarter mile steep climb up to South Twin Mountain. The sky was still overcast in the wake of yesterdays' rainstorm, and there were no view to be had as I reached the summit. Several people were there waiting for the skies to clear, and it looked as though it might. I told everyone up there that I wasn't waiting around, and that if I left the weather would surely clear. I headed on down the trail gradually descending toward Mt. Guyot a few miles away. The weather did clear up later in the day, and perhaps broke up a bit after I left, but I had to move on and was rewarded with a terrific view of Whitewall Mountain from Zeacliff, a mile or so before arriving at Zealand Falls Hut.



*Fantastic view of the Whites from Zeacliff.*

I reached the hut and decided to take a break, eat my lunch and relax before moving on. I was still being nagged by that tiny pea sized blister on the back of my Achilles tendon. I decided to pop the blister, which was located right under the collar of my boot and was aggravated by the boot top on every step. I don't really know what it was, a bug or spider bite maybe, but the puss that came out of that little blister filled the air with the most foul smelling odor that I had smelled in a long time, even worse than "The Trailwalker." Now that the blister was gone, the boot did not seem to touch as much and I now felt relief.

While at the Zealand Falls Hut, I met Bruce's wife and his other gorgeous daughter! She was more my age, but the other was better looking, although this one was no slouch. I picked up a tip at the hut about a former thru-hiker named Dan Harty that puts up hikers near Crawford Notch. This sounded interesting, so I said goodbye to the ladies and continued on past Zealand Falls, down to the valley floor, and along the base of



*Whitewall Mountain from Zeacliff.*



*Railroad grade below Whitewall Mountain from Garfield.*

about a black thru-hiker named Winston Lumsdon, who was headed south on the trail. He was described as quite a character, and was the first African-American long distance hiker that I had ever heard of. Kathy had left her camera at Madison Hut, a hut that I had not even reached yet. Apparently they were not hiking in a "straight down the trail in one direction" kind of hike. I guess that is how they ended up being ahead of me.



*Amanita Mushroom just popping up.*

Whitewall Mountain following an old railroad bed beside Whitewall Brook. I stopped in at Ethan Pond Shelter to check it out and read the register. The shelter was located on a nice little pond and seemed like a very nice place to stay. From there I began the descent into Crawford Notch and route 302 running at the lowest point. Once at the road, I hitched a ride to a place where I could telephone the Harty's. I spoke to a female who said that Don was not home, but someone would be by to pick me up later. Don's father came and offered me a ride to Don's house. To my surprise I had talked to Kathy, who I had hiked with back near Damascus, Virginia! Along with her was Ron, who I also had met back then. A couple of new people I had not met were there also: "The Maximus", Nick, and "Lan A.T. Hiker" I was able to shower up, and feel at home as we had a great feast that night, and I took the opportunity to contact Pinkham Notch Camp to cancel my reservations for Mizpah hut this evening that I had made earlier. I then scheduled a spot at Lake of the Clouds Hut for tomorrow night. That night I heard



*Zeac cliff from the railroad grade.*

*Ethan Pond*





Aug 24 , 1983 Wednesday (346.1 mtg) From Gonzo's Appalachian Trail journal

This morning Mr. Hardy drove me back to the trailhead in Crawford Notch, where I had left off the night before. The road through Crawford notch ran beside the Saco River, which had to be crossed this morning before beginning the ascent of Webster cliffs, the beginning of a section of the White Mountains known as the Presidential Range. This area is noted for its amazing views, tough hiking, and bad weather. The climb out of the Notch had an elevation gain of 1500 feet in just one mile! Most of the climbing up to this point usually covered no more than 1000 feet in a mile. By the third mile into the



*Crawford Notch from Webster Cliffs.*

day's hike I was passing over Webster Cliffs on my way toward Mt Webster. The cliffs provided breathtaking views down into Crawford Notch and across the notch to the mountains from which I had come. I stopped many times to photograph and take in the scenery. This is what the trip is all about.

I began to approach the summit of Mt Webster as I stopped repeatedly at the views provided by the Webster Cliffs just before the summit. Upon reaching the summit, I began the gradual ascent along the ridge that would ultimately culminate on the summit of Mt Washington after

passing over or around many peaks, all named after presidents of the United States. Only Clingmans Dome in the Smoky Mountains surpasses Mt Washington in elevation. From Mt Webster I traveled just over a mile and stepped onto the top of Mt Jackson. Each stop along the way seemed to provide a view more impressive than the one before. I could see the rocky cone of Mt. Washington projecting above all the rest on this beautiful morning.

One and a half miles beyond Mt Jackson, I stopped at Mizpah Hut, the place I had scheduled to stay tonight, but rescheduled last night after going somewhat farther than I had anticipated. There were few people at the place, but eventually I located one of the hut crew and was able to obtain a weather forecast. The prediction seemed quite agreeable - highs in the 50's with 2 mile per hour winds, clear and sunny. Can't get much better than this. Not far past the hut, I came across a sign that informed me that I was about to enter an area that contained many miles of continuous above treeline hiking, and that this particular area was known to have the worst weather in the world. What! Today



*"Toilet bowl" fungus.*



*Sign upon reaching treeline.*

seemed so nice. But apparently the weather could change very rapidly since at least three weather patterns converge near Mt. Washington causing wildly fluctuating weather patterns. I continued on, happy with the weather that I was experiencing as I gradually stepped out of the scrub growth onto the "barren" rocky above treeline trail. I had only four more miles to get to Lake of the Clouds Hut, where I had reservations to spend the night. At the summit of Mount Pierce (4310'), the trail begins a 12.7 mile section of trail that is almost entirely above tree line, with little protection from wind and rain. Mt.

Pierce is also known as Mt Clinton, and this name is used more, even though Pierce is the official name. The trail had been following the Webster Cliffs Trail up to this point. Just beyond, it becomes part of the Crawford Path all the way to Mt. Washington.

As the trail approaches Mt. Eisenhower, a loop trail continues to the summit, while the A.T. skirts the summit on its eastern side. My path, the A.T., lead me thru some scrub growth. I will have to go to the summit on some other trip. Mt. Eisenhower had been named Mt. Pleasant until 1972 when the name was changed to honor the past president.

I passed just west of the summit of Mt. Franklin, and then past Mt. Monroe. The trail bypassed their summits as well. If I had not been so dead set on doing the "whole" trail without deviating, I could have had even more views today. As it was, the views into the Dry River Wilderness to the East, and toward Mt. Washington were some of the best I had seen on the entire trip, so I was satisfied at the time.

Coming around the east side of Monroe, the outline of Lake of the Clouds Hut came into view and there was still plenty of daylight and good weather to be had. I checked into the hut, but asked if there was work to be had that I might stay the night for free, but was told there was nothing to do. I asked one of the hutboys if there was a daypack that I could borrow for the afternoon as I made the hut my basecamp and set out to explore. Thinking that the weather could change by tomorrow, I decided to climb up the remaining mile and a half to the summit of Mt. Washington and get the view during this magnificent stroke of luck that I had received with the weather. I practically ran up the remaining trail having no weight to hold me back but a camera, water bottle and some snacks. The freedom of no pack was like a freedom from my ball and chain. The entire route was just one big rock hop. One rock to the next, there is virtually no soil but what remains in obscure areas with delicate vegetation hanging on for dear life.



*Washington and other mountains I would cross seen from somewhere near Mt. Jackson.*



*Rock cairn used to mark the trail route.*

At the summit there are many buildings, too many as far as I was concerned. This was no longer a wilderness experience, people could actually drive up an auto road to the 6228' summit, or take a cog trail if they chose to. There was a weather station, The Tip Top House (an old Victorian resort from days gone by), and a new visitors center with cafeteria, museum, and its own small post office. I stopped at the post office to see if my package had arrived. It had, but I would pick it up tomorrow. No sense in carrying everything down and then back up tomorrow morning.

The next thing I saw, I immediately recognized as Winston Lumsdon, the southbound black thru-hiker. There was no mistaking him, first off he was black. As far as I knew, the only black thru-hiker on the trail. I knew he was a thru-hiker just by the way he looked. It does not take long out on the trail to develop an eye to distinguish a regular hiker from a thru-hiker. I introduced myself and immediately became charmed by this anomaly. Winston was an old man, retired professor he said, from Tuskegee University. He claimed to be a pilot from the Tuskegee Air Base, and although I think he was telling the truth, you kind of wondered how exaggerated it really was. He and I hiked back to the hut together and talked along the way.

Back at the hut, Winston talked with the hut crew and somehow with his charm talked them into giving him the leftover pancakes from breakfast. He was such a conman that he even convinced them to warm them up for him! What a guy. After that he started working on lodging. He had his routine down, and in no time had convinced them into letting him spend the night in exchange for kitchen cleanup duty. I immediately asked if I could get in on this deal as well, and this time was accepted. I was in the presence of a professional. We helped the crew prepare some of the food, but our job mostly was with cleanup. Winston announced "I is the Goreman" in a thick black dialect as he scraped the uneaten food from the plates into the garbage. I washed the dishes as he completed his "gore" duty. We had a blast.



*Alpine wonderland somewhere after Mt. Jackson.*

Later that night one of the hut boys set up a large telescope outside where the stars numbered into the billions as the sky remained clear. The moon was bright and may have been a full moon as he set up the device to look at the craters. I had my first view ever of Saturn as it quickly passed from the center of the view piece to the edge and the out of view. We looked at Globular Clusters as well. All would disappear from view just as fast due to the earth's rotation. Jupiter came and went as well. Today's visibility was estimated at 90 miles. 10.5 miles to Lake of the Clouds Hut, but almost 14 with the side trip up Washington and back. The day could not have been nicer.



*Mt. Washinton seems fairly close, but is still miles away.*

*Looking into the Dry River wilderness.*



*The rocky cone of Mt. Washington.*



*Skirting the edge of one of the presidentials just before Lake of the Clouds.*



*Lake of the Clouds Hut.*



*Lake of the Clouds and the hut.*



*Washington Summit Cone.*



*On the Summit of Mt. Washington.*



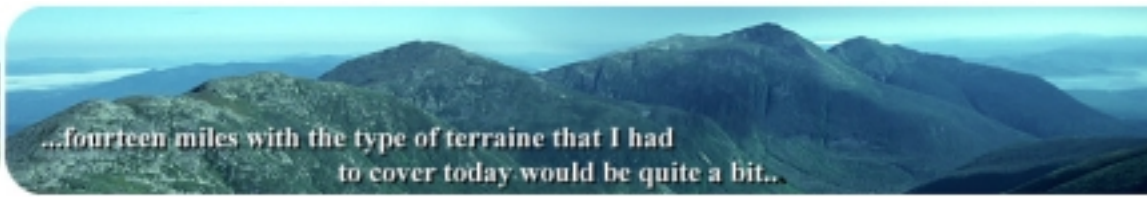
*I met Winston Lumsdon on the way back to the hut.*



*Winston heads south to the Lake of the Clouds Hut.*



*Bunch Berries.*



Aug 25 , 1983 Thursday (335.6 mtg)

Up early to take advantage of the nice weather, and to be able to travel the 14.4 miles to Pinkham Notch Basecamp. Fourteen miles with the type of terrain that I had to cover today would be quite a bit. I ate my own oatmeal for breakfast this morning rather than staying for the meal. If I stayed for the meal I would have had to stay for the cleanup. Managed to get some hot water from the crew for my oatmeal. I asked if I was "all settled" as far as having done enough to compensate for last night's stay and meal. They said

yes, so off I went for my second climb up the cone of Mt. Washington, this time with my pack.

It was another beautiful morning, and there was no one to speak of on the top when I arrived. That was nice, except I had a hard time finding someone to get me into the post office for my package. I had been eating so good at the huts that I really did not need any of the supplies that I had sent to the summit, but picked them up anyway. I packed up the supplies and headed down the trail, descending from the cone toward the Northern Presidential's surrounding the Great Gulf Wilderness Area.



*Tourists don't get up this early to the summit of Washington.*

Dropping off the cone, the trail crosses the cog railway and turns sharply to the left to follow the Gulfside trail. Once again the trail skirts the summit of the major peaks on its way around the gulf. I passed to the left side of Mt Clay and continued on toward Mt. Jefferson, but passed to the side of it too. At the junction of the Airline Trail, which leads .8 miles to the summit of Mt. Adams. From this point, there was a particularly impressive view of Madison, which the trail then continued toward. Madison Springs Hut is reached before passing over Madison summit. I stopped in at the hut and saw Dick and Lan, a couple of thru-hikers going north. They had decided not to go up Mt. Madison, I guess they were going to take a different trail down the mountain that began at the hut, rather than the official trail that lead over Adams and followed the Osgood Path down the mountain. I opted for the official route. I was happy that the official route actually passed over the summit. This seemed like a novel thing since all the other peaks had been



*They say that on a clear day you can see the Atlantic Ocean from Mt. Washington.*

skirted. The view was great. The climb was short, but steep, and a couple of "goofs" were at the summit in t-shirts and shorts and no other gear to protect themselves should the weather change. The descent to Pinkham notch from Madison was long and involved much downhill. Over three thousand feet ticked off before I reached Pinkham. The last few miles after Madison Gulf Trail Junction were not as bad, just a walk in the woods so to speak.

At Pinkham camp, I asked if they needed help. They welcomed me and set me up to work in the kitchen washing dishes in exchange for room and board. Everyone was very nice, one girl even got me some cherry chip ice cream while I was working. I had to stop washing in order to finish it off. After the dishes were all cleaned and everyone was done cleaning the kitchen, one of the boys took me to a nearby beaver pond just before sunset to see if we could see some beaver activity, but unfortunately we were not lucky that night.



*Panorama from the summit showing the northern Presidential, and the cog railway coming up the mountain.*



*Northern Presidentials from the edge of the dropoff into the Gulf Wilderness Area.*



*Looking back at Mt. Washington while skirting the summit of Mt. Clay.*



*The auto road can be seen snaking its way up near the base of Mt. Washington.*



*Mt. Madison from the junction of the Airline Trail and the A.T.*



*Gulf w Wilderness with Washington in the background.*





...unfortunately, the weather had changed overnight  
and today I was facing a damp environment...

Aug 26 , 1983 Friday (321.2 mtg)

Got up early this morning and went to the kitchen to see about getting some hot water for my oatmeal like I had yesterday morning. When I asked about it, I was told that I was entitled to eat breakfast with the rest of the guests before I left. I accepted, ate, and then packed up for the big climb up Wildcat Mountain. Unfortunately, the weather had changed overnight, and today I was facing a damp environment, or at least the potential for a damp climate. The clouds had rolled in from the west, and Mt. Washington was mostly obscured by the cloudbank that had just set in over the Presidentials. So far it had not crossed the valley to the area that I was heading. The guidebook gave this description for the coming climb: "begin exceptionally steep ascent; use extra care, particularly when wet." A mile and a half after engaging in what might be called technical rock climbing over steep rock slabs, I reached the first summit of Wildcat. "Peak E" it was called. There is a gondola terminal building on this summit that if I had really wanted to, I could probably have sent my pack up by gondola and navigated the ascent without a pack. I don't like to be separated from all that I own so I chose not to do that. Besides, that would incur additional expense as I am sure they would not do it for free. I found the building closed at this time anyway, so I would have had to wait for the place to open also. It is best not to slack pack. I did manage to get some water at the building, and continued on over the remaining Wildcat summits. Looking back over toward Mt.



*A dramatic change in the weather as Washington is engulfed in the clouds.*

Washington I could no longer see the mountain. Just one big cloud bank.

From the summit of Wildcat I dropped steeply down for .6 mile to the area known as Carter Notch where I passed a couple of nice mountain lakes near Carter Notch Hut. I stopped at the hut to check for left overs, but they had already been cleaned out. Back to the trail and up Carter Dome I went. While on the way up to the 4832' summit, the wind began to blow and I decided that I had better prepare for a storm. The wind in this area had produced a lenticular cloud above the

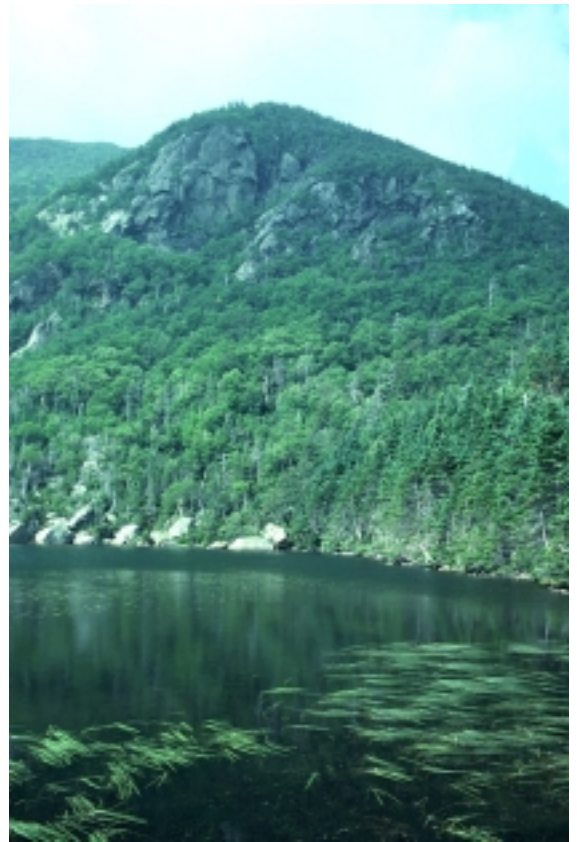


*Carter Dome.*

mountain that really amazed me, especially when it changed in shape from a spoon into the shape of a hamburger. I had read about these types of clouds and felt blessed to have witnessed such a juicy looking burger.

I put my camera in my pack and began to move quickly to the next shelter. I had about six miles to go, but only a small portion of it involved much climbing. I descended off of Carter Dome and found Zeta Pass and began the gradual uphill climb of Mt. Lethe. From there it was down hill to Imp Shelter.

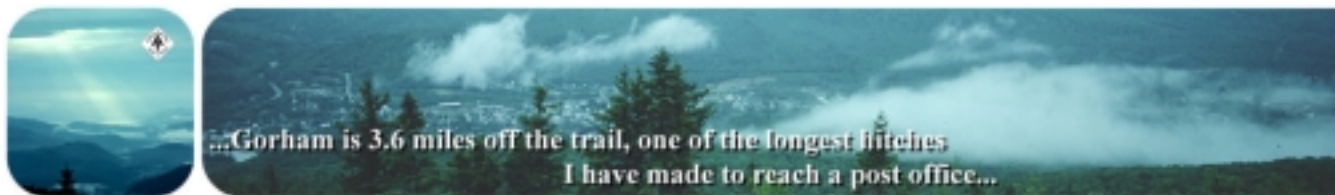
I reached the low point in this section where I thought the shelter was located and began what appeared to be an uphill section. I began to wonder if I had passed the shelter when I suddenly came across the A frame structure complete with an upper bunk section besides the regular floor platform. This was apparently a newer shelter since both the guide and the map called it Imp Campsite. A nice spring/stream flowed nearby. Found out from a girl at the shelter, who was a worker for the AMC trail crew, that she had just reblazed the area around Garfield that I had so much difficulty finding blazes a few days ago. A couple of guys from Canada came in later and offered me one of their dried squids and dried fish. Not bad, but quite salty.



*Carter Lake.*



*Lenticular Cloud that looked like a hamburger.*



Aug 27 , 1983 Saturday (308.8 mtg) From Gonzo's Appalachian Trail journal

Maldrop today in Gorham, NH seven or eight miles up the trail to the road crossing and then a few miles into town via Route 2. From Imp Shelter, I climbed steeply to the summit of Mt. Moriah while bits of the song kept entering my consciousness. No matter how hard I tried, I could not get the song out of my head as I hiked along.... "And they call the wind Moriah." Dipping down and then back up to Middle Moriah Mountain, I began the descent to the road along the Rattle River Trail beside Rattle Brook. The miles flew by quickly as it was mostly gradual downhill and easy hiking. I flew by Rattle River Shelter and waved to its' occupants as I went by. At Route 2, the road to Gorham, I found another hiker hitching to Gorham. Now there were two attempting to hitch. That makes life more difficult. We eventually resorted to waving down a van using a pleading "why not?" gesture and were loaded up for the trip to Gorham. The lady was quite interested in Appalachian Trail hikes and was on her way to Wisconsin to spend a few days on a remote island.

Gorham is 3.6 miles off the trail, one of the longest hitches I have made to reach a post office. But there was more in this town than just a post office, but the Post office was the first stop. Once the mailing was accomplished, I set out to find the home with the garage loft set up to provide hikers a place to stay. The garage was located right along the main drag. I claimed a spot on the floor and took inventory before heading to the store for supplies. I treated myself to a chocolate shake and more at the local MacDonalds. Gorham was full of restaurants catering to the throngs of tourists that pass through to visit the White Mountains. A good reason for hikers to stop as well.

There were many thru-hikers congregated at the town, resting a few days before going for the last push out of New Hampshire and into the last remaining state: Maine. I found Cathy and Ron again, Nick, "the Mill Hunkey", Harry Train (ex-admiral of the Pacific or Atlantic fleet), and Pauline. Later Roger Brickner came in looking for Mike Patch. Ray and Lysle, and James the taxi driver were there too. A BIG crowd! Maximus and "Lan A.T. Hiker" had gone on before I arrived.

Late that afternoon I had a nice Italian lasagna meal at a nice restaurant before buying some ice cream to take back and share with everyone else. I found giving the ice cream away to be unusually difficult, I guess everyone had been there too long and ate too much. I eventually got rid of it, but felt badly about having had so much trouble giving something away that usually people feel lucky to get. Civilization can soften a person. Later I discovered 50¢ hamburgers and ate once more.



Aug 28 , 1983 Sunday (301.2 mtg)

Nick, Cathy and Ron got up early this morning, ate breakfast early, and then staked out a spot along the road in front of the garage as their hitching location and tried for a while to get a ride back to the trail. Not much luck. No one would stop. Then Ray and Lyle came by in a car driven by James, their taxi driver friend, who stopped, picked them up and took them to the trailhead. At first I thought I should "get out of Dodge" with them, until I found out that Ray and Lyle were planning on eating at the Sunday morning brunch at a local restaurant before continuing on their journey. This meant that I could probably get a ride later as they were taken to the trailhead. The brunch did not begin until 11:30, so I would get a late start today. The owners did not know what hit them after all the thru-hikers went thru the line. The food was excellent, and provided everything but cold cereal. Afterwards I did get a ride back to the trailhead from James, and set out up the side of Mt. Hayes from a point directly across the road where the trail had come down from Mt Moriah.

I crossed the Androscoggin River, and waddled down the trail thinking I would only do about six or seven miles this afternoon. The first four miles took me gradually up to the summit of Mt Hayes and then turned off toward Cascade Mountain, a couple of miles away. Then a steep descent into Trident Pass before heading back up, this time toward Wocket Ledges. From there the trail was more level for three miles before heading down to Gentian Pond and the shelter located nearby. I caught up to Cathy somewhere along the level section and frightened her as she thought that I was a moose that was approaching. As I neared the shore of Gentian Pond,



*Sign to Wocket Ledges.*

I spotted someone sitting on a rock at the edge of the water and thought it to be one of the gang. Following along the shore, I approached and found the person to be a nice looking female reading a book in the solitude provided by the surrounding area. I stopped and struck up a conversation, which lasted a while, and found out her friends were nearby at the shelter. We walked back to the shelter and I hung my



*View from Wocket Ledges.*

pack up. I intended to stay the evening. A few sprinkles of rain began to fall and I then convinced the girls that they should stay at the shelter tonight as well. Darkness was beginning to set in early due to the rain. They decided to stay and that made my evening a lot nicer. I had someone good looking and interesting to talk with. I did not write her name down, but I often wondered years later if this was the star from the movie "Flashdance." I had not seen the movie until later, but she reminded me of her when I saw it. The shelter was rather crowded even though Ron, Cathie, and Nick all slept in tents. Gentian Pond Shelter was the first shelter equipped with a "solar

one holer" solar powered outhouse. The solar energy helped decompose the waste. The prevailing weather conditions were too cool to do the job well or quick enough. There were females all around the shelter! I went to get some water once and caught a glimps of one washing up with her top off. Although her back was facing me, it was too much for a man who has spent so long in the woods mostly in the company of males.



*Gentian Pond.*