

Rex R. Pulford.

Appalachian Trail hike 1983.
(however far the hike goes)

13 March 1983 started hiking today - a Sunday. But actually things got well started Saturday (yesterday) Betty & I drove to Amicalola Falls St. Park to camp Sat. Nite so I could get an early start on Sun. Dorothy & Jeff joined us and we had a pretty good party. Had to buy a new Coleman cook stove because the old one retired without having informed us before hand. Do. & Jeff drove 48 miles to find a hardware store. With the new stove working, & several fine cooks - we had a real feast.

Sat Nite 28° & windy. Hard to sleep warm.

Sun. 13th had another feast for breakfast & started hiking 8:35 A.M. Got to Springer Mt. shelter at 3:30 P.M. 7½ miles, maybe, for the day. At first I made good time; but I tired out

very quickly. Coming up the days last two mts. "Black & Springer" was very slow & painful. Betts & Do & Jeff all told me to do only 5 miles the first few days. Probably they are & were correct. But this way at least I am 1/2 mile onto the A.T. & off the approach trail.

14 Mar. 83 - Spend Nite in Hawk Mtn shelter. Distance traveled today approx. 10 miles. The shelter looks about as it did two years ago except no Passles & giggles of girl scouts. This time I had it all to myself. Last time it was so full we couldn't stay in it but had to climb back to top of Hawk & sleep in out house. These woods are almost 100% hard woods. Saw hardly any green at all today - & most of that was holly. Today's walking was easier than Yesterdays. Did today's 10 miles faster & with less strain than Yesterdays 7 1/2 mi. Tomorrow we try for Gooch Gap shelter. If that should go too quickly & easily. (It's 8 mi.) I'll go on to Woody Gp. 12 mi from here.

15 March 83

Made Gooch Gap shelter 8.9 Miles, and truly pooped out. Couldn't have made another mile if they were paying good money for it. Got here about 3:30 P.M. Panting & Puffing. Got some food in me and things looked better. My right knee is beginning to hurt pretty much. This is unusual, it is my left knee that usually causes most of the trouble.

This evening I met the first two people I've seen on the trail. Both through hikers going to Maine Mac Smith from Phillips, Me. & Bob Matheny from Kentucky. Both came from the Springer Mt. shelter today. About 190 miles - & I'm hurting over 8.9

Tomorrow the hike to slaughter gap would be great but realistically Jarrard gap is more likely. In either case, no shelter.

16 March 83 Wed. Been on the trail now 4 days. Today I did more Mileage than before 13.2 miles. I was pretty awfully tired when I arrived (all the way to Blood Mt.), but not hurting any where in particular. This distance by the way is several miles further than yesterday I predicted for today. The day itself was pretty nasty, extremely Windy 30 to 35 M.P.H. + drizzly. I had a chance to try the foul weather gear. It works. Mac Smith, the Maine man, thought it was a fine mild day, he hiked in shorts, the rest of ~~us~~ us shivered. This Blood Mt. shelter is one of the nicest I've ever seen. However, tonight, the view is of mist.

17 March 83 Still a windy, misty day. Didn't do much hiking; just came down from Blood Mtn. shelter to Neels gap. The distance is 2 miles; steep, switch backs, and today slippery. From Neels gap called

Dorothy & Jeff at Wolfcreek.
They drove over, Picked up Bob
Matherly & me, and took us home
to Betts. Spent the rest of the
day showering, cleaning up gear (of
which more Canon) & getting ready for
further travels. Also took Bob to
Gainesville Ga. so he could catch a
bus home. His knees gave out, his
father is an M.D. He thinks he can
get fixed up & then back on the
trail. Good luck to him.

Betts discovered that MICE
on Blood MTN. had chewed up
part of my pack. So plans are
changed. For the next couple of
days I'll do day hikes, shall repair
the pack - then off again.

18 March 83 Friday

Betts drove me up to Neels Gap
& I hiked, with light day pack,
to Hog Pen Gap where Betts picked
me up. Not much but another
6.6 miles on the way North.
Rex & Susan & Do & Jeff are coming

here tonight to see Do + Jeff's
wedding pictures. Should be a very
pleasant evening. Tomorrow Betts
will drive me back to Hog Pen
Gap + I'll hike to Unicorn gap.
Betts got the pack all fixed.

19 Mar. 83. Got on trail at Heppen
Gap at 10:30 A.M. Reached Low Gap
Shelter - 4.4 miles at 12:30 P.M. Little
better than 2 M.P.H. This is my best
speed to date. Had lunch at Low
Gap + went on to Rocky Knob shelter
which I reached before 5 P.M. 11.2
miles for the day. Met a bunch of
college students on spring break,
in fact, so many that there was no
room left at Rocky Knob shelter
and I had my first sleep in my new
Bivy sac. Very satisfactory. The college
kids were most pleasant. Met a bunch
of members of the Georgia A.T. club
Ln. doing maintenance work on
the trails and shelters. Asked them
for info on how to join the club,
which they gave me.

20 Mar. 83. Hiked 3.3 miles from Rocky Knob shelter to Unicoi gap. Betts picked me up + we came home. Spent day making final preparations for big take off. When I next take off, tomorrow - or when weather moderates - (its pouring), I'll be on my own entirely. I'll get through the Great Smokeys. Betts will join me then. I'm loading food for 8 days + hope to refuel at Wesser.

21 Mar 83. Monday. Nasty looking day - very cold, cloudy, and windy. Stayed home - did not start hiking. First day of Spring "BAH HUMBUG!"

22 Mar 83. Betts drove me back to Unicoi gap and I started out at 9:30 hiking North. Still very cold day freezing or nearly all day. Snow on the ground on the high MtNs - especially Tray. Sleet on the trees - very pretty. Very clear

day after 10:00 A.M. Some ice on the flat rocks. Went from Unica's gap to Addis gap - 11 miles. Addis gap shelter was occupied by a bunch of

10, 11, + 12 yr-olds on a programmed trip - with counselors & NOT out of Wakecreek, but out of Cleveland.

I slept in my tent.

23 Mar. 83 Wednesday. Hiked from Addis Gap (which I have seen before - but not used) to Plumorchard Gap Lean To (which Dorothy and I used once on a hike down to Addis Gap. Distance 11.3 miles. I seem to be stuck in that range. Day was clear, bright, cold; still some snow & ice in the higher spots. It's cold sleeping these nights. I'm only about 4 miles from the N.C. border. Should get that marker taken care of tomorrow.

24 Mar. 83 - Still at Plumorchard gap Lean To, I began snowing sometime during the wee small hours last night. If

Wake me about 5 A.M. by blowing fine snow on my face. I moved my bed and went back to sleep. When I did get up, eat breakfast & get ready to go there were about 3" of snow on the ground. I packed up & went about 100 yds. Almost fell down 3 times. It is slippery out there. No way I can make $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles over mtns. without getting hurt. Snowed till 1 P.M. and I guess we had between 4 & 5 inches on the ground. Then we got some rain for a few hours which melted off some of the snow. Now, 6 P.M., it is snowing again. We'll see what tomorrow brings.

25 Mar 83 Fri. Came from Plumardai to Muskrat Lean to - 7.2 miles. A short haul, but because of the snow, it was tough. About 2 inches of snow on the ground in the morning - slush in the afternoon. On the uphill stretches kept sliding back, which is tiring & frustrating. On the downhill stretches kept sliding ahead, which is scary. Made it without falling, which is lucky. Crossed

into North Carolina at Bly Gap
at 11 A.M. One Map retired - one
state down

26 Mar, Sat. A very cold night,
a cold day; I can get my exercise
by shivering. Hiked from Muskraut
Lean To to Deep Gap and the base
of Standing Indian Mtn. The distance
was only about 4 miles but it took
forever in the snow. When I got to
Deep Gap I took stock of the
situation & decided it was too
cold, there was too much snow, &
it was too easy to bust something
important on the slippery slopes
& ridges. So I decided to go home
for a bit & come back on the trail
when the weather moderates. Took
five hitches to get home - but
the last ride brought me to the
base of our driveway. Fast &
efficient transportation.

1 Apr '83. Morning did chores around house,
took Betts to dentist for tooth reconstruction.
Had lunch at home with Betts, Do, & Jeff

Then Betts drove me back to Deep Gap & I got back on trail. Just hiked .78 mi to Standing Indian shelter. The shelter seems to be packed & I am hoping to squeeze in because the weather report is for rain storms tonight & tomorrow. We'll see!

2 Apr '83 - Last night, because I couldn't squeeze in, I continued walking over Standing Indian Mtn. & down to Beech Gap - an addition of $4\frac{1}{2}$ mi I hadn't planned on. Had to camp out - no shelter. I'd have had to camp out at Standing Indian shelter anyway - no room. It rained hard from 1 or 2 A.M. up till about Noon. Tent leaked, lot of equipment soaked. I hiked on most of the day to Big Spring Gap shelter. If you are already wet you might better be hiking than sitting around regretting. Now, at Big Spring shelter, the sun seems to be trying to bust forth. I have a bunch of stuff hanging up drying. Tomorrow, if I want to stop at a shelter, I have to go either 5 mi. or 15 mi. We'll see.

3 Apr. 83 Too tired to say much. Walked in snow all day - some continued to fall until after noon. Also we seemed to be in heavy cloud all day. Worst visibility I've ever seen up here. Was heading for Siler Bald Lean To. Missed it, due to stupidity, and ended up near Wayah Gap - a little picnic Park. Also had a bunch of boy scouts for company. Very cold all night. Tent Froze. Did a little over 15 mi. Don't want to do that again till I get a lighter load.

4 Apr 83 Walked from Wayah gap almost to Cold Springs Lean To. About 10 miles. That's all I cared to do after yesterday. Beautiful clear blue sky all day to day. I'm camping out - no Lean To - and trying to dry my stuff. Discovered that the lookout tower I've remembered & tried to describe to people, is on top of Wayah Bald. It's the same as always - still undergoing repair. Tomorrow I'll probably try for Wesser Creek Lean To. About 9 miles

5 Apr. 83 Tues

That fine, beautiful day + nite for camping out lasted until 5 A.M. Then the lightning + thunder started. I jumped out of the bivvy sack to see if I could pack all my stuff before the rain came. Got it all packed dry - some before, the first shower + some between showers. Started walking at quarter to 7. THEN the rains came. It has poured all day. Figured to walk about 9 miles to Wesser Creek lean to. I heard it was hard to find. I never found it. Found another, unlisted, lean to about $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Wesser. Decided to hike on in to Wesser + get a room at the Outdoor Outfitters. They were all filled up with an outdoor medical convention. Hitched about 3 miles and got a room at Nantahala Village. Since then have been drying out equipment.

bathing, & then reveling in
warmth & dry. Tomorrow I meet
Betts at Nantahala Outdoors.
A RED LETTER Day. Hope the
weather improves.

6 ~~Wed~~ Apr. 83 Wed. Day off
hiking. Spent the day with Betts.
Spent Nite at lost mine campground.
Have met two very pleasant young
fellows & we have shared camp
areas a couple of times.

Mark Evans R.P.F. 2 Box 2002
Gurnet Rd. Brunswick, Me, 04011
Bob Lynski 8000 S. St. Louis
Ave, Chi. Ill 60652.

7 Apr 83 Thurs. Left Wesser &
Betts at 8 P.M. of an overcast
Morning. The trip to Fontana is
24 Miles. I hoped to do 11 today
& 13 tomorrow. The first part is
the famous JUMP UP. It took me
much longer to make the first 6

miles + shelter than I expected. Also it started to rain. So I accepted the 6 miles + stayed at Sassafras Gap Lean To. People are coming in here like crazy. There are already 7 here + its only 2 P.M. I understand 5 more are coming.

8 Apr. '83 Fri. Did 13 miles - all morn. in rain. Very tough terrain. Made Cable Gap shelter + slept there. Of the 14 of us who slept in Sassafras lean to only 6 of us made cable Gap today. Too tired to write more -

9 Apr. '83 Sat. Made 7 miles from Cable Gap shelter to Fontana by Noon. Still raining continuously. Met Betts at dam. We got a fabulous lunch. Got permit to hike Smokeys. Start through there tomorrow. Betts tent blown down. We set that to rights, but I have a hunch shell need a new tent.

The weather report is for it to clear tonight or tomorrow morning + to have at least a couple of clear days. We'll see!

10 APR 83 Sunday - First day's hike in the Great Smoky Mountains.

The first hiking is Tough up, up, up. But it isn't as tough as the hike from Wesser to Fontana. The day started out beautiful, blue, + clear + I Planned to do 12 miles. It soon clouded up + by 1 P.M. was snowing + cold. I quit early because of the miserable conditions + am now at Mollies Ridge shelter.

About 10 miles for the day. Not too bad because the first day - with all its upping - looks harder than most. Tomorrow has to be either 10 or 15 miles. If the weather conditions stay bad I'll probably opt for the 10. I've been hiking along with a very Pleasant young fellow - 23 yrs

old - from Dartmouth College
+ California. Dave Buchanan.
He hikes a little faster than
I - but not much.

11 Apr 83 Monday. Hiked from
Mollies Ridge shelter to Derrick
Knob shelter - a little over
10 miles. Anyhow, for the 2 days
in the Smokies, we have done 20.2
miles. An experienced hiker in
these parts, told us (I'm still
hiking with Dave) that today's
hike is the toughest one in the
Smokies. From now on all gets
easier. Maybe - We'll see. The
weather turned nicer. Today, at
long last no rain, no snow,
no bitter winds. About noon the
sky turned clear and blue. No
doubt it will be cold. We are
at pretty good altitude. The
weather report seems to call for
a couple of good days at least.
Tomorrow we do 13 miles to
Mt Collins shelter. This puts us

over Clingmans Dome which is the highest point on the whole A.T. Animals around here a very tame. We've seen 4 deer you could almost pat. Right now, 7 P.M., we are trying to discourage a Coon who, I'm sure, will get in the shelter tonight & raise hell.

12 Apr. 83 Tuesday - Hiked 13 miles - felt like 50 - from Derrick Knob shelter to Mt Collins shelter - but it was over Clingman's Dome (highest point on the whole A.T. The slopes & climbs aren't bad, but the climbs are sure long - just go on & on. The interesting thing about tonight is that we have 8 people at the shelter and all but 2 of them were together (including me) at the first shelter out of Wesser Top of the Jump. The bunch are planning a party at Hot Springs next wed or Thurs, probably at the hostel. Betts &

I could go. Everybody brings their own - of everything.

13 Apr 83 - Anniversary - I've been on the trail for one month. Actually I had a week or a little over off the trail. But it has been one month since I began. Perhaps more importantly, it has been one month since I've had a smoke. I hope this can become permanent. Today we (Dave + I) hiked $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Newfound Gap where Betts (bless her soul) was waiting in the car. Spent the rest of day shopping in Cherokee + ~~back~~ at tent organizing for the next stretch. We are carrying food + clothes for 7 or 8 days. Our next big stop is Hot Springs, N.C. in $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 days. There may be a big party at Hot Springs for the Through Hikers - Party on Wed.

14 Apr 83 Thurs. Weather terrible + up at Newfound Gap even more terrible. So we spent the day with Betts at Smokemont campground. We

were especially careful about storing food for the night because last night Smoke Mountain Camp Ground had its first bear attack for the year. Tore up a car pretty badly. Tomorrow we have to go on no matter what the weather. Our permits will run out if we don't.

15 Apr '83 Fri. Hiked from Newfound Gap - 10 miles - to Peck's Corner Shelter. Rain stopped & gave beautiful views of mountain tops sticking out of the general body of mist. The sky was blue whenever we came out of the fog. The day remained pretty cool & tonight is going to be cold. Tomorrow we have to do a 13 mile day, to get to Cosby Knob shelter. There are 7 people in this shelter tonight & all of them are heading for Cosby tomorrow. I'm the slowest hiker of the bunch - so I'll be lucky to get

a bunk.

16 Apr '83 Sat. Hiked from Pecks Corner shelter to Cosby Knob Shelter - about 13 miles. David & I were the first 2 from our group to reach the shelter; there was already a married couple here. We picked out beds for the night - then people began to show up. Eventually we had 16 people here - 4 of them had to sleep in tents. Beautiful clear blue day today and fantastic views from the ridges. Coldest day in a long time. One of the fellows had a thermometer & it showed $+19^{\circ}\text{F}$ first thing this morn. All of our water was frozen. Tomorrow we hike out of the Smokeys - about 8 more miles. Then it is a new map & hunt for a camping site tomorrow nite. My arches were aching this evening from all the downhill work. We have even more downhill tomorrow. Will have to see what I can do.

17 Apr. 83 - Sun.

Charles Griffith "The Maximus"

Fred Abraham/ Jim Moore

154 Cross St.

Lowell, Mass. 01854

United Way of N. Central Mass.

South St.

Fitchburg, Mass. 01420

17 Apr 83 Sunday - Hiked from
Cosby Knob Shelter right on past
Davenport Gap Shelter + right on
out of the smokeys. We decided to
keep on going over the top of Snowbird
Mountain so that we would have a
good downhill start for the next day.
A Good Thing Too. Actually a

beautiful day - We covered about
17 miles - my longest so far for the
entire hike - and tented for the
nite just over the crest of
Snowbird Mt. Most of our gang
went on for another hour +
slept in a shelter. Just as well
that we didn't go on because the
shelter was full. Of our immediate
group that tented together, I got

there first, found the spot, and had my tent set up before the others showed. Dave & the two Drs. completed our group.

18 Apr. 83 Monday A DAY OF DISASTERS - OR NEAR DISASTERS. Woke up this morning & yesterday's beautiful weather was shot to hell. It was COLD and SNOWING. By the time we started walking there was an inch & a half or so on the ground. It continued to snow harder & harder. Visibility became very limited - the white trail blazes on the trees began to become covered and hard to see. The wind became quite strong & the snow began to drift. Footprints from hikers in front of me became filled in quite quickly. We finally got about 6 or 7 inches of snow. A little after 11 A.M. we came out ~~at~~ on Max Patch road & started to walk along. Came up on *Cladonia Maximalis*

† his group. They had decided to quit † get a ride into Hot Springs. We decided to join them. The new lodge wouldn't give us any help but suggested we try the ~~the~~ Moynahans about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile down the road on the right. We did. How delightful! An elderly couple - he quite sick - in a snug warm house. She arranged a ride in a farm truck for us. In the meantime, we had to wait about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the ride, she whipped up a feast of home grown food for us on her wood burning stove. Imagine 5 dirty, cold, wet hikers † their packs making a soggy mess of your kitchen † living room. We took up a collection among the 5 of us which I think surprised them †, I hope, made it profitable for them. We found

out the next day that the bitter cold and heavy unseasonable snow had messed up hikers all over this part of the country. Apparently local people were putting up hikers in barns ~~or~~ outbuildings. Anything was better than the woods.

Apparently everybody came through O.K. I met Betts in Hot Springs about 3 P.M. She had a motel room - so we are warm & all of our gang is well taken care of.

19 Apr 83 Tuesday No hiking today but plenty of activity. I came down with an intestinal upset maybe *Giardia* maybe not. Went to the local clinic. Have to get them a stool sample. In the meantime no solid food - or ice cream - for 24 hours. Plenty of liquid. No hiking for 2 days. They'll send the report to Erwin & any prescription also. The group we have been hiking with had

a barbeque here today. In as much as I couldn't eat and felt pretty sick we just showed up at the picnic long enough for everybody to meet Betts. We also drove to ~~Erwin~~ Erwin to pick up new shoes that Jeff & Do sent. Very nice of them - but due to my designating the size - the shoes were too small - so we drove to Asheville & bought another pair. My feet have spread. The new size is 10 EE. The new ones feel comfortable - but they are a little heavier. Hope the knees will take it. Incidentally, the Dr. got my ~~my~~ blood pressure as 110 over 65. Not bad for a guy who once had high blood pressure.

20 Apr. 83 Wed.