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ADIRONDACK ALPINE JOURNAL

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TO OUR READERS: Many of you may grumble about the "tardy" publishing dates so far. Our goal is a bi-monthly magazine, but many factors arise to delay this. Because we must make a living, we are forced to work 9 to 5 by day and burn the candle at night, publishing the Journal. So look for a new Journal, at the latest, three months after the last.

In the long run, we would prefer a quality over quantity product, and hope that it's a

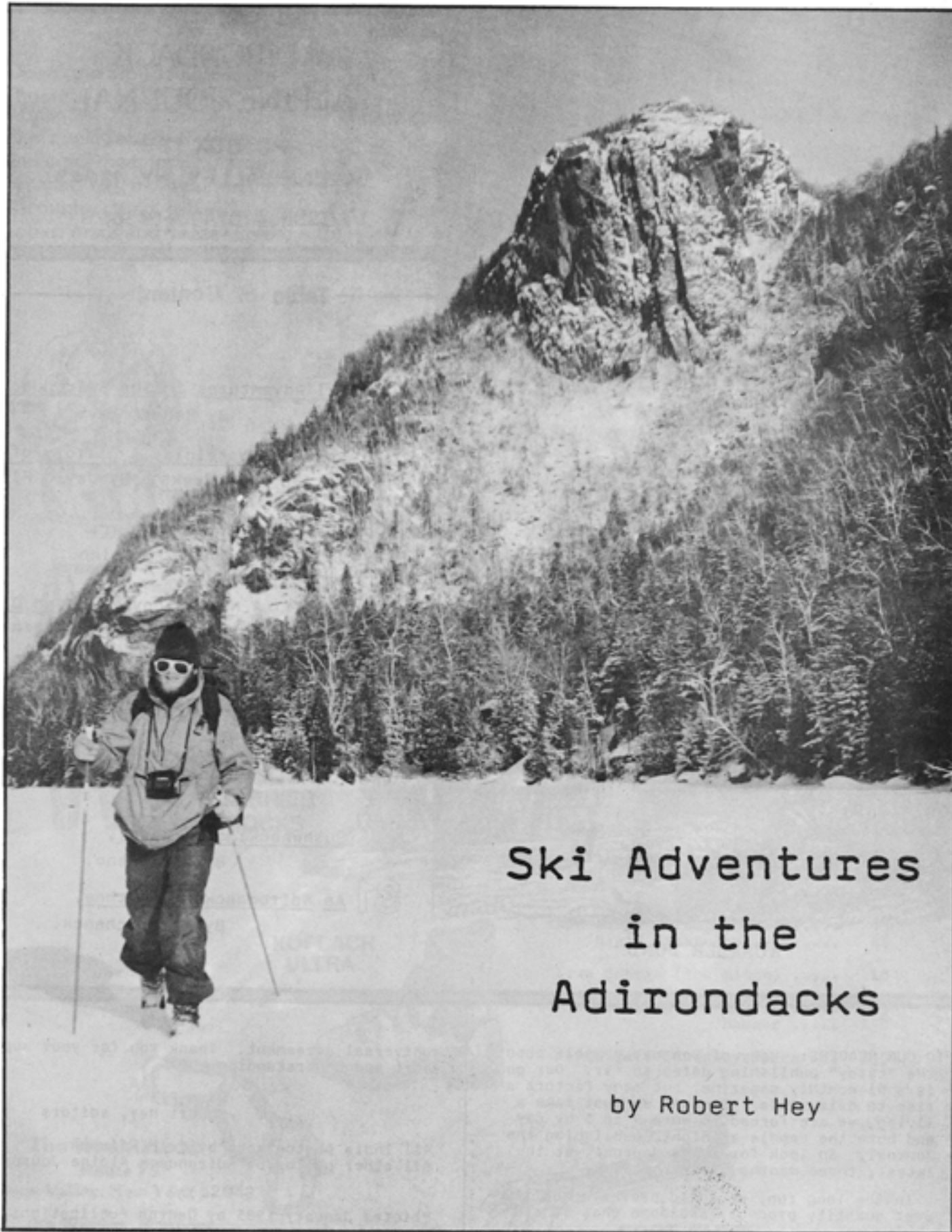
universal agreement. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Dave Flinn
Robert Hey, editors

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Ski Adventures
in the
Adirondacks

by Robert Hey

Sean Quinn on the Lower Ausable Lake.

"Skiing trails is clearly a different game than other kinds of skiing, and fabulous technique counts less than nerve and craftiness. If you have a lot of nerve, the ultimate unrestrained way to ski trails, of course, is to schuss the trail until things get desperate and then sit down".

Steve Barnett
Cross-Country-Downhill

The High Peaks receive an average annual snowfall of 120". Much of this falls in single storm accumulations of 8-12". In February and March, just after one of these storms, the high country is most accessible. Hiking trails leading to the highest peaks are snow-choked skiways. Dwarfed pine trees near timberline are often buried. During the dead of winter after a bad storm, the following ski tours are at their best. All three are intermediate in difficulty and could be done by anyone who has enjoyed alpine skiing.

Equipment for these backcountry tours is somewhat specialized. But you can use a sturdy pair of touring skis and do fine. Your ability to ski, to turn and stay in balance, should already be developed. A pair of Merrell telemark single boots work superbly in the Adirondacks. Overboots, such as supergaitors, should be worn on very cold days. Bring a spare ski tip and a complete single binding, or be able to improvise a bail. Skiing with one foot is not fun.

In case of emergency, it is always advisable to have at least three people in your group. Have fun and be creative.

Klondike Trail and Grace Camp Hut Skiing

Snowfall on the north side of the Great Range can be heavy. This tour starts at The Garden in Keene Valley and crosses Klondike Notch to Adirondac Loj. A car should be left at each endpoint or have a party start from each trailhead and exchange car keys in the middle.

From the Garden, ski in over rolling hills that level out into cruising straight-aways then climb to the ranger cabin at 3.0 miles. Snow-laden John's Brook will be on the left during the next stretch that ends at the wilderness John's Brook Lodge. If you wish to do extended ski-mountaineering and climbing from this area, contact Adk. Loj about renting Grace Camp Cabin for \$7 a night per person [(518) 523-3441].

From JBL, take the red trail to Big Slide Mountain and Klondike Notch. Climb moderate and short steep grades up the Klondike trail for two miles to the top of the notch. The Yard and Big Slide turn-off is about a mile from JBL. Now ski the better part of 3.5 miles down long, winding grades. A mile into this downhill the Klondike Lean-to sits in a birch forest. It is a great place to have lunch. In deep snow the stretch below the lean-to can be schussed.

Follow signs to Adirondac Loj. After passing a junction with the Mr. Van Ski Trail at 8.6 miles continue on until taking a left towards the lodge at another well marked trail junction. At 10 miles the Adk. Loj is reached.

Glades and Glaciers: Giant Mt. North Trail

This tour features good downhill glade skiing and is an education in glacier formations. Begin at the North Trail parking area, which is kept plowed, two miles east of Spruce Hill Lodge on Rt. 9N to Elizabethtown.

About two hundred yards up from the trail head turn left onto the hard-to-find red trail. The trail winds uphill gradually for five miles to a lean-to that makes for a pleasant overnight. At 1.0 miles the trail climbs onto an esker, an elongated arm of soil left by a glacier. Continue on to Owl's Head Lookout at 2.5 miles. Walk to the top for a view up a U-shaped valley to the Eastern Cirque of Giant. At 2.7 miles a steep section of the trail should be side-stepped down. This is, however, the only part of the tour that cannot be skied. The trail now enters an ancient stand of hardwoods that are spread far apart over a clean forest floor (the return run will be glade skiing in the High Peaks at its best).

At 3.5 miles you arrive at High Bank, the 200' remnant of a glacial moraine. Ski gradually uphill another 1.5 miles and either stop for lunch or stay the night at the cozy lean-to (in the morning a two mile hike to Giant's summit makes for a good bit of fun). The return ski run is all downhill.

To the Heart of the High Peaks

Deep in the mountains, on the frozen shore of Lake Colden, there is a cabin heated by a wood stove. The public is welcome to stop in for a warm lunch. The cabin is the Lake Colden Ranger Station and your object is to get there and back by skiing through a wild mountain pass.

This tour, and many of the best in the High Peaks, begins at Adirondac Loj, where a room reservation can be made by calling (518) 523-3341. From the main trail head in the parking lot take the Blue trail 2.7 hilly miles to Marcy Dam. The dam is a crowded camping area in summer, but in winter the fine view of Avalanche Mountain is all yours. Turn right onto the yellow trail to Avalanche Pass. Avalanche Lean-to is reached at 3.7 miles, followed by a stretch of steep switchbacks known as "misery mile." Be assured, it will not take as long to ski down the section as it did to climb up it! At 4.0 miles you reach the frozen surface of Avalanche Lake.

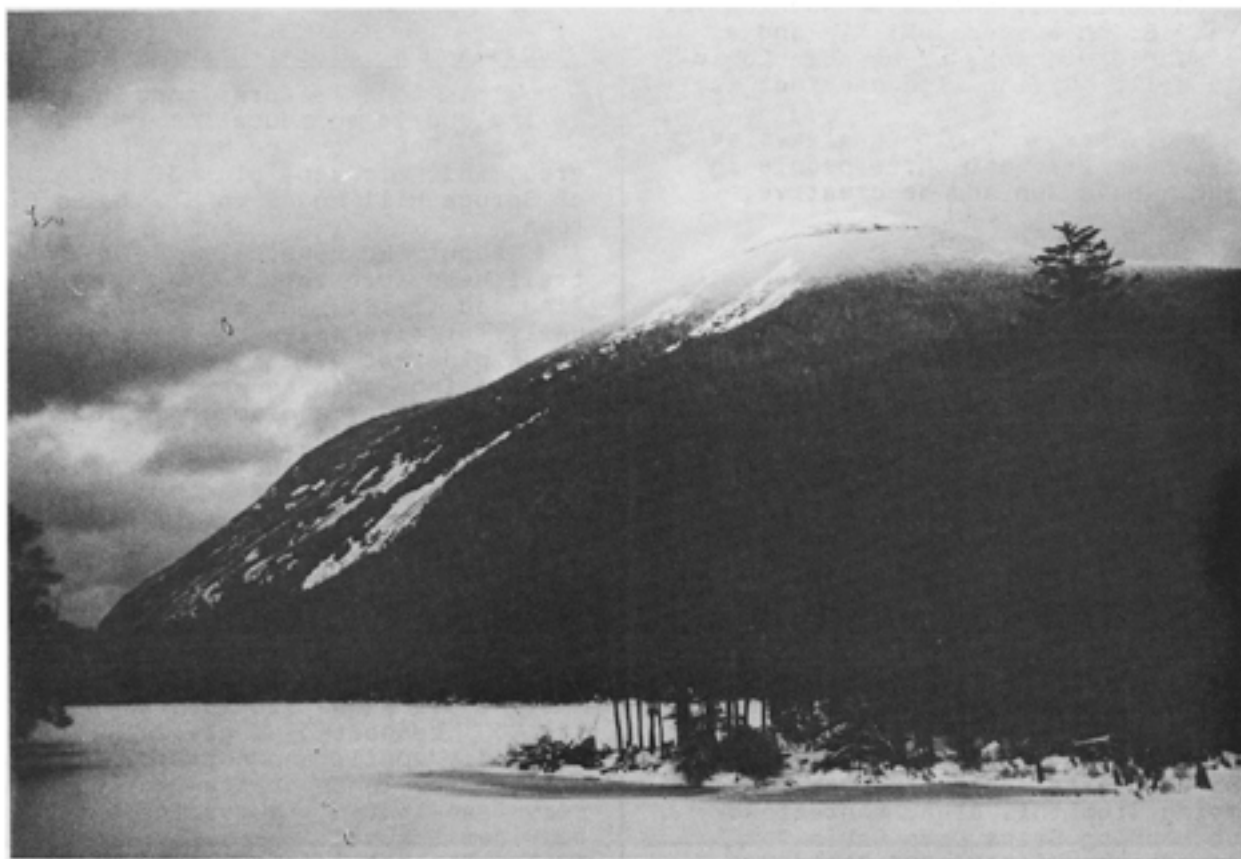
Sheer rock walls loom on either side as you ski the half-mile-long lake. Half way up the lake you will pass a huge cleft in the wall on the left. This is Colden Trap Dike, birthplace of modern alpine

climbing in the Adirondacks. If you are a good ice climber, stow along the bare necessities and climb this feature and on to the summit of Colden. Hike down to Lake Arnold and strap on the skis for a fast run back to Avalanche Lean-to. Now that is a good day of ski-mountaineering.

Weather in Avalanche Pass on the lake can be unpredictable. Last winter we skied through with clear visibility then returned a few hours later to a cauldron of wind-whipped snow. We skied into a white-out where gusts of wind struck us from two directions. It was easy to believe that the pass was aptly named, for the unseen walls above funneled wind and small avalanches to the lake below. ALWAYS CHECK WEATHER CONDITIONS.

At the south end of Avalanche Lake a land bridge leads to the shore of Lake Colden and the ranger cabin at 5.0 miles. Enjoy your lunch!

For a detailed description of this tour and an option to continue on from Lake Colden over Flowed Lands to Tahawus, thereby traversing the High Peaks, see Northern Adirondack Ski Tours, by Tony Goodwin, Adk. Mt. Club, 1981.



Mount Colden at dusk.

Mountain Nostalgia:

THE HISTORY OF TEN ADIRONDACK PEAKS

by David Flinn

The following descriptions concern the discovery, naming, and first ascent information for a few of the Adirondack High Peaks. All of the data and drawings in this article were taken from Russell M. L. Carsons book, Peaks and People of the Adirondacks, published by the Adirondack Mountain Club in 1927. For all those interested in mountain history, this book is priority material!

As one shall discover, there will always be a debate concerning the actual "first" ascent or "the" accurate name of these mountains. Since both red and white man have inhabited this region, it is certainly a dilemma in choosing between either nations' claims. As to the nature of things, the conquering nation usually assumes control over recorded history.

Fortunately, some men back in the 1870's had the insight to record in history both cultures, so that today, we can reflect back and learn some of the truth and history of our Adirondacks.

1] Mount Marcy, 5334', 1626 m.

In 1837, another geological expedition set out to explore the mountains of New York and try to determine the source of the Hudson River. But those involved also pursued other goals. The leader was Ebenezer Emmons, a professor of Chemistry at Williams College. William Redfield, Archibald McIntyre, David Henderson, and an assortment of other gentlemen completed the group.



MARCY

"Marcy points upward to the heavens as an ever-present reminder of the supremacy of truth"

On August 5, 1837, the expedition set foot on the highest peak enclosed within New York's boundaries. Emmons, on the summit, stated that the mountain be named after William Marcy, the present governor of New York. From that day on, Emmons was publically criticized for his christening of this beautiful hill. Many people preferred "Tahawus", or The Cloud-Splitter, the original Indian name.

Never-the-less, the mountain is still the highest in the state and always is the goal of many vistors to the Adirondacks. Various quotes and notes have been recorded about it, but the words of John Cheeney, who was on that first ascent, says it all:

"It makes a man feel what it is to have all creation under his feet. There are woods there which it would take a lifetime to hunt over, mountains that seem shouldering each other to boost the one whereon you stand, up and away Heaven knows where. Thousands of little lakes are let in among them so light and clean. Old Champlain, though fifty miles away, glistens below you like a strip of white birch when slicked up by the moon on a frosty night, and the Green Mountains of Vermont beyond it fade and fade away until they disappear as gradually as a cold scent when the dew rises."

2] Algonquin, 5112', 1558 m.

Again we find controversy over a mountain name. This peak was first recorded as Mount McIntyre, in honor of Archibald McIntyre. He owned and operated the McIntyre Ironworks, as well as serving as a Controller of New York State. The name was documented sometime in 1836 or 1837, but no secure date is known. The first ascent of the mountain occurred three days after Mount Marcy, by the same expedition.

The name Algonquin, not McIntyre, was recorded by Verplanck Colvin in his survey reports of 1873. It is the name of the Indian people who first occupied New York's wild Adirondacks. At a later era, the Iroquois also lived in the region, but moved away to present-day Central New York over a quarrel. In the early 1600's, the combined nations of the Iroquois and Mohawks sided with the English and over a hundred year span, proceeded to exterminate the Algonquin people.

Colvin's naming of Algonquin is certainly a permanent reminder of these once powerful people.

3] Skylight, 4920', 1500 m.

Unknown to most visitors, Skylight looms high and wild directly south of Mt.



Deer's Head Inn

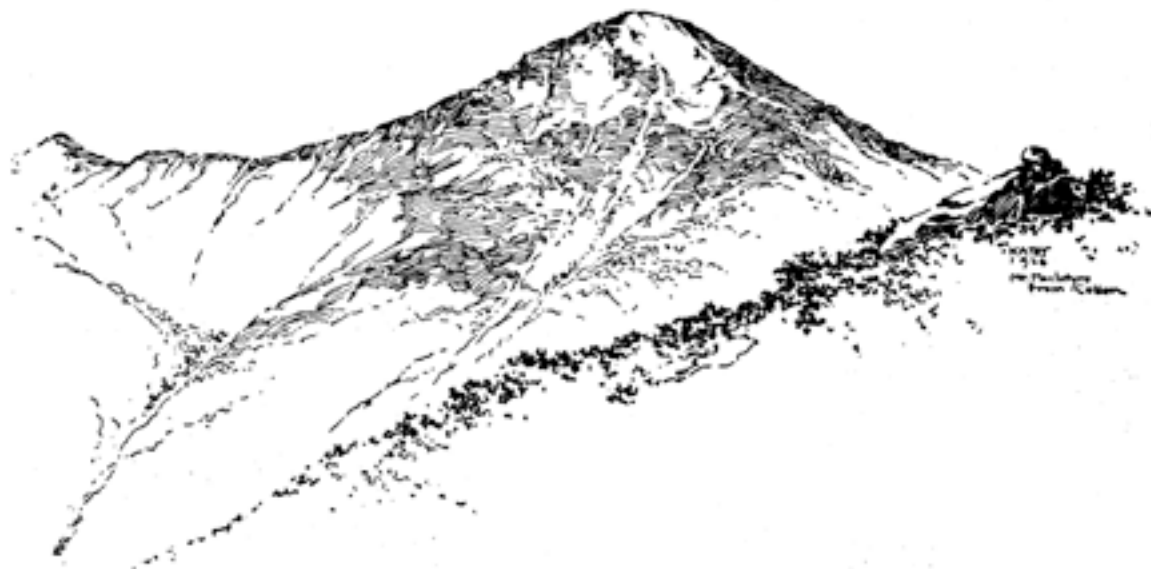
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Marcy. In 1857, Old Mountain Phelps guided an amateur artist named Frederick Perkins to the Marcy summit. Because many peaks in their panorama were unnamed, they proceeded in a naming duel. On the summit of one, they perceived a rock formation in the shape of a dormer window. It seemed that only one side of the dormer was exposed, while the other simulated a Skylight.

Sixteen years later in 1873, Verplanck Colvin and his survey crew consisting of Professor Charles Peck, O. S. Phelps, and Roderick McKenzie were the first to record an ascent of this towering peak.



MOUNT ALGONQUIN OF THE McINTYRE MOUNTAINS

"The name McIntyre properly belongs to a massive range considered by many to be the noblest group of mountains in the Adirondacks"

4] Haystack, 4918', 1499 m.

In August 1849, a trio consisting of Orson (Old Mountain) Phelps, Almerson Oliver, and George Estey made their way to the Marcy summit. Looking up, Phelps mentioned that the mountain to the east looked like a stack of rock, but in its form, it resembled a stack of hay.

Many people seemed to avoid Haystack, with all the climbing publicity going to Marcy. It was 'nt until Colvin published his surveys that people noticed both Haystack and Skylight. But even after his notes, these two mountains seemed neglected, with very little travel. Which is odd, because some of the most stunning scenery can be seen from these majestic hunks of rock.

5] Gray Peak, 4902', 1494 m.

For many years, this mountain was lost in paperwork. It finally appeared on the maps in 1925. The mountain was named for Professor Asa Gray, a noted Harvard botanist. About 1869 it was thought to be named by a state entomologist, Professor J. A. Linter.

More notable than the name was the first ascent by Verplanck Colvin and his good friend Bill Nye on September 16, 1872. It was on this day that they also found Lake-Tear-of-the-Clouds, source of the Hudson. Colvin's account of his find, "Discovery of Lake Tear", can be found in issue four of the AAJ.



"OLD MOUNTAIN PHELPS."



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6] Whiteface, 4872', 1485 m.

Of all the high peaks, Whiteface has seen more people on its summit and probably more attention. Its first ascent and the origin of its name is clouded. But it was the first mountain to receive a name. There are records going back to 1813 in reference to Whiteface. There is a couple of Indian names on record, and in translation relate to its present calling. Rumor is that the noted slide with a gray white appearance laid forth the name.

The first recorded ascent in 1814 was by a surveyor named John Richards. But no one knows who was the actual first soul to set foot on her summit.

Whiteface is noted for the circumstance known as "Ulloa's Rings", or "Spectre of the Adirondacks", which was experienced by Peter Schofield in August 1872:

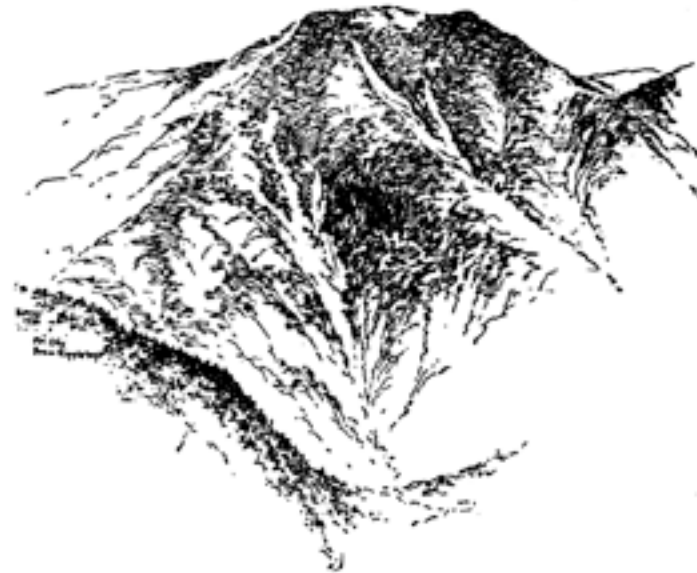
"At the time I was viewing this unique and interesting spectacle, the rising sun was shining from an unclouded sky, and just below the crest of the mountain was a huge bank of vapor lacking the closer texture of a cloud. Standing between this and a brilliant sun, my shadow, projected upon this background of vapor, was also surrounded and set off by an elongated, oval halo of prismatic hues. This latter effect was due, of course, to the penetration of the vapour drops by the sun's rays, to the reflection and refraction of these and their final decomposition into their prismatic colours displayed in this rainbow-like exhibit. As I walked along the crest of the mountain, this aerial companion keeping abreast of me imitated my every gesture and movement until, with the breaking up and dissipation of the vapour, it melted away into thin air."

More recently, Adirondack photographer Nathan Farb has also experienced a similar adventure. Maybe someday soon one of us will be the next lucky individual.

7] Mount Iroquois, 4855', 1489 m.

As usual, this mountain changed its name a few times. Colvin first called her Mount Clinton, but by 1880 had changed it to Iroquois. Like the naming of Algonquin, Colvin favored the memory of the Indian over the white man.

Between the two peaks, one can find Boundary Peak. It is still not proven



DIX'S PEAK

fact, but Colvin believed that it was the boundary line between the Iroquois and the Algonquin nations. Whether or not it is true does not really matter, but these two mountains in the McIntyre Range will forever mark the memory of the Indian people.

Colvin was the probable first person on Mount Iroquois, but William Brown was recorded to top the summit in October 1883.

8] Dix Mountain, 4842', 1476 m.

In 1837, Professor Emmons named the mountain to remember John Adams Dix, who was the current Secretary of State. But Emmons never stood on her summit, he only named it as he measured its elevation at 5200', obviously incorrect.

At the time, Dix was noted to have been the second highest peak climbed, next to Whiteface. In 1807, a surveyor name Rykert pushed to the top of this massive mountain. Being furthest east of the remaining high peaks, Dix is often forgotten and unseen, except when viewed from Giant or the Great Range. And then one can view one of the most majestic mountains in the region.

9] Basin, 4835', 1474 m.

On the summit of Marcy, Old Mountain Phelps and the painter Frederick Perkins pondered the view before them. It was 1857 and looking out, they noticed a depression which appeared between the south and west peak before them. So from then on, Basin Mountain it was.

Colvin was again the first to stand on her now rocky summit. He and Ed Phelps recorded August 10, 1877 as the first ascent. But it is known that others were there before, but unfortunately, no records were kept.

Basin is surely a beautiful climb and is the central peak of the Great Range.

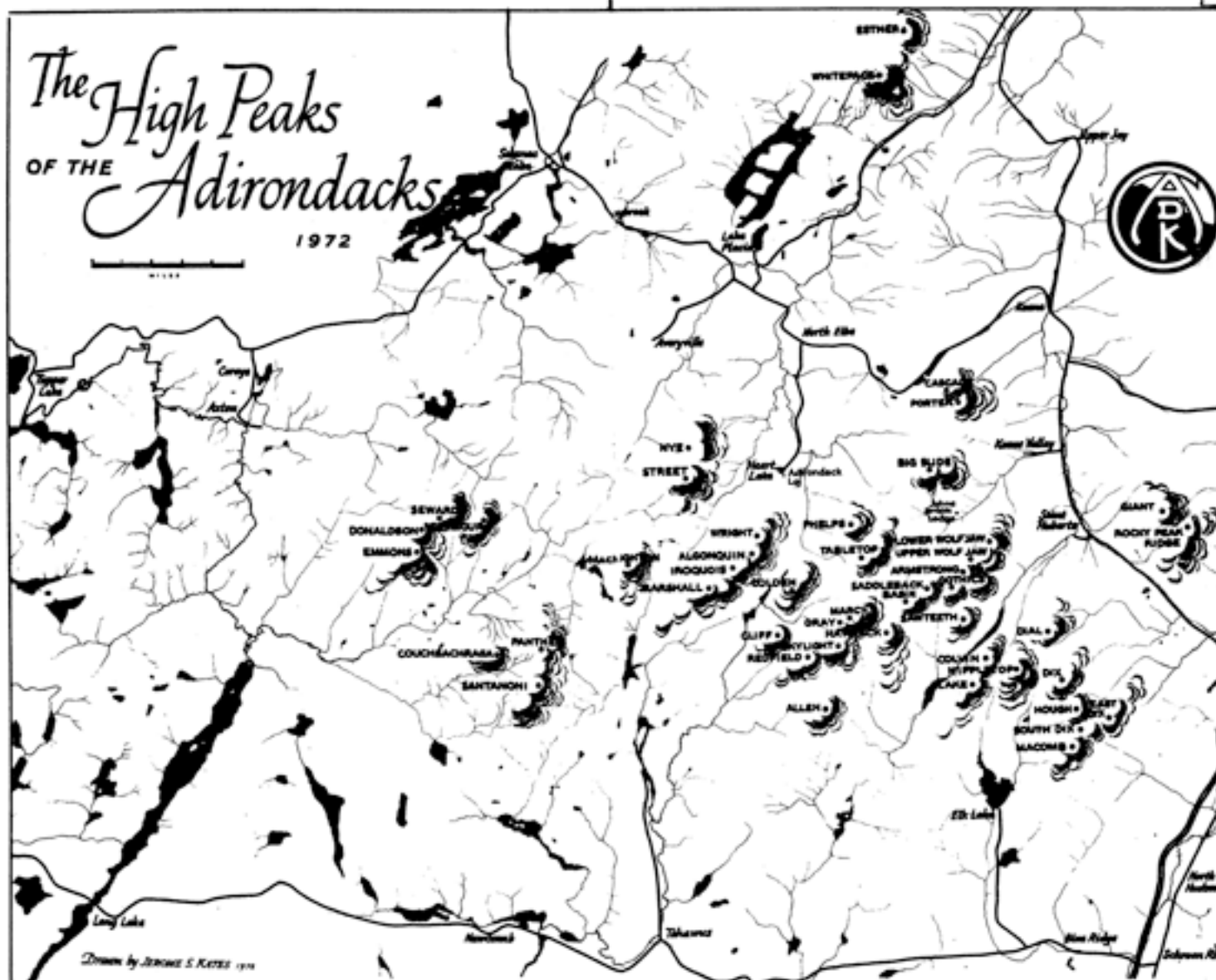
10] Gothics, 4738', 1444 m.

Gothics was another of the mountains named by Perkins and Phelps in 1857. Perkins perceived the arched triple peaks with the large slide and exposed rock as gothic architecture. Since Phelps couldn't provide a more suitable name, Gothics it became.

Colvin again holds the first ascent. With Roderick McKenzie and Ed Phelps, the summit was achieved on October 11, 1875. Even though it is doubtful that

they were the first, Colvin is certainly the winner in describing the ascent of this spectacular peak:

"Before us an irregular cone of granite, capped with ice and snow, rose against a wintry sky. The dwarf timber crept timidly upward upon it in a few places, not too steep to find a foothold, and on either side the icy slopes leaped at once down into gloomy valleys. Beyond, irregularly grouped, the great peaks, grizzled with frost and snow, were gathered in grand magnificence, all strange and new - in wild sublimity. No sound save the shuddering hiss of the chilly blast as it swept over the fearful ridge of ice that must be our pathway....Then, with spikeless boots, and no alpenstock save the tripod of the instrument, we essayed the last ascent, the glaring slopes of ice on either side, descending a thousand feet or more, threatened death as a penalty for a single slip."





Ice: the Final Frontier

by David Flinn

Often I wonder to myself why certain people are drawn to frozen water. Not just from the perspective of an ice skater, but to that of those who search out vertical waterfalls. And not only to view the sparkling blue beauty, but mainly the desire to smash, thrash, and climb up these hunks of ice sculpture.

One of my buddies loves the cold. All summer long he moans because he can't wear his "fuzzy" pants. He mumbles about winter's lack of bugs and crowds. If one mentions snow or ice, his complexion stiffens and a strange faraway look enters his eyes. Oh yes, snow and ice ...

Most fascinating to ice fanatics is the ice axe. All year long you can catch the climber in the basement, staring at the ice tool in his hand. It's just not the same holding a gas stove or a hiking boot. Ice climbers love their equipment. There is an awe generated around the axes, hammers, carabiners, crampons; all this gear that he gets to play with. If you are a gear-lover not yet bitten by the climbing bug, don't read any further.

Basically, ice climbs can be categorized as winter rock climbing. The same elements are needed: tons of gear, vertical and not so vertical cliffs, technique, knowledge, a general lack of sense, and lots of courage. But from this point, the two sports branch. The biggest difference concerns the equipment. While in rock climbing, one only relies on his equipment in the event of the unfortunate fall. One uses the existing cracks and nubbins to hang on to, rarely resorting in aid from his gear. On ice, one chops, swings, hooks, places, or bashes foot and hand-holds. Your security depends wholly on your tools.

Another big factor is the cold. Because of the nasty weather, warm clothing and boots are essential. Today, with technology bringing us plastic boots, polar fleece, polypropylene, and Gore-tex, it becomes infinitely easier to conquer the cold.

My major reason and interest in climbing ice developed because it gives me more mobility in the snow and cold. I love to snowshoe, ski, and hike, but now I can also play on the ice. The skill, technique, and adventure experienced in climbing helps to round out one's outdoor skills. Climbing is just another part of mountaineering to learn and become familiar with. Every outdoor adventurer dreams of traveling to Europe, the Rockies, Alaska, the Himalayas, the Andes, or Baffin Island. These are big mountains and lots of skill and knowledge is needed to travel safely. For me, the techniques I have learned in the Adirondack snow and ice are going to pay off when I spring-board up to higher mountains.

How to go about it:

It's great to suddenly decide that climbing is what you wish to try, but it's a totally different story to learn it. The majority of people doing it now were usually dragged out by their friends and thus exposed. But unfortunately, not everyone has friends like these. If possible, a knowledgeable friend is certainly the easiest and most effective method. Besides getting a buddy to teach you, either Outing Clubs or professional instruction are your best options.

Outing clubs are an interesting place to learn. In fact, my exposure to the sport was nurtured in one. The best part about a club is the abundance of gear for rent at extremely minimal cost. For anyone affiliated with or near a college, this can be your quickest and least expensive avenue to the sport. The drawback is that it is hard to find professional, personable, and informative instruction. Because most of the club leaders do not receive any payment, it is hard to find a leader who is continually willing to sacrifice his/her precious time teaching beginners. I recommend anyone in this situation to be persistent. If you consistently show enthusiasm, no respectful leader will refuse to take you with him. For those with the time and patience, the Outing club route is a great place to introduce yourself to the sport.

If one is not willing to wait around in a line at a club function, professional help is the next step. One can expect to pay around fifty dollars a day for lessons on the ice, and you certainly get your money's worth. The schools carry all the gear you need and the one-to-one instruction allows you to learn the basics rapidly. Ice climbing is pretty easy, so with a small investment in a week-end course, you can begin climbing on your own. A big plus on your part is if you already know the basics in rock climbing; most notably the rope handling skills. I strongly advise strong understanding of the basics before pursuing climbing on your own.



Dave Flinn on "Tendonitis", North Face of Pitchoff.


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<u>Recommended Boot</u>	<u>Related Activity</u>
	A summer medium-weight hiking boot. Good for one going on day hikes on a warm winter day. VBL sox and gaitors recommended. Not suited for crampons.
	Sorrells are widely used for frequent treks in snow. Not good for below zero F°. Extended trips, use VBL. Not suited for heavy trail crampon use.
	Leather Mountaineering, Asolo Yukon or Galibier Super Guides. The Boots before plastic. All-around use in winter. Great for ice climbs. Use supergaitors. Hard to find new now, due to plastic boots.
	Kastinger Robson or Kolach Vivas or Novas. Similar qualities as above, but in plastic. Probably perfect Adirondack boots for the person who loves all winter activity.
	Koflach Ultra for the technical mountaineer. Good for Adirondacks, and can also be used in Alaska, etc. Koflach Ultra Extreme overkill for Adirondack use. These boots for the serious alpinist on long trips.

As you develop more of a taste and desire, you will begin to meet more and more people who are also immersed in the sport. The objective is to enjoy mountaineering per se, and companionship you can trust is the only way to continue your interest. Besides Outing clubs, there are other organizations worth exploring. The Adirondack Mountain Club, the AuSable Club, the Appalachian Mountain Club; these are all fine places to meet people. Rumors abound concerning an Albany Rock and Ice club as well as one in Central New York. Whether you prefer waterfall ice climbs or classic alpine routes like the North Face of Gothics, there are many others out there and you only have to find them.

Where to find Ice:

The two essential elements needed in order to climb ice are water and cold temperatures. The geography that falls underneath these two conditions is immense. Ice climbs are found in abundance all over New England. In good water years, the cold experienced in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and most of the northern Mid-west, will carry good ice. People are even climbing frozen feed silos out there!

Even though the foothills and flatlands have splendid one pitch climbs, only the mountain regions offer longer and more enjoyable climbs. The Adirondacks per se, have many pleasant lower angled climbs in the NEI 2 - 3 range, while the majority of flatland climbs are extremely vertical. The lower angled stuff are superb training grounds for everyone. For example, found in the Cascade Pass between Lake Placid and Keene, the Cascade Waterfall is probably the most classic NEI 2 climb around. It is highly recommended.

Anywhere one finds two or three weeks of extended freezing weather, ice can be located and climbed. Our next issue will cover many of the more localized areas.

Gear: the Key to Climbing Ice:

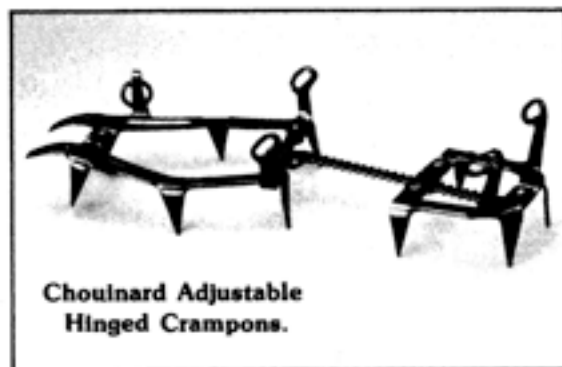
When it comes to advice concerning ice, Yvon Chouinard's words ring soundly; one must use the best available equipment possible. Hell, at some point, you may trust your life on it, and it better not fail! And of most important to ice climbing is the boot.

Where most people have trouble in winter is with their feet. Whether hiking, climbing, or skiing, most injuries occur in the form of frost-bitten toes. But there is little excuse today with the introduction of plastic boots. Koflach, San Marco, and Kastinger are the most popular brands. These boots are just superior to leather in most activities concerning ice, snow, or general mountaineering adventures. They're lighter, warmer, cheaper, and best of all, they remain rigid after sustained use.

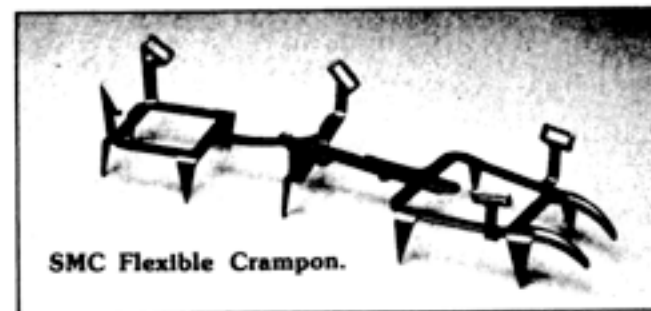
Even with the popularity of plastic, leather boots are still quite effective. Leather tends to fit one's foot better, it gives where plastic won't, especially on low-angled ice where the "French" technique is used. The ankle tends to bend easier with leather than plastic. Plastic boots are much more available than good leather ones now, but look for Raichle or Asolo for excellent makes. My recommendation for leather boot owners is to purchase super-gaiters to enclose the boot from snow, water, and ice. Berghaus Super Yetis are the best on the market and worth the investment if you become serious about your play in the cold.

The table on types of boots available is just a guide to help fit your outdoor desires with the adequate footwear. Hopefully you can differentiate your desires and cram them into a good pair of boots.

You can't dance on hard ice with soft soled boots. Sorry, Sorrels and Mouse boots are too flexible, causing your crampions to shear out under weight. Stick to a boot with rigid soles!



Chouinard Adjustable
Hinged Crampons.



SMC Flexible Crampon.

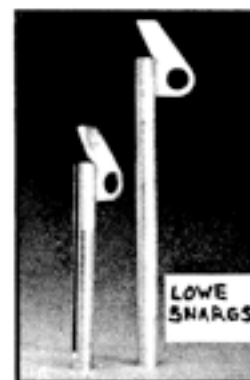
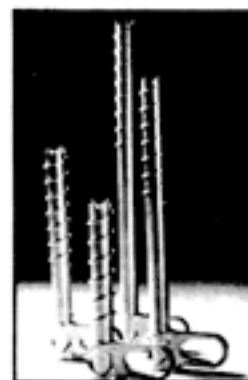
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Tim Broader descending "Deadline".

For those who are not yet hooked on this sport, there is a cheap alternative in foot wear. Go out and find some of those old leather downhill ski boots that Dad used to wear. One can find these at rummage sales for under five dollars. They will be fairly warm and are certainly rigid enough. Beware the attempt to hike in them; it is murder on your feet.

But the best reason for first buying these old boots is to give the sport a try. There is no reason to spend gobs of money on a sport only to find it ridiculous. So buy some of these boots and go try them out. If you get hooked, you can scrap them dead soldiers and purchase mountaineering boots.

Once you have tried the sport, most likely you will catch the bug. Your whole life changes and focuses on climbing. And thus, you have to purchase more gear. If you are a safety-conscious person, I highly recommend a helmet. The only one to get is made by Joe Brown [JB] in Wales, UK. They are without a doubt the best and safest out there. Helmets certainly shed many unasked for projectiles, but for those who don't give a damn, buy crampons first.

The best reason for next purchasing crampons is that you can go anywhere in the hills, not just on ice. One can hike the icy trails to Marcy's summit or stroll up an iced stream. They give you mobility in the winter woods. All the other gear comes later, once you really get trapped by the sport. I personally own a pair of Chouinard Everest hinged crampons, but would prefer those by SMC. Chouinards contain too many screws and bolts which can and have broken. The SMC's only need two allen bolts and are much more reliable, stronger, and cheaper.

But of most importance, the SMC's are simpler to install on your boots. Those Chouinard ones take a Masters degree in Physics to fit correctly. I found out the hard way when one scampered 600' down Tuckerman's Ravine one day. You bet I learned how to fit them after that. So buy SMC; you won't regret it.

Gear Useful for an Adirondack Top-Roping Session:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - rigid-soled boots. | - ice axe. | - polypro or wool hat. |
| - fleece or down coat. | - rope. | - nice mittens or gloves. |
| - helmet. | - 8 carabiners. | - "Climbing Ice" by Yvon Chouinard. |
| - vapor barrier sox. | - 4 webbing slings. | - water bottle. |
| - wool or polypro sox. | - harness. | - Gore-tex mitten shells. |
| - gore-tex parka. | - pack to stuff it in. | - camera. |
| - gaitors. | - food. | - Nice one-pitch ice fall to play on. |
| - crampons. | - expedition weight polypropylene. | |
| - ice hammer. | | |

Now that your toes are warm, don't forget the rest of your body. The invention of polypropylene makes this extremely easy. Buy the stuff, as well as anything wool. What is nice is that most of this clothing is universal for any winter activity. Don't forget your hands. Mittens are best because they tend to be warmer. Shells to cover them are a good idea. Gates Gore-tex gloves are the new rage and are definitely great to wear. They allow one the dexterity of gloves with the warmth of mittens. They are a good alternative to Dachsteins.

All the hardware involved in ice climbing becomes personal. There are many ice tools to choose from. The most durable ice axes are the Forrest Lifetimes. Nothing can break these tools. Chouinard's X tools are light, fairly durable, and reasonable in price. Lowe and Co. make a good selection of ice gear, but their picks are not the strongest. Many tools are made overseas and give you more toys to choose from. Most climbers are very picky about their axes and hammers; always there to argue that their gear is the best.

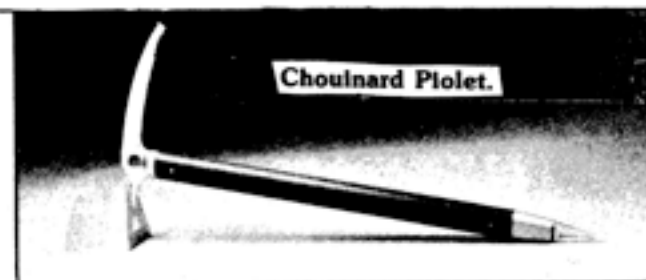
Read the December 1984 issue of Climbing magazine if you are in the market for any ice tools. Every brand has it's difference in weight, balance, and production. My recommendation is to try as many tools as you can and then make your own judgement.

As for ropes, ice screws, karabiners, pitons, and all such stuff, I leave up to yourself to explore. Most ropes and karabiners are essentially the same, with small personal differences influencing your choice. If you do wish to purchase ice screws, I suggest ice pitons, better known as SNARGs. They are made by Lowe and are the best in ice protection. Snargs are superior in strength, holding power, but especially in placement. One just places the sucker and whacks it in with a hammer. Hell with all that twisting and turning needed with screws.

Climbing Ice is lots of fun but it is necessary to have endurance, strength, lots of equipment, boldness, but most of all, technique. All the other elements one may have, but without practice and thus technique, one cannot begin to learn.

I hope you can find or have found a way to get together with someone so you may try this climbing of ice.

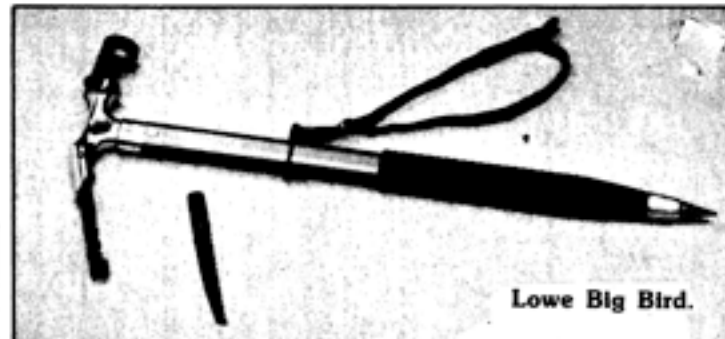
Sure it's okay to write and read about it, but going out and doing it is where it is really at; out at the final frontier of your experience.



Chouinard Piolet.



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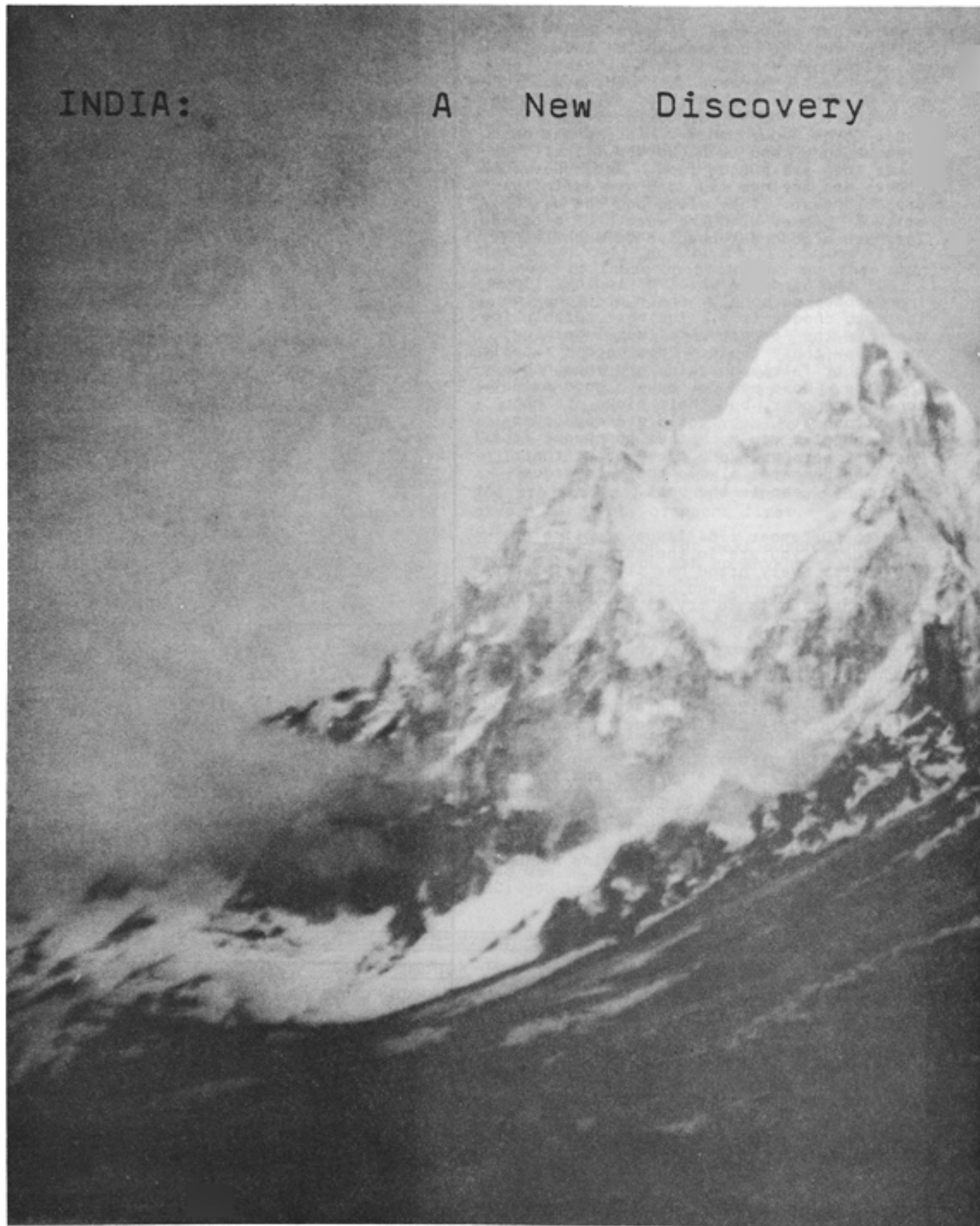
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INDIA:

A New Discovery



in an Old World

by Eric Pfirman



In May 1984, three adventurers from Syracuse, New York left for a Himalayan journey. Eric Pfirman and Micheal Rodriguez traveled to Delhi with Pankaj Jain, a native of India. Their goal was to travel and absorb India's culture and her mountains.

They traveled to the Shivling region, and climbed Kedar Dome, as well as a few minor peaks. Eric and Micheal were introduced to Pankaj's India and now Eric lets us all in on a few of his discoveries.

Hot. Hot. Hot. It is two AM at the Delhi airport and God it's hot. If it this warm now, what's it going to be like during the day? And what's that smell? It didn't smell like this when we left New York, way back - oh yeah - yesterday. And what are those guys in blue pajamas that look like muggers doing by the exit? Speaking of muggers, I'm glad that policeman on the shuttle from the plane didn't take away my camera. Just imagine six weeks in India without a bloody camera.

Well, one step at a time. Just have to make it through immigration, then we'll look for our friends Pankaj and Pawan. Did I say it was hot? We're supposed to be mountaineers, ready for everything, senses always alert. But it sure was hot. I had prepared emotionally and physically for surviving the severe, unrelenting elements in the Himalayas, (pronounced Him / all / yas), but what about surviving customs? I thought these guys were supposed to speak some English. Look out: sensory overload. Time to fall back, close down the senses, and rely on instinct.

Poor Dave. I can remember when I called him up back in March. He was so psyched to tell me about his climb up Gothic's North Face that day. And I just casually let it slip, "Hey that's great. Oh, by the way, I'm going to India this summer with Pankaj". Another bubble burst. Guess there really is no way to drop a bomb like that with any tact. Looking back, just telling people about the trip was half the fun. Boy, did the jaws drop.

Not to mention my mother's reaction. Of course, she got even by going to Grindelwald and bringing back pictures of the Eiger! Probably did it just to show me up. That's what happens when your own mother and father are crazier than you are.

Of course, buying all of the gear for the trip was great fun also. A climber let loose on the Mountaineer all weekend with a brand new Visa card is worse than a kid with a quarter in a penny candy store. Six weeks later we were fastening our safety belts on the plane and making eyes at all of the Indian girls. Out of control!! Look out India, here we come!

Two and a half days in New Delhi. Heat, hovels, people, poverty, flies, filth, lep-

ers, beggars, cows, tea stalls, busses, bikes, people, heat, people, heat, and more heat.

It feels great to be on the road again, but I'll be glad when we hit the mountains and get away from this heat. I guess I opened my mouth too soon. The only thing that could be worse than the heat was the bus journey up into the mountains. And it was. Winding roads, mega-people, sweat, vomit, nosy elbows, last night's beans, this morning's beans, more winding roads, drunken bus drivers, no guard rails, 1000' cliffs, raging rivers, flies, no water, heat, and on and on and on.... Won't we ever stop?? Better let Mike have the window for a while; he's looking a little green.

"Ick cup cha?" A cup of tea. It's funny how such a little thing as a cup of tea can be such a comfort; an island in this swirling sea of insanity. Have a cup of tea and talk with the villagers and the other passengers. Sitting in the shade of a peepul tree (Huge!!), eating pakoras or rice and beans, of course, and sipping that sweet tea. I sure wish I knew what those people were saying, but it is kind of fun trying to figure it out just by looking at their expressions. But I do wish I had taken the time to learn some Hindi. I should have known that the mountain villagers wouldn't know any English. There aren't even very many schools to be found up here. It is nice and cool in this tea house. And the air even smells good. Oh well, we'll be arriving at the end of the road soon; then we'll be able to shoulder those packs and really get moving.

What luck! Who would ever expect that three guys would hook up with one Canadian and two Irish girls on the first day of the trek? I didn't even think we'd even see another foriegner, (ie: non-Indian), again. It's funny how all we talk about is how good it will be when we get back home. Steaks (Sh-h, not too loud around these Hindu pilgrims), baked potatoes, pizza, beer, corned beef sandwiches. "What's the first thing your'e going to eat when you get home?" Twelve tins of SPAM later and we all know what it won't be. Who ever heard of rice and beans and SPAM or spaghetti and SPAM anyhow??

Shivling! How many times had we spoken that word? How many times had we let Shivling roll off our tongues (accent the second syllable; it sounds better)? Not Mt. Shivling, or Shivling Peak, or even THE Shivling. Just Shivling. That one word, Shivling, seems to sum it up. And we've never even seen a picture of it. It's funny how something like that can stick in your mind. From the first time we heard the name, subconsciously we knew we had to go there.

Shiva - the god of destruction. What an ominous, foreboding thought; especially for a climber. And yet, base-camped here in Tapovan, a wide flat alpine expanse snuggled warmly within the wide, motherly flanks of Shivling, it's easy to forget for a second all the people who have died up there. But then, one look up to that overhanging peak as it forces its way from be-

hind the first monsoon clouds of summer is enough to remind us that: "Here, but for the grace of God, go I."

And lest we forget, here comes the thundering reminder of another avalanche. Even from the summit of Baby Shivling, halfway up the main peak's southeastern flank, that foreboding peak still perches impassively, refusing to be forgotten. Sorry folks, Gothics and Pitchoff simply won't cut it up here with the great God Shiva. Oh, the foolish impetuosity of youth. Doesn't he know the Adirondacks are eons older than him? Shiva just shrugs his shoulders and sends another avalanche crashing down. Looks like it's time to find a friendlier peak to pit our meager skills against.



Pages 16 & 17: Shivling at dawn.

Eric (in the glasses) surveying the scenery.

Off to Kedar Dome. This smoothly rounded, snow encased mountain looks more our speed. Reprovisioned from an overstuffed Bengali expedition and blessed by a priest on Ganga's (the Ganges river god) birthday; what could possibly stop us? How about a sweltering, inescapable noonday sun in the middle of a glistening snowfield? How about invisible crevasses, visible crevasses, and climbing up through snow up to your hips? How about an early monsoon blizzard? How about the air at 22,400 feet, or rather lack of it?

But that's what we came here for. Not to beat the odds and conquer this formidable foe, but rather to see if we were skilled enough to live with all that nature had to offer - the beauty and the beast. To await with eager hearts and trepidation whatever might be around the next corner. To combine total sensory awareness with an unfailing instinct and common sense, and an indomitable lust for life. To become one with nature. Okay, maybe Sir Edmund Hillary wouldn't get the thrill out of this mountain that we did, but it was Tetsing Norgay's first Himalayan peak and ours, too.

Yup, we made it.



Kedar Dome from base camp.





The Pick of the Matter

An Insight in Ice Technique

by Robert Cotter

"We are Homo Sapiens, the tool users. We earn the name by developing tools to increase our leverage on the world around us..."

So states Yvon Chouinard, master alpinist and dynamic influence in the evolution of modern ice tools.

While many technologies have contributed to the high standards obvious today in ice climbing, perhaps none is so radical as the development of the toothed, drooped pick tools and the arrival of piolet traction to the realm of alpinism.

Piolet traction, the placement of these tools by overhand swing so the pick will give purchase in steep ice has placed an almost limitless bound on what ice may be climbed.

While many of us have limits as to what ice climb falls within the scope of our abilities, we must also remember that our tools (these contrivances that allow us to excel in the ice game) are limited as to what they will endure.

With the picks of our ice tools serving as the principle point of contact and security with the ice, they are also subject to high levels of stress.

Subsequently, many of us have seen our expensive and coveted ice tools shed their beaks, often under untenable circumstances.

As the pick of the ice tool becomes structured for higher ease of penetration into the ice, (i.e. finer and more acute), the threat of breakage increases.

Interchangable picks eliminate the scrapping of an otherwise fine tool should breakage occur. But picks, whether interchangable or not will often depart on the steepest of ice columns, or the most exposed of faces.

Much can be said with regard to non-interchangable pick tools. Among their advantages are cleaner lines, finer balance, and the avoidance of allen screws seizing in the head or inexplicably coming loose on a climb.

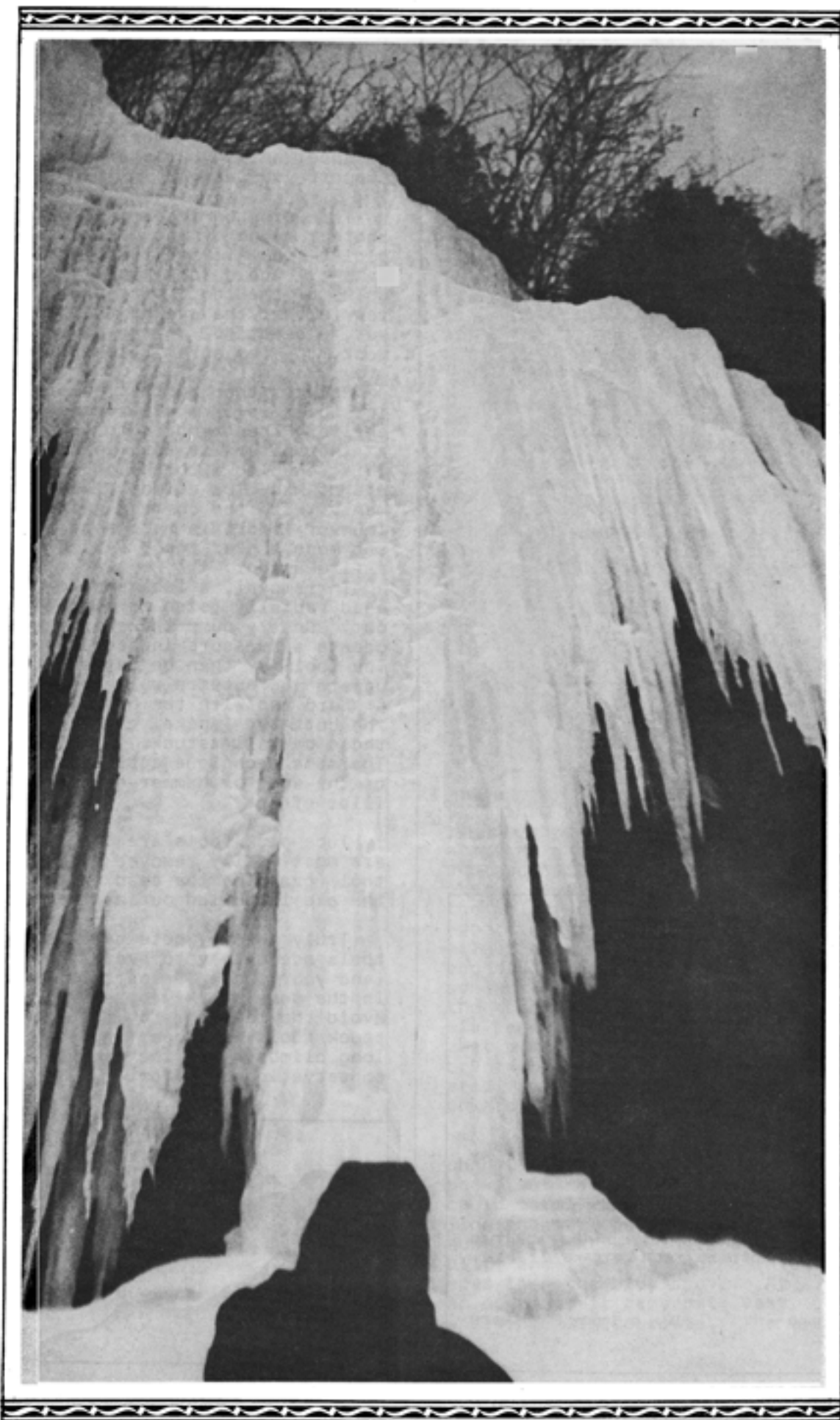
Whether you prefer a one piece tool or an interchangable ice axe is basically personal. The issue is to avoid the unfortunate destruction of the pick.

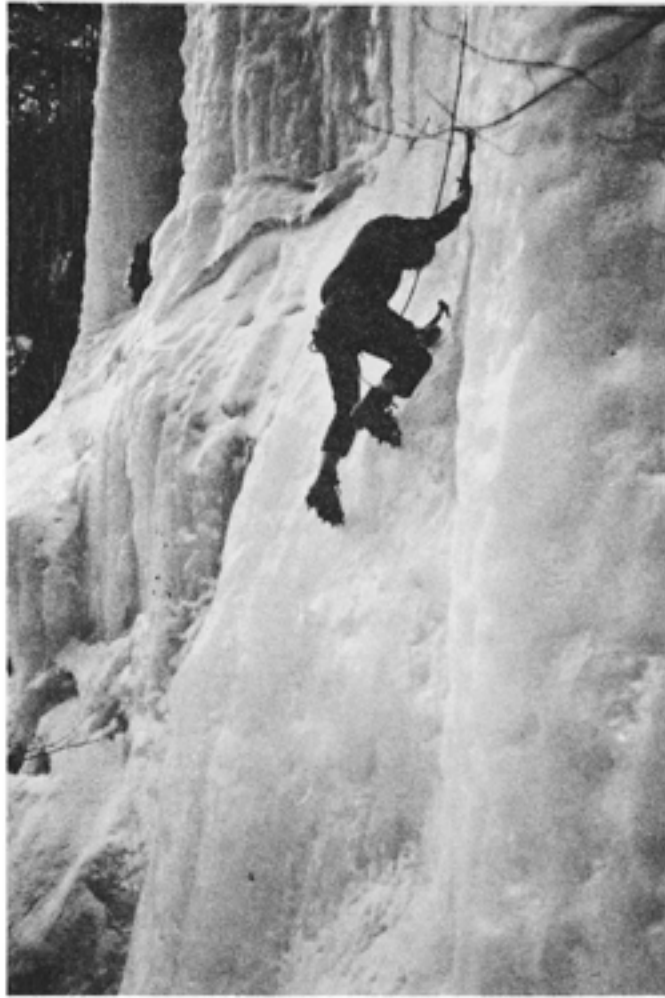
Pick breakage can occur during either placement or removal, or while undergoing ice screw placement or retrieval. Placement of the tool should not break a pick unless one bashes into underlying rock. Beware thumping a bulge with the shaft or smashing the shaft after penetrating a hollow veneer of ice. The secret here is care of placement, especially on thin ice where rock is visible or suspected nearby. The slightest flick of a tool (preferably



Bob spent most of his life training in the Adirondacks. His love for alpinism carried him west, where he can be found in Seattle, WA or most likely, high up in the Cascades.

"Jaws" in Cascade Pass.





Bob Hey on "Deadline", North Face of Pitchoff.

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into a pocket) is adequate, especially with modern gear. A pick does not need to be driven all the way in to hold; a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch will suffice. Remember, ice tools are for balance, while your crampons and boots support your weight.

Torquing on ice screws with the pick is another means by which to circumsise your piolet (ice axe in French) or northwall hammer. Avoid such activities by using the spike of the tool, better another ice screw (either the eye or the tip), or better yet, a beautiful energy-saving accountment, the ice screw ratchet.

Perhaps the greatest culprit of broken ice tools is in their removal. Mentioned earlier, the trend is to make a pick with a finer nature to ease in penetration. This, coupled with the often vigorous nature of many ice climbs, leads to overplacement. With the correct swing, only a minimum of effort is necessary to adequately set modern gear the 3 - 5 cm required for a firm anchor.

In removal, a tool should never be torqued radially (side to side), or twisted out. Gently pump the shaft up and down to create a pressure-induced removal groove. The tool may then be extracted with a firm upward and outward pull grasping the head. A sharp rap with the heel of the hand on the butt-end (spike) of a tool will loosen those brutally stuck. The same technique applied to the underside of the adze or hammer-head will have a similar effect.

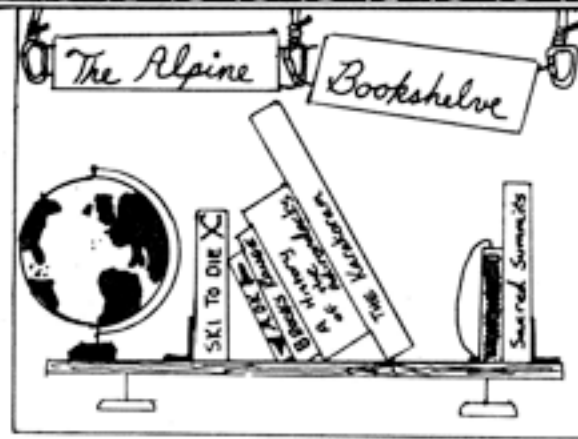
Tube pick tools are the exception and are most easily removed by rotation of the tool (grasping the head) with the pick as the axe is pulled out at the same time.

Truly the key note here is to drive tools adequately to avoid their sudden (and your sudden) departure from the ice. In the same stroke (or swing), we must avoid the tendency to overdrive. Removing stuck tools is exhausting on hard and or long climbs where the name of the game is conservation of effort.



The Indian Pass

by Seneca Ray Stoddard



This story is just one found in Stoddard's Illustrated Guide to the Adirondacks, published in 1874. His explorations and visits occurred in the same era of Old Mountain Phelps and Verplanck Colvin. His woodcuts and drawings depicted many varied landscapes of the late 1800's in New York State. He spent most of his life residing in Glens Falls. This book covers the whole Adirondack region at a time when it was just being discovered. The book is certainly a goldmine covering the Adirondack frontier.

I had expected to find a level, fertile, grove-like way through which we could walk with little exertion in the shadow of great rocks on either side, but how different the reality; for three miles the rise was gradual, then we began to climb, crossing the rivulet back and forth as we went upward, at times making long detours to the right and ascending the mountain some distance, then a level stretch along its sides until the wildly dashing torrent was reached once more; then onward, upward, the path growing wilder and more difficult, the brooklet bounding from rock to rock, then lost in some dark cavern, anon trickling down among the huge boulders, gurgling in muffled music beneath our feet, then bursting out to rest a moment in some mossy basin, pure crystal in an emerald setting on which floated fairy ships of Autumn leaves, then onward in its long journey to the sea.

We had caught occasional glimpses through the trees of - was it a cloud or solid rock that rested off toward the left, we could hardly tell until we traced its outline against the sky, for Indian summer had hung her mantle of haze over the great cliff and it seemed but a shade or two deeper than the blue above. At last, through an opening, it came out; vast, grand, overwhelming, immeasurable. The eye saw it



INDIAN PASS.

hanging in mid-air, a cloud, an outline, a color; tender, sweet, luminous. The soul felt and bowed beneath its awful weight. The giant pines that fringed its brow seemed bristling hair, the great rifts and seams a faint tracery that scarred its sides. Motionless, it still seemed to be sweeping grandly away as clouds shot upward from behind and passed over to the east, then approaching, and retreating, as cool gray shadows and yellow sunlight raced swiftly across or lay in slant bars along down its misty face. (The cliff Stoddard describes is Wallace; editors note).

But the highest point was not reached yet; we were just entering at the lower gate, and for nearly a mile it was a continuous climb over great chaotic masses of jagged rock, thrown there by some convulsion of Nature, now on a huge fragment that seems ready to topple over into the gulf below. now under a projecting shelf that would shelter a large company, now between others from which hang dripping mosses and sprawling roots, stooping, crawling, clinging to projecting limbs, climbing slippery ledges, upward all the time.


The trees that had found lodgment on the top of the rocks seemed to reach out thirstily for something more than they found in their first bed; one that we noticed had taken root on the top of a huge boulder, and sent down a mass of interwoven roots twenty feet to the damp earth beneath.

At last we near the summit and stand on Lookout Point, (today called Summit Rock); close by rises that grand wall a thousand feet up, and extending three hundred feet below us, reaching out north and south, majestic, solemn and oppressive in its nearness; a long line of great fragments have fallen, year by year, from the cliff above and now lie at its foot; around on every side huge caverns yawn and mighty rocks rear their heads where He who rules the earthquake cast them centuries ago. Along back, down the gorge we look, to where five miles away and 1,300 feet below us is Lake Henderson, a shining drop in the bottom of a great emerald bowl.

Slowly the sun swung around toward the west, the shadow of the great wall crept down into the valley across the gray rocks, and over toward the mossy ones that had lain there unnumbered centuries; gradually the sweet tinkling, gurgling music of the infant Hudson died away and solitude reigned. Then as we passed onward a familiar sound came once more, faintly at first, then more distinctly, the singing of little waters; first trickling over rocks, then dancing downward, increased in volume by tributary streams from the

slopes of McIntyre -- rocked in the same mountain cradle, twin brothers and equal at their birth -- the mighty Hudson rolling southward, and the impetuous Ausable dancing away toward the north. Down the rocky bed of the stream we went until we had left the pass behind, through the thick carpet, often hiding the slight trail. Over the foot hills of the mountain on the west, often misled by seeming paths until the absence of scars on the trees warned us to retrace our steps and gather up the missing thread. On and on, until it seemed that the eighteen or twenty miles we had expected to travel before seeing a familiar landmark had lengthened out into twice that number; then in the gathering twilight we emerged from the woods in sight of North Elba, forded the Ausable -- grown to be quite a river since we had left it away back toward its head -- and up to Blin's, with a sound as though a whole colony of bull-frogs were having a concert in each boot.

Does it pay to go through Indian Pass? I answer a thousand times yes. It costs a little extra exertion, but the experiences and emotions of the day come back in a flood of happy recollections, and the soul is lifted a little higher and made better by a visit to that grand old mountain ruin.



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The following stories are a sample of the literature which recently turned up in our mailbox. The authors had the initiative to write and forward their novels to us for publication, without any encouragement on our part.

The Adirondack Alpine Journal enjoys such methods and we hope that anyone who feels so inclined, will send us any type of material for publication. From hiking to hunting to hilarious undertakings, we want to print them all! So concentrate, be cunning, and most of all, be creative!

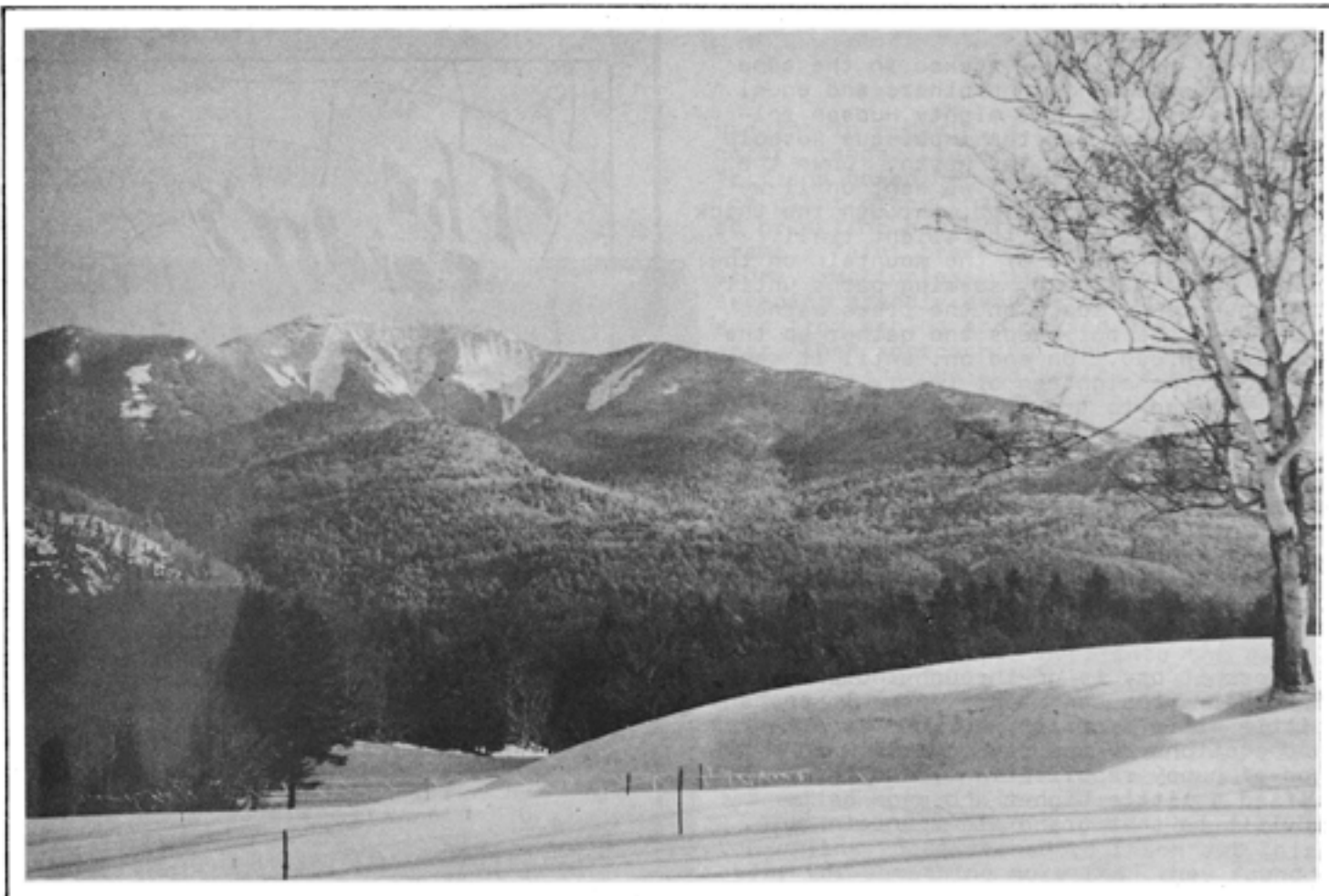
Bushwhacking on Giant

by Alan Reno

We reached the highest massif of Rocky Peak Ridge and looked outwards at the lunar landscape of Giant's eastern face, the tarn of Mary-Louise, and much further on, the drowsy Champlain valley. We reached the Peak after first climbing Giant from Route 73.



Alan loves the outdoors and also Journalism, trying to combine both and make a living. He lives in Massena, NY.



During lunch, my hiking companion revealed his plans for the return trip: Marv traced out a path which would have us bushwhack back to the Chapel Pond-Giant trail after leaving the col between the latter and the Ridge. The idea of walking a trail-less mile and a half at an uninterrupted 50° angle with a probable sight distance of one yard, thanks to hedge-thick vegetation, did not sound pleasing and I formed one of those are-you-out-of-your-bloody-mind expressions. Marv gave me the old "Beaten trails are for beaten men" maxim, but it didn't work. To Hades with adventure, I said.

"I'm not returning the way we came," He said, referring to the trail between the two summits which includes crossing eight thick elevation lines within a painfully short distance. And the memory of that is what swayed me.

And so, half an hour later, we reached the col and Marv left the trail. I erred by following. Neither of us are babes in the woods; my 12 years of hiking and Marv's Fanger school experiences had beaten various wilderness skills into each of us, yet I still felt we were hunting trouble. Yup. Having walked just 25 feet or so, I triggered a widow-maker, which would not have missed had I one more layer of skin. Scar-

ed spitless, this vividly recalled the two Dead Creek hemlocks which, on successive days, nearly did me in.

Leading the way on the steep slope, Marv yelled out something about how exciting it was to walk where probably no other sapien had ventured. I replied with a scatological comment under my breath. But followed never the less. The trees suddenly ended and we found ourselves on the edge of a steep slide, which in some sections rated perhaps a 5.0. Not exactly the Eigernordwand, but more than sufficient to occupy this ex-art major's attention. With much of the rock surface slick thanks to a stream, it appeared unpassable. Now, now, I reminded myself, people actually climb the entire length of these sonsabitches. And enjoy it. I studied the slide again. Masochists, the whole lot, I thought. But Marvin talked me into attempting a crossing. During this painsakingly slow process, two rolls of film which documented this hike into God's country, somehow parted company with me. Two convenient tree islands helped us psuedo-climbers pass the wet spots till by the by, we stood upon the other side.

There Marv constructed a four foot cairn vainly hoping that his handiwork would be visible from the Ridge. We skirted a bear

den and climbed over the rubble at the bottom of another slide before heading up the neighboring slope. A slip nearly twisted Marv's bad leg into a mobius strip, so I considered climbing up via the edge of the slide to avoid a repeat and the smothering undergrowth...but Lord knows how many violent spring runoffs had worn the rock smooth.

We had each read descriptions of climbers belaying up such near vertical slides. ..this particular concept in rock climbing etymology means to tackle a peak by the most difficult approach known. Fascinating.

We leaned up against a school bus size rock to wolf down some chocolate and allow lungs and hearts a badly needed rest. But late afternoon had arrived, and the sun was now westerning, so with our lengthening shadows trailing behind, we continued upwards.

Our path zigged and zagged to avoid several thickets and blowdowns, but we reached the trail sooner than I had expected. Still, by the time we returned to our car parked at Chapel Pond, we'd been away nearly ten hours. So much for short cuts.

The next day my bent body ached as if it had been kneel-hauled and those who heard out our traveler's tale just rolled their eyes or complained about yet another cock-and-bull story.

Marv's next goal is Panther Gorge.
Pie in the sky.

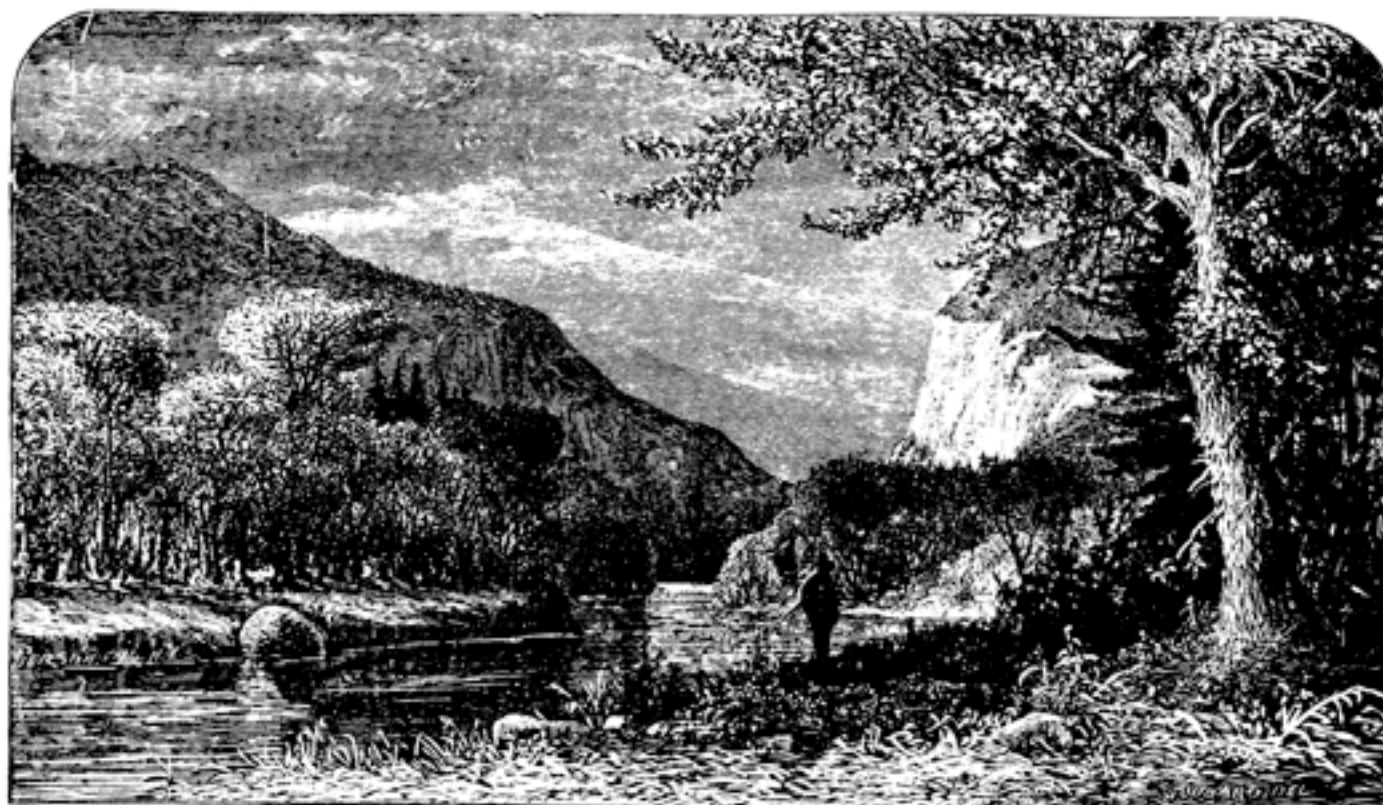


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An
Adirondack
Misfortune

by Marc Schenck



LAKE SANFORD.

It started out as a disappointment, but it was perhaps one of the most fortuitous disappointments in all my experiences. Time, money, and commitments forced us to scrap plans for Wyoming and then Scotland and Wales. We were left with the need for an inexpensive climbing trip and the Adirondacks fit the bill nicely. Isn't it strange how some of life's best experiences aren't planned?

Marc, as one shall read, is a recent discoverer of the Adirondack woods. When not climbing, he can be found on Long Island, NY.

Bob, my partner in extremis, and I backpacked and fished for a week in order to allow my foolishly rope-burned hand to heal. Brant, Schroon, and Pharoah Lakes were explored, in addition to smaller places such as Crane Pond and the Schroon River. We fished, often procuring dinner or breakfast, and marvelled at the abundance of crags that had probably never felt rock shoes nor chalk. With such visual stimulation, my hand healed faster and with the protection of a modified leather glove, tape, and gauze, we were ready to start our exploration of the vertical (and more often slabby) world of the Adirondacks.



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Rogers Rock was the first stop and Little Finger with the direct finish was the route. A beautiful route in a fantastic setting was the verdict. A short new link-up variation on the Chapel Pond slabs, Hesitation on the Washbowl Cliff, and Esthesia on the Spiders Web all provided stimulating, quality climbing in the Chapel Pond pass region. Determined to be geographically well-rounded, we moved on to Pitchoff Chimney Cliff. The EL proved to be absolutely classic, Uncontrollable Desires was undesirable, and Bob's lead of P. F. Flyers was most exciting. Next, we were struck down by a broken water pump and were limited to areas close to Lake Placid. After some clandestine bivy spots, we set out for the Adirondack Loj and hiked to Mt. Jo. The setting there for bouldering is probably one of the most aesthetic around. Finally, some days spent at Poke-O-Moonshine provided the final touch for the trip, with the routes there being most memorable.

The preceding paragraph was not meant as a progress report on our trip, but as a basis for the message in this article. The Adirondacks were beautiful, clean, and uncrowded. We often had entire crags to ourselves, even at Poke-O. Initially, we were dismayed by the abundance of loose and dirty rock, even on the "popular" lines, but we later learned to "appreciate" its hidden meaning. A real sense of climbing adventure and responsibility was evoked by the settings around us. Potential for new lines abounded and we yearned for more time to explore. The few people we met were most helpful and some have now become lasting friends. Bob and I genuinely felt sad to leave, having just experienced some fantastic climbing areas with so many more that we left untouched.

Had it not been for the fateful breakdown of our original plans, we probably would have never made it to the Adirondacks. Granted, the Wind Rivers or the Lake District in Wales would have been nice, but the Adirondacks raised our eyebrows and pumped our arms to our hearts content. It is a place where one can find beauty, challenge, solitude, and reward. And for those with energy, the reward is commensurate with one's efforts. Not only did this trip illustrate the quality of climbing in the Adirondacks, but more importantly it made us realize that the whole area, not just the crags, is an area under stress and in need of care and attention. For once the surroundings disappear, rock climbing will then simply be a form of exercise that can be performed inside any gymnasium.

The only other comment I have is that I can't wait to return.



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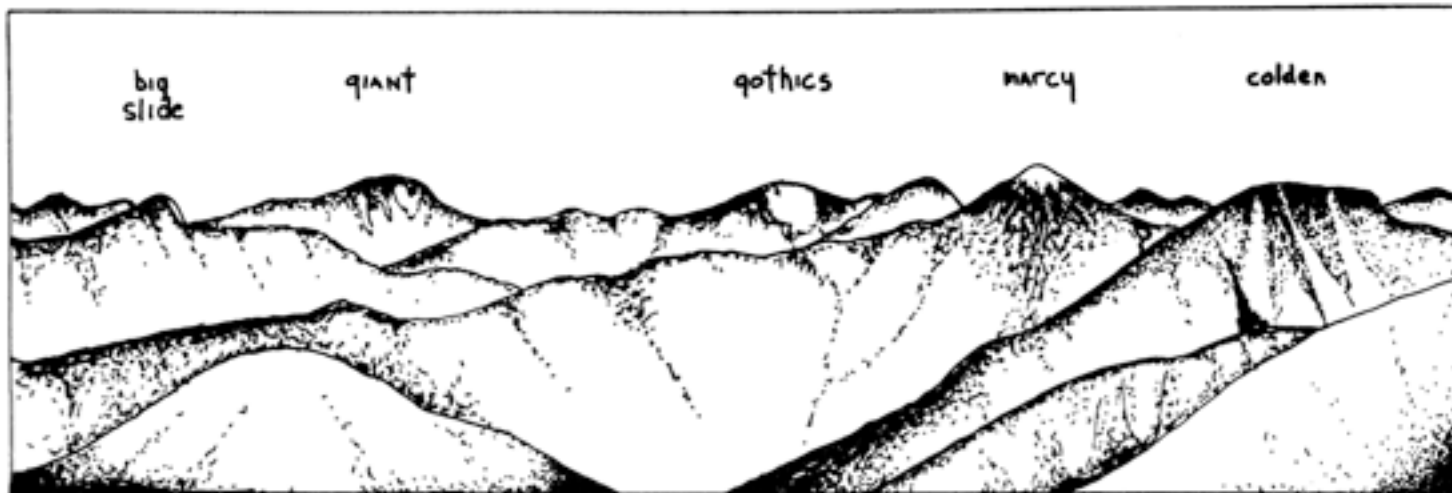
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