

Ramblings

Dick Brigham

A dairy isn't complete unless it has some organized thoughts added here and there. Its my privilege as the writer to do as I please, OK!

This story has been left in it's original form in most instances, and only altered to give it more accuracy and interest. It has been fun to relive this episode in my life as I rewrite the log. I have retraced our steps by going back into the guide books to pick out names, places, mountain elevations, and times of the season. In so doing visual flashbacks cause me to gaze off into a space filled with peace, quiet, soft whispers of wind in the trees and fresh woods smells.

Reason for this log is multivaried. It permits an accurate record of the trip to be kept and a way of communicating to the generations to follow. Somehow I feel like a very simple person that wants to continue to be a part of the happy children of the Brighams, Crandells, Plummers and Woods long after death. So I still will want them to know that I am touching them and saying to them that they are important to me and that it would have been enjoyable and pleasurable to have lived longer in their lifetime.

This rewriting assembling of pictures is of course strictly off the cuff and in it's own way (homely or homey) stylizes the individuals involved. After all, we aren't perfect. The misspelling, bad sentence structure and word crossouts will serve to characterize the jumble of excited thoughts and show the eager desire to get the words down on paper before they are lost to mind. Those who know we will agree -- Yes this is Dick, alright.

I Love You All!

Experience of a Lifetime

by Rick and Dick Brigham

Dedication

To Ann, the first of the Brighams to explore the land and the sea. Her spirit will live in our hearts all the days of our lives.

We are grateful to you our friends who have been so helpful in giving companionship and hospitality to us while hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Our hike of 2000 miles beginning April 1st, 1975 at Springer Mountain, Georgia, was completed October 5th, 1975 when we arrived at Baxter Peak on Mount Katahdin, Maine.

Thank you again many times.

Rick and Dick Brigham

Introduction, Preface and Summary

The contents of this book represents many hours of solid, relived peace and sweat after each day's long unwinding, mind blowing, foot so-o-o-re travel over the Appalachian Trail. The events of each day can never be set down in exactly the way they occurred. A spell-binding view captures your whole being on the spot and one's thoughts race along right then recording a million comparisons to it. A deer paws the woodland leaves and blows out his challenge to you jarring you out of your concentrated gaze at the trail under foot. The silent windless night surrounds you in your campsite then the wierd hoots of an owl inscribe the feeling of being discovered by the woodland sentry. When about to close your eyes in your tent after a long day's walk, a feeling of oneness with the world overcomes you and you know that you can't hardly wait to begin the next days trek. The silence is broken by the unexplained creak and groan of a tree which will and finally does crash to the ground ending it's life as a quiet sentinel of the woods. The last mile before arriving at a haven of rest, becomes a hundred miles, then a lean to's bright silvery metal roof flashes from beyond the tails edge and you smile, another day is done and your stomach will be filled in another 30 minutes. A trickling stream, a silent spring, a gushing, bubbling brook serve to cool your face, your feet, your body finally. That sleeping bag feels good as you crawl into it and if there is any light left, write a few lines in the log to describe the days events, animals seen, views outstanding, people met, birds seen or heard, variety of trail hiked, weather conditions, recount what you can of those unbelievable moments which you enjoyed the most, felt the worst about, problems solved, plans made, and on and on. But never can you put into words what really took place as you walked, climbed, pulled, stained, panted, gasped, then strolled, sauntered, ambled, lazed along the trail. The silent moments spent alone are the precious moments when only one mind sees, feels, spins out of control in pure bliss knowing it will be at least a six month

span of time before the bands of steel, the arms on a clock govern what your day will contain.

I have never enjoyed the seasons of the year as much as this past year 1975. To feel the crisp air, and warm sun fight for supremacy in the early spring, as if they were struggling to please just you as you hike along the ridge tops in the beautiful southern woodlands of Georgia, North Carolina, and southern Virginia. The trees leaf out and gradually close in the forests, the wildflowers bask in the bright spring sunshine and smile up at you as you make your way beside them trying desperately to identify them. But names aren't necessary to enjoy the colorful beauty, and grand aromas of these nymphs of the woods. Gee, but it's great to be alive and free to roam in this new fresh world. The rains are easy to take as they overtake you on the trail, although I must state that this year has been exceptionally nice weatherwise in my opinion. The stories told by other hikers make this hike of ours seem like roses and sugar, but I can't help but notice the proud glee these stories of others contain. So my conclusion is that the misery, discomfort, distress experienced by the hiker is small payment for the grand fulfillment and life-giving moments of ecstasy gotten from walking day after day in nature's wonderland, the woods. The cool nights soon give way to warm balmy nights. The insect life becomes more noticeable, the young broods of grouse, turkey, the young rabbits, the fawns, the young raccoons, the chirping of young birds, all serve notice that spring has sprung and summer is around you before you can recognize it. The leaves on the trees soon shut off the most prevalent views. A very short season for summer awaits the thru hiker for he passes thru lower altitudes only briefly as he travels through Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The insects, people, all signs of mass population soon fall behind as Vermont is traversed and New Hampshire's higher mountainous area offer cool refreshing breaths of air and scenery. It is in these grand heights that cooler weather, colder rains, stronger winds, and finally changing colors of the trees' leaves tell the hiker, he is fast approached by fall. His hike has reached it's zenith and from this point on the thru hiker must realize his goal is not very far away. The great mountain of the people of Maine, Mount Katahdin marks the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, the end for the 2000 miler going from Georgia to Maine, but the beginning for the hiker walking from North to South, Maine to Georgia.¹

It was in the high country of New Hampshire that our interests matured for hiking, Dolly Copp National campground 1961 served our family and close friends as a secure, warm haven while learning to probe the mountain's secret hidden side trails and educate our bodies to sweaty, wet climbs and treasuring the discoveries of grand views, bright cloudless heights, and quiet rushing streams. We grew to love the soft patter of rain on our tent at night while curled up snug in warm sleeping bags and to eat with unsurpassed vigor what was to many other people a tasteless meal. But when fresh air and outdoor exercise combine to stimulate the body a whole new outlook on life did develop.

It wasn't until 1971 that we had an opportunity to return to this grand area again. And this time our two week stay included a pre-planned three day hike over the Carter-Moriah Trail from U.S. Highway 2, east of Gorham, New Hampshire up the Rattle River Trail portion of the A. T., south over the Kenduskeg Trail to the ridge of the Moriahs, and Carters to Carter Notch, and down to Pinkham Notch via the Wildcat Mountain Trail. This three day hike took place only after three preparatory day

hikes during the previous week so as to condition ourselves to strenuous climbing with packs on our backs.²

In 1972 and 1973, our family and close friends the John S. Crandells visited Shenandoah National Park in Virginia where we camped at Big Meadows and Loft Mountain campgrounds. We enjoyed great walks on side trails and on the A.T. and listened to the nature talks by Aggie Crandell and her able staffers on flowers, animals and insects of the Shenandoahs.

By December 1973, I had decided to hike the entire length of the A.T. and enjoy a full six months of peace, nature, solitude and fresh air on a leisurely stroll from Georgia to Maine starting April 1st, 1975.

Rick, my 17 year old son, decided to make the trip with me. So with a year to plan we got busy. Rick was excused from high school with the blessing of his counselors who felt that this kind of experience could only enrich his life educationally and physically better at this age than at any other time. He would be able, too, to graduate one year later with his friends who are all one year behind him in their ages. Rick was overjoyed. My employer was most kind and granted a six month leave of absence to me from my job as floor manager in his home improvement company. He extended my retirement clause to cover this period so that I wouldn't be dropped from the program. A most happy event for me.

The planning of what equipment, food, food and mail pickups, budgeting time, money, all fell into place in this 12 months. A lot of good books are available to those who need ideas and Ed Garvey's paperback book "Appalachian Hiker" was one of my choice guides. Colin Fletcher's "The Complete Walker" was another. The National Geographic publication "The Appalachian Trail" furnished off the trail stimulation towards the trip.³ I would rush home from work at noon to enjoy a page or two of Garvey's book and plot his walk on the maps furnished in the National Geographic book. This way I could see his progress and feel the spirit of close neighboring area thru which he hiked. It wasn't long before I was acquainted with a great portion of the trail and knew approximately how Rick and I must travel speedwise and foodwise. As it turned out we never ran out of food or became disoriented enough not to know where we were or how to plan.

I found out that all hikers, whether good organizers or poor, still must organize or they don't hike very long trips. A backpack can only carry so much and the excess soon hangs on the outside of the pack or is returned home by the next homeward bound mail or dumped in the closest trash can. Much to Rick's and my disgust we found containers, raingear, rolls of toilet paper to name a few items and all were left either at lean-tos or cast on the ground beside the trail to become litter eventually or right away.

Equipment necessary for six months of extended hiking (thru all kinds of weather and over very rough terrain where water, hot conditions, cold conditions would cause faster than normal deterioration) was carefully selected. Our choices of equipment showed us later just what areas of hike experience we lacked, but for the most part turned out very successfully.

Two Kelty Tioga model backpacks furnished lightness, capacity, versatility and durability except for the padded waist band which started tearing at the point where it rolls around the aluminum frame.⁴ We surmised that the chemical action of the material, weather and body perspiration might have had something to do with this failure as it worried us over most of the trip and required many hours of sewing repair. Finally in Hanover, New Hampshire we took the belts off and took them to

a shoe repair shop where we had leather gussets sewn into the belts at the worn points to take the obvious chaffing.

Our shoes were medium hikers boots made by Dunham and comfortable, but not built for the type of hiking we were doing. The shoe uppers separated from the sole about 600 miles into the trip and continued to do this repeatedly throughout the trip.⁵ Rick and I had a backup pair of boots at home which we used while getting the necessary repairs made. Two sets of soles each were required to complete the trail, however only the standard Vibram sole was used in each case (the original sole plus one replacement set). Yellow label Vibram soles I feel would have given better service, but not available at the time of repairs.

The stove used on the trip was a Svea 123 with Sigg cooker kit. A very good, dependable unit. We used it morning, noon and night for cooking with Coleman fuel. We obtained fuel along the way and carried a one quart flat metal fuel bottle. The fuel would last us about ten (10) days and at resupply points was always available. The cook kit and stove nested together, allowed good storage and, I felt, served us according to our needs. The cook kit lid and large kettle served as a popper for corn which bolstered our spirits around campfires at night, the lid served as a fry pan and pancake maker with a pot over the top as an oven. We did lose use of the stove for a week when the orifice cleaner broke and we couldn't find the right size wire as a cleaner. We used an open fire at this time for cooking until we obtained a .009 size guitar wire at a music store in Waynesboro, Virginia to replace broken wire cleaner.

Various other gear served us at vital times along the trail. Pocket knife (one each man) at no other time was the large multi-use knives as advertised ever required. Compasses, a much needed item were carried by each of us. One repair kit consisting of mending tape (nylon), needle and thread, repair ring and pin for pack, spare pen lite batteries. Mallory flashlight (one only). Candles are a nice addition and many hikers used them: when the days got shorter the candles gave quick light for preparing the evening meals. We added this item to our pack in August as we began the last third of our hike.

Other items included extra shoe strings, pad matches, a short piece of plastic tubing to feed fuel from the tank to stove when priming to preheat the orifice of the stove and Cutters insect repellent.

Plastic cup and bowl with metal spoon served us nicely for food holders. The pots from the cook kit were also our food holders as we ate direct from them when one pot meals were our menu. That was most of the time.

Our sleeping bags were down type (Wood by name) and good for 30 degree weather and along with them we had hip length foam pads in a waterproof cover. The pad fit nicely into a large size stuff bag, as did the sleeping bag, a down jacket and down booties. These were a treasured item, because after a long day on the trail my feet needed a change of pace and the booties were warm and unrestrictive. The jacket served it's purpose both at the beginning of the hike and at the end when colder weather was with us. It was mailed home after the first six or seven weeks, but returned to me 8 weeks later as we moved into Vermont. The sleeping bags were adequate and on only two occasions were they not warm enough, and sleeping in our clothes served to keep these chilly nights to a minimum discomfort. Neither Rick nor I bought new sleeping bags for the trip, but used ones purchased five years before. My large feet need room to move around while sleeping and the straight sides and large bottom area in this bag gave me this freedom. Many nights the bag was left open to be comfortable and my toes could wiggle freely without binding on the

bag. Also summer heat kept us outside the bag many nights and a cool stream made sleep easy after a dip in refreshing water.

Liquid containers: For water (2) quart plastic Oasis canteens, (2) 1/2 gallon plain plastic distilled water jugs or containers salvaged after my wife finished with them. We carried these empty until getting close to our nightly campsite, at which time we would fill them all and then feel secure until the following day. We also carried a 1/2 quart shaker to mix, tang or other juices and also to presoak beans, rice, or lentils for the evening meal. This presoaking served to cut down the cooking time at night.

Food: Breakfast was a dry cereal, tang, coffee; we might heat water to mix with our powdered milk and cereal in on cold mornings. Lunches consisted of honey, peanut butter, graham crackers, or bread when near to stores, powdered soups, minute or natural rice, lentils, potatoes (flakes), cans of tuna, sardines, served us for evening meals. We learned how to vary the mixtures and add soups to the mixes for variety. One favorite evening meal was tuna, rice, chicken soup thickened with potato flakes, tea, bread, and chunks of chocolate for desert. We used a mix of M&M's (chocolate), Heartland or Familia dry cereal, raisins, peanuts, coconut for a snack on the trail. We called it Gorp [GORP stands for "gobs or raisins and peanuts" which is a combination or goodies that could be altered to suit taste]. This mix was a quick energy builder and regenerated us after many of the hot climbs in the summer, or after trucking thru mud-filled trails in the rain. Spices used were dry red pepper flakes, oregano, onion flakes and parsley which served to give our taste buds the thrill we wanted. Rick and I needed surprising amounts of food to sustain us on this hike and when we came to a highway crossing the trail we generally went looking for a grocery store where we would consume a loaf of bread, 1 lb baloney, 1/2 gallon of ice cream. Then we took hold of ourselves and said we can't afford this kind of food. So on our way we would go. Another staple we ate a lot of and carried even though quite heavy was a 2 lb bar of cheese. Our groceries came from two sources: Joan mailed food packages to us at nine prearranged post offices along the trail and we also purchased food at A&P stores where possible or from small grocery stores along the way. It is possible to buy adequate supplies along the trail without mailing food to points along the way, however, we looked forward to these contacts from home and it made our hike much more enjoyable. We were able to use the same cartons to return clothing and collected items not needed back home. Mail was thee most treasured item for a father and a son who have many loved ones at home. Their mail made us feel important and served to stimulate us to our goal of completing the trail in one year.

Clothing: From head to toe comfort was and is a most important requirement. Wool caps, wool shirts (1 each), down jackets (1 each), dark tee shirts (2 each), I discarded mine in favor of (2) short sleeved light work shirt, 2 pair long pants for me (later cut legs off of one pair at Pearisburg, VA), blue jean pants and Rick carried blue jean cut offs from start. Later we both switched to light track pant shorts in the heat of summer, and retained one pair long pants for night when it was cool or to ward off mosquitoes. We continued wearing short pants all day for the balance of the hike. Comfort was more necessary than avoiding scratches, mosquito bites, bee bites, and poison ivy. Rick and I are both aware of the outdoor villains and managed to avoid poison ivy almost always and the prickly weeds we took in stride. Underclothing 3 pair jockey shorts for me and none for Rick. No belts were used (I carried one for when I wasn't on the trail) because they got in the way of the padded hip belt on the backpack. I lost weight and needed a belt when

wearing long pants so my effort wasn't for naught. Rick gained 3 lbs and I lost 10 lbs on the whole hike. Socks were the special double knit ankle high type. We each had three pair and they lasted the entire trip, although we were re-enforcing them towards the end of the hike with knitting wool purchased at a department store. Rick wore two pair all the time and I wore just one pair.

Socks are key items and cut down on foot problems. We both suffered blisters and overcame them in different ways. Rick's were from his boots stretching out and letting his feet slip around inside the boot. He solved this by wearing two pair of heavy socks. I had the same problem after I got my second pair of boots from home, but instead of heel blisters like Rick got, mine were horseshoe shaped on the bottoms of my heels where the insole and boot wall separated or stretched. I solved my problem by using 2" wide adhesive tape and covered my heels until the blisters toughened and callused over. Later, I replaced my boots with the original set of boots and had no more problems. Gloves made our days more comfortable, too. We each had a pair of army surplus wool liner gloves which kept our fingers warm on early morning starts. It seemed that if our heads and our hands were warm, then the rest of our body was comfortable. I wore gloves, wool cap and short pants many times and remained very comfortable. It wasn't uncommon to start the day hiking in down jacket, long pants, cap and gloves and by 9:00 a.m. start peeling off clothes 'til only shorts and a shirt remained to cover the body.

If you have done a lot of hiking, you are aware of how your body fluids will flow. Carrying 30 to 50 pounds on your back while hiking 12 to 15 miles per day can make the sweat really roll in the coolest of climates, not to mention the 90° summer weather traversed on the Appalachian Trail. So most hikers find it good planning and layer their clothing so as to peel down gradually as their bodies begin to heat up while walking. (See rain gear footnote).¹³

First Aid Kit: We decided a small zip lock plastic bag would carry what was needed and settled for bandaids, bactine, aspirin, lomotal pills, adhesive tape (2" wide), mole foam, ace bandage wrap, small scissors (with rounded points on ends to keep from punching holes in bag), small container of vaseline, Cutter insect repellent, Cutters snake bite kit and halazone tablets for water treatment. The bandaids were used for small blisters and skin lacerations which we got from broken sticks, sharp rocks, and cuts while sliding down Sugarloaf Ski Slope and such, lomotal pills used by other hikers, we toughed it out on two occasions for short 4 hour periods when Rick and I got some bad cistern water. The tape I used on my feet, Rick used the mole foam, we both used the ace bandages on a couple of occasions when I fell into a well and sprained my knee and Rick when he fell down a rock and landed on his knee. Also, Mark Schmid did the same thing as Rick, while hiking in Maine with us. The ace wraps served to support us until the muscles healed. The small scissors trimmed toenails, mole foam and fingernails galore. The vaseline helped us when our crotches became inflamed during hot sweaty weather. We needed the insect repellent for a period of two weeks while walking in New York and some of the lower elevations. It did a good job but washed off when the sweat got to rolling. The only answer is not to stop walking while the mosquitoes are out.

Well, on the weekend of March 29th, 1975 after saying good bye to my fellow workers, I, my wife, and son headed for Birmingham, Michigan to join forces with Barb and John Crandell. The five of us began a very familiar routine of trip planning to the starting point of the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain, Georgia. We had all traveled together on previous summers to the White Mountains in New

Hampshire, and to Virginia where we enjoyed the Shenandoah area. John was to hike with Rick and I the first two weeks and this would put him close to Franklin, North Carolina where our wives would meet us and return with John to Michigan.

On March 31, 1975 we approached Nimblewill Gap, Georgia by a fire road, but decided it was best to hike the road rather than drive to the gap. It was a beautiful day, with the sun shining, a crispness in the air made us eager to be on our way. With the usual picture taking over, John, Rick and I began the gentle ascent to the gap and then blue blazes began to be seen leading the north bound hiker towards the first famous steps to the southern terminus of the long exciting trail.

We referred to the guide book and knew we had some 3.5 miles of blue blazed trail to walk before arriving at Springer Mountain. Our packs felt heavy and strangely overloaded, but our bodies were cocked ready for the task ahead. Rick swung off up the trail at a good pace with John and I following, but it wasn't long before our breaths became short and labored. So a short rest let us look around to see what the woods were like. Believe me we got plenty of chances to look at the trees, wildflowers, icicles on dripping hillsides runoffs before arriving at the New Shelter lean-to one half mile beyond the mountain. Before gaining the summit of Springer, a girl with a backpack slowly overtook us. We learned she was Sally Sheldon from Massachusetts on her way to meet another girl, then both of them were going to hike the entire trail all the way to Maine. Sally had done some of the A.T. in Vermont, some in Massachusetts and was ready in January of this year to go the whole distance. Rick and I were to hike on and off with Sally for a good 1000 miles before she left the trail to return home for a rest and to her ailing mother. Sally's trail companion turned out to be ill equipped for the hike and left the trail after walking 32 miles. This she did alone and Sally never caught up to her during this time. The sweat was soon rolling off our bodies and the cool day became a hot day because of our extreme efforts in walking. We were soon to learn to walk a measured even pace and to let our minds and our bodies become accustomed to the weight on our backs, the uneven trail, the hidden 6" sticks which waited to catch your heel on one foot as your other foot swung forward picking up the partially lifted stick with the toe and neatly tripping you. We arrived at New Shelter lean-to about 3:45 p.m. and decided to start the official trip as planned on April 1st. We found the brass plaque indicating that this was truly the A.T. bolted securely into a large boulder, the following words were inscribed:

Appalachian Trail Georgia to Maine
A footpath for those
who seek fellowship
with the wilderness
The Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, 1934

We were to see this plaque only a couple of times more along the trail, but it matched my feelings very nicely.

Had a total of (10) people at the shelter, mostly local folks on the trail for a couple of days. After the sun went down, a brisk coldness set in and the fire burning merrily in front of the shelter helped to warm up the shelter. We were early to bed, the hard floor felt strange under our bodies, but it didn't take long to fall asleep. John was up during the night and saw a skunk pawing through a pile of trash left by careless hikers next to the shelter. There were a few raindrops during the night.

April 1, 1975. Eager to get a full day in on the trail, we got up at 7:15 am. The moon was shining brightly and the horizon was ablaze of red where the sun came up a half hour later. Breakfast was hot tea, dry cereal, apple rings, dry milk. Rick is happy, most of the boys at the shelter are his age and they worship his upcoming hike to Maine like it was never to happen to them. Rick is talkative and as amiable as I have ever seen him.

Started hiking about 8:45 am and passed Rick up (he had gone ahead of us alone and missed the blazes) as he went off the trail for a rest stop. John and I didn't start worrying until two hours went by without seeing him. We met other hikers coming towards us and they hadn't seen him, so we asked them to tell Rick if they saw him behind us, that we were waiting on the trail ahead of him. Finally, he came puffing up to us and collapsed on the ground beside us while we all took a break. I was greatly relieved to have him with us. This was a lesson to us all to stay close to each other and not separate in order to remain a coordinated group.

Hiked 8 miles to Hawk Mountain lean-to in 60-70° temperatures, with sun all the time. What a nice day, the trail was kind to us, but quickly broke in our bodies to sweating even in fair weather. A nice cool spring at the shelter to drink from and new friends to get acquainted with (Jane and Joe Kaopuiki from Hawaii). After some storytelling, John and I retired to our tents and soft leaves for a mattress, while Rick stayed in the shelter with the boys he met last night and is now staying with them around the campfire. Joe and Jane are going to hike the entire trail, too.

Our evening meal consisted of instant rice and potatoes, tuna, pudding, crackers, hot tang, and some of John's strawberry ice cream.

April 2, 1975. Spent a very restful night and vowed to sleep on the leaves every opportunity I had. Temperature was 46 to 54° during the night and the owls were busy (4 short hoots). Up at 7:15 am after very restful night on good old mother earth. John and I had our tents about 15 feet apart and we never heard each other make a move all night long. Our breakfasts were cold cereal, apple bits, tang and Brewer's yeast.

We moved out onto the trail about 9 am after a stop at the beautiful little spring of water. We found a note addressed to Sally from her hiking companion Sue encouraging her (Sally) on. Sue is 20 years old and it seems a bit of a speedster, but maybe her plans are somewhat bunched together as she plans on meeting some friends for a trip west if she isn't finished with hiking the AT by August. We learned later that Sue left the trail after some 32 miles because of improper cold weather gear. One fact kept coming up as we hiked, the approach trails to the shelters all seem to be up and after a long day of hiking, it seemed as though we never would be able to make that last ascent to the shelter. However, we would arrive and then -- Oh, yes -- plod downhill again to the spring for fresh water. Meanwhile our day was a beautiful fresh day for the first 3 hours with ups and downs over Georgia ridges and hollows with the rain finally starting about 1 pm. We leap-frogged along with our Hawaiian friends and Rick is hiking with Jeff (17) and Daniel (16) from Jonesboro, Georgia. We passed a couple of girls from Ohio who are holed up in their tent by a pretty creek waiting for the rain to quit. We talked only momentarily with them before continuing on. Our raingear soon made us uncomfortable and I removed mine thinking it would help, but before long I put it back on. It was a chilly rain.

Gooch Gap is our destination for the day some (9) nine miles form Hawk Mountain lean-to and the trail crossed several streams where both Rick and John slipped on the same log one time, but didn't get wet. The approach to the shelter was heralded by the usual steep trail over a log stairway that took giant steps to ascent and our packs seemed to weigh a ton. We had stopped to fill our 1/2 gallon water jugs with fresh spring water before making the last climb to the shelter. This move always seemed smart because it usually saved a return trip over very steep trail, sometimes after dark for water; but that added 4 pounds of water was like a ton of weight being added to our packs late in the day when we were so very weary. On this occasion the lean-to was occupied by 10 girl scouts and their adult leaders, so John, Rick and I pitched our tents as one large tent and made the best of it. Rick and his friends made a hit with the girls ages up to 15 (Army brats) and soon the boys were given all the army rations the girls had and didn't like. To us the food tasted delicious and was a heavy addition to our packs, so we ate as much as we could; canned ham, eggs and bacon, jellies, muffins, mints and meats of various kinds. While writing in his log tonight, Rick's flashlight attracted a frog and it hopped onto his lap twice even after being tossed out into the woods. The wind blew all night and we had to peg our tent down several times, soon it rained, too, and by early morning hail and some snow had fallen. As each gust of wind came it sounded like a freight train roaring down the tracks and then it would die away only to be followed by another. I didn't sleep good and was glad to see the morning sunrise and a new day.

April 3, 1975. Gooch Gap shelter is a log affair, three sided with plastic across the fourth side for protection from the wind.

My thermometer gave us a chilly 25° this morning and the wind was sharp making our planned rest day here rather uncomfortable. The sun was shining but didn't warm up the lean-to one bit. We thought the next lean-to might not afford as warm a place to stay the coming night and hoped the weather might warm up. A lot of hikers had passed us here at Gooch Gap lean-to and it looked like sleeping space might be at a premium there. We lost our other traveling companions who went into a little town called Suches for supplies and to warm up. We still had more company when other hikers stopped here at noon, ate lunch and moved on to a campsite further up the trail where they pitched their tents. One man from Maine (Art Knowltey) is hiking the whole trail to Maine, a real neat young man dressed in old G.I. jacket and bib overalls and full of zip. Graduate of Maine University in math. John learned that Art had a recorder with him (among other sundries which I bet he gets rid of soon because of weight) and was learning to play. John promptly gave him a lesson and told him of the history and background on his instrument which Art really appreciated. Another young hiker named Rick talked books with our Rick and soon it was dark. We all turned in about 8 pm with the wind blowing and still cold. It made us feel like we were back on Loft Mountain in Virginia like last year.

April 4, 1975. Awoke to the rattle of Art's tin cup as he ate some cold cereal before heading out. Rick went also (not our Rick) and they both say they will go to Suches for supplies and Rick mentioned his blisters might stop him from going further than Suches. He is a college student and attended college in Boone, NC and thought it might be smart to call it quits before his feet got any worse. The temperature is 28° and ice formed in John's pan, he has a picture to prove it. We ate cold cereal,

orange drops (Marion's welcome treat) and started out for Blood Mountain some 12 miles away.

The wind blew all day, but it was sunny and clear. We soon reached a sandy road which lead to Suches, GA some 1.6 miles to the left, however we had all the supplies we needed and soon reached the shelter of the woods where it was warm and beautiful. Birds are beginning to catch our attention and John pointed out a red capped woodpecker. The comfortable warm woods made us aware of the surrounding beauty of early spring -- yellow and purple violets, bloodroot, 3 leaf small green plant with dark patches on it. Looks like a houseplant one would get from a greenhouse. A hawk with very pointed wings and straight tail, couldn't see color, but seemed dark. We decided after 10 miles to camp in a gap protected from the wind. The sun went down at 7:30 pm and we sat around a small fire and ate. Took a look at my thermometer and it was 58° inside my tent. We expect to go over Blood Mountain (4400') tomorrow am and past Neals Gap to Tesnatee lean-to.

April 5, 1975. Temperature 58°, some wind, lots of sun. All night long the wind gusts sounded like freight trains zooming by one after another. We could hear them approach, pass through the gaps and recede beyond. No night sounds. After a wet cereal, raisins, tea breakfast we retraced our steps 1/4 mile to get water from a stream which we passed last night which trickled down the mountain.

A note about our beds. The leaves furnished a nice soft groundcover and with our hip pads and sleeping bags one couldn't ask for a nicer soft warm place to sleep. A slight grade allowed us to shift downhill during the night.

The steep ascent up Blood Mountain allowed us time to study our uphill walking and after noticing another hiker (Helene) moving very slow with measured step without stopping, we all adopted this technique and found it a good one. The summit of Blood Mountain revealed the shelter nestled among huge boulders. It looked much like an old schoolhouse, made of stone with a fireplace between two rooms, dirt floors, shutters falling off the windows which were boarded up. We were glad that we selected the clean floor of the woods instead of pressing on last night to stay here in this shelter. The views are fantastic however (see pictures), elevation 4458' highest point on the AT in Georgia. 1.8 miles to Neals Gap and here we washed some clothes and trimmed our beards in the mens room. Also ate hamburgers, ice cream and hot chocolate inside the store and talked with the manager who works for the State of Georgia. Then (1) one hour later headed up the trail to Tesnatee Gap. We were told that the AT lean-to was a beer party site so decided to camp again in the woods by a water source. We have been using halazone almost constantly since Hawk Mountain lean-to. The streams are clear and cold, but we are leery of them anyway. After onion soup, milk, oleo, beef jerky, canned beef soup and cracker meal with vanilla coconut pudding desert, we gathered in my tent for a preview of tomorrow. Rick loves to hear Uncle John read about the upcoming trail data and follows it determinedly as John reads. Rick talked about how he would enjoy a break in June with one or two days spent in Lansing and a backyard picnic at Terpstra's and the rest of the time at Lake Michigan. We have a creaking tree caused by one tree leaning against another and when the winds blow the two trees rub together. Our dreams will have background music. Braggs Creek Gap is the name of this campsite location.

April 6, 1975. 32°, sunny and some wind this am. Had a fast breakfast at about 7:30 am, headed out to Tesnatee Gap lean-to which is on the Russell Memorial Highway

and very accessible. Got there about 10:30 am and found a shelter made of logs, very bad shape and assume it will be torn down soon (see pictures).

Three nice ascents to 36-37-3900 feet brought us to the new Low Gap lean-to 6.5 miles from our camp last night. Arrived at 2:30 pm and decided that this was Sunday, after all, and a day of rest would feel good. We stopped (after seeing two nice cool streams) and took stream baths and washed clothes. There was just one man here when we arrived (he was from Texas), but 2 more arrived after 4 pm (one from Maine (Daniel) and going all the way south to north; another from Indiana (Ron) also a thru hiker).

Rick is writing his letter to Mrs. Saaf and her class now while sitting cross legged on his sleeping bag in the shelter. The men now here have beards and are college students and they are free swinging, idea exchanging kids. This lean-to is also close to a road, but it is a fire road, and soon a boy on a motorbike came to the lean-to. He appeared to be of Indian ancestry and he wanted to talk and be friendly with us. He knew that motorbikes were prohibited on the trail and indicated that he "kinda watched over this lean-to to make sure that no one mistreated it." We told him that we appreciated his surveillance and hoped that this lean-to would survive for many years. Soon he left us and blasted out of sight.

I felt a little hesitant about talking with the other younger hikers because of my own age. However, it is surprising how infectious their conversation is and how easy it is to get them interested in your own interests.

The night was quite cold, but the gurgling streams soon put me to sleep. Its nice to have a son sleeping beside you and enjoying the same experiences.

April 7, 1975. From Low Gap shelter (new in 1971) we hiked 9 miles to Unicoi Gap, over (2) 4000' peaks and through many beautiful glens (gaps). Towhees, woodpeckers, rhododendron budding, laurel bushes, blood root, jays hooting and owls calling.

Up at 7 am cereal, tea, and off we went. Beautiful all day. Unicoi offered us a good flat campground and water and toilets close by. We pitched tents and slept on lush green grass. Ron and two other boys are here with us (Angus White and Gomer). We all sat at a picnic table and enjoyed each others company while eating. To bed about 8:30 pm and about 10 pm an owl landed in the tree over our tents. He would hoot and move from one tree to another. One long hoot and about 4 to 8 times before each move. The night was clear to begin with, but clouded up by morning.

April 8, 1975. John and Rick hitched a ride into Helen and Roberts Town for supplies and to make a phone call to the girls in Florida to confirm our progress on the trail and a meeting place on the way to Franklin, NC. Back by 9:30 am and in the meantime, Joe and Jane Kaopuiki (the Hawaiian couple) caught up with us. They also hitched into town for supplies, while John, Rick and I set off for Tray Mountain some 7-8 miles away.

Long climbs all day and cloudy skies made our hike a dark one. However, no rain except a few drops late in the afternoon. Our campsite tonight is a nice quiet place and we watched the sunset. The clouds separated enough for us to see it. Our location tonight will allow us to see the sun come up, too, for we are on a narrow wooded ridge with the trees falling away on either side. We should have had rain according to Jane and Joe, but it looks as though we lucked out. The temperature is around 50° tonight. Skunks are our only night visitors and some mice, but when camping in the woods we hoist our food bags into the tree using the 50' long nylon cord brought for this purpose.

Rick is sitting beside me by our campfire and John has gone to bed. The rocks around the fire keep Rick's feet warm while he writes his Journal. Our evening meal tonight consisted of macaroni, cheese, tuna, carnation instant breakfast drink and Rick topped it off with an orange and some cereal.

April 9, 1975. Wednesday -- Camped at a pretty gap just north of Tray Mountain, Georgia. Sunset on one side and a sunrise on the opposite side the next morning (see pictures). We arrived about 5 pm this day.

Started out at 8:30 am after light breakfast and made several high ascents reaching toward Tray Mountain ranging from 4000 to 4200' elevation. Passed and got passed by several hikers in a leapfrog fashion and put in 12.5 miles today and ended up at Plum Orchard Gap shelter. It started raining about 3:30 pm and we wanted to get in another 3-1/2 miles so we walked in the rain and got pretty wet. Gomer and Angus had the water hot when we got there (lean-to) for coffee and tea. Nice companions to hike with. 2 sisters (Heline and Steffanie) from Staten Island, NY joined us soon after we arrived so there were seven in the shelter that night. We could normally sleep in this shelter, but you just plain adjust to accommodate as many as possible. The rain stopped about seven o'clock and the ground was really soaked. The shelter was junked up with paper, cans, etc. and Rick, John and I picked up as much as possible knowing we would have to carry it for two days along with wet clothing before reaching a disposal point.

We heard whip-poor-wills and owls tonight and saw stars and a satellite going across the sky. It clouded over about 11 pm; temperature about 50°.

April 10, 1975. Thursday -- 81.46 miles hiked so far. Up at 7 am and ate cold cereal, with hot milk, sugar, cinnamon and tea.

Underway by 9:30 am after our sheltermates had departed. We only need to reach Muskrat Creek shelter some eight miles away, but over some real ascents, Courthouse Bald at 4650' and Sharptop 4348' elevation. Our ascents started at 3500' and caused us to do some sweaty walking. We reached the shelter about 3 pm and it is an "A" frame design and new in 1973. We are the only ones here and have lots of room. Enough room in this shelter for 12 to 14 people with packs hung from the roof. I took a nap and felt very refreshed by mealtime. John served Rick and I steak, potatoes, Swiss Miss and soup tonight. Kind of a farewell meal as we meet the girls tomorrow and John leaves us. What a meal!!! All our taste buds are satisfied. Our food is holding out very well and each night a mixture of rice or potatoes, soup, either tuna or beef jerky rounds out the meal nicely, topped off with tang or tea.

Rick has a fire going merrily in front of the shelter with rhododendron leaves helping to get it started. The dampness on the ground makes it almost impossible to have a fire with the frosty air and wet trees in the area. Temperature now is about 46° and it is clouding over. We sat around the fire for a while and had more soup to go to bed on. More owls this evening.

April 11, 1975. Friday. Up at 8 am and away by 9 am. Weather cloudy and 46°, but by noon we had sun and 50-60° temperatures.

At Deep Gap we left the AT and took a fire road out to Highway 64 (NC) where we met Joan and Barb about 4:30 pm. We all headed for Franklin, NC and Woods Motel where a shower, meal (and I mean meal) was consumed. Then to the laundry and grocery store for supplies for Rick and I. Up until midnight arranging food in plastic bags. Joan read our log books and got brought up to date on our trail happenings. This

was just the beginning of many pages she would be reading as we will mail the pages of our log home to her.

April 12, 1975. Saturday. Up at 7 am, wrote some cards and ate breakfast at a restaurant in Franklin, NC where we ran into four other hikers, Dan Cohen, and three others who had come off the trail the day before at Wallace Gap for some refreshment and a shower. This was the last time we would see Daniel. He completed the trail. By noon we had returned to Deep Gap where Rick and I bid good bye to Joan, Barb and John; it would be 3 months before we got together again.

Rick and I got underway quickly and by 6 pm made camp at Carter Gap lean-to (8-9 miles away). The fire we built smoked and filled the lean-to -- a good start for the two of us. We put out the fire before retiring. Another hiker came to the shelter before dark (John from New York City). He is a high school age boy that has super energy and hikes too fast to enjoy the things around him. He talked a mile-a-minute and is a nice kid who is lonely. He wishes his dad would hike with him.

Our shelter was built in 1959 and is somewhat run down with a board missing here and there, but could accommodate six people comfortably. A pretty spring runs out of the hillside some fifty yards away and would be very pleasant on a hot day to cool off a sweaty body. However, this spring weather isn't warm enough to get me into cold water and I was content to take shelter within my sweaty condition for a good nights sleep.

Ate leftover steak, rolls, oranges, tea, soup macaroni and cheese and gorp for dinner. Juncos are coming up to the front of the shelter to pick up crumbs dropped by us. This happened before at Muskrat Creek lean-to 4-10-75 also. This close contact with Mother Nature's creatures serves to put me in a peaceful mood and helps to set the pace at which my mind would move for the coming months of walking.

One of the "upsetters" encountered were the tiny bits of foil littering the ground around the shelters and in the fireplaces. It seems that these escape the eye of many other hikers as not pieces of litter and drive me nuts, and I want to pick them all up and carry them to the trash cans near the trail heads. People just don't think what they are doing when small pieces of foil fall unnoticed onto the ground.

April 13, 1975. Up at 7:45 am, heated water for both of us and the other young hiker (John) and for our cereals. John took off by 9 am [Note: today John wore both sneakers instead of one boot and one sneaker as he had yesterday. It seems that a blister was plaguing him while hiking and he changed to relieve the discomfort. It was quite a sight last night to see this young boy come hiking into camp with odd shoes on each foot. But we were soon to honor this desire for comfort and learn how much blisters disturb the hiker.]

Rick and I soon left the shelter and a beautiful cold, clear day (temperature 28°), crisp and fresh greeted total senses. Couldn't stay warm in my sleeping bag even with all my clothes on. Rick too. Will cover up with them over us next time.

The trail was very good all day -- fairly level with small ups and downs. Hiked through tunnels of rhododendron and mountain laurel bushes -- their buds all ready to pop out when the first few days of hot weather move in. Some blow downs, both trees and bushes knocked down by the winter storms, blocked our progress on the trail and we had to detour either upgrade or downgrade to get around them. We took a wrong trail when we failed to catch sight of a double blaze and ended up at the bottom

of a hill and a dead end. Rick says, "Nothing else to do, Dad, but retrace our steps." Brother was that tough! The climb back up the hill to where the AT turned served to make us so much more alert and we lost about one hour progress to boot.

Our destination became Rock Gap shelter and we arrived about 6 pm after 12.2 miles of hiking. A pretty good days walk by our standards at this early stage in our trip so far, but not enough to gain Katahdin's summit in the allotted six month time span. There wasn't anyone at the shelter and it was nice to be entirely alone for the night. The tent will be our cover over our sleeping bags tonight even if it doesn't seem as cold. Rick has a nice fire going and the smoke goes away from the lean-to this time. Its 8:30 pm and time for bed. Saw turkey buzzards, juncos, woodpeckers. Heard a pileated, too.

April 14, 1975. Arrived at Silar Bald lean-to at 2:30 pm. Left Rock Gap lean-to 9:30 am after a full night of gentle rain. Everything was soaked and a ground fog had settled in. The fog stayed with us all day and our clothes became very damp. After hiking approximately 7 miles we decided Silar Bald lean-to would be the place to hide out for the day.

Our days hike covered some rather steep ascents and some trail blocks, mostly tree tops and uprooted old trees which couldn't withstand the winter winds and crashed down across our path. We spent a long time crawling over, through and under these barriers, but even with a temperature of 42° the trail is a pleasure to walk. Markings or blazes are always in sight and we are secure in this beautiful woods. The merry little steams greet us at every turn in the trail, gentle breezes let us know that we are walking on a carpet of leaves when they tumble across the path. Grouse pound out their messages occasionally throughout the day.

This section of the trail had a register box on a post where people signed to let each other know when they passed. One fellow, Art Knolton (ME) is 5 days ahead of us now. We saw him at Gooch Gap and he signed through here 4-9-75. T.H. (NH) was at the lean-to when we arrived. He slept there last night in his tent and got soaked, so was staying over to wait for his equipment to dry out. He is a young man with a family, but loves to have his freedom and his wife says OK. He has camped and hiked in the west also. A very pleasant fellow. We were just (3) three in the lean-to and it rained all night and the roof leaked a little, but we angled ourselves around so the drips missed our sleeping bags mostly. Hiked seven miles today and I think we are getting itchy feet to hike more miles after this. We'll see!

April 15, 1975. Up at 7:30 am at Silar Bald lean-to. Temperature 46°. Fog was lifting and rain had stopped. Sky showed signs of clearing. T.H. made his meal last night on his Svea stove and tipped it over, but it didn't stop him from scraping most of it back into his pan. This morning we were extra careful not to do the same with our usual cereal, hot milk and tea. Breakfast always tastes good.

Rick and I headed out on a sloppy trail consisting of an old logging road that eventually lead us to Wayah Gap and a highway (just a lonely road). We proceeded to ascend Wayah Bald 5336' elevation where we found a stone structure much like a small castle, a monument to J. B. Barnes (see pictures). Rick and I got only partial views south and east from here, but north (Mt. Mitchell) it was fogged over.

So after a cold lunch spent huddled against the monument we headed out for Cold Springs lean-to which was still a ways off and reached there about 4 pm. A beautiful lean-to built of logs by the C.C.C. about 1937. Rick and I preceded two other hikers up the trail to this lean-to with our first non-stop ascent. We were

thinking that we might have to sleep outside if the lean-to was full so after a sustained climb we found only one other man in the lean-to. The (2) two behind us turned out to be Jill and Burt Gilbert (NH) who have hiked many miles of the AT and Burt was going for his 3rd thru hike of the entire AT. T.H. (our partner of last night) came in soon and before long 2 more hikers arrived. Burt Gilbert is a retired Navy man and he met Jill while hiking a year ago. They now are married and hike the trail at every opportunity and will get as far as possible before June when they will return to Enfield, NH where they live, put in their garden, then make tracks for Boone, NC for the AT Conference. After which they will return to the trail to hike the rest of the way to Maine. Jill and Burt have played host to several thru hikers including Peter Dunning, George Dunn and the Becks from Michigan to name a few. Rick and I have an invitation to stop in Enfield, NH. Both Gilberts are hardy souls and wear shorts, light packs and hike 20-25 miles each day.

Tonight the temperature dropped below freezing before we got to bed. Rick and I couldn't get filled up with enough food so after a sauce mix of Vienna sausages, beef, beef patties, tomato soup, oleo, instant potatoes, cream of chicken soup, hot tea, and hot tang, we topped it off with more instant potatoes, rice and ramps. That did it! We applied all clothes and covered my sleeping bag with my tent and slept soundly.

April 16, 1975. Wednesday. Up at 7 am and our breath showed up plainly in the crisp 26° temperature. After a quick breakfast, a sunny sunrise and spectacular view just 75 yards above the lean-to we took off at 8:30 am. The Gilberts left 30 minutes earlier headed for Wesser and a motel. Rick and I had decided to do the same thing earlier so our plans coincided.

This day turned out to be a most pleasant day to hike. Temperature went to at least 65° and we climbed over Wesser Bald (El. 4627'). The climb was steep, but the other side was a dream of fairyland switchbacks taking us back and forth over nice soft leaf-covered trail with new spring flowers, gentle tinkling streams and beds of wild ramps beside it (see pictures). Every conceivable wildflower native to North Carolina was blooming on this the sunny side of Wesser Bald. Rick and I dallied along and enjoyed every inch of the trail. Picked us a batch of ramps (Rick is in the bathroom cleaning them now) as I write up the days hike. We reached Wesser and got a room at the Nantahala Outdoor Center Motel for \$12.00 (2 beds and a shower). We had a tasty meal at 4 pm of sauteed liver and onions with homemade bread, brown muffins and blueberry muffins and a dish of corn-onion chowder. More than I could eat, but Rick finished mine up. Our booth in the restaurant overlooked the Nantahala River where the rapids are quite wild and white. This is a combination restaurant, camp outfitters, grocery store with a motel across the road. Prices are very reasonable. We met the Gilberts again and spent another enjoyable hour or so with them. We also had an old gent with us while we talked and he told us about this area. He leads small groups on local expeditions to see trees, weeds (as he called them). This is a resort for fast water canoe and kayak enthusiasts and their boats are stockpiled close by even now. We got to our room by 8:15 pm and are going to get our logs up to date. I did a laundry in the sink which took a while and we hung up line to air out our sleeping bags which were damp. We hear the rushing waters of a feeder stream rushing past our window as it heads for the Nantahala River some 200 yards away. 10.8 miles of hiking for us today.

April 17, 1975. Started from Wesser about 10 am after a nice breakfast. A very sunny day and blue skies with white clouds floating along. Rick says we'll have rain in 48 hours, but we had rain last Tuesday and hope it holds off for a few days at least.

This day has been another pleasure with some ascents which made the sweat run. Lots of wildflowers and one grouse which flew across in front of us. Two lizards about 6" long on a rock and a tree (see picture). The Nantahala River runs very fast and a lot of rapids make this river an exciting water course. Our goal for today is the next lean-to, Sassafras Gap only five miles away, but by 3:30 pm after a 10 am start and the steep ascents we were bushed. We were joined by seven more people by dark so the lean-to was full plus. A nice fire and good bunk mates made a good finish to a beautiful day. Threatened rain but it never came. Occasional gusts of wind and warm; that made for a comfortable night.

April 18, 1975. 56° this am and after a freeze-dried egg breakfast, Rick and I started off hiking by 9 am. The day was cloudy, but warm enough to make us remove our top layer of clothes in one hour.

Our hiking routine has come down to a break every two hours for gorp, lunch or water if needed. Rick is a swell companion, his stride is the same as mine and his temperament is great, a very logical thinker. All the other hikers think he is just perfect. Mrs. K. (Hawaiian) said today, "If your other two children are like Rick then they must be swell kids." Rick laughs his approval at all the conversation and always reflects a likeable agreement with the things other people say. He is a good listener.

Our hiking today brought us along 10 miles, but about 9 miles short of Fontana Village. We will go to town tomorrow night and camp somewhere close by. Tonight we are camped in a gap just 6 miles short of Cable Gap lean-to and 10 miles out of Fontana Village. The sun was out all pm and the wind is gusty now, but we are down behind the ridge and no wind touches us. But we can sure hear it. See picture of Rick making (shaking) our pudding.

April 19, 1975. Saturday. Camped out at Cable Gap and Cable Gap lean-to -- Fontana Village. Rain all day. Made good time as usual. We walked about 10 miles today and the weather permitted us some pleasant, some slippery hiking. After a good night's sleep on some leaves that let us nestle down and stay comfortable, we had a quick breakfast and packed up just in time to keep our tents dry, but got us wet.

The rain stayed with us and we stopped at the Cable Gap lean-to to dry out for one hour. Then on to Fontana Village. The trail was very slippery and I took a spill without any bad results. The descent into the Little Tennessee River gorge was beautiful, but became more populated. As we came out of the woods onto the asphalt highway, a park ranger stopped his truck beside us to see if we had gotten our permits for the Smokies. He was very helpful and explained the permit system, helped us estimate the time necessary to hike through Smokey Mountains National Park which started on the other side of the river. He fixed us up with our permit and wished us good hiking. We now had a two mile walk into Fontana Village, with no prospects for a ride. Our clothes were wet and no one cared about having wet bodies in their cars, there really weren't many cars this early in the year. The State Park close by wasn't stirring and so after about 2 hours Rick and I made it into town. It wasn't much of a town, more like a resort with the cottages all sitting on the hillside. We went into the central lodge and got a cottage for one night

for \$9.36 which is the "before season" rate. Shower, twin beds, heater and a chance to rest -- boy was this a luxury

With it being Saturday (to late to shop) and the stores all closed on Sunday we imposed on the grocery store manager to open up so we could get our grocery supplies and get underway on Sunday. The local police officer unlocked the door and rang up the cash register for us as directed by phone by the store manager. I had to talk like a Dutch Uncle on the telephone prior to getting this special service. Finally the manager decided that a father and son team of hikers couldn't be all bad and was finally warm and courteous and helpful. We couldn't get our mail and this hurt, but the laundermat, clean clothes and a cafeteria meal all helped to make Rick and I feel like human beings again.

Met a former thru hiker Mike Shehan who did the trail in 1973 while we were eating. He was very nice and cheered us on our way with good wishes. After repacking our groceries, writing cards and bringing our journals up to date we got to sleep about midnight. The rain stopped about 5 pm and the sun came out to brighten things up a bit. The evening was cool and the temperature about 40°.

Fontana Village is the aftergrowth of a government project. The dam which is part of the TVA system got people to living in this area and the land then was available to concessionaires who contracted from the federal government and operate this whole area as a resort. As a result, a hotel system of cottages, a theater, grocery store, etc. took root. So now people come here to spend their vacations. The lake above the dam is big and the Smokey Mountains border on the north side giving a beautiful background to the whole setting.

April 20, 1975. Sunday. Up at 7 am and got packed, had a final good eat at the cafeteria and moved out. A very beautiful day sunny, fresh air and clear skies. What more could a guy ask for?

Hiked 2 miles back out to the trail and a mile and a quarter to the dam where we crossed the Little Tennessee River after looking around inside at the maps and miniature TVA dam display. The pictures we took ought to be good, showing the redbud, dogwood and water and blue sky background. After 5.22 miles of graded hiking trail we reached Birch Spring shelter, the first of the big stone structures built by the U. S. Forest Service. Three sided with a bear fence across the fourth side, a fireplace inside and some wire bunks for 12 people.

The day's hike was truly delightful; the graded trail maintained by the Forest Service was flat and only a minimum of erosion had occurred. We had set a faster pace because of this easier footway, but noticed that it took longer to ascend the taller mountains as the trail would switch back and forth. The 5.26 miles from the dam to the shelter was quite steep and it is the beginning of the ascent to the crestline of the Smokies. We arrived at Birch Spring shelter about 4:30 pm and had a choice of 12 wire banks to choose from. The door into the shelter was through a wire bear fence and I noted that the latch wasn't working and wondered if we would have any bear problems? We didn't.

The shelter had a nice spring and outdoor latrine as all the shelters in the Smokies do. All hikers in this area (Smokies) are welcome in these shelters, but just give way to those hikers that have reservations. However, no one will be left out of the shelter even if the shelter is filled. The others just move over and make room and we found that no one is denied a place to sleep. A very pretty setting is universal for all shelters, with beautiful views, water close by and an outhouse.

April 21, 1975. Monday. Goal: Spence Field shelter. Hiked 9 miles; weather: sunny.

This day was the beginning of some pleasurable hiking. We had sun all day and arrived at several beautiful spots with views. Ate lunch at Russell Field shelter and shared our meal with the local mice in the shelter. A very pretty spot in a clearing on top of a ridge surrounded with young trees, its a low spot between mountains right on the AT. We had reports of wild boars that roam this area, from other hikers. Only saw footprints and rootings, but another group of hikers just ahead of us was approached by a pig with baby pigs close by and she made enough fuss to protect her babies. As we approached our goal, the trail passed down a grassy field and afforded us a spectacular view of the next days ascent up Thunderhead mountain. It seemed like open meadows far up in the sky and nothing has taken my interest like this spot. It seemed real mysterious to see these clear fields way up on top of these high places.

Our shelter holds ten people tonight; 4 thru hikers, and the rest doing sections of the Smokies. These mountains are quite popular and everyone likes the big homey shelters. The level hiking is pleasant, but the scramble to reach this trail is quite something. Again we had reports of bear, boar and deer from the other hikers, but we have yet to see them ourselves.

Our food is great and gorp has become a favorite item now. The taste of chocolate is something our bodies need right away I believe. The night meal is spiced with ramps we have picked along the way. Potato flakes thicken our rice, soup, or meat mixture for a one bowl meal. Ramps have become everyones favorite and Rick has gotten the others on the road to natural foods along the trail. We were given some dried red peppers by Dave Bass (Vermont) who says they change the taste of dried foods. Wow -- he was right, these peppers became a regular item on our shopping list and served to liven up our meal considerably. We have everyone looking for ramps now. Its 46° and we are sleeping warmer than usual.

April 22, 1975. Tuesday: 50° temperature this morning, beautiful red sunrise at 7:30 am.

A beautiful day to walk over sunny balds, meadows on top of mountains as the trail follows the ridgeline at a steady 5000' elevation. Ravens are calling, song sparrows are singing, and we passed over Thunderhead Mountain, through rows of rhododendron not quite ready to blossom, but heavy with buds. As we passed through wooded sections and dips in the ridge, boggy boar wallows caused us to tread the dry edges of the trail. But as yet no boar came into view. We paused for about an hour on a neat grassy hillside and took a sun bath; it felt good to just sink down into the grass and relax. I guess this is one of the pleasant things that will be remembered about this experience. Weather: sunny, 50 - 65°. Hiked: 13.9 miles. Goal: Double Spring lean-to".¹⁴

April 23, 1975. Wednesday: Stayed at Double Spring lean-to last night with 13 people. We decided to hike the extra miles today so as to get used to the extra pressure of more miles per day, the trail is graded and affords easy walking so the eyes can see things around us without having to constantly watch for poor footing.

The day was nice. Missed seeing bear as per report from another hiker. Trail is all on ridge crest and follows uphill a few times. The beauty of the scenery offsets the huffing and puffing, but even this exertion is a pleasure knowing your body is holding up so nicely. I wonder if we will ever be able to pass this way

again and have the chance to enjoy this great freedom once more? I'm behind on writing so some facts about today's hike are missing. This will occur when we hike longer distances.

We had ramps again and, boy!, does our evening meal ever mean a lot to us. Mixed rice, soup, tuna, and thickened it with potato flakes, desert is a few handfuls of Gorp. Rick had a nice evening with 4 boys from Chicago (17 - 18 year olds) out for a week of hiking. They all sat in a semi-circle in front of the fireplace inside the big stone shelter, their shoulders all touching and hands clutching their knees. Rick got a full dose of what living in a big city means to others and just what these boys appreciated, what values are to them, part time jobs, outdoor opportunities and what it means, swapping stories about their parents etc. In another corner were 21 to 25 year old people also having their exchange of interests. A very interesting gathering and I soon slipped off to dreamland as I snuggled deeper into my sleeping bag. Passed over Mt. Backley 6582', Clingmans Dome 6643', Mt. Collins 6188', Newfound Gap 5045'. Weather: 46° am. Sunny and cooler in pm. Hiked: 13.2 miles today. Goal: Ice Water Spring lean-to, 6100' elevation.

April 24, 1975. Thursday: A chilly night due to rather high elevation but comfortable. Up at 7 am (to the rattle of cooking equipment of other hikers). 50° temperature, rained all night and the foggy look outside the shelter made it look bad for the day, but after we got onto the trail the skies broke up, but the clouds stayed around all day.

We climbed over beautiful mountain tops, went through virgin conifer forests and over sawtooth ridges. 4' wide paths where the side fell away quickly from the ridge (precipitous is the word). We traveled around stone cliffs too (Charlies Bunyon). This day was chucked full of nice variations of woods, hills, skies and other trail conditions that only make this trip a beautiful experience. Rick has gotten nice pictures of the forest floor, hope they turn out, its rather shady -- poor light. The trees had fallen on top of each other and then moss grew covering them up so that when we walked our feet never touched the ground. In fact a person couldn't walk through these woods unless there was a trail to follow.

Tonight we are in Tri-Corner lean-to and Rick is actively conversing with a doctor and intern on vitamins, radiation, etc. He seems so ignited by the people he meets and loves to trade conversation. We are a total of seven people in a 12 man shelter. Dave Bass, George Anderson, Rick and I, and 3 others. Dave and George are our present companions as thru hikers. Weather: Cloudy, 50° foggy, sporadic sun, rain in the evening. Hiked: 12.3 miles. Goal: Tri-Corner lean-to Great Smokey Mountain National Park.

Today's trail passed around Charlies Bunyon elevation 5800' approximately, through False Gap 5400', after Porters Mountain 5500', around Eagle Rocks 5900', descend to Copper Gap 5650', then Mt. Sequoyah 6000, Mt. Chapman 6200', Big Cove Gap 5825'.

April 25, 1975. Friday. Tri-Corner was a nice lean-to, large, and not crowded with people. The weather wasn't very helpful, because soon after we started hiking (8:45 am) it started raining lightly. We put on both poncho and chaps, but soon I was wetter on the inside than out so took them off. Rick was comfortable (his poncho was a breathable material given to him by Uncle John) and kept his rain gear on. After 3 miles it began raining harder and I put on my rain gear again (for the 3rd time). In 10 minutes we got a downpour complete with thunder and lightning and it

bothered me that we were on top of a mountain with very little shelter. It wasn't even comfortable walking so we took slight shelter under some very small trees (pine) until the worst was over. Just standing there knowing there wasn't a darn thing one could do to keep from getting wet soon made us immune to water and after this nothing could get us down (at least not so far). So we went sloshing down the water-filled trail trying not to get our already soaked boots soaked, what a joke. It all seemed so funny and it really didn't make any difference whether you got your wet feet wetter, cause you couldn't tell the difference anyway. About 1 pm the sun came out and dried up our top clothing, a beautiful transformation after the rain and we came into virgin conifers that were giants. Our hiking was a real treat with walking over grass balds, pine-filled woods and finally rock cliffs with drop offs. The views again were superb, Clingman's Dome, LeCont, a sweeping panorama of the Smokies and the Nantahalas far across the Little Tennessee River and Fontana Lake, behind us.

We stopped for a rest and ate some lunch at Cosby Knob lean-to, but continued on soon. Evidence of horse travel on the trail made us feel sorry for the horses, because the walking was very very rocky, horse and rider would have to be very careful each step of the way to avoid turned ankles. Six miles later we descended towards Davenport Gap, but arrived at the shelter before the gap some three miles and the small village of Mt. Sterling. The lean-to was nice and we had 2 Marines with their wives besides George and Dave for bunkmates. George Anderson got there first and dropped his pack and headed for Mt. Sterling where he bought tomatoes, hamburger, ice cream and marshmallows. He soon returned and we all shared his gifts of food. What a feed!

Weather: Rain-sunny-cloudy. Hiked: 15.4 miles. Goal: Davenport Gap lean-to (Last lean-to in the Great Smokey Mountain National Park).

Climbs around 6100' Tri-Corner Knob, Guyot Spur 6360', Deer Creek Gap 6020', around slope Inadu Knob 5941', Camel Hump Knob 5250' and slabbed around Cosby Knob 5145' and around Mt. Cammerer (5025') descended to Davenport Gap (1975') a very long walk downhill, the next day.

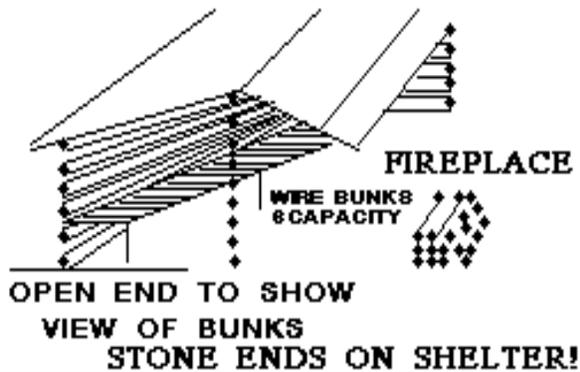
April 26, 1975. Saturday. Davenport Gap lean-to was nice and big and with only eight people we had lots of room. The night was warm for the first time and my sleeping bag was too warm.

Got up at 1:30 am and made a trip to the outhouse, we had clear skies and a full moon. Up at 7:30 am, nice clear day. The hike down to the road was relentlessly long and if it hadn't been for the beautiful group of dwarf iris growing by the side of the trail and spotted by Rick, the walk would have been tedious. I was anxious to get to the store for some baked goods. Glad we weren't going up the trail. This was a tough pull for the Marines and their wives who came in last night. We could tell by the weary sighs of relief as they entered the lean-to.

Went into Mt. Sterling via a winding gravel road and crossed the Pigeon River to get to the one and only general store for supplies. The selection wasn't bad and after repacking all the food in our ziplock bags who should happen along but two of the hikers now driving their car. They happily gave us a ride back to the A.T. about 10:30 am. Boy was that nice. We then entered Pisgah National Forest and immediately noticed the difference in trail from graded to rough similar to the trail in Georgia. Still very pretty, followed streams, crossed mountain tops one long climb from gap to mountain crest and by 5:30 pm we reached our goal.

The lean-to was 2/10 mile off the A.T. and had 5 bunks (wire). We were all alone and expect to lay over here Sunday. There are two streams, latrine, table and a nice fireplace. We ate our meal about 6 pm and talked for a while and to bed by 9 pm.

Weather: 60 to 75°, beautiful white clouds, sunny and then clear skies.
Hiked: 10 miles; Goal: Ground Hog (Deep Gap) lean-to Pisgah National Forest.
Trail: 1400' elevation at Mt. Sterling to 4263' elevation at Snowbird (West Top) then 4280' for Max Patch road, and then down to Deep Gap, 3000'!



Deep Gap lean-to

April 27, 1975. Sunday. Slept well; only one disturbance: some 4 footed creature landed on my stomach when it fell from the rafters overhead in the lean-to during the night, but otherwise comfortable sleeping.

Up after Rick started the fire about 9:30 am. Beautiful day, owls are hooting like wild. Lots of other birds singing. Got breakfast of rice, sugar, oleo, big snack planned for noon. Washed body and clothes in stream and waxed my boots. Took a walk and saw a pileated woodpecker and salamanders.

We are just sitting here at the table listening to the wind blowing thru the trees and birds singing. Its 1 pm and very restful. Later other hikers arrived and soon a total of seven people were at the shelter. So much for a peaceful day. These other hikers were boys we had seen before and very interesting all with a single purpose to hike-thru-to-Maine. We all shared our dreams and several pans of popcorn over the campfire before retiring at 9:30 pm. Had mosquitoes tonight.

Weather: 50 to 75° sunny and clear with slight breeze. Hiked: 0 miles.
Goal: Deep Gap Groundhog lean-to.

April 28, 1975. Monday. Another good night with seven people in or close to the shelter.

Started hiking at 8:30 am. Good weather prevailed with some spurts of rain before leaving the lean-to. Steady ascending got us to 4680' Harmon Den Mountain, and then it was up and down the rest of the way to Walnut Mountain lean-to. Lots of trilliums: white, red, red and white, yellow-white, chicory (split 5 pedals white flower and dime size). Nice smells with gentle breezes. Reached shelter at 3:30 pm and only one man there. Jim (young man, looks like Mark Terpstra) from Durham, NC. Another hiker (Sally Sheldon) came in later. Took 1-1/2 hour sun bath on top of a grassy knoll close to shelter and composed story for the ATC Trailway News. Later we saw a sunset from this same spot. The lean-to is a 1937 vintage shelter and rather old, but it kept the rain off us during the night. In bed by 9:30 pm.

Weather: Cloudy, spurts of rain, then sunny rest of day. Hiked: 10 miles.
Goal: Walnut Mountain lean-to.

April 29, 1975. Tuesday. Up at 7:30 am and got away about 9 am. The Hawaiians caught up with us and traveled with us all day. Today Jane involved Rick and I in

wildflower and bird identification. So as I write, we are all sitting at the picnic table in front of the lean-to talking about what was seen today. Sourwood trees, fir (we are camped under fir tonight) also the bunks are very short, trilliums (3 colors) and one of another type, wild iris purple and white, several violets white, yellow, purple, bloodroot, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, dogwood galore, dutchmans breeches, solomon seal, water cress, fringed polygala, etc. to name a few, bellwort in bloom. We learned that Hot Springs (tomorrow goal) has a youth hostel with showers and so we will go there tomorrow for supplies and shower and then on to the next lean-to.

Local people make sourwood honey we learned. The bell-shaped blossoms look like Lily-of-the-Valley, but much more clustered and grow on trees. We have Lily-of-the-Valley right here at the shelter too. The daylight is staying with us longer now and makes it easier to get our notes and letters written. Am sending letter to Ann tomorrow and suggested she mail it on to help us with our letter writing obligations. Rick sat around the campfire with Joe (Hawaiian) and got an interesting story or two about the second World War. Our tents are located on soft fir needles for ground cover and the sleeping ought to be good tonight. Hiked 10.4 miles, weather 56° in am, sun and some clouds. Goal: Deer Park lean-to.

April 30, 1975. Wednesday. Up at 7 am, some rain during the night, but only enough to refresh the air. Off for Hot Springs by 8 am. Reached town by 10 am. Free hostel for hikers at foot of the trail, complete with showers and beds. So we took up residence and got cleaned up. Saw pink lady slippers on trail, chicory, purple, white pedaled flower with yellow center 6" tall, blue tailed skink (at Deer Park lean-to) yesterday, see Rick's picture.

The day has been beautiful and after getting to town, we showered, put on clean clothes, went into town for a second breakfast and lunch combination, bought groceries and did laundry. Then cashed a personal check at Wachovia Bank and Trust for \$15.00. Only place in town that would do this. Met a lot of folks at the hostel, mostly hikers going both directions. The place is supported by contributions and townfolk, and operated by the Jesuits (Father Jeff Burton). Its 1/2 mile into town and so after returning from town we sorted out groceries, repacked and mailed letters. Our roommates are two young men hiking the trail and living on wild foods, so Rick and I got a lesson in other types of foods. Wild asparagus, polk weed, clevers, jewelweed (immature, we had thought it to be water cress). Marion Nimmos's and Joan's favorite centerpiece for the table.

Rick promptly went outside and got enough for supper (it is on the hillside by the hostel). We made a boiled salad and added rice to it with mustard and salad dressing and it was terrific. This has been another fun day and all the kids here are so full of laughs. We met 3 boys from Walled Lake, Michigan here who ran out of money and are working around the hostel to earn their keep until next Friday when they expect to head for Damascus, VA. Another boy came into the hostel this pm who is from Detroit. He is having blister problems and will remain here until they heal. Right now he is upstairs over the kitchen whiling the time away playing his flute. The other boys between cleaning and rebuilding the old section of the hostel bake bread and go fishing to round out their meals. Over 130 people have passed here and used the facilities since it opened early this spring. Rick and I intend on leaving here early tomorrow am.

May 1, 1975. Thursday. Rooster crowed at 4:30 and again at 5:30 and again at 6:30 am this morning. Had a great rest on a mattress last night.

After a breakfast of cereal, dates, tang and tea Rick and I hit the trail leading from the hostel, through town (Hot Springs), and across the French Broad River. In two hours we covered four miles of beautiful leaf and pine covered trail above Hot Springs, NC. The mountain tops all were cloud covered, but sun shone in and around them. Our walk this day has been punctuated by wood thrush calls and many other birds singing. We turned a corner on the trail and suddenly a grouse flew up (red tail). At another point three crows had stopped for a drink from a cool stream and they flew off as we approached (note picture by Rick of orange blossom on a tree resembling a dogwood tree). A long ascent brought us to a crest and then up and down to a lean-to. We arrived at the lean-to at 3:00 pm and decided to stay here. Five bunks and only one man here so far and we were not interested in proceeding further.

Trillium covers the hillside in front of the lean-to and leaves are partly out casting a slight green cast over the landscape. We saw mountain laurel blossoms today starting to burst out like star clusters.

Weather: Rainy to 8 am, sunny w/clouds the balance of the day. Hiked: 6.7 miles. Goals: Spring Mountain shelter.

Rain started suddenly about 7:30 pm and thunder with lightning, too. For about 1/2 hour we had a sheet of rain coming down (how nice to be inside a shelter at this time). There are five of us now and we sat in silence listening and marveling at the foray of raindrops as they bounced off our tin roof. Minutes before the rain started we were hoping for a nice sunset and it really (the sky) looked like it could happen.

We had slung our food bags in the tree for the night and covered them with a backpack cover, but the food bags got wet anyway. I must remember to tie a rope around the cover next time. It rained off and on most of the night, but it made for pleasant sleeping. We will have a hiking partner now for a while. Ron Woodworth from Walled Lake, Michigan caught up with us and asked to walk with us. He says he wants to be home by June 8th for his high school graduation. He was traveling with two other young men, but wanted to leave Hot Springs and get on with hiking. He left his companions at the hostel. He will be a nice companion for Rick, the idea of lonesomeness never seems to arise when there are other young people around for Rick to talk to. We stopped on the trail early in the day and picked a large batch of polkweed and had it for dinner this evening. Very tasty!

May 2, 1975. Friday. Rained all night long and temperature was in the 40's, but the sky cleared of rain clouds and promised us fair weather for hiking.

The trail was quite diverse and the ascents and descents were over tree roots and stones and the footing was tricky. We stopped at a fire tower and took pictures looking back over the trail we had come over with the Smokies on the far horizon. This elevation of 4844' is one of the highest in the Pisgahs and we were on a 50' tower above that yet. Rick was real pleased with himself and at ease as he climbed bravely and out onto the open balcony outside the fire lookout room.

We covered a good distance today and there were only four of us at the shelter. Sally Sheldon is keeping up with us. I think she feels more secure with Rick and I and seeming to arrive at the shelters shortly after we do each night. Traveling alone and a woman can be a rather trying experience I imagine. We don't show her any favors because that's the way she wants it. The bunks were not that good in this shelter and Sally slept on the floor. We had a fireplace inside the shelter

and a fire burning merrily in it. The wood thrush, owls and warblers were busy during the early evening and night.

Weather: Cold, cloudy, then sunny. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: Jerry's Cabin lean-to.

May 3, 1975. Saturday. Arose at 8 am and got to hiking by 9:00 am. Trail was high and ascending seems to be the first order of business each morning, but soon leveled out.

Passed 2 Civil War graves of Wm. and David Shelton killed on this spot during the Civil War. Later in the day we learned that a small boy was buried with them, but no one seems to know the circumstances. We then hiked about four miles more to where the trail crossed the farm of Mrs. Latta B. Shelton (a relative of the above men). It had started to rain by this time and we would have to camp out tonight. So as we passed Mrs. Shelton's house I knocked on her door to see if we could sleep in her barn for the night. After cautioning us about fire, she most obligingly said, "Yes", but we stood on her front porch for the better part of an hour talking with her and her daughter. Very nice people and we would have liked to talk longer, but we were wet and needed to change clothes and eat.

It was about 2:30 pm and the rain looked like it was here to stay. So at the barn we spread hay for our beds and hung up clothes to dry. There was a nice stream flowing past the front, too. After one hour Sally came trudging by soaking wet and joined us. So we will spend the balance of the day and the night here in a nice dry barn. It is raining almost continuously and the skies refuse to give us any hope of clearing. The barn is a treasure house of old tools, tobacco stakes, hands of tobacco and pitch forks, 3 plows for a single horse, 2 hand scythes and the barn is laced with drying racks for tobacco. Outside there is a flowing creek coming from the mountain above. We pitched hay into a small room and spread out our sleeping bags. That night we all pitched food into the pot for a round house stew at Ricks's suggestion. Rice, potatoes, beef chip, meat, peas and whole grain meal. Wow -- but it was good. It rained all day and part of the night. A nice night to sleep. Bluebirds here, too.

Weather: Cloudy, rain all day. Hiked: 8 miles. Goal: Mrs. Latta B. Shelton's barn, Flag Pond, Tennessee.

May 4, 1975. Sunday. Up at 8 am. Had breakfast, pitched hay back onto second floor of barn. Went down and thanked Mrs. Shelton for her hospitality. She gave us potatoes and onions from her storage basement and they got eaten later that day at the next campsite.

The trail went back through the Shelton farm and up a very steep hill covered with tiny streams and new wildflowers, and ramp beds, through very beautiful woods, along fence rows in open fields that were on mountains. We could see for miles in every direction. Saw Indian paintbrush, purple and white centered flowers that resembled hyacinth with a trumpet-like blossom. Rick picked a good batch of ramps for our meals.

Weather: Sunny and cool. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Campsite 3 miles beyond Sams Gap in a beautiful gully next to a fresh stream.

May 5, 1975. Monday. Slept rather well with the thrushes putting us to sleep and waking us up. We were tent camping and the silence during the night was great. The food packs had been slung up in the tree to keep 4 footed animals away from them

as was done every night. We had 3 sacks together this time; Sally's, Rick's and mine and it was always fun to pitch the rock-weighted line up and over a branch. Then one or all of us tugging together to hoist the load up out of reach of the most athletic bears.

The hiking was again unbelievable with, of course, the towhee and junco the principle birds in view and the thrush a close second. Beautiful, sunny weather with the temperature 42° in the am and holding at 60 to 65° rest of the day. We went over 5516' Big Bald Mountain and it was astounding to see the views as we approached the top and then from the top, too. It seemed as though we would never reach the top mainly because it was always in sight and our eagerness outdistanced our breath to reach it. But a nice rest on the sunny side of the top out of the wind let us relax and enjoy the beauty. Here we ran into Susan Bartlett and Wendy Eliot, two young girls also hiking the entire trail. They soon left us and we didn't see them again that day. With a grassy top, there were no obstructions so the views from this mountain were again amazingly clear and we could trace our past morning's hike by looking south and west from where we had just come. After 30 minutes of rest we pushed on.

The rest of the day was spent in walking through beautiful woodlands with Indian paintbrush, trilliums, chicory and oxalis. Our Michigan friend, Ron, decided he wanted to go home and forged ahead to highway 19W where we presumed that he hitched a ride for we never saw him again. To lighten his load, we learned from Wendy and Susan that he left his potatoes and onions (from Mrs. Sheltons) on a rock by the roadside with a note offering them to the next hiker to come along. So we are hiking as two again.

The shelter tonight is No Business lean-to all cement block and relatively new. There are 3 men and 3 women here tonight. We are about 6 miles from Erwin, Tennessee and will go into town there to get supplies. The weather is good and should hold.

Weather: Clear, sunny all day. Hiked: 13 miles. Goal: No Business lean-to.

May 6, 1975. Tuesday. A beautiful day, one man up and away at 6:10 am. He was doing 20 miles each day. The rest of us got away by 8 am.

Rick and I needed supplies so we went into Erwin, Tennessee. The Nolichucky River ran along the foot of the mountains near the town and we crossed it as we approached the farmland surrounding the town. There were spectacular views as we descended from the trail to the highway. It was three miles into town and we looked for a place to hide our packs so we wouldn't have to carry them in and back out of town again. The Webb family farm house was of stone and very solid looking. So Rick and I stopped and asked if we might leave our packs in their shed which was OK. Our hike into town was short because we got a free taxi ride into the city from a taxi driver who befriended us. Stopped at the bank to cash a check and got a cup of coffee off their hospitality table. I usually have to talk with the manager of the bank to get an OK due to our appearance and being from out of state. Rick enjoyed the coffee.

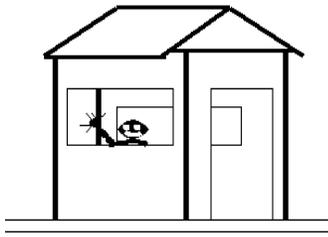
It felt good to have 75 to 85° temperatures, the bushes and trees on the lawns in front of the houses were beautiful, all blossomed out and a big variety of colors. We got a nice dinner at the cafeteria and what a treat it was. As we went outside -- there on the corner were Susan and Wendy, who had followed us into town and Susan's

hair was short. She couldn't stand the long hair all tied up on her head each day so off it came. She was "refreshed" she said.

We repacked our supplies at the Webb's shed and by 3:30 pm were on the trail again. Followed the Nolichukey River and it's wild noisy splashing was refreshing, saw a whole hillside of Indian paintbrush, saw "spotted" salamander swimming in the creek we ascended, sponged off our sweaty bodies, waded in the cool stream and drank it's cool waters. Walked in tunnels of rhododendron as we hiked the 4.5 miles to the next shelter. We drank repeatedly from the stream, the fresh water tasted so good and it was getting warm as we labored up the trail, so we needed the water. Saw a baby snake, black with gold spot on it's head, hummingbirds too. A whip-poor-will serenaded us most of the night, telling us and his friends that he is important and lives happily and doesn't like being dusturbed by hikers. Rick slept in his tent, the floor of the lean-to is quite hard compared to good old mother earth.

Weather: Clear skies, sunny, beautiful, 75°. Hiked: 10 miles. Goal: Curly Maple lean-to.

May 7, 1975. Wednesday. Sue and Wendy up early 6 am and left lean-to by 6:50 am. Rick and I up at 7 am and gone by 7:50. Weather doubtful, trail very pretty and after a short ascent followed the side of the mountain for some 4 miles. Started raining about 10 am and continued all day with fog and more rain. We hiked over a beautiful bald mountain and through the wooded summit of Unaka (4700') not full elevation. A solid pine woods that hardly let any rain through the tree branches; the wet ground cover was soft and made walking this summit a pleasant experience. All told, the weather was lousy. There are 5 people at the shelter tonight, 3 women and Rick and I.



Latrine at Cherry Gap lean-to, wide open, full to the brim and facing the AT (downhill a little).

Latrine at Cherry Gap lean-to

Our meal includes ramps cut up and added to the combination of whatever we eat. Hot soup, balsam tea with honey, then came the food. Dessert was gorp with coconut and sunflower seed. Will get to bed by 7 pm tonight. Rick is in already, but reading a Time magazine he got from one of the girls.

Weather: 60° cloudy, rained all day. Hiked: 11 miles. Goal: Cherry Gap lean-to.

May 8, 1975. Thursday. A very dark night and cloudy -- no visitors (four footed) and a good thing because we all had our food sacks in our packs inside the shelter. Some rain during the night and fogged over and cloudy this morning.

The woods in front of the lean-to are shrouded in mist and look mysterious. Up by 7 am and hiking by 8:30 am. Rick didn't sleep well last night because of the hard wooden platform used in the lean-to. These lean-tos are of cement block and are sturdy, but hell on hiker's backs. Have used this type of lean-to 3 times here

in the Cherokees and the floors are as hard as rocks. We do more tenting in this National Forest and sleep on soft leaves on the forest floor when possible.

About 10 am the sun shone and made our morning hike a very wonderful walk, pretty and enjoyable. Saw bluebirds in an apple orchard where we took a break. Then a tough ascent to the summit of Roan Mountain.

Weather: Cloudy -- foggy -- sunny. Hiked: 14 (tough) miles. Goal: Roan Mountain ranger cabin and spring.

After reaching the park area on top of Roan, we lost our bearings for a while, but soon found the trail to the ranger cabin. But the building was on it's last legs with only part of the foundation intact and the mist was heavy with rain soon to come. We (Sally, Rick and I) put up our tents inside the cabin and built a fire on the ground just under the roof of the dilapidated front porch. We enjoyed the companionship of tired hikers and retired to a hard dirt floor. Not much sleep.

May 9, 1975. Friday. The facts written here today aren't in order because as I get time to write I put down the most current thoughts.

Rick had a low point today after spending a dreary night on top of Roan Mountain in clouds and waking up to a fog-shrouded day and very little sleep on a hard damp floor inside a cabin situated on the summit (6285'). The temp was about 40°. So today he let it all hang out about, "I might not come back to finish the AT after going home in June." We had a heart to heart talk with me doing most of the talking and only getting a few short replies. We need a full days break which is coming up soon at Laurel lean-to next to Watuga Lake. I always notice a difference in Rick after a good time or a restful night. Right this minute he is checking north by the compass as he sits on top of Hump Mountain (a complete bald, elevation 5587'). We can see for miles in every direction except back to Roan Mountain which is still cloud covered. The sun is shining down on us and a gentle breeze is blowing.

We inspected a possible campsite inside a cave above Elk Park, but no water. Passed through a partially settled residential section and the dogs took out after us and I protected the rear as they dived in at us. Managed to connect with one dog with my stick, but it didn't stop him. Owner finally called him off. Decided to pass beyond Elk Park and camp and found a nice field with a cemetery on one side and apple trees on the other side. My chance to tent under an apple tree had arrived and so spread my tent as a two man tent and Rick and I slept together. Other interesting observations: a dead green colored garter snake, lizard ran across Rick's foot while ascending Hump Mountain, fog-covered views of Roan Mountain as we left it in the distance and our tents erected inside the cabin so the raindrops wouldn't get our sacks wet.

May 10, 1975. Saturday. Hiked 10.79 miles yesterday, the weather was all kinds -- sunny, rainy, foggy and cloudy. Our goal was a campsite 1/2 mile north of Elk Park under an apple tree.

We got rained on last night, but it was sunny this morning and our tent was erected under an apple tree with beautiful blossoms. Rick slept with me in my tent set up as a two man. Hopefully he got a better night's sleep. He has been a lot happier today and energetic. We went into town and got groceries enough to get us to Damascus, VA.

The trail was level today and after returning to Elk Park for supplies we left by 12:30 pm and managed to get 9.2 miles done by 6 pm. We got some beans and bacon in a can for dinner tonight and I felt the extra 2 pounds weight on my back all day.

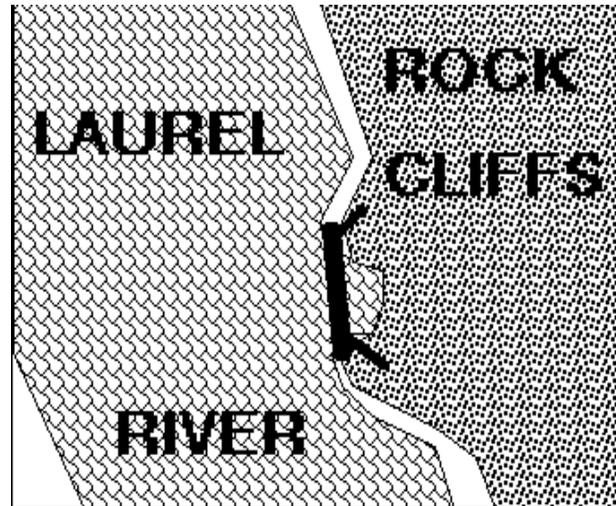
We are camping out again tonight even though the shelter is not full, but the hard bunks aren't as comfortable as a leaf mattress. A nice night coming up and the sun is down now behind the mountains leaving the blue sky and clouds a beautiful blue-pink color. We are going to Laurel shelter tomorrow night and spend a "rest day" there. About 7:30 pm it thundered and rained large drops, but the sky remained blue and pink then a burst of hail stones 1/8" diameter pelted the shelter. After that we had a beautiful clear night with 50° temperature.

Weather: 55 am to 70° pm, sunny all day. Hiked: 9.2 miles. Goal: Moreland Gap lean-to, Cherokee National Forest.

May 11, 1975. Sunday. Fact of interest. Woodchuck lizard, Cawtaba rhododendron, rhododendron, water falls, skinny dipping, log cliff part of trail, Laurel Fork lean-to. Up about 6:30 am and took off about 8 am.

Only a short hike today because the next lean-to (Laurel Fork) is situated in the Laurel Fork Gorge and we were planning a layover here. But Rick is not in favor of the layover and wants to push onto Damascus and mail. Our walk was a pleasure with only two ascents and all very woodsy.

As we approached Laurel Fork Gorge area we paralleled the rushing stream as it cascaded down the side of the mountain in an extremely captivating manner. Many small falls result, then pools, then rocks and cliffs without any hair raisers as we descend. The stream ended at the rushing river and Laurel Falls. The water falls over a series of terraces 10' high each, 40' wide with varying depths. Another guy (Azel Ames) and I took a dip in the cool waters and washed a 10 day accumulation of sweat and dirt off our bodies. What a great feeling. The water was about 60° temp and very breathtaking. The trail continued along the stone bank of the river crossing a very weird log and cable suspended out over the river. The only



Laurel Gorge log bridge

way to go was clutch and inch around bulging rock boulders while negotiating this log. Very interesting!!!! Not a long fall, but the river was deep and we didn't relish wet equipment. However we made it. As we moved along the trail a note on a rhododendron branch pointed up a little traveled trail saying lean-to.

A very pretty location for this lean-to of sandstone and cement put together by the Tennessee-Eastman Hiking Club. Sitting on a knoll up in the trees the lean-to was well constructed and protected from driving storms. It resembles most other shelters, but is better built. Rick is our fire builder and when we reach a shelter



and a fire is needed he cleans up the fireplace and starts the fire very expertly using small twigs first after clearing out all wet debris. Today he outdid himself and rearranged the whole grill area as diagrammed above. The only way is the right way if you know Rick. He can be counted on to do it right.

Laurel Fork lean-to
Stone shelter, capacity of
eight

Rick also spotted the woodchuck sitting in the path this am, the lizard as it spurted across the trail, and the first flowering mountain laurel bushes, the first we had seen along the whole trail. They were the object of our affection due to not

expecting to see a blossom until June 1st. The rhododendron we saw was next and just as we approached the lean-to it's blossoms a deep luxurious red with a blend to white. Catawba rhododendron is another we expect to see soon, it's blossoms being white to maroon in color. We expect to see them tomorrow as we progress toward Damascus.

We have some 50 miles to go yet to reach Damascus so we should see a lot of interesting things. Whole grain rice tonight with meatloaf seasoning and instant potatoes as thickener with wintergreen tea and honey. Maybe a slab of Kraft cheese which we are carrying now for snacks. Its heavy but filling, 2 lb loaf.

Weather: Sunny, rainy toward 4:30 pm, 70°. Hiked: 6.7 miles. Goal: Laurel Fork lean-to.

May 12, 1975. Monday. Up at 7:30 am on trail by 8:30 am. Seven in lean-to last night, one big fella snored (Azal), but his neighbor kept waking him up and pulling him onto his side to stop it.

The stream we got our water from was a steep, racing, gushing stream and we filled our bottles from a miniature falls. Two hikers left early, but one came back to retrieve his slicker. We had met this fellow at Cable Gap shelter before Fontana Dam and this is the first time meeting since then. Another Rick. A fairly level walk this early am through a camping area then past summer cottages and some ascents. We are by Watuaga Lake and Wilbur Lake now and the trail passed through pine, beech and maple as it follows a ridge line overlooking these lakes. Rick is using a latrine by a little church so I always grab the log and write a while. We will cross the river now and seek out a picnic table to eat lunch on. A camper with two elderly couples are parked close by and they want us to tell them all about our hike, but we politely excuse ourselves and eat then hurry along. The two men are trying their luck at fishing in the river. We walked around the end of Watuaga Lake which is 16 miles long and formed by a TVA Dam. We have been on the bluffs most of the day and I fell behind Rick quite a ways and I was glad when the Vandeventer Lean-to came into sight and Rick was seated on a rock gazing out over the lake, a beautiful view, but I was tired and eager to eat. The view came later for me. But a thundershower started about 8 pm and it lasted all night long. The tin roof on the lean-to

furnished a chorus to the claps of the thunder during the rain and the sleeping bag felt cozy as I settled into it. How nice to be inside a lean-to and hear the water pouring onto the tin roof and see it, too. Heard whip-poor-wills later in the night and owls, too.

Weather: Warm, sunny and finally a rainy night. Hiked: 13.88 miles.
Goal: Vandeventer lean-to.

May 13, 1975. Tuesday. Weather today: Heavy fog-until 10 am. Hiked: 14 miles.
Goal: Rich Knob lean-to.

Up by 6:30 am and hiking by 8:15 am. A very foggy start and trail was wet from the rain last night. Rick and I came upon a grouse drumming on a small ridge in the fog it was an erie sound and sight. (About 6 pm tonight a pileated woodpecker flew across in front of our lean-to as we were preparing our dinner). There are 3 men here from Michigan, one is from Ludington, one from Detroit and one from near Cross Village and is an Indian folklore specialist. He knows wild foods and has built tepees. Rick has gone on a wild leek onion hunt with this guy now and we will no doubt have them for dinner tonight. There is a dog with one guy and it is a golden retriever, sharp as can be and friendly. The day has been perfect and my only regret is that we won't make Damascus until Thursday. I told Joan we would be calling her Wednesday pm and I'm afraid she might make plans that won't match our timetable. But we'll call late at night so as to be sure to catch her. We had a flat walk today through beautiful forests and over some rocks. Carpets of violets covered the forest floor with other varieties mixed in. The white and pink centered trillium is growing here, too. We saw the orange bush variety of azalea (flame) again. The fog prevented views of Watuaga valley which we saw yesterday.

May 14, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Sunny. Hiked: 19.5 miles. Goal: Campsite close to Damascus, VA.

A beautiful day with sun all day and sunburned legs and arms and shoulders for Rick who has been wearing shorts only and no shirt. I sure enjoy listening to him talk about the things he knows with other people. He is a very outgoing person and everyone likes him. The experience of collecting wild foods, eating them, walking the trail meeting other hikers, eating, sleeping with others has given him confidence to talk about the things he is sure of. He also has boundless energy which shows up in his spring-like legs that propel him along the trail uphill and down. I cannot keep up with him for more than 30 minutes, then he just coasts out of sight. But he waits for me around the first bend in the trail. My gait is too slow for him yet he doesn't want to leave me behind. He always checks to make sure I've taken my digitalis each morning, too. Well, I guess being the only one around him all day shows that he cares for you. He is one fine young man and how lucky I am to have him for my son.

The expectation of reaching Damascus tomorrow has energized both Rick and I because we want an instant change of diet. Like a fresh salad with hard boiled eggs, sliced on top with tomato chunks. Also, I want some ice cream. So tomorrow is a big day. The trail straightened out today and we hiked almost 20 miles on flat going and a few up and downs. Tonight we are camping out in a woods near Damascus with a spring close by. The trees are beautiful and this area is in Virginia, Jefferson National Forest. The site is a former homestead, but the house no longer exists and all that is left is spring, trees and beautiful land. Sally soon caught up to

us and put up her tent near ours. We shared a fire together and talked about the days trail which was long and our sore feet shouted at us.

We met a man from Winston Salem, NC today hiking a short section of the trail. He had just left Damascus and was amazed at our progress from Georgia -- very encouraging words. We had just stopped to rest and to watch a pileated woodpecker chop away at an old tree stump. This man sat on the ground with us to watch. Soon the bird let out one big, woody squawk and flew away. It was about 5:30 pm when we spread our tents and Rick prepared our meal tonight. One can of red beans and chili found at a previous lean-to, ramps, instant mashed potatoes, meatloaf flavoring, oleo (from Sally) and tea. Very filling! Slept good on a bed of nice, dry leaves and needles under a white pine.

May 15, 1975. Thursday. Weather: 70's, rainy. Hiked: 3 miles. Goal: Damascus, VA, motel "Sportsman".

Up by 7:30 am. Breakfast prepared last night was long grain rice (huge servings) mixed with raisins. Heartland cereal, hot milk mixed in and Baker's bittersweet chocolate chunks. The idea was to fill up so we wouldn't go wild in town eating whatever came into sight. Even after arriving in town one hour later, we weren't hungry.

The trail was a rocky logging road dropping down steadily from the mountains into the notch where Damascus is located. Our appetites changed after we had picked up 4 packages and 7 letters at the post office at 10:30 am. Then we found a place to stay for the night in the Sportsman motel. The heavens opened up and the rain came down for the rest of the day. The rest of the day was spent in showering, reading letters, laughing over the letters, clothes sorted and certain items we found were not required (the weather was warmer now).

We repacked these clothes in the same boxes that Joan sent our food to us in and used the tape and labels also enclosed. By 2 pm we had showered and gotten to the bank (which closed at 2 pm). Then we (as is our usual procedure) price checked the grocery stores in town before buying groceries. Then had a nice dinner about 3 pm. After that we washed clothes at the laundromat and talked with other hikers who were arriving in town. About 5 others, all hopeful "thru hikers". I say "hopeful" because a lot depends on their finances holding up and their confidences remaining strong. Loneliness, health and spirit all play an important part in holding to this set goal. These are all young people and their goals in life are sporadic. Barriers of this nature are demoralizing and soon one goal is replaced by another not so difficult. Rick and I have set our minds to the task at hand and "screwed our heads on right", so that we are enjoying the hike.

Only two young men that started about our date (April 1st) I'm sure will complete the "thru hike", Daniel Cohen and Art Knowltry, and they are about 10 days ahead of us now (as noted in the registers at the lean-to's we passed). There are two others (Jill and Burt Gilbert) who are dedicated hikers will without a doubt complete the trail early (Burt for the 3rd time).

Rick and I had a late (8 pm) chicken, lettuce and tomato sandwich with potatoes, milk shakes and chocolate sundaes on the side before calling Joan on the phone. The voice at Lansing was sweet, but kind of tired sounding and I only hope Joan will be careful of herself and get more rest. She goes so hard each spring with park activities and field trips. But these are her joys and therefore should be her relaxation I keep telling myself. Hopefully this is true. Rick and I love Mom and we both got a real shot in the arm from our phone conversation with her. Rick got

to writing and I couldn't get to sleep, so here we both are sitting here in bed at 1 am writing letters and in our diaries. Tomorrow we shop for the rest of our supplies, put stuff away and finish up letters and rest in bed. The next leg of our journey into Virginia begins Saturday.

May 16, 1975. Friday. Weather: Foggy, rained all day. Hiked: 0 miles, rest day in Damascus. Goal: Rest, write letters and mail home non-usable items.

Up at 8 am, breakfast in room of Heartland cereal, milk and hard boiled eggs. We wrote letters until 1 am this morning and finished up this morning by noon. A very leisurely day of paring down our packs, re-boxing materials to send back home and mailed letters. A damp walk to the post office then bought spaghetti dinner. Tickets at Damascus Child Development Center for tonight's meal (a Head Start program under Presbyterian Church guidance). The meal was great with spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, coffee and tea, jello and chocolate cake, done by 5 pm.

We felt that we had been cheated in our accommodations at the Sportsman Inn and the management gave us a \$5.00 refund plus moved us to better rooms. The first room was lousy, no soap, one pillow, small blanket, heater didn't work, shower and stool in same room with bed and the floors got all wet after each shower -- all this for \$10.40 per night. We did better the next night.

Bought supplies but not many because Joan's food drop really took care of a big share of next weeks requirements. Rick and I made a fruit bowl salad tonight and served it with cookies to five other hikers who we have been traveling with off and on. They all came into our room at the motel and talked together while eating from their own spoon and cups. It was really neat and about 9 pm we all decided that it was time to break up and get to sleep. Another lucky day for us as we missed getting wet all day long by the rain. Later, I cut Rick's hair shorter so it wouldn't get caught in his backpack. Took a picture while in the process and then Rick collected the remnants to mail home. He looks good and the hairline is well above the shoulders now so it doesn't scratch when sweaty.

We are eager to get started on the trail after a very nice rest day. Mt. Rogers (5729') is just ahead and we go right over the top. We should be there on Sunday and our packs will be full and our stomachs, too. Boy, I hope we aren't out of condition after this layover! It looks as if the ascent will be at the end of the day and that isn't always the best time, only time will tell and its all in the way you have your head screwed on.

May 17, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Sunny, cloudy too, rain then sunny. Hiked: 10 miles. Goal: Old cabin near White Top Mountain.

Our two day rest at Damascus is over and now we are 2 miles up the trail. I took a long approach to the trail by mistakes this morning so we walked an extra mile before getting on the regular trail. The Straight Branch River parallels highway U.S. 58 and the AT for a 1/2 mile and the rushing water and moist smells have a peaceful hold on us as we progress along the trail. Its cloudy with occasional sunny spots. The temperature is about 60° and our surroundings are just beautiful. Damascus rests in a valley surrounded by hills and mountains and with a population of 1500 it is a quiet town. Yesterday after supper at the Child Development Center, Rick and I went by an old house that had a sign in front that read, "Kimberly Little Shop", and it had crafts, second-hand knick-knacks on the first floor, quilts on the second floor. We spent quite a while talking with the owner and another hiker. Mrs. Kimberly, "Town Magistrate", showed us her patchwork quilts, explaining the

patterns as she went along. She wants Rick and I to return sometime with pictures of our quilts from Aunt Martys. So much for that interesting interlude.

Anyway, we managed to get 10 miles of hiking in today and our trail, all woods-walking, lead us to a sign that advised us to take a new trail. Our guide book described an old cabin on the trail and we suspected that this turn would cause us to miss it so we continued along the original path and sure enough we arrived at a skeleton of a cabin. This is private land and the AT has been re-routed around this beautiful old cabin site. We will stay here tonight.

Sally, Azel, Rick and I are the sole occupants and we have a beautiful spot to camp. The most common birds today, towhee, wrens, blue jays; flowers, rhododendrons, azalea, both flame, white and lavender, pink lady slippers, Lily-of-the-Valley and dogwood. Rick is out wildflower and wild food hunting with Azel Ames and Sally Sheldon. I just finished putting seam seal on my tent and it should waterproof it completely now. Thanks to John Crandell I have this seal sent in the mail to me at Damascus.

This hour after we arrived here at the cabin is a warm, beautiful interlude in our day because the sun is warm, our dinner is finished by 6:00 pm. So with at least 2 hours of beautiful, sunny daylight left everyone wanted to see this area. It looks like the grass used to be mowed and the cabin was very strong with hand hewn timbers 30" wide, 6" thick and 12 feet long into a square corner. I don't think this cabin ever saw a mower unless it was a scythe, hand held. Just the walls are standing with one corner of the cabin open to the elements. There isn't a lot of protection, but the roof is good and rain can be slanted off enough to protect the hikers inside. We climbed the walls to get to the second floor (yes, it has a second floor with holes) and this is where I slept.

We met two of the men mentioned in the guide books today. Both were older men (J. W Parker and Jerry Dean of Taylor Valley, VA). Both men were very helpful and shared their knowledge of the trail and surrounding area with Rick and I adding a definite flavor to our walk today.

May 18, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Cloudy in am with rain last night and early this morning. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Deep Gap lean-to, Virginia between White Top and Mt. Rogers.

We are hiking through a forest of rhododendrons with birds all around us, grouse landing in bushes near us and looking wierd as they sit there like shadows. Lots of robins, thrushes, veerys, others I can't identify and juncos. This area is covered with groves of rhododendron. It must be a beautiful sight when they are in bloom but, unfortunately, we are early for this grand display, maybe some day we can return to see the "beautiful sight."

The two tallest mountains in Virginia are on our trail today (White Top, 5530', and Mt. Rogers, 5729') tomorrow. And along with this stretch we are getting a lot of rain. These mountains catch the clouds and, as they rise, they condense and cause it to rain almost continuously. We were rained on (3) three times today and my pants dried out (2) two times while hiking. It rained as we sat down to eat lunch and before we could get the food back in our packs and our packs on our backs, we were soaked. So there wasn't anything else we could do but put on our ponchos and hike in the rain. Fine! But our trail got worse as the ground became a mire of mud and on a 45° slope without any switchbacks. Oh well, we came here to hike, not to complain and, anyway, the wood thrush sang all day just for us I'm sure. The many little streams gurgled and tinkled merrily over roots, around rocks and down the hill with

a very refreshing song. When you have your head screwed on right, it only takes a couple of these combinations to make you want to hike rain or shine.

Right now the toughest thing we are doing is sitting at the back of a shelter that has scooped up all the smoke from the campfire made with wet sticks. The overhang of the shelter is just right to catch this smoke and it is driving me right outside. Ned (a young hiker) can't get his butane gas stove to work and got this fire going to cook his food with. Poor guy! But he didn't endear himself to the other hikers in the shelter.

We have (6) six people here tonight, all thru hikers, so the body temperatures ought to warm up the shelter a little. Right now its 58° and ought to be cooler tonight. A point of interest today was the bald top of White Top Mountain (see pictures) and it's green crown sloping away on each side of us, the clouds blew in and then went away concealing and then revealing beautiful views of the surrounding country. A very moving sight to always be remembered.

May 19, 1975. Monday. Weather: Foggy (clouds) on top of Mt. Rogers, sunny 10:30 am and warm balance of the day. Hiked: 9 miles. Goal: Raccoon Branch shelter.

Up at 7 am and had a warm milk-Heartland cereal breakfast with tang for a chaser. Off and up the trail by 8:00 am, very misty with periodic rain drops. A beautiful setting with a mysterious atmosphere prevailing all around us as trees emerged in front of us and giant rocks, too. As we came to the summit of Mt. Rogers, a huge coffin-like rock lay there with a tilted sign behind it announcing that we had arrived at the summit. I felt as if I was standing in a mortuary with ghosts all around and if I had really tried, I bet I could have heard an organ moaning in the background. Rick and I couldn't see anything because the summit was completely wooded and offered no views. As we descended the far side of Mt. Rogers we passed through open meadows, fog-hrouded and mysterious, and through woods where streams flowed happily and energetically. The day gradually turned warmer and soon we were hiking in a flood of sunlight. Late in the afternoon we passed by Comer Falls and crossed it soon, a very pretty site, but not before we had stopped at Old Orchard shelter for lunch where we sat on the side of a mountain and looked over to Iron Mountain, a range that we would hike over later in the day. The whole picture was in a sunny, warm setting. Truly beautiful!! Whip-poor-wills and owls got busy as we settled down for a good night's sleep. One owl woke me up in the night with a backward Hoo-ah (his was Ah-ooo), towhees, juncos, wood thrushes, blue jays, ravens and crows were the birds of the day and Angie Crandell's pansy-like violet (see picture), pink lady slippers, fringed white pedal flower, the flowers. Our shelter is new and very neat (see picture).

May 20, 1975. Tuesday. Grouse drumming this morning and the sun is shining brightly with a slight covering of dew on the grass. Azel had the water hot when we got up. Two other boys were up and away before 7 am this morning. We probably won't see them again as they are going at the rate of 18-20 miles each day heading for Maine. Temperature in the 80's by noon even as we got into the 3000' elevations.

It is very interesting to sense the change in weather as the nights become more comfortable and tend to get cooler as the sun goes down. We still have to cover our sweaty bodies after a full days hike or we become very uncomfortable.

A very beautiful day all day with the thrushes singing from dawn to dusk. It seems that the trail in southern Virginia is nothing but a continuous pin cushion of rocks. Our feet have a hard time locating a flat place each time we take a step.

I was coming down a fairly smooth stretch of the trail and I tripped and did a complete flip landing on my pack. Unscathed, but red of face, I got unbuckled and rearranged my dignity then put my pack back on. Rick was quite concerned. Took a stream bath at the shelter and then had pork and beans and french bread for supper. All this took place after we had stopped at Sugar Grove for supplies. We hitched a ride into this small town with a school teacher, got lunch, shopped and returned to the trail all in one hour. Our return ride was with some boys who were off work (loggers) for the day and wanted to help us out. Owls are busy tonight.

Weather: 80°, warm and sunny, clear skies. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Killinger Creek lean-to (damaged by vandals).

May 21, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Beautiful, bright and sunny day, some clouds -- temp 85°. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: Walker Mountain lean-to.

Over Glade Mountain 4100' elevation this am with beautiful farms, pastureland and roads to U.S. 81 by 10:30 am. A second breakfast of pancakes, sausage, coffee and milk and on our way by 11:45 am. Now we are resting on the uplands of a farm just prior to ascending Walker Mountain. A nice stream runs by us and orange azaleas grow beside the overgrown old log road where the AT goes.

We stopped several times for water today because of the warm temperature. Each stream delights Rick no end and he is ready to plunge in. However, I've noticed his modesty never permits him to skinny dip. My shoes are not fitting to my feet very well and the callouses on my heels are getting sore. I think a Dr. Scholls insert might solve this problem where the heel of my foot is bigger than the insole rubs in a horse shoe shape. I'll tape this area up tomorrow.

A flycatcher is nesting under the eave of the shelter and has (5) eggs underway (white with black specks). I noticed the excessive hum of insects in the woods today, yellow jackets everywhere. Wild geraniums, chicory, and common cinque foil line the trail. Met a man and wife from Florida who are completing a portion of the trail when they arrive at U.S. 81. They take 2 weeks each year and hike and will have done the stretch Georgia to Pearisburg, VA when they arrive at U.S. 81.

May 22, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Temp 65 - 80°, sunny, white clouds and delightful. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Big Bend Recreational Area.

The weather always inspires the hiker and today was no exception until the heat and a darn restaurant and blisters on my feet cut down the length of hiking. We hiked 8.2 miles to Walker Mountain lookout which has a nice food stand where ice cream and pie are available. Rick and I had pecan pie, orange juice, and chocolate milkshakes, which quenched our starved taste buds. This stopped us for one hour. It made it possible for us to tent out tonight at Big Bend Recreation Area, a relatively new picnic area with views galore, green grass, latrines, fresh water and fireplaces with tables to eat on, each in it's own beautiful part of the woods.

We have a moon here now at 8:45 pm and its still light outside. There are (4) four of us here now (Azal, Sally, Rick and I), and two others (man and wife) from Pennsylvania who are just hiking and meeting people and enjoying it. They hitch rides around areas of the trail that they have hiked in previous years and hope to complete the trail this year.

Today the flowers were chicory, common cinque foil, yellow lady slippers (see Rick's picture) and wild geranium. Birds included, whip-poor-will (right now), blue jay, flycatchers, black vultures, ravens, towhees and one hawk (brown with white wing bars was seen as he glided past us as we sat on a high rocky overlook; Joan

would love it). We are seeing more hikers, hiking short distances for the pleasure. The "thru hikers" have all passed us it seems and they told us their completion dates were August and September 1st, 1975. We could never do it that fast.

May 23, 1975. Friday. Weather: Cloudy and then sunny for all am. Rain at noon and sunny for balance of the day. Temp 70°. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: High Rocks lean-to.

Spent a beautiful night tenting at Big Bend Recreation Area. Excellent views, nice facilities. Got Rick's tent seam sealed finally in the afternoon sun yesterday. Got up at 7 am slightly foggy, but wind soon blew it away. Hiked until noon and got in 6 miles before the rain caught up with us. Luckily we were in another lean-to (Turkey Gap) at the time eating lunch. So stayed there for two hours and napped in our sleeping bags until rain stopped. By 5:30 pm we had gotten to High Rocks lean-to.

These lean-tos are all (6) man lean-tos, but on occasion can handle up to eight people. However, tonight I prefer to tent and sleep on a soft bed of ground cover. We are seeing loads of berry bushes, but as yet the berries haven't grown past the blossom stage. In fact we could eat like kings if (on berries) they were out. Strawberries, huckleberries and raspberries galore. We saw yellow lady slippers in groups of 4-6 & 8, pink lady slippers, trilliums (all colors, white various shades green to deep purple) that covered the forest floor (see Rick's pictures). A white flower coming from daffodil-like leaves and has a starburst blossom, seen earlier is the "white snow" in the song "On Top of old Smoky" is fringed phedelia. Saw the May apple, of course. Its a regular sight all day long with blossoms and fruit. The forest floor is alive with plants that are unidentifiable, but each is beautiful in it's own untouched setting. I hate to step on them yet they overflow onto the trail so much that its impossible to avoid them.

Some other single hikers came by us today going south, two single 50ish men, hiking the AT in 300 mile stretches. Birds seen: towhee, peewee, vultures, nuthatches, cardinals, jays and flycatchers.

Its interesting to watch Rick and his picture taking. He doesn't let you know what motivates him to take the picture, but the singular beauty of the object usually says enough. I suggested he add an extra sentence to describe the picture when he records the shot, which might reveal his reason for taking the picture.

We are taking a day of rest tomorrow and will stay here at High Rock shelter a second night. I have a slight swelling on top of my left foot from the tongue of my shoe knotting up, also a charlie horse in the calf of my left leg and a day of rest will help cure these malfunctions. My heel blisters are calming down and after this layover day, old Dick ought to be back in shape.

May 24, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Rained lightly during the night, sunny with some clouds. Temp in 80's. Goal: Rest day, High Rock shelter.

Up at 9 am, good sleep, foot and leg better. Sunny and warm -- looks like a good day ahead. We are (the shelter) on the main drag of the AT and seven hikers have gone through already on short jaunts. Now 1 pm and we learned that a church group of 24 boys and girls will land here tonight. So we might move out to a campsite closer to Crandon to get away from the mob. Glad we didn't tho, Rick is happy about talking with these young people (his age) and exchanging ideas. There are about 14 people (adults and young people) seated around us now and all manner of conversations are in progress. Two black retriever dogs are with this group of

church people and one lays down while it eats it's food. We will be seeing a moon eclipse tonight and a fire tower from which to watch. A very interesting and refreshing day! As usual when there are lots of people around we enjoy extra handouts. Yes, we are learning about people, generosity and friendships. One counselor was able to arrange a jeep ride out from this shelter in the morning from another complete stranger passing by on the trail.

May 25, 1975. Sunday. High Rock shelter. A wonderful night. Weather: Sunny all day, temp 70 - 80°. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Wapiti shelter.

A wonderful night's rest in my tent on a leaf and humus forest floor surrounded by rock outcropping that overlooks the valley below. Rick slept in the shelter with some of the church group and Duane Gould (another thru hiker). Rick stayed up until 2 am watching the moon eclipse. I passed up the spectacle to sleep peacefully. Before retiring, however, we sat around the campfire with this group eating marshmallows and watched a funny skit put on by the kids. An adult leader (John) told three weird stories designed to scare the kids (ages 15 to 20). Ha! Ha! There were, as usual, the cut-ups, but all the kids were nice. The group was hiking for 2-1/2 days and about 18 miles, rather rough on the adults.

Our rest day couldn't have fallen on a better day as Rick (not to mention myself) really needed some diversion and the cute girls and sharp boys and leaders (all from Winston-Salem, NC) ate up our stories of hiking the AT. With three of us thru hikers at the shelter there was some idol gazing, mostly at Rick and Duane age 17 & 19. Duane is a minister's son from NY. Rick really had a ball. He is in great spirits today. He wants to get the complete hike over with he told me. His desire to hike is still strong, but the snails pace that we travel really gets him and yet he understands that we cannot travel any faster. Rick comes right out with whatever is bothering him and we talk about it as long as is necessary. I think his boredom will go away as our contact with human beings increases.

Today was an interesting day. We were up at 7 am, ate and with good byes got to hiking by 9 am. A beautiful day, came down from High Rocks and crossed a picture meadow, walked five miles of road and sat in front of a church about 11:30 am and watched the people come out while resting. Our bench was on the porch of the general store in Crandon, VA. The store was closed, but it had a drink machine outside so we drank Coca-Cola and orange to refresh ourselves. The town is pretty with one store and gas pump, an old church and a new church. That is all. All on 4 corners. We noticed that all the people coming out of the church were women and we surmised that the men were all out working the fields today or something. The minister was the only man.

Well, to go back a bit to the meadow (its too pretty to pass up), we passed the C. M. Bane farm house. This name was in our guide book. We had some letters to mail but no mailbox, so we stopped at the Banes farm to ask if we might leave our letters in her mailbox to be picked up. Ethel Bane (daughter of C. M. Bane), 74 year old, and her dog were in the yard pulling weeds. We talked to her, and she told us about the farm, her father C. M. had died in 1958, and she and her brother had about 1000 acres of farm to manage. The house was a centennial house with tin roof and a large porch. The flowers in the yard were tall and orange and looked like they had been growing ever since the first Bane had lived there. Truly a fine but plain old farm house full of memories.

It was Memorial Day weekend and Miss Bane doubted that our letters would go out before Tuesday. Rick and I hadn't given it much thought due to our very casual

time schedule. I had wanted Joan to mail us some items in our next "drop" and now it was doubtful she would have our note in time.

Later in the day our lunch break was taken under a bridge by the Walker Creek. We tried fishing and enjoyed scrambling about trying to find a good vantage point, but to no avail. We caught no fish, but mostly because we were in a bad spot because fish were jumping in the creek across from us. Further down the road we passed a pony farm and there must have been a reunion in progress, but we kept on hiking. It was warm today so we stopped at a grocery for 1/2 gallon of milk, sweet cakes and ice cream sandwiches. While eating them at the store, the lady behind the counter told us all about the ax murder of a girl on the trail in April. Of course we knew about it in detail by now as all of the local people had told us as we progressed from N. Carolina, Tennessee and now Virginia.

We passed through a low swampy area and then over another creek so Rick and I stopped for a skinny dip. Rick was having trouble with bowels and needed to rinse off after numerous stops. The problem stopped by the time we got to our shelter. We thought the large quantity of milk drank at the last store might have caused the trouble. I managed to fall while hiking later and hit my left knee, causing some concern, however at the shelter tonight I put on some hot compresses to cut down any swelling. This was helpful and will be no hinderance to hiking. Rick says, "Boy we sure got all the problems at one time." His bowels, his shoes are rotting out, my knee, and leg charlie horse my swollen left foot and blistered heels. All of them are much better now (we ar at Wapiti shelter), but it seemed like a lot all at once. I can't see why so many unusual things happened on Sunday⁶.

I decided to simplify my note taking while hiking and jotting notes down while they were fresh in my mind by carrying a small note book in by breast pocket where I could grab it at a moment's notice. Then rewrite them at night while at our campsite thus keeping my journal more accurate and interesting. This day has had lots of happenings like the young minister's son (Duane Gould) standing at the end of the picnic table early Saturday morning at High Rock shelter, mentally checking out his pack which was already on his back making sure everything was in it. Then taking off down the trail. Five minutes later one of the church girls found four (4) sweaty one dollar bills on the ground exactly the spot where the boy had stood. We hoped to catch up to him by Tuesday am so I told the girl who the money belonged to and that we would return it to him. Sunday (today) stopped at a grocery store for goodies and the owner said that a boy answering our description of Duane had to cash a travelers check to buy some ice cream.

We are seeing snakes, but not in quantity and it makes me think about congregation of snakes that Joan has at the arboretum. What an unusual situation that is seeing garter snakes in great masses.

We are getting a lot of flies as the woods become warmer. They fly in clouds in front of our faces and get in our ears and eyes. Mostly gnats I would guess, however after the sun goes down they start to disappear. Saw redwings, blue jays, flickers, thrushes, towhees, crows, vultures and whip-poor-wills today, not to mention the butterflies, insects and etc. Even heard roosters crowing this am. The meadow this am provided us with sheep (see Rick's picture). I shall not forget the beauty of the meadow we crossed on the Bane's farm about 11 am with it's old barn in the middle, piles of rocks, flock of sheep under big trees in the shade, the singing of the birds and insects in the bright stimulating sunshine, green, green grass everywhere. The old dirt road with high banks on each side and grassy fields stretching away from it to the sloping hills and tree-covered mountain sides. It

could have been this way over (100) one hundred years ago. I could feel the silence of past years whispering to me of long forgotten moments. The sun bathing the whole grand display reenforced my already strong desire to hike on and look for more of these exciting moments, while pulling in great draughts of sun washed air. The Bane farm was a little further down the road, full of old history (and probably antiques, starting with Miss Ethel Bane, her father, and grandfather).

To talk again about Crandon: It was a peaceful little town and as Rick and I sat on the porch the church bells rang, the choir sang and our weekend seemed to fall into place. Got to Wapiti shelter about 6:30 pm. No one else was at this shelter because it is on a side trail that isn't being used as the main AT anymore. We are glad to be alone. These late arrivals at our campsites always make Rick and I promise each other that we will start earlier in the am to hike and stop earlier in the pm to camp, but it never quite works out that way.

May 26, 1975. Monday. Weather: Sunny am with fog to start with then clouds and some rain about 2 pm. A beautiful sunset. Hiked: 13 miles. Goal: Tent site close to Pearisburg, VA.

Our shelter at Wapiti was a neat log shelter, clean and like new and well kept. Rick and I had it all to ourselves and we thoroughly enjoyed the seclusion and isolated feeling. We got up at 7 am and started hiking about 7:45 am. After some steady uphill climbing through thick foliage and soggy hillsides we arrived at a rangers' forest service cabin (on Sugar Run Mountain). There was a sunny pond close by so Rick and I took a break and fished for a while and ate a snack. Rick caught some fish, but they were all too small to eat and we decided to put them back in the pond. Followed a dirt road for a while that wasn't blazed and after some searching located the trail.

At 1 pm we stopped at Doe's Knob shelter for lunch where we enjoyed the company of four men who were hiking the AT in the opposite direction. They were members of the Tennessee-Eastman Hiking Club out for a group hike and would meet others of their group coming along the trail from the opposite direction, swap car keys and pick up cars spotted at the other end of their section of the trail. These men were planning on attending the AT Conference in Boone, N. Carolina and we had a nice talk. Being trail maintainers, they knew a lot about the trail and listening to their comments about upkeep was interesting.

The rain held us up at the shelter for about 30 minutes and we were refreshed by our lunch and a short rest. We proceeded down an old logging road high on a ridge about 12 miles outside of Pearisburg. Rather than enter town at night Rick and I decided to camp on this ridge and go into town in the morning, thus saving some money and feeling more energetic about facing people, shopping, getting our mail and getting a place to stay. We will be about 7 miles outside of town. Hope the whip-poor-wills shut up tonight so I can get some sleep. They come close to the shelters and call steady for 15 minutes or more. I lose track of the number of times they call in each sequence, but I've counted over 100 many times. Saw wild turkey this am as it ran across a side road some 500 feet away. It's head erect and bottle-like body presented quite a sight. Its the only one I've seen so far.

May 27, 1975. Tuesday. A very interesting day. Weather: Cloudy, then sunny all day. Hiked: 7 miles. Goal: Pearisburg, VA.

Short hike into town with the usual nasty dogs snapping at our heels as we pass through the outskirts of town⁷. By 11 am we were eating an early lunch

(devouring is more like it) after which we made our way to the post office, our mail had not arrived yet. We had been told to call the Holy Family church for hostel-type accommodations and possibly a ride to the church which is located 1-1/2 miles outside town. Sure enough we got picked up and taken by pickup to the church. Other hikers were there and we soon had a shower, did our laundry in the private bath and laundry of Father Charles Beausoleil (beausoleil is a French word meaning beautiful sunshine). His warmth and friendliness is unsurpassed. We found that here would be one of those unforgettable experiences of hiking the AT.

The beds were thick foam pads placed on the church floor and very comfortable. Our evening meal was cooked in the kitchen by our hiker friends and vegetables came from the "hiker garden". By 1:30 pm we had our food parcels from Joan and we got them back to the church where we packed our packs for the next day's hike. Weight 48 lb each pack and the weight really seemed a lot. We knew that more food was on the way, too. So arranged forwarding to Cloverdale, VA of other parcels to follow. Repaired Rick's shoes and mine, a friendly talk with Father Charles in his own sanctuary took care of the day. Its amazing how helpful people are to others.

We find that our down jackets, wool caps and rain chaps are not needed any longer and we mailed them home. The chaps are only comfortable when its a cold rain and we won't get any now. Any rain we get is a welcome cooling agent.

More about the dinner at the church tonight. We all sat around a circular table (8 people) and the conversation was pretty much on hiking with Fr. Charles staying out of the talk. But he added very timely remarks. He is a man in his early 40's; stocky, dark hair and dressed very casually.⁸ It was a lovely close quiet dinner.

May 28, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Foggy in the early morning, then sunny and warm the balance of the day, temp 70's and 80's. Hiked: 8 miles. Goal: Tent site in the woods.

Our beds were on the floor of the church and 2" thick foam pads served as mattresses. I did a laundry after clearing and washing dishes with the help of five other hikers. Rick, I, Duane, Sally, Susan, Wendy and Bob from Durham, NC. This last boy started hiking the AT in March and after 5 weeks of hiking decided that he had had enough, but didn't want to go home. He is 17 so he is living with the Father in the church and acting as Inn Keeper. Father Charles has made him promise to reflect one act of love each day to be sure he knows that he (Bob) is needed and is loved. Its a very nice relationship and Bob is not as belligerent or rebellious as before according to Fr. Chas. The Fr. discussed this with me while asking about Rick and his reactions as a hiker with his dad. It was nice to talk about Rick in this way. As we left this morning the Father kissed each girl and shook our hands and he kissed Rick as a natural reaction to a close fatherly guidance gesture. I think Rick was pleased but embarrassed.

Again, I can't begin to say enough about Rick's outgoing or extrovert actions toward all the people we see and travel with. Like today. We are hiking and camping tonight with Sally, Susan and Wendy. Rick is laughing and talking in a give and take situation with them and they love it. Susan and Wendy are 19 year old girls both college students who are looking for a college in which to spend their final year. Sally, of course, 34 yr old, an R. N. is plugging along and enjoys the pure solitude of the woods, flowers and wildlife. She now has extended an invitation to both Rick and I to stay with her and her mother at their home in Northfield, Mass when we get into the state.

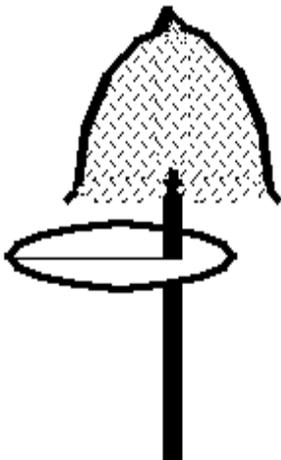
The flowers are really out now with the warm temperatures and all. The mountain laurel is out and it has the prettiest blossom. Like a china soup bowl with bumps similar to the sharp bumps on a conch shell. The inside is striped with pink on the white blossoms. Colors vary from white to pink.

Before leaving town today we checked the post office and got Joan's nice long letter. So we headed for a Dairy Queen and ate ice cream while we read it. Of course the good and the bad news were taken as we came to it. We laughed and oh'd and ah'd about the good times by Ann, David, and Mom and Jeanie and Marty's news clipping that went to Fontana Dam. Then we cried about our little doggy Shady. We had tear stains on the table and our pants too. I read about it first and laid the pages down on the table trying not to divulge what I was reading and wanted Rick to get the news in the nice manner in which Mom had written about our doggy. I think Rick suspected, but only when I noticed him stop and gaze out the window did I express my feelings. I blubbered and he mumbled and we both rubbed tears from our eyes. We couldn't talk about it right then, but after we grunted and strained putting our packs onto our backs for the balance of the 3 mile hike out of town to the trail starting point did we talk about the death of our friend and companion "Shady". We will always remember her and talk about her.

Rick and I have about decided to hike until 4:30 pm each day and then stop and camp. The earlier we start will determine the distance and increase our miles each day. Arriving late to our campsite each day shortens our day down. We want to enjoy some quiet time at the end of each day's hike while there is still light to write and talk or whatever. The sun goes down about 8:30 pm and our meal is shortened up when we arrive late at the campsite. Of course a water supply is always essential and may determine the exact stopping time. Gotta quit writing now -- 8:30 pm and get to bed. Expect early start tomorrow.

May 29, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Sunny and warm. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: Bailey Gap lean-to.

That early start never occurred. We got rained on most of the night with the weather clearing up about 8:30 am. We had clouds and some sun the balance of the day. Temp was in the 70's all day with a lower temp about 6 pm. We hiked 14 miles today to Baileys Gap shelter. The trail was through knee high nettles, Virginia creeper, shooting stars, yellow lady slippers, pink trillium, chicory, clivers; the fern was chest high (see Rick's picture). Lots of sharp stones dotted the path and slowed our progress. We saw orange salamanders 3" long, a large spider about 3" in diameter. That attacked my walking stick repeatedly until he discovered what it was.



Bell shaped blossom cluster

As we progressed up a very steep part of the trail a wren left her nest from a very low bush 12" off the ground. She had 5 small white and brown spotted eggs. This morning as we walked, the cloud-like fog surrounded us and we seemed to float through the forest of white-green mists. I usually am 15' to 20' behind Rick and all I could see was his outline ahead of me.

Another small flower 4" high with the stem penetrating each leaf held my interest.

The warm weather finally caught us and to be more comfortable I cut the pant legs off my trousers to make shorts. It was nice to have the leg freedom while walking.

May 30, 1975. Friday. Weather: Sunny and warm until 5 pm. Rained for one hour then a cloudy red sunset. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Tent site above John's Creek Valley.

The girls saw 2 male turkeys with spread tails in the road above our campsite. After road walking some five miles today we hitchhiked around a relocation of the trail. The re-routing isn't done yet and we didn't want to get into trouble with land owners by trespassing so we chose the asphalt trail. There are Wendy, Susan, Sally, Rick and I in this group, so rides aren't easy to get.

About 5 pm we stopped at a grocery store and shared a 1/2 gallon of ice cream while sitting on the lawn outside the store. So it began to rain and we all went into the store and talked with the store owner and her son (a wheel chair patient with brain damage from a car accident). A typical country store with benches, chairs and stove (oil fired). Our conversation was all on local politics and pretty much offered by the lady store owner who seemed to know all the facts on this area. About 6 pm after the rain stopped we all headed up the road to some state-owned land and walked off the road about 1/4 mile and camped for the night. A beautiful spot, but was logged over (see pictures of morning sunrise 5-31-75 and clouds settling in the valley). We had a camp of five and swapped mystery stories with the girls. A nice evening.

May 31, 1975. Saturday. Up at 6 am and the weather looked good, misty and sunny, temp 70°. Goal: Barn and haymow.

The birds were coming in and couldn't see just what kind but I took pictures of hilltops above the clouds. There is a freshness about the early morning air which seems so good and the sun adds something to this nice, bright morning. Had some dew last night and packed up wet and headed back out to the road. Got 2 rides which put us at Sinking Creek and we took an approach road up to the mountain top and the AT. Passed the two groups of Boy Scouts slowly making their way up the road and we hoped we wouldn't have to spend any nights close to this noisy group.

The relocations are now behind us and it should be clear hiking from now on. Stopped at Niday shelter for water and surprised a young couple in the process of dressing. They offered to drive us to the next section which was very kind of them, however our purpose and goal is to walk the trail wherever possible so we explained our goal to them and refused their offer. The girl gave us a piece of apple cake -- Umm! Our trail called for a hike over colorful Dragons Tooth Mountain and after some creek crossings which required shoe removal, another shelter Trout Run, we crossed a hill and started up very steep Dragon's Tooth. Shortly before we startled a family of baby turkeys from our path and the mother was in a tree above us. Finally she flew and I don't believe I've ever seen such a large bird in flight before. Dragon's Tooth was a pretty but very steep ascent and we perspired freely all the way to the top. At the top tall rocks formed the summit and sheer drop on the far side added to it's majesty. The view were superb, however it was starting to cloud over and it looked rainy. The descent was real hairy with narrow ledge walking and 20' drops and some neat rock ridge walking and of course the rain began. We finally made it down to a parking lot and lost the trail at this point. It was getting late

and some people pointed our a grocery store and barn to us which was just what we wanted. The store furnished us with canned beans and pineapple and slabs of fresh cut cheese. Then a small barn with hay furnished us a dry place to sleep and a small dog for company. It rained all night long. I had gotten another chance to sleep in a barn on a hay bed. I was happy.

June 1, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Rainy all morning, then sunny all afternoon and evening until dark. Temp 74°. Hiked: 13 miles. Goal: Campsite outside Cloverdale, VA.

Our quarters last night were comfortable and no four legged creatures came near us. Our little dog probably kept them away. The hay mow was warm and it rained cats and dogs all night long until 8:30 am. Rick and I started hiking about 9 am and road walked some 6 miles to Catawba then another mile beyond on all asphalt road to the trail. We met Sally Sheldon who was behind us hiking, she had slept in her tent in the rain and not had a fun time so far. Poor girl, she is really toughing this hike out alone.

The relocations have played havoc with the area over which the trail goes and not well marked. At the shelters maps are left on the walls directing the hikers, but the trail isn't clear and its handier to follow the road or old trail if it is in sight. No problems have arisen using this choice so far.

Now we have our tents up in a beautiful woods and the whip-poor-wills are going at it loud and clear (8:45 pm and its still light). The little dog has followed us and is sleeping in a leafy nest next to our tents. We enjoyed some rock climbing and woods trail hiking today. Gotta quit now.

June 2, 1975. Monday. Weather: Sunny all day. Hiked: 13 miles. Goal: Cloverdale, VA post office. Campsite behind P.O.

Mountain laurel really coming out and it's white and pink cups are very distinctive. We've seen lizards on trees and Rick has pictures. The trail follows a ridge line that overlooks the valley and there were several good views. The dog is with us and got into one of Ricks pictures. Met (2) two other hikers today, J. B. Buritt from Conn. and another boy and that was all. The trail seems beautiful and secluded. The dog we picked up at the haymow stop has made Rick very happy which leaves a happy smile on Rick's face when he looks at the dog. But Rick says he doesn't want another dog now because of the extra responsibility at home for others to look after the dog when he is gone or all of us are away. We are seeing yucca like plants in addition to others now. It has a grassy base, long stem about 36" high with hairy soft spines and white flowers, long kind.

As we were descending off the ridge on a developed road a jeep offered us a ride into town. Being eager to get to the post office, we accepted. The dog came along and after talking with the driver he suggested we drop the dog off before getting into town. He already had 3 dogs and felt another would be too much to look after. At least we would be without a dog again.

Arrived at the post office and received our packages from Joan. Two large boxes which had been relayed along from the preceding post office. Boy what a treat to have all this variety of food for a change. We talked to the postmistress about a campsite and she suggested we camp behind the building so we did. Made our tent into one large tent so we could get our packs under cover. Then explored the town. We wanted to call Joan and the phone was outside bar on the main road. So we tried to reach Joan until 10:30 pm but without success. While seated on the porch of the

bar and restaurant a fellow came out and talked with us. He wanted to talk I suspect because he carried the conversation by himself. Being on vacation he didn't have anywhere to go and was drinking the evening away. We returned to our tent and had a nice sleep.

June 3, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Foggy until 9 am then sunny and warm balance of the day as usual in southern Virginia (unless raining). Very wet from the dew and pretty. Hiked: 11.5 miles. Goal: Campsite close to Babblets Gap lean-to.

We got up at 7 am, talked with the neighbor and looked at his big garden. He had everything including pigs which he was in the process of feeding before going to work. We watched him bring out his cow and tether it, too. We packed up our gear (the tent was still wet for the dew) and started off down the highway through town about 8:30 am. Late start 1 1/2 miles to walk before reaching the beginning of the AT. In about one hour the trail left the hot asphalt road and headed into the cool woods. A beautiful trail day and good going, but our packs were heavy with all the goodies Joan had sent to us so by 4:30 pm we started looking for a campsite. Its nice to be in the higher elevations now as the temperatures are in the 80's and 90's in town, a real sweat jerker temperature range. Rick got a picture of a woodchuck in a tree, rather unusual for this creature. Saw lizards, non-poisonous snake, also three new kinds of wildflowers today, all resemble bladderwort with red-purple and white leaves or pedals. The whip-poor-wills are going at it now. We don't hear the thrushes as much anymore. Towhees, yes, but not as much as before; must be changing seasons. Saw mourning doves, wrens, vultures (white head) curious. The rhododendron blossoms are falling off the trees now. My left shoe seems to have burst it's seam at the sole, so like Rick's shoes, mine are giving up -- only even faster. The AT is paralleling the Skyline Drive now as we move into the Blue Ridge Mountain section. Rick and I saw a deer run up a draw snorting and blowing as we walked this afternoon. Could be rutting season, no its too early for that I guess.

Our campsite selected by Rick was perfect, right on a loop of the trail as it broke over a small ridge. A high rock prominence 50 feet away afforded us a view of the sunset. We used a fire tonight because our Svea stove is plugged and we don't have a cleaning wire to clear out the carbon build up. Don't like to build a fire for several reasons, but its a necessity tonight. We picked up our water in advance of finding this campsite. Soon it was boiling in preparation for our macaroni and cheese. Others had camped here before, but kept it clean by spreading the rocks around when done with the fire as we will, too. The weather was beautiful all night long. We took pictures and watched the sunset. Banked the fire for use in the morning.

June 4, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: cool at 6 am with sun coming up. Temp 50°. Later 9 am 65 - 70°. The clouds are beautiful, big and billowing. Hiked: 16 miles. Goal: Cornelius Creek shelter or tent site before.

The whole day was a beautiful sunny day with various new flowers, cooing mourning doves, 5' long black snake, small sand colored snake, some rocky pathway and my shoes are still holding together. Our day started at 6:30 am with Rick making breakfast. Off hiking by 7:30 am and we got 16 miles by 4:30 pm. So we stopped and camped 5 miles short of Cornelius shelter. Our tent site is on top of Fork Mountain in the woods with a thrush singing his heart out at 7:45 pm. We had macaroni, cheese, mashed potatoes and cream chicken soup. Rick has gone to bed already and I will soon. Our bodies are tired tonight after wading through 80°

temperatures and sweating profusely. We enjoyed sunning ourselves for 30 minutes on the Blue Ridge Parkway and crossed it about 4 times. Some nice views and a taste (memories) of the enjoyable past years with Joan, Barb and John on previous trips in this section stayed with us on this day.

June 5, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Perfect, sunny with some clouds. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Campsite before Marble Spring.

Up at 6:30 am and Rick got our fire going for hot water which really makes the breakfast cereal taste good. We both like hot cereal to start the day. Our trail takes us over a lot of the Blue Ridge Mountains today and touches the parkway several times. We admired views and expected to see Uncle John's and Aunt Barb's yellow station wagon parked on the overlook when we arrived (it had happened that way before on previous excursions with them in the Shenandoah section of the AT). The trail was beautiful and flat except for Thunder Hill today and Apple Mountain, our climbing endurance seems to be unbelievable as both of us putt, putt, putt, right on over the tops of hills without stopping for rests. The mountains are much lower from now on until Mt. Killington is reached in Vermont (elevation 4400'). So our daily miles will start to increase steadily. Our starting time is earlier now, but we are stopping before the evening meal. Saw garter snakes, woodchucks and deer today. Birds remain the same with our friend the ever present towhee, thrushes, ravens, and some unknowns. With leaves on the trees now, it is quite hard to spot the birds. Flycatchers we know are here, but warblers I can't say. The undergrowth is high now and obscures the trail a lot. Nettles are troublesome. Our lunch spots are great, mostly a picnic by a stream or scenic overlook, and very peaceful. Jewelweed tonight for dinner. Expect rain tonight.

June 6, 1975. Friday. Weather: Rain last night, sunny all day and beautiful blue sky with some clouds right up to dark. Hiked: 15.25 miles. Goal: Johns Hollow lean-to.

Boy did we get a wind storm with some rain. We tented and our campsite was in a protected area and the wind and rain blew right over the top of us. Rick got some water through the zipper on his tent, but it was mostly because of the position of his tent. Nothing to worry about. We were up by 6:30 am and hiking by 7 am.

We buzzed along and got 10 miles in by 12:30, then felt we had earned a nice rest. So a trip to Snowden one mile down the road got us ice cream, pop, and junk to eat. Wow, what a celebration we had even though it shot our days hiking. Just 5 miles of walking in the next 5 hours -- we just poked along after loading up with sweets. As we left Snowden we ascend steeply -- looking back over the James River, we got some good pictures (turned out to be snapshots).

Jumping back to earlier in the day now. The shelters we passed looked too nice and inviting to stop at so by noon we reached Matts lean-to next to a pretty stream. Just right for a skinny dip (Rick's too bashful for this) and in I went. One part of the stream was the size of a large bathtub and just right for Dick. Rick just can't make himself do these kinds of things and washed his legs. We also got some laundry done and hung on the backs of our packs to dry while we walked later in the day. By 6 pm we reached Johns Hollow lean-to.

June 7, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Beautiful, sunny with some clouds in the sky. Hiked: 16.9 miles. Goal: Brown Mountain Creek lean-to.

Up by 6:15 am and off hiking at 7:00 am. Spotted copperhead snake and it resembled a milk snake and it was eager to get out of our path and swished into the woods quickly. Rick and I are not in agreement on the identity, but we don't bother to corner one to see who is right. Wonder why? The first thing we did was ascend Little and Big Rock Mountains (this is usually the last thing as well as the first thing we do each day -- ASCEND). Some precipitous climbing put us in view again of the James River Gorge (see pictures). We then ascended Bluff Mountain after some ridge walking. The climbing really wasn't bad, just consecutive and about three hours of it. The balance of the day was flat woods walking on a beautiful ridge. And with some beautiful streams and creeks and the Lynchburg Reservoir for flavor we managed some 17 miles of walking. With Rick's calculations we ought to be in Harpers Ferry by the 21st of June or earlier. If we average 15 miles per day then this is possible. Its impossible to believe that we are tiring of seeing nothing, but beautiful views and scenery, but time begins to become important if we are to finish the trail in the allotted time. We plan on speeding up our trip on purpose to gain time for the northern sections through New Hampshire and Maine which we know are more difficult to hike through.

The flowers are so beautiful now and I can't identify them -- there are so many to see. It seems as though there are different kinds at each bend in the trail. The birds seem to be quieter now (could it be they are too busy feeding their young?) and we still hear the ravens, towhees and every beautiful song of the thrush morning, noon and night. Rick is happy now with prospects of going home so close at hand. He is talking now with four (4) boys from Cleveland, Ohio, who are hiking a section of the AT. They are here at the shelter now laughing and talking a blue streak. All four just graduated from college and are going on a cross country lark that should take them to California.

June 8, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Sunny and 44 to 68°, cool. Hiked: 15.8 miles. Goal: Campsite on a logging road short of Priest lean-to.

Our day was a cool 44° beginning in the morning and we were located at a shelter at the bottom of a mountain so the sun didn't get to us or us to the sun rather until we had hiked for 30 minutes going up steadily. The weather was perfect for walking and we had a hard time working up a sweat. I find that it is much more comfortable walking however after I have worked up a sweat. To me its easier and less tiring once my body muscles relax to walk without having to stop for rests. The sweat seems to relax my muscles. Two ascents were hooked on one after the other and it seemed like we were ascending all day. We scared up a hen grouse and she flopped around in an effort to divert us away from her chicks. We found strawberries and ate those, but it was only a taste. The real berries are just now beginning to come out and we ought to get plenty before long for our meals. We will have to go the 1/2 mile to a general store at Tye River Gap to get a few supplies on the morrow so our next campsite should be near Harpers Creek which has a beautiful creek we are told. My boots are falling apart and the nylon cord has come in handy to hold the soles onto the leather uppers. I'll get repairs at Waynesboro soon. Its kind of worrisome to have one's shoes go like this, but we'll make it OK. I hope I will read the notes written into the guide books later because some facts can escape your thoughts and are reminders for the time when recopying this log. We would be without essential information if it weren't for our guide books. Its time for bed 8 pm.

June 9, 1975. Monday. Weather: Sunny, 43 to 65°. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Harpers Creek lean-to.

Grouse, baby chicks - views - lots of other hikers - Rick Goodman from U of M at Ann Arbor, comprise some of the facts for the upcoming days walk.

After a nice campsite among the ferns beside an old woods road and waking up to 43° temperatures, Rick and I started off under sunny skies, shadowy trees, through dew-laden fields to a point called Spy Rock. We began running into hikers coming the opposite direction doing short hikes through this section of the AT. Vacations have started and schools are out so at last the vast population has started to flood our quiet trails. How can one help but feel that his privacy is being invaded after having such beautiful quiet walks in the woods all to himself.

Last Saturday we ran into a large group of scouts from Minnesota. Today at least twelve hikers were college age kids getting their "relaxation" by hiking as they laughingly called it.

June 10, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Overcast and cloudy but cool with rain prospects light due to cool front that moved in. Hiked: 16.62 miles. Goal: Campsite just shy of Rockfish Gap on Humpback Mountain.

We were up by 6:45 am and hiking by 7:30 then 1 1/2 hour off for lunch after reaching Maupin lean-to where we built a fire to get warmed up. The sun didn't come out very often and if you were sitting still, one soon got chilly. The instructions in the guide book are not always accurate due to some trail relocations. Rocks stick up from the ground and newly cut tree stubs constantly tripped us. So at the end of this day both Rick and I were tired. We found a nice grassy ridge well protected on Humpback Mountain for our campsite. If it doesn't rain, we'll be lucky and happy. Our fire is snapping merrily now and the water starting to boil for our macaroni and cheese, sardines, crackers and milk supper. Rick and I eat enough for four people and it seems that our food supply is always coming to an end. The only one suffering is the grocer -- he can't get rich off of us. Yesterday we stopped in at a grocery in the Tye River Gorge crossing where we bought 1 lb of baloney, loaf of bread, 1/2 gallon of ice cream and consumed it outside on the steps of the store. A few other items were added to our larder even though we are getting a mail drop in Waynesboro.

The shoes I'm wearing are both popping out around the sole at the arch and at the heel. Dunhams aren't as durable a shoe as some others we've seen. Pavettas are a popular shoe and other hikers are getting good service from them. The Italian boots are popular, but are stiffer and harder to break in.

We were very tired tonight as we groped around looking for our campsite and hungry to boot. As usual I started nagging Rick about finding a campsite. Just as we finished eating and crawled into our tents, a very gentle rain began. I soon fell asleep.

June 11, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Cloudy, rainy and cool, temp in the 60's. Hiked: 7 miles. Goal: Waynesboro, Virginia, motel room.

Our campsite was nice and offered a comfortable spot for last night's rest. Of course it rained during the night, but Rick and I didn't get wet and our tents were packed up wet. We usually have a sunny period during the day when we spread out our wet gear and dry it. The tents are great and dry quickly. No sun today so we'll wait until there is sun. Our trail this am was stony with jagged rocks sticking up so it was slow going. The wet bushes got our pants wet as usual and

about 9:30 am we stopped at the Blue Ridge Parkway Historical Visitors Center to wash, get dry and shave. Luckily we picked up a ride here all the way into Waynesboro with a couple from Pennsylvania who were traveling and returning home from a trip south.⁹ He (age is about 45-55) rearranged the gear in their camper truck to fit Rick and I into the rear end of the camper box. This ride saved us 3 hours of hitchhiking and by 10 am we had located a \$9.00 cottage in town behind a Standard gas station and very close to an excellent shopping center. Our 1st order of business was to grocery shop and get ingredients for a long awaited pancake meal. Rick cooked the entire meal on our Svea stove on the floor of our cottage. Man!!!! what a feed!!!! Dried our tents on the lawn and then walked back into town in search of a shoe repair store. After getting my shoes nailed and sewn up we got Rick's shoes resoled. He had been slipping and sliding a lot on the trail because the Vibram cleats had become badly worn. This was the first resoling to take place on either of our shoes. The shoes will hold us up a couple of extra hours in the morning according to the repair shop, the glue must have overnight to dry. Better to take the time now than later. So for \$15.00 we decided it was time to take time out for this essential repair. Now we are doing groceries which have been separated from their original containers and put into plastic bags and we're eager to get out and find hamburgers at the Whopper up the street. Rick and I were in bed by 12 midnight after talking with Joan on the telephone. She sounds tired but we talked for 45 minutes.

June 12, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Cloudy and rainy with warmer temperatures about 65°. Hiked: 10 miles. Goal: Sawmill Run lean-to in Shenandoahs.

Well, we got a nice leisurely start today. Up at 8 am, breakfast of egg sandwiches, tang. Walked into town and stored our packs at the shoe shop. Rick's shoes not done yet and we must wait another 1 1/2 hours. We went to the bank and cashed a check, then took a tour of the city; post office, city hall, chamber of commerce, Dennings music store. Mr. Denning had given us the .009 guitar wire free for cleaning our stove the day before. Talked with him for a while before going to the drugstore for coffee and read up on Waynesboro history. While at the drug store we talked with the city librarian and Mr. Denning again.

At 12 noon we got Rick's shoes and started hitching rides back to Rockfish Gap. Just 40 minutes wait and we got one ride from the edge of town all the way to the gap. A lady and her two sons in a station wagon picked us up. She has three sons all of whom are hikers and was eager to hear our story.

As soon as we hit the trail it commenced to rain and we walked in it for 3 hours. But soon after, it stopped and the warm breezes dried us all up. We passed over several bald mountains tops and through pastures. Our ponchos just couldn't be worn. Our bodies perspired so and we were wetter than the rain from itself, on the inside, of our clothing. Rick and I would rather get fully wet and dry out again as we walk. Our trail took us through two occupied cow pastures and over the Blue Ridge Skyway Drive three times.

We arrived at our shelter by 6 pm where we ate and got into bed by 9 pm. The ground was too wet to camp on and it is going to rain again tonight so we are sleeping inside the shelter even though it is prohibited. One other hiker is here plus another camped out on the only flat spot in the area.

June 13, 1975. Friday. Weather: Sunny in pm and finally beautiful blue sky. Hiked: 17 miles. Goal: Loft Mountain campground.

Up at 6 am and hiking by 7:30 am. Rick is finally getting the idea about time in relation to distance and Harpers Ferry and home. He is eager to get up and get started in the morning and he now likes to prepare the evening meals. We exchange on dishwashing which preserves our dignity when it comes to culinary arts. We argue over how long to boil the water even. So this is a healthy sign of self respect and we both recognize the fact.

Our trail today was quite level and the views were nice where we crossed the parkway. One mountain that has character was Black Rock Mountain (see Rick's picture). Not a high mountain but a rocky one from which we could see our goal for the day of Loft Mountain campground. We finally got to Loft and got a campsite for the night #G-150. Our old site from a previous time was G-163 and was unoccupied, but we needed to be near the bath house so we could stash our packs in the men's room at night. The bears have been active here and we didn't have any tall trees from which to hang our food sacks. The deer are still milling around close to the campers yet. We tented and had a beautiful rest with stars all night long, warm temperatures and soft grass on which to sleep. Our meal at night was begun by baking all the day before. We had biscuits and honey -- Man! -- that was a great start -- then our meal of macaroni and cheese. We got to bed about 9 pm after walking around camp and reminiscing about our last camping experience at Loft Mountain. We looked at the lights coming on in the valley as darkness approached.

Oh yes -- a note -- as we approached the campground coming from the AT Rick and I decided to follow the nature trail which branched off the AT. It was labeled and we read the signs as we went along. Of course this meant that we stopped and read all about the trees, flowers and landscape which proved very interesting. We saw a lot of vacationists today and hikers doing sections of the trail who wanted us to stop and tell them all about our thru hike of the AT. Its amazing how much time can be spent talking about yourself and have a captive audience. As "thru hikers" we were a novelty to these other hikers and they wanted all the details of our hike so far.

Tonight a small baby bunny came into our campsite and nibbled grass about 6 feet from where Rick and I sat eating at the picnic table. Such pure innocence and lack of fear. We didn't have any bear trouble either. While hiking today Rick found a nice scout knife and this pleased him. We have had a pleasant day and the memories of last years campout here are with us.

June 14, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Another beautiful day, sunny, warm and blue skies with some clouds. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: High Top shelter.

We were up by 6:30 am. Rick was up first and got the packs out of the men's room. He woke me up and then after breakfast we started hiking. We picked up the nature trail again and followed it to the edge of the campgrounds (reading signs as we went). A beautiful sight of Loft Mountain to the north (the campground is on Flat Top Mountain) and the ridge approaching it started us taking pictures. We passed Ivy Creek lean-to, Pinefield lean-to as we hiked (stopped into Pinefield lean-to to see if it had changed any). All are the same as before and clean. This morning's dew glistened on the green grass and our shoes as we walked. Rick lived every minute of it as we stopped at the overlooks and OH'd and AH'd at the views. We checked wildflowers in bloom and spotted another baby rabbit on the trail as we hiked. Soon it was time to remove top shirts as the sweat began to roll. We are planning on staying an extra day at Big Meadows and Sunday night ought to find us at Lewis Spring just one mile outside Big M. (See Rick's pictures). We saw mountain

laurel again lining the trail as we walked; its always so beautiful to see this bush and it's blossoms. The nicely graded trail makes hiking easy in this section and our progress should be better now and speedier. Pulled into High Top lean-to about 4:30 pm and decided to stay. Lucky we did because one hour later the heavens opened up and drenched the whole landscape with torrential rains. The weather is bad enough so again we will sleep inside the shelter,

Two other hikers and their dog arrived during the rain and will occupy the shelter with us. Took some pictures with my camera, but the light meter battery was bad and doubt if they will turn out.

Going back to Loft Mountain -- the word "Loft" is believed to originally have been "Lost" when the letter "f" was substituted for the letter "s" which is early English lettering.

We stopped at Simmons Gap and dried out our tents and ate lunch. Same spot that we stopped last year and waited for Barb and John to hitch hike back for the car. The Forest Service station just beyond furnished us water before our ascent to Powell Gap just below High Top Mountain. The day was beautiful and the late blooming wildflowers were out replacing early bloomers so the green forest floor seemed more lush than usual today. By 4:30 pm we had ascended High Top Mountain and prepared to stay the night at the shelter. About 6 pm we put our tents back into our packs after setting them up because of the prospects of rain. Shortly after doing this we got the torrential downpour as described previously.

June 15, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Beautiful and sunny all day long, blue skies and some clouds. Hiked 18.1 miles. Goal: Big Meadows campground campsite or as close as possible.

Up at 6:30 am and hiked and hiked and hiked. It was a nice day full of reminiscing at Swift Run Gap where we got our camping permit renewed at the ranger entrance station. A memorial to Alexander Spotswood, the discoverer of "The Valley of the Shenandoah," and his Band of Knights of the Golden Horseshoe grabbed my attention and I wrote down some words inscribed on the stone put together by Gertrude Clayton, 1934, which added feeling to my own imagination and thrilled me on my way.

We stopped at South River shelter and talked with a Japanese hiker and Rick had a chance to tell of his episode with the bear in 1973.¹⁰ We met Mr. Daniels and Mr. Haring (14 years old) who had hiked the entire trail in 1974. They gave us a can of beer each to refresh us and for about 30 minutes we swapped tales and got some good leads on places to look for and enjoy as they had done on their hike. Bear Fence lean-to then Pocosin Cabin and a wonderful freshwater spring, lunch at an overlook and soon the gaps, Powell, Millam, Smith Roach, the mountains of Hazel Top, Bear Fence, High Top, Flat Top and finally Big Meadow. We made 18 miles today and finally set up camp just short of Big Meadows. We were exhausted and needed to rest and eat. The woods and a stream close by seemed to be a good place to spend the night just after crossing Millam Gap. In bed by 8 pm and went to sleep as the patter of rain drops sounded on our tents.

Note: The pressures of everyday living as I had known them up until now, that is until the alarm clock and the five o'clock whistle work-a-day routine was slowly giving way to the pleasures of refreshing mornings, birds singing their messages at all hours of the day, enjoying even the rains and wind-robbing climbs up mountains with a load on my back that should

by rights cause me to stop and wonder "just what the devil am I doing out here anyway?" But that thought never crossed my mind. How could it? I was doing, actually doing what I had set out to do: hike the full length of the Appalachian Trail. What's more, I had my son Rick right by my side doing it, too. I had a chance to see him day in and day out, watch him grow, listen to him laugh and understand what he was laughing about, watch him be serious and see the reason for being serious, and watch him cry and be there to talk with him and understand his reasons for crying and watch the rays of sun be reflected in his smile again. I often thought how unfair it was of me to have this chance and not have his mother there too, for she would have known the reasons for all his feelings and would have added another dimension to his expressions.

I was learning something about myself, too. Inside of this man was another person who could enjoy life on a scale less demanding but with as great a need to achieve. Sounds queer doesn't it? Stop and think of what happens to us as people between our ages of "Gosh, am I ever going to amount to anything?" and "Gee, but why didn't I do this or that when I was younger?" Well, some of us like to smell the flowers along life's way and not be greedy about putting in a full work day and in hopes of getting that almighty \$. Sometimes all the \$ in the world can't get one's own self on a peaceful, content level of living. I'm so glad that I took time out and walked a new path in life, to do what I really wanted to do.

June 16, 1975. Monday. Weather: Cloudy and rainy during the morning, sunny and warmer the rest of the day. Clear evening sky with moon and stars, but clouds kept drifting across them as so we had a foggy night. Hiked: 2.16 miles. Goal: Big Meadows campground.

Having camped just shy of Big Meadows, it didn't take long to hike, stop at a restroom, wash, shave. It had begun to rain just as we entered the restroom but, having set our goal -- "Bill Hoffman" park rangers apartment -- we kept on rain or no rain until we located his apartment on the north side of the campground. Rick and I met Bill just outside Pearisburg, VA hiking the trail and after talking a while, he invited us to stop at his place on our way through. Well, Bill had extended the same invitation to one other hiker, "Len Pizer" from Bowling Green, Ohio. We found Bill's place and Len was already in residence and took us in immediately as all fellow hikers would do, so after Bill's roommate Jeff Doyle arrived and welcomed us. Bill was in town (Luray) for the day and probably wouldn't be home until late. We took showers, did our laundry and did some very limited shopping as the prices at the camp store were high. Jeff was also a park employee and was a naturalist. He extended us all the courtesies possible and asked us to attend his nature program on insects. Rick and I went to see it and it was terrific. The talk included slides taken by the staff at the park which really added a lot of flavor. We met another naturalist who was to talk tomorrow night at the Lewis Mountain campground. Didn't get his name, but he told us we would hear Barred and Long Eared owls mostly in the park. Kathy Banano is another naturalist, also Mr. and Mrs. Troops, and Mr. and Mrs. Snively to name a few of the others who work here in the camp. These people do the programs for the entire park and rotate around to each of the other campgrounds regularly. After the program tonight we all returned to the apartment and Jeff Doyle

played his guitar until midnight, a real talented boy. Jeff gave Rick (and Dick) a Peterson Guide to Reptiles and inscribed it for us as "thru hikers". Rick and I spread our sleeping bags on the floor and slept good.

June 17, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Beautiful and sunny all day. Hiked: 12 miles. Goal: Shavers Hollow lean-to.

Up at 6:30 am bought a few supplies at the camp store (30% higher prices) in fact a box of rice, and that was all. Then spent time in the Harry F. Byrd Visitor Center looking at exhibits and a movie on the history of the park. The exhibits covered old pioneer days of this area with apple butter making, spinning of yarns, Indian lore, surveyors instruments and growth of the Big Meadows area and information on it's dedication by Delano Roosevelt in July of 1936.

Our hiking was short in one respect, but long in reaching our goal and we are tired tonight. The birds are pretty much the same with thrushes and towhees predominating. Grouse and their grown babies are still on the trail. Ravens and juncos are around a lot. The flowers aren't as profuse as in the more remote areas however the mountain laurel is all around us here tonight at the shelter and the bushes literally cover the adjacent hillside.

The shelter is very pretty situated on a hillside overlooking the valley below. Built in 1940 by C.C.C. crews and made of squared chestnut logs. Only problem is, no one can sleep in it. The floor has rock bumps all over and no level spots on which to spread a sleeping bag even if it was permitted -- but in good weather it isn't permitted. I think Rick and I will camp in tents away from the lean-to. The rangers have been handing out \$25.00 fines for violations of the new rules and we can't find a level spot here so will move back up the mountain closer to the trail which we did and slept good. See Rick's picture of the owl.

Called ATC headquarters to arrange for use of a typewriter and talked to Jean Caslin. Peter Dunning had departed for Boone, NC and the conference so she said we could have access to the equipment. Done before leaving Big Meadows Nature Center.

June 18, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Cloudy and sunny later -- temp in the 70's. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: Elk Wallow shelter.

We started this day nicely with sunny weather and a nice trail which was wide and easy to walk on. Some rock climbing only added to the interest of hiking in this beautiful woods. The freshness of the morning dew and the singing of the birds around 7 am area wonderful sound, seasoned with bright sunshine and cool breezes. Towhees with all their different sounds, pewees, catbirds, thrushes, mourning doves.

After returning up the side trail from the lean-to where the tent sites weren't good and Rick and I set up our tents some 15' off the AT. While doing this a shadow flashed over Rick's head and came to rest in a tree. A Barred owl in search of four-legged food sat still enough for Rick to get a flash picture. It ought to be a dilly (it really was, too, and became a main picture in our talks later about the AT).

Our hike was spiked with spirited conversations to some of the 30 girl scouts and other hikers who are out for summer recreation now. We were celebrities and beleagued by questions about our hike, our equipment, our reasons for hiking all the way from Georgia. How exciting this trip is especially to the young people who pride themselves in endurance tests and overcoming the hardships of living outside. These youngsters will remember our tales and their overnight campfires for years

to come. Probably some will continue this sport for the enjoyment received on their first camping trip and because of the ease with which Rick and I seemed to be doing this trip.

We had to do a lot of looking around to find a good tent site because of the crowded conditions. The thickness of the woods helped give some degree of privacy and we spread tents in a spot that resembled an old stream bed and not the least safe from a flash flood. But weather conditions looked good and it was dry. We had a good meal and got to bed early enough to dream of the "rest break" coming up next week. I know Rick is very happy and his spirits are tops.

June 19, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Clear and sunny all day with temperatures in the 70's and 80's. Hiked: 15 miles. Goal: Indian Run shelter here in Shenandoah National Park.

It seems that the birds are in full cry now that spring is here and summer is about to start because they are all around us this morning. The leaves hide their flashing bodies so only the most recognizable ones are apparent such as towhees, thrushes, robins, veeries and vulture circle in the sky.

An early start got us to our goal by 3 pm. Both of us suffered with sore feet and so we quit early. A nice well cleared trail today made our walk enjoyable and enabled us to see the signs of early summer as ground squirrels scampered across the trail, woodchucks rustled the leaves as they ran beside us, deer would stop in the trail ahead of us and stare then dash into the woods. Juncos seemed to delight in telling us to follow them up the trail by flitting and stopping ahead of us. Saw lots of columbine and a white flower which I think is poke flower. We had to fish pickerel frogs out of the springs we drank from.

Our water is becoming more suspect as we walk north and the yellow warning signs recommend the water should be boiled before being used. We use halazone tablets or boil it when cooking now in order to avoid problems.

We are passing lots of other hikers off for vacation or out of school that are doing 3-7 day hikes. The warm weather is causing me some problems while sleeping. My sleeping bag is too warm and I sweat profusely and I wish that I had a zippered cotton sheet to sleep in, but sleeping in the nude helps and only partially covered works OK.

Our lunch spot today was a beautiful overlook on Hogsback Mountain in the S.N.P. Fish sandwiches, brown bread and water. Seems rather dull doesn't it? But to us, it was a feast as our bodies demand the protein from the fish and bread and the strength pours back into our muscles as we eat. Gorp (peanuts, raisins, and M & M's) rounds out the meal. All very tasty. Tonight its long grained rice, tuna, chicken noodle soup with celery salt and wild onions thrown in and, oh yes, instant potatoes, also a chocolate hot drink. Rick and I are very full.

Just before arriving at the lean-to we talked to a couple from Davenport, Iowa, who are tent campers at Loft Mountain and Lewis campground. He is a conservation officer and interested in the way camping is done in other state campgrounds and was curious about our "thru hike" of the AT. I might note at this point how lucky the eastern seaboard is to have a mountain range at their back door.

Forgot to mention meeting a man and wife at Thornton Gap the day before yesterday. The man was a retired engineer and had helped map some of the AT near Duncannon, PA. Rick and I had stopped at the Panorama Restaurant to load up on wild cherry sundaes and milkshakes. Mr. and Mrs. Barnhardt asked us if they could take our picture. They had just seen a black bear five minutes before crossing the

highway -- funny that we hadn't ever see a bear all this way on the trail. We obtained a map from Mr. Barnhardt which helped us considerably as we didn't have anything showing the trail in Pennsylvania. Rick and I were considering Duncannon, PA as a possible pickup spot at the time we go back to Michigan for a visit so the map was helpful. However, Caldonia, Penn, is an alternate spot which would allow Rick and I to visit Gettysburg and see the Civil War Memorial there before returning to Michigan.

Well, lets get back to today; the shelter area is becoming quite crowded as a lot of scouts from Cleveland, Ohio have arrived and plan starting their trail hike from this point going south for 50 miles. Also, two girls who are teachers are here. Rick and I are besieged with questions and then after the evening meal is done we clean up all the leftovers from the scouts. We are the only ones who have any appetites at this point so how lucky can we get. Salad, mashed potatoes, chili, gravy -- WOW! This is great. Another very interesting event was the father and son we saw later arriving in camp equipped with hand axes, bolo knives, heavy army belts, canteens. Rick and I would have died of overloading if we had carried all that equipment. I believe these two people will have learned a lot by the time they complete their hike.

Our tent sites for the night are some 50 yards behind the lean-to on newly seeded (2 years ago) ground that is flat. Slept good.

June 20, 1975. Friday. Hiking by 7:30 am. Quite a hassle what with the scouts getting breakfast at the same time, but we admired their organized preparation. The adults in the group were very calm and the boys seemed happy with the prospects of a full week of hiking in the Shenandoah National Park and another week of sightseeing. There were two school teachers (women) hiking in our direction. They taught kindergarten and 2 and 3 grades and hoped to go as far as Harpers Ferry. We soon lost track of them as we walked north and after 15 miles decided to go into Front Royal and then hitchhike to Harpers Ferry. We circumvented part of the trail under relocation and not well marked in an effort to get into Harpers Ferry before the P.O. closed and if possible use the ATC office typewriter for a story before both close for the weekend.

We enjoyed a ride from Chester Gap to Front Royal, picked up supplies and ate barbecued chicken and milkshakes. Then hitched a ride to Berryville and then into Harpers Ferry arriving exactly at 4 pm. After picking up our mail drop at the P.O. we walked to the ATC where we left a story on the hike. Mary from the office was very kind to us and gave us a ride over to the Kiwanas Youth Hostel, a nice large rambling house with accommodations for 15 men and 15 women, showers, laundry, dining room, kitchen and a huge old fireplace in a nice living room. We met Len Pizer again from Big Meadows acquaintance. Being the only ones here, we took over the place and after a "separate dish" dinner got our mail read and food separated. Next was a phone call to Joan (10:30 pm) which Rick and I both enjoyed.

Some difficulties can arise from the thoughts in Rick's mind at this point concerning time to be spent at home on our break. He has 2 weeks all planned and the actual time is going to be somewhat shorter. About ten days is all that we can spare if we want to make Mount Katahdin before shut down time. It is an emotional setback for him and I am afraid of the results. He indicated he might not finish the trail. So I'll have to wait and see just how he faces this decision.

Our costs at this lodging are \$2.50 each person per night and not bad, so we are doing OK on expenses.

June 21, 1975. Saturday. Woke up to beautiful sunny skies and warm temperatures in the 80's. Our plans included a sightseeing walk around Harpers Ferry before heading up the trail. We walked across the railroad trestle and covered all the historical points in town recalling our last visit here with Mom, Barb and John the previous year. This town is a National Park and is visited by many people. The buildings are rebuilt from early pre-Civil War times with all manner of historical sites manned by guides, films depicting past events. The old cemetery was a very interesting spot and contained the graves of the original founder of the town, the first settler was Peter Stephens, a trader who arrived in 1733. Then in 1747 Robt. Harper, a millwright, became the owner of the site and made it his home. In 1801 the United States government built a gun factory here, the Hall Gun Works, designed and built guns (breech loading flintlock rifles). Eighteen fifty nine saw John Brown's raid and Harpers Ferry as the setting for further history making action followed by the Civil War and the town changed hands several times during the war.

To go back to the log our goal for the day is a campsite just shy of Gathland State Park north of Harpers Ferry and across the state border in Maryland.

We had a good nights sleep at the Kiwanas Youth Hostel and got up at 7 am. Our breakfast was gook; rice, raisins and mix sent to us from Joan. Excellent tasting and very filling. Did the laundry and then Rick and I headed for our tour of the town, returned by 2 pm and after cooking eggs in the yard at the hostel we headed out on the trail (4 pm). After seven miles we found a campsite. Our trail is very flat after ascending Weverton Heights at the end of the C&O canal raised dike section. And we found the footing rough going over small rocky terrain so the campsite was a chance to rub sore feet and rest. The scenery was mostly lush green woods with a rocky outcropping following the trail. We enjoyed the views of the two rivers, Potomac and Shenandoah meeting at the apex with Harpers Ferry in the middle.

We enjoyed a nice sunset with mourning doves cooing at 8 pm still. Don't know what that means, but Gramma Brigham would have a saying for it I'm sure. Our beds are on top of soft forest leaves tonight so we ought to sleep well. Will hoist our food bags into the trees tonight to discourage the four footed marauders from eating our newly acquired food. Can't imagine there being any bears this close to civilization, but we can't relax our vigilance or it might cost us. The bears haven't bothered us this far and I can't imagine why, but we haven't seen any fuzzy bears yet. There are bear reports all the time from other hikers, but seem to occur at shelters behind or in front of us. Tomorrow will be a full day so I'm going to bed now, 8:15 pm.

June 22, 1975. Sunday. Joan and I have been married 28 years today -- Happy Anniversary Joany! Our love has been a very enduring love and my respect for you ever deepens.

Sunny all day today with cloudless skies and temperatures in the 80's and 90's. Covered 14 miles on this day and our goal is Pine Knob shelter in Maryland. Last night city noises were with us because of our closeness to Hagerstown, Maryland, but we slept good in spite of them. I suppose being alone and away from all the hustle for as long as we have been may present some problems to Rick and I in adapting back again to the steady hum drum life. I'm sure that loneliness may not ever be a problem to us because we will know how to place the feeling in it's right, beautiful perspective.

Up at 6:45 am and hiking by 7:45 am, the trail was rocky and in about 2-1/2 miles we descended down through early morning shadows of sunlit trees to a pretty park called "Gathland State Park" so named in memory and dedicated to artists and correspondents of the Civil War era. Gath is a pen name of G. A. Townsend and somehow connected to this farm turned into a park. Stone building consists of a museum, library, old homestead and a memorial arch with names and markers telling about the park.

Rick and I sat at a picnic table and ate our lunch and enjoyed the quietness of it all. The balance of the day's trail was all ascending to crest of the mountains and then crest hiking through pleasant woods and passing through Washington Monument State Park where we were halted by many picnickers wanting to know all about our long hike and reasons for doing it. Finally we crossed I-70 interstate highway and after passing over the hiker's bridge we found Pine Knob lean-to. Deep in the woods, but not deep enough to shut out the roar of heavy truck's engines as they whined and ground through gears on the steep grade of the highway. Again Rick and I decided to sleep on the ground rather than the hard floor of the lean-to. It was a nice night without any rain prospects and only an enjoyable sleep in prospect (truck noise notwithstanding) for we were less than 1/4 mile from the highway race track. Being very tired we soon lost the truck noises and dreamed of tomorrow and it's surprises.

Its 8 pm and time to sack out. We have two 16 mile days to Caldonia and then a day for sightseeing in Gettysburg, PA for the Civil War Battlefield, museum and monuments before mom picks us up and we return to Michigan for 10 days and a change of pace.

June 23, 1975. Monday. Today it was a sunny comfortable day with some clouds in the sky and our goal is Mackie lean-to after hiking 19 miles. My, my where do we get the energy to hike so many miles in one day. Could be our impending rendezvous with Joan? Our tent sites last night were flat and dry (no dew). Breakfast saw the last of Joan's oven mix consumed and the balance of our Heartland's mixed in, too. Our appetites are stronger in the morning (or larger) and our energy lasts until our stomachs say eat which is every 4 hours. We don't seem to get tired of the same fare each day so our small selection of food doesn't hinder us at all, as it would a person doing the same boring job each day. We feast on the different views, variance of surroundings, different trail terrain and interests of the country and trail characteristics. I suppose the food is a means only by which we may discover more and more of this rich enriching experience. How wonderful to realize that we have yet another three whole months of walking ahead of us.

We walked a long way today so that we could be in Caldonia State Park on Tuesday and have a whole day to explore Gettysburg prior to Joan's arrival Thursdays am.

One nice spot on our walk today is "Big Rock" hotel ruins in Maryland overlooking a rich Pennsylvania farmland. I believe this is actually in Penn.¹¹ (At this point my view of this area was obscured by a very sore shin splint ailment and my comments in the diary reflect my soreness). "This was about all Maryland had to offer of interest, lots of rocks, gnats, and more rocks. 36 miles through the state and I fear that this state will hold no fascination for either Rick or I." We passed into Penn. this afternoon so that our trip is about half over. Tonight we arrive at Mackie lean-to and found Len Pizer (a boy we met in VA at Big Meadows and again at Harpers Ferry Kiwanas Youth Hostel). He had a big bandage on his head from a fall earlier in the day. A thoughtful motorist picked him up and took him to a doctor who put six stitches to close the wound. It was a bad cut, but not enough

to stop Len from doing his hiking. I believe he was about to end his extended hiking and only had a few more days to go before returning to his home in Ohio.

A scout troop is here at the shelter and they offered the remnants of their Chili Mae kettle to us. Boy! We really cleaned it up. Afterwards the scouts formed a straight line and covered the entire area elbow to elbow picking up every bit of litter they stepped over as they progressed across the camping area. Now that's what I call a real dramatic way of showing concern for the AT and it's adjacent environs. Being close to the road like this lean-to is makes it hard to keep it clean. (Note: in 1978, this lean-to was torn down and now only a memory in our minds).

June 24, 1975. Tuesday. Weather is muggy but still beautiful, sunny all day except about 2:30 pm when we had a rain shower for one hour. We were in a shelter at this particular time. Hiked 14 miles today reaching Caldonia State Park about 5 pm.

Our day was full starting at 7 am and ending at 5 pm. The trail was a nice grassy path wandering over two minor ascents and a ridge crest. We passed three shelters and about 2:30 pm stopped for a snack at Raccoon shelters (2 small 3-man size lean-tos) and while there it rained so we rested and took naps. Earlier in the day we came across an 18' timber rattlesnake that someone had pinned down, but not killed. A group of small boys and one adult were examining it at a distance. So Rick and I did too and then agreed with the little boys to free the snake which we did. The adult leader called it a "pine rattler", but Rick couldn't find it in his book.

We did a lot of road walking and looked around an interesting theater where Edith (of Archy Bunker "All in the Family" fame) did a lot of shows as herself, Jean Stapelton.

Not being sure of just where to set up camp, we selected a site back in the woods close to the highway where Joan would pick us up. A tavern and restaurant furnished us water and we called Joan to confirm our arrival and set a time for our meeting on Thursday in front of the Manor House Restaurant on U.S. 30 at Caldonia, PA. We have wintergreen berries growing around us here at our campsite and Rick just saw a big deer. The ground is nice and we'll really sleep good tonight and tomorrow we'll hitchhike into Gettysburg.

June 25, 1975. Wednesday. A very interesting day and different from any day in the last 3 months. Temperatures in the 70's when we got up. After a quick breakfast we packed one backpack with only essentials and headed for U.S. 30 highway. Hitchhiking wasn't good on this stretch, but finally a truck picked us up and we did the 15 miles to Gettysburg. We walked into town from the city limits and stopped at the grocery store for eggs and bread. Then stopped at a city park and hard boiled our eggs, made egg salad spread used the bread for sandwiches. Made friends with a local minister strolling in the park before walking out to the Battlefield area. (Note: Rick and I had \$1.20 left before shopping and we did some reconnaissance on two grocery stores before making our purchases. It was worth the effort and educational to boot. Two guys separate and then pretty soon return to the street corner to share costs and make comparisons, then going over to the store with the better prices to buy the bread, eggs and mustard).

We walked quite a way to get to the battleground. We reviewed the battle in the pamphlets, maps and story audio form. Walked through the extensive museum, the cemetery ridge, attended slide lectures at the U.S. Forest Service building. It

rained while we were inside the museum and late afternoon found us sitting in a picnic area eating the remains of our egg salad sandwiches with sips of water. We really enjoyed ourselves and did what we loved -- become completely engrossed almost putting ourselves into the soldiers' positions, living during the actually early times of the Civil War.

Our hitchhiking on the return to Caldonia between 5 and 7 pm was much more successful and by 9 pm we were in our sleeping bags.

June 26, 1975. Thursday. We were up at the crack of dawn and packed and down on the highway by 7 am. Within minutes Joan arrived and we hugged and squeezed and hopped in the car and headed for Michigan. Joan brought her home made bread along and Rick and I gorged ourselves on it before stopping for breakfast. We made it back to Michigan by 5 pm and enjoyed a great welcome from Smiths, Hiltons, and Terpstras. The homecoming was a beautiful thing with our friends and neighbors gathering at our car and talking about the times missed not being at home with them.

Note: This 10 day break from the hike afforded Rick and I a chance to acclimatize to home living and see just how much we missed the niceties of home with food, shelter, and bed and bath facilities close at hand. We enjoyed it. But our routines were so firmly set while hiking that after gorging ourselves on food the greatness of walking each day was soon missed. And after some enjoyable times at the lake (Lake Michigan) and the Eddy Farm at Douglas, John Crandell took Rick and I back to Caldonia to begin our hike the second half of an experience of a lifetime.

July 5, 1975. Chambersburg, PA, Keystone motel. After driving all day, John, Rick and I stayed at a motel close to Caldonia and prepared to start out the next day from our pickup spot of June 26, 1975.

July 6, 1975. Saturday. With sunny skies and some clouds now and then we started out hiking in 80 to 90° temp and soon worked up a sweat. Today we hiked from Caldonia State Park to Birch Run lean-to -- some 9.5 miles. Hiked through a portion of the park and ascended to a flat crest where we had flat walking until 4:30 pm.

The day was a trial run to see how our legs, feet and brains worked since the last extended hiking was done. John did well and our daily miles should come to 14 to 16 miles tomorrow. Saw a 30' timber rattler alive and crawling just off the trail this pm. It rattled just as Rick went by him. He was two feet into the brush beside the trail and not coiled. A beautiful golden brown color and he was just telling us that he was there and not to step on him. So many other hikers think that all snakes must be killed immediately, but not us. We love to know that we can share the beauties of the woods and live with these beautiful creatures. We attempted some distance pictures of the snake, but doubt if they will come out because of the shadows deep in the woods. Saw deer and ground squirrel and woodchucks, also today and met 8 to 10 other hikers coming in the opposite direction. Our goal for the day turned out to be twin shelters called Birch Run lean-tos and held 3 people each which we had all to ourselves. John took one and Rick and I took the other. A family of six was camped down the trail from us and a single hiker put up his tent up the hill from us. Lost our food rope tonight while trying to get it over a limb

of a tree where we intended on slinging our food sacks. But our bear problems are nothing now and we don't need the rope.

Temperature about 7 pm is 77° so I imagine the valley people are sweltering in 80° or higher temperatures. The flies are out tonight with gnats in clouds so rain is expected tonight (one of Gramma B's predictions). Good food tonight, tomato sauce over mashed potatoes and large sardines, chocolate drink and some of John's freeze-dried strawberry ice cream. At noon today we had fresh blueberries, milk and sugar. Boy oh Boy -- Yum Yum! Our packs are heavy, but they are lightening up after each meal.

July 7, 1975. Sunday. Weather: sunny in am, cloudy during pm and rained up to 4 pm. Hiked: 12.5 miles. Goal: Campsite just short of Tag Run lean-to in Pennsylvania.

We were up by 8 am and a slight fog hung in the air, but it disappeared by 10 am. Our trail is a straight one today with a total of 16 miles ahead of us. Rick's concern for getting mileage in is interesting as he commented on our late start and hoped we would get a good days hike in. Have seen five (5) other hikers so far (10:30 am), the woods and terrain seems like northern Michigan, lots of deer, birds (towhees, teacher birds {ovenbirds}, thrushes, ravens and others. We went through Pine Furnace State Park and longingly looked at the swimming pool, but our day was too short on miles hiked to permit us to stop.

We learned that Azel Ames is ahead of us on the trail by one day from another hiker we met and talked with. A group of Connecticut College students are "thru hiking" the AT and are right behind us now doing miles per day. They have a driver who meets them each night and supplies the hikers with extra food, clothing or shoes. The group started May 15th, 1975 and must complete the hike prior to school enrollment date in September.

We got a little wet this pm, but not enough to be miserable. Our tents are again very versatile, waterproof and adjustable forming a lean-to so all three could sit together to plan the day's hike for the next day. The sky is clear now and it looks good for tomorrow. As we learned on the trail today, the leader of this group of "Conn Yankees" is Warren Doyle who holds the record of 66 1/2 days for hiking the entire length of the AT. The former record saw held by Brandly Owen who did the trail in 88 days.

The AT went through a landmark today -- a former prisoner of war camp where World War II submarine prisoners were kept. A very pretty valley with green mountains and some of the original buildings are still standing. Also, we passed over several charcoal ring flat spots in the middle of the woods about 50' in diameter where charcoal was made for steel making processes in the early 1800's. These circles are weird because they are so obvious and form an ancient history not often seen by people. Trees have grown up in the middle of the circles signifying this lapse of time since they were discontinued after the Civil War. We passed two locked cabins used by one of the maintaining hiking clubs (PATC). Very rustic. John has a picture of one of the old steel making furnaces (Pine Grove Furnace State Park).

July 8, 1975. Weather: Again warm 68 and up to 85° in the pm. Sunny. Hiked: 14 miles. Goal: Little Dogwood Creek Charcoal Hearth campsite south of Allen, PA.

We started by 7:30 am and the trail was rocky but pretty. Our stops were longer than usual with frequent cooling off at springs. The sweat made us soaking wet and each spring became a haven in which to cool off. John got blisters and so did I.

Also had a chaffing problem from wet underclothes, but some vaseline took care of it. Tape and mole skin took care of the blisters.

Our routine was interrupted continually today by 21 hikers -- "Connecticut Yankees" and Mr. Warren Doyle who wanted to talk. I think that we could have gotten at least 3 more miles of hiking if we hadn't stopped to talk with these people. But no one's to blame but ourselves. We love to compare notes and get stories of their experiences.

We got news today that the Hawaiians are ahead of us and also Azel Ames. Saw a boy (Pete) that we met in the Shenandoah National Park now laid up in a lean-to with blisters (Tagg Run shelter).

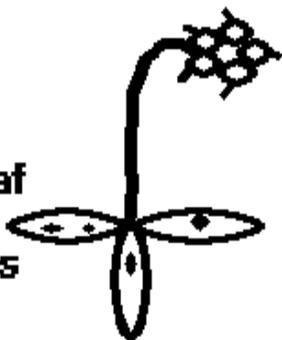
Birds today: thrushes, towhees, and towhees with cream (John's version). A bird that starts out like a towhee and then substitutes a double trill or echo type second note puzzled me. Beautiful purple flower with yellow center (see Rick's picture) caught my eye. Looks like deadly nightshade to me, but Rick says it's in the orchid family; short with green leaf folded around it. Also we camped with white holly flowers around our tents.

See the following: 6-7" high
White leaf

and green leaf

Hairs off each

**Green leaf
with
dark spots**



Green leaf with dark spots

A Trillium

Also see John's picture. I take a picture once in a while like blisters on John's heels. See Dick's picture. Our campsite

tonight is an old charcoal hearth near a stream. After a skinny dip and a Chili Mae meal its time for bed -- 8 pm. Warren Doyle came through on the trail while we were having dinner and he will rendezvous with his group in another 10 miles. Boy, I don't envy him or his hiking companions.

July 9, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Sunny with cheesecloth clouds which means rain later. Temperature 86° and hotter. Hiked: 12 miles between Pennsylvania turnpike and U. S. 81 super highway. Goal: Motel on U. S. 11 highway.

We were off and hiking by 8 am from Little Dogwood Creek Charcoal Hearth campsite, Penn. South of Allen, Penn. Proceeded over White Rock Ridge to Allen, PA (known as Churchtown) via 6 miles of road walking. Nice country but hot. We got some rain but not bad. Saw a raccoon scurry up a tree just off the trail. Our day was not as successful as usual for Rick twisted his left knee as he came down off the ridge. It wasn't real serious, but caused some discomfort for the rest of the day. John's blisters caused him to complain enough so that after eating at a restaurant on U. S. 11 and coming out to a rainstorm to start walking at 3 pm, we left the truck stop restaurant and headed for a motel where we holed up for the rest of the day.

We licked our wounds and used "Atomic Balm" on muscles, on legs, on knees and on hip. John had a sore hip which seemed to give him continuous soreness. Rick's knee got the treatment and I used the "Balm" on a charlie horse on my leg (calf of my right leg). As usual the weather cleared up about 5 pm and the sun came out for a short time then it clouded up again. We are in for a real thunderstorm because its muggy and very hot now about 9 pm. Rick gave Dick a haircut tonight and Dick did a washing in the bath tub (hot water not working in sink). We cooked our dinner on the bathroom floor and sat in front of the TV eating and discussing tomorrow's hike. Sally Sheldon stayed at this same motel two days ago so we are behind Azel, Sally and the Hawaiians now. Expect to catch them in about 10-14 days. We want to step out and hike, but good things always come eventually and Rick, John and I are learning about each other which will be a lifetime of memories. Oh, yes -- got a letter from Bernie today when we stopped at the P.O. in Allen, PA.

July 10, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Sunny, beautiful and blue skies with white clouds. Hiked: 12.8 miles. Goal: The Thelma Morks shelter, 3 miles short of Duncannon, PA.

Our motel accommodations were nice and had a good sleep. Up at 6:30 am and on the trail at 7:30 am. Six miles of road walking. Some creek walking and then two ascents and woods walking. A good day with John leading most of the way and we all felt good by the end of the day. We reached our goal by 4:30 pm and John pulled out all the stops with steak, rice mixture, chocolate with marshmallows and chowder soup. This is his going away celebration on the final night before he heads back to Michigan. It was a real treat and we enjoyed it. Another bonus today were the black raspberries and huckleberries we ate along the trail. Its so luxurious to have these at your fingertips while strolling through beautiful woods and back roads. The heat was the only villain today, but there just had to be something bad about the day. We stopped and splashed in the cool stream and spring today to combat the 88° temperatures. Rick's knee is better today, but a little stiff. John's blisters are on the mend and my charlie horse is gone. Saw a box turtle and passed near another old charcoal hearth. One other hiker in the shelter with us tonight.

July 11, 1975. Friday. Weather: Sunny with temps near 65° to 75° at 7:30 am with clear skies all day until late evening then rain. Hiked: 3-1/2 miles into Duncannon, PA. Goal: Our place of abode was the fire station where an unexpected illness caught us.

Left lean-to about 8 am and hiked into the city of Duncannon, PA. No animals in sight, but saw another box turtle, some mourning doves and views at the time were limited by woods growth, both second and third stage. The trail was very rocky except for one section going through a beautiful pine tree area. At Hawk Rock as we descended, views popped into sight with farmland to the northwest, the city of Duncannon and Susquehanna River with Sherman Creek on the north and east.

This rocky area is a favorite spot for hawk enthusiasts to view the hawks during migration season. The hawks fly through this area in flocks or be vies or whatever on their way northward. Our trail goes through the heart of Duncannon, PA¹² so some supplies were picked up. At this point John left us to hitch a ride back to Caldonia where he left his car and to return to Michigan.

Upon obtaining our supplies and moving out of the store to pack them away, Rick became ill. He was faint and nauseated and in no way could he walk. I hastily

spotted the fire station across the street and inquired if it would be alright if we used their facilities for a while to wait out this flash illness of Rick's. They were very hospitable men and said to help ourselves to their lounge which we did immediately. Rick lay down and rested.

It seems John had been ill all night at the lean-to with the trots, but settled his problem while hiking and he left us about 11:30 am.

The lounge was equipped with a color TV, ping pong table and couch and chairs and a toilet and sink and refrigerator. So after Rick downed some aspirin to combat the headache and slight fever, he laid down for the balance of the day. We ate and watched TV the rest of the day and I did some exploring around town between 3 and 5 pm to see what the history of Duncannon was. I met the grocery store owner, a contractor, people at the "Borough office", people on the street, post office people, newsstand owner, lady on her front porch, retired electrician and a lieutenant in the fire department. These folks all loved to talk about themselves and about the history of their town.

By 5 pm I had walked a lot of the town and returned to the fire station. Rick wasn't doing any better so decided to hang loose here for the next couple of days. We decided to enjoy ourselves as best we could and rest up. With a grocery store across the street, eating was always on our minds, so we dined on hamburgers, a lot of liquids, ice cream and bread and lettuce.

July 12, 1975. Saturday. The weather was cloudy and rainy so our indoors living was advantageous. Up at 7 am with both Rick and I shifting into gear for the second stage of this illness. We had the trots and stomach aches and continued rest was the routine for the day. Our sleeping quarters are in keeping with our finances -- no charge and low key -- but comfortable and we will remain here until this bug leaves us. Sure hope John made it home OK.

A few facts about Duncannon, PA. Original names of the town were Duncanville, Baskins and Petersburg up until 1915. The name Duncan belonged to a man who owned and operated a sled factory (and scooters later) in the 1800's. The town had a steel plant, granary and nail making plant. These buildings are mostly gone except for the payroll building which now is used for a VFW meeting house. Highway #11 now runs over the land occupied by the before mentioned. A centennial celebration was held in 1965. The buildings in town are mostly original with some new ones such as the post office and banks. All the old homes on the main street are close to the street showing how little the original street was even now that it has been widened to it's maximum. The porches of some of the houses have their steps ending at the very narrow sidewalk. And of course the homes are very closely built. There aren't any stop lights in town. In fact none exist in this entire county. The Lions Club have a library in town which I hope to look into. Hope we feel up to leaving Duncannon on Sunday am.

Note: At this time pages are left for snap shots taken that relate directly or indirectly to the trail.

Footnotes section may have information relating to events that happened on the trail while Rick and I were hiking or events that have happened since our hike. The AT News has interesting news items that relate to some locations on the trail and I have added these later.

- 1.About 15 hikers started in Maine during June and July and hiked south to Georgia. We began meeting these people in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey going in the opposite direction from us. Their hardships all seemed so much greater than ours. Black flies, water and boggy hiking in Maine, then November's wintery blasts close to the end of their hike. We later (July 1976) met them again for a hikers reunion at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.
- 2.The day hikes were on the Ammanusac Ravine trail up to the Lake of the Clouds hut and back the next day. The Great Gulf trail cut off Dolly Copp via another side trail.

The Pine Mountain trail walk.
The side trail up Mt. Jefferson over the Casalated Rocks.
- 3.Our major source of information came from the trail guides we purchased from the Appalachian Trail Conference at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. These became our "bible" and sheet by sheet we read them as we walked the trail. They were accurate with some exceptions where new relocations had occurred after the guide was printed. We found the hide and seek relocations the most exciting part of the trail because it required assistance from local people who were most kind and helpful.
- 4.Kelty replaced these padded hip belts at no charge to us and to others, too, who experienced the same problem.
- 5.Be sure to treat your boots with the proper leather weather proofing because if your boots are made with "chrome tanned leather" it is best to use a wax and silicone mixture. But if the leather is "oil tanned," it requires an oil base treatment. Treat: the welt (and midsoles require different treatment than the uppers). Use a mixture of shellac, wax and bee's wax for this area of the boot.
- 6.My observation of this statement at a later date would lead me to believe that the pressures or fears of not being able to hike anymore or maybe not being able to complete this long hike were gradually building up. One's mind has to still function and natural anxieties existed about the wasting of six months by spending the time as a physical wreck when I could be enjoying the endless quiet and solitude of the woods.
- 7.Can't describe the viciousness of the dogs we passed today, but am glad the owner called them off, or we would have been bitten for sure. Second time Rick and I have had a close shave. My walking stick is a deterrent to rowdy dogs and I swing it freely if need be. It seems that a group of dogs are much more aggressive and you can get surrounded by them. They encourage each other to attack. This is an inborn or carryover trait in order to survive possibly.
- 8.See article about Father Charles Beausoleil in Appalachian Trailway News September, 1976 by Ed Garvey, "Holy Family Hospice."
- 9.Waynesboro is a very clean small town. Originally called Teesville in approximately 1736 when it was developed and in 1797 changed to Waynesboro

to honor the popular and dashing army officer Mad Anthony Wayne. Rick and I were always digging up the history of these small towns and the Chamber of Commerce was the 1st place we headed for when we started looking for things of interest.

Stopped at a music store to find a wire of the correct size to clean out the orifice of our Svea stove. The owner happened to be a retired Flint, Mich man and he had settled here because of the inclement weather which allowed for pleasant living year round.

Population about 11,000 in 1947 and lies about 25 miles west of Charlottesville near Rockfish Gap on Interstate highway 64. South River runs through Waynesboro (originally Waynesboro-Basic). Basic City lay south of the river and became a part of Waynesboro in 1923.

10.In 1973, Barb, John, Rick, Joan and Dick camped at Big Meadows in the Shenandoahs. While taking some day hikes, Rick was left to hike on his own with some other boys met at Bear Fence lean-to. The following night after hiking to South River lean-to Rick sat up most of the night keeping watch as a bear prowled around the area, scaring other hikers, sleeping in tents and stealing food from their packs. By morning everyone was inside the shelter and the bear was serenaded by the banging of pots and pans in an effort to keep him away. This met with only mild success as he returned to do more poking around the empty tents and according to Rick the other boys soon began chasing him and taking his picture. A foolhardy adventure which worried Rick. His story always unfolds and he loves to tell it -- so be sure to ask him.

11.Met a couple of young men hiking for a day one black, that other white, both enjoying what our world has to offer. The height of companionship and seeing eye to eye the most beautiful sight of nature. Also, John Crandell in doing this section of the trail in either '77 or '78 took pictures of "hang gliders" taking off from this point and falling away to the depths of the trees and fields below. Big Rock has a stretching beauty.

12.The AT passes through several towns and many small populated areas such as Hot Springs, NC, Damascus, VA, Pearisburg, VA, Monson, ME to name a few. The few others had the trail on the outskirts of town and it was quite a walk to go into town if one needed supplies.

13.Rain gear not mentioned but taken: chaps which cover the legs only and serve many purposes, such as quick way to cover bare legs when going through nettles, also light and flexible over a pair of short pants in the rain and serve to shed water before it rolls down your legs into your boots or shoes. Excellent for early morning when the dew is heavy as your legs get wiped by bushes and grass. The water cannot get to you and keeps from demoralizing you. A poncho also went along serving as a ground cloth and as an awning during breakfast and lunch breaks. A pack cover was used to save the pack from excessive soaking and warded off small rodents when the pack was left on the ground at night (minus the food sack of course). A wool shirt jacket and wool stocking cap served as the most comfortable rain protection. Many times the weather was such that the rain

felt good and no protection was the only way to go. It is next to impossible to stay dry while hiking rain or no rain.

14.Two hikers died at this lean-to July 10, 1980, lightning bounced off a tree close by and into the shelter where several hikers were staying. Roger Lyn McGlone of Marysville, Ohio and Scott Powell of Saline, Michigan were struck and killed by the lightning.

Editors Note:

Book Two begins with two writings that were printed in Volume 3 of the Beech-Hurst Family Heritage Book in the *Tales on Trails* portion. References for these writings are as follows:

Rick's "Freedom's Value" in Beech-Hurst Family Heritage Book, Volume 3, page 82.

Dick's "Appalachian Trail Experience" in the Beech-Hurst Family Heritage Book, Volume 3, page 91.

Lets interject another view of this 2000 mile trek by another participant, Rick Brigham. On October 7, 1976, for his Composition #2 class Advanced Composition Rick penned the following story entitled "Freedom's Value".

Freedom's Value
by Rick Brigham
October 7, 1976

I can see no reason why so many people become downcast over the smallest irritations and mishaps. Their disenchantment stems from the irresponsible non-acceptance of the consequences of their decisions and ultimate actions. Each person on this earth should realize that he is responsible for his own actions. These actions are the results of a live's compilation of values, beliefs and principles, all of which life travels upon.

Everyone has a cure for the psychological ailments of mankind; a cure for a desperate life. Well, this is my remedy, and I must say it has kept me continuously happy or at least content, through all odds since I adopted it way back when.

Life is an infinite and continuous forward flow with no backward course. Its currents hold a never-ending wash of experiences that keep life from becoming still and stagnant. I have yet to see a person who could not take a step without calling it a step never taken before.

I have never believed there ever was a word "bored" because I have seen no part of my life pass by me and not see it as an experience. One of these experiences occurred within the last two years. I consider this a major experience, as it is still and always will be of great consequence to me, and as an experience it held within it many, many other full-bodied occurrences.

Our family has always been avidly out-of-doors oriented. We love the natural world and will do much to preserve it. From this association was brought about the major experience I am leading up to.

In 1961 my family and Aunt and Uncle traveled to the White Mountains of New Hampshire. There we did some amateur dayhiking in the Presidential Range. Several times we ventured upon and crossed the Appalachian Trail.

From the minute we set foot on that tiny stretch of the A.T. (Appalachian Trail), my father's curiosity about it produced itchy feet. Several times in the years 1969-1974 members of our family, along with my Aunt and Uncle and friends, backpacked

portions of the A.T. in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, and again in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains, New Hampshire.

All of this footwork only generated more vigor in my father's curiosity about the A.T. Early in 1974 my father started intensive study of the trail and decided that he was going to traverse its length.

In the summer of that same year, while talking about it over a pancake breakfast, at our farmhouse in Douglas, on Lake Michigan, I was intrigued by such a challenge and asked my father if I could go also. He welcomed the proposal.

I immediately began to accumulate all the same materials he had already gathered. My knowledge of the A.T. grew enormously; this information was necessary. The Appalachian Trail runs from its southern terminus of Springer Mountain in northern Georgia, along the crestline of the Appalachian Mountain chain through thirteen eastern seaboard states to Mt. Katahdin in the center of the Maine wilderness. This trail, being a total of 2050 miles long, would take us all of 6 months to complete.

We gathered all of our supplies and equipment through the fall and winter of 1974 and set the date of April 1st, 1975 to be on Springer Mtn., Georgia. Arrangements were made for me to be excused from school from April to June and during the following September and October. My counselors and teachers all encouraged me by saying this would be a much more worthwhile educational experience than school itself. My father quit his job.

My mother, Aunt and Uncle drove us to the starting point at the base of Springer Mtn. in Georgia. The Uncle I have spoken of accompanied us for the first two weeks.

These first two weeks were our breaking in period. Since we were backpacking, we had to carry supplies between certain points on the trail. Our packs held a usual load of about 50 pounds, and with this weight legs and feet took a beating. All of us had dollar size blisters on our feet for a time and sore calf and thigh muscles. After this training period our feet accumulated calluses and our legs became used to the strenuous ascents and descents of the mountain terrain.

As planned a one day break waited for us in Franklin, North Carolina. When my mother and Aunt picked us up, they said we had all lost weight, looked extremely healthy, but dirty or else tan. The two women had vacationed with my grandparents in Florida during the two weeks before the break. After the break they dropped my father and me back on the A.T. and returned to Michigan with Uncle John.

Being 17 at the time of this hike and quite inexperienced at being away from the security of home for long stretched, I became depressed with homesickness from time to time. I began to wonder if we were jinxed by starting on April Fool's Day. Of course my main reason for being depressed was that we had just started a great undertaking with no sure end in sight. I overcame these fears as we talked with fellow backpackers with the same ailment.

This fact and the fact that we all shared one common goal, as long as we traveled this trail, bonded us together whether we liked it or not. We brought one another cheer in times of downheartedness. It was also great to hear news, from our companions that had gotten ahead or fallen behind, through that never ending grapevine of communication.

We hiked the full length of the misty, green Great Smokey mountains and found the reasons why the Cherokee had loved this quiet solitude for their homeland before the white men came.

Every other week or so we came to a road where we would stick our thumbs out and hitch a ride into a town to restock our food and out other necessities. We had

set certain towns up along the way to be pick-up points for mail. Boy, was it ever enlivening to hear from a friend or relative I missed so much. The return letter writing I did was extraordinarily for me, because I never have written many letters.

Most interesting, along with everything else we encountered, were the diverse cultural heritages we came in contact with. The easy-going southern Appalachian mountain folks with a kind word and smile for you at every greeting. The older southern country folks, of an industrialized city, with a story to tell me. The all too familiar curiosity of a stray-eyed city person in a hurry to get to work, and with no time to even quench his curiosity by asking a simple question. People of Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry relating their region's history, with pride. A backwoodsman who loves the wilderness and shows it through shiny eyes set within a weather-beaten and wrinkled face. All people with differing accents, but all with a like admiration of somebody who is doing something he believes in. In complete freedom -- a word none of them will ever forget and all of them will cherish.

Our trek took us through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the scorching sun of clear June skies. At Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, we took a couple days off for recuperation and rest. While there we toured the old town's historic places with a sensitivity derived from the grace and strength of the structures still standing after almost 200 years. Then back on the trail to look back down, with another perspective, on the old buildings, from rock ledges far above the joining of the two great rivers, Potomac and Shenandoah.

A stop at Caldonia State Park affords us time for a thumbs ride to Gettysburg National Battlefield, while we await my mother's arrival. When she arrives there are cries of joy with hugs and kisses to make up for three months of being without sight of her. A ten day break is spent back in Michigan, encompassing July 4th. This vacation from a vacation involves gatherings of friends and relatives who can see and wish to know more about the spiritual and physical changes that have come over us.

Uncle John takes us back to the A.T. and again hikes with us, but finding us quick on our feet, now, stays only a week.

Our average speed was 12 miles a day, relatively slow compared to other hikers going 20 miles a day. We have the privileges of seeing many more of nature's wonders and enjoying the seasons, as we hiked through them from early spring to late fall.

The variety of backpackers we met was fascinating. Some were people who lived in Maine and just wanted to see what it was like to walk home from Georgia. One older couple (63 and 65 years of age) from Hawaii, he a pure blooded Hawaiian and she from St. Louis, were both professional surfers and had the stamina of deer. Others we met we became good and close friends with, also. Of all the people we encountered doing the whole A.T., I was the youngest and I had many to look up to and admire. About the time we crossed the Hudson River in New York we began meeting hikers that had started at the northern end of the trail and were working their way south. Hiking from north to south on the A.T. meant beginning later in the season, due to long and wet Maine springs. They told us of the trail ahead and we obliged with any information that would prove useful to them.

In Vermont the A.T. is temporarily the Long Trail, which extends from the Massachusetts border to the Canadian border. The A.T. uses half of its route in mutuality. This part of the trail runs through the lush Green Mountains of which are covered in fir and balsam.

The colors of autumn were splotching trees here and there as we passed through New Hampshire. Since I was only three, at the time we had traveled up Mt. Washington

in the Presidential Range, this was actually my first view of the mountains, with any clarity. They were huge mounds of rock with no foliage on top, because timber line was below their crests, at 5700 feet. This is an area I must cross in a day, for the weather at this altitude changes suddenly. As my father and I crossed the top of Mt. Washington, at 6288 feet, gusts of wind were blowing up to 70 miles per hour. This, of course, we found later.

We had a surprise waiting for us at the base of the Presidentials. My sister, Ann, her boyfriend Smitty, my brother Dave and a buddy of his all greeted us with hoops and hollers. Have you ever tried to hug someone with a backpack on? I hadn't seen my sister in two years, because she had been living in California. And Smitty I had never met before.

We found a spot along the Peabody River and camped there for the night. We made the biggest spaghetti dinner you ever did see. I had one of my best nights sleeps, on a bed of leaves, with the rush of a river to lull me to sleep. My brother and his friend stayed with us only a week, but Ann and Smitty had no jobs to tie them down and they stayed with us through Maine.

If I chose a part of the trail that I thought was most untamed and beautiful, it would have to be Maine: trees everywhere and fall colors in full regalia. Not an extremely mountainous state, except for the southern portion and the weather was magnificent, but cool and crisp.

We reached Mt. Katahdin October 5th. This mountain was visible to us from several days away. It sticks out like a sore thumb, at an elevation of 5700 feet in the middle of a flat green wilderness. The Appalachian Trail dead ends on top of this mountain. At a journey's end it's an unforgettable climax to look over an area you had traveled through in previous days.

It is not possible to summarize an experience that means so much; there are too many happenings that pop to mind or can't be remembered at the time. So is life, one gigantic experience, unified, but in a million fragments in one's mind and in the minds of others that have shared it with you?

What I have learned in this: Never think that the world will come to you, for this is laziness. If one gets off one's rear-end and investigates the world, one will find adventure in a stimulating and exciting life.

My mom and Aunt picked us up at the bottom of Mt. Katahdin, and we used the next week to dawdle our way back home. We first went down the Maine coast, camping at Acadia National Park and then up into Canada and down through the Windsor Tunnel into dirty, grimy, crowded Detroit.

I could have sworn I had culture shock when I arrived back in Lansing. Everything and everybody seemed to fall on me at once. All things became structured and routine once more. I became hypertense, my hands shook and my thoughts were erratic, making me tongue-tied. This only proves what a rat-race city life is, and that the life I had been leading those six months was a relaxed life with time for me to collect my thoughts for the first time in my life. I had matured immensely during those six months of freedom from all but the necessities of life; that is why I chose this as the most valuable experience of my life-time.

The Appalachian Trail Experience
by Dick Brigham

The previous composition was for a class when Rick returned from the trail. He received an "A" for this work.

Rick and I learned to stand shoulder to shoulder and face all the big and little hardships together: We learned about each other and to understand each others silence, joy, sorrel, to pull together in rain, sweat and heat, uncertainty and to anticipate each others reactions and how to react in turn.

I'm thankful that my hike merged with my family and that they participated in so many of the experiences. I'm thankful to have rubbed shoulders with my children Ann and David who shared brief moments on the trail with us. Little did I know that these moments would become almost sacred and that sweet Annie would not be able ever to share them again. She passed from this life June 23, 1978 while exploring the underwater world in the Virgin Islands. Her shining image will forever be with us in all our adventures and most likely she will be waiting for us at the end of all our days to laugh and discuss the happenings surrounding the events where they occurred.

My dearest wife gave her inner strengths to Rick and I at every turn of the trail. Joan's interests inspired us to explore the ground, water, and sky as we walked. Each hour would not have been exciting if Joan hadn't fired OUR NEEDS to know what each flower, bird, tree, fish, insect, and cloud made the natural beauty so alive, vital to the earth and to us as human beings.

dMy daily log continues at this point:

July 13, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Cloudy and rainy all day. Hiked: 15.5 miles. Goal: Campsite at Clark Valley (lean-to is torn down).

Met these people along the trail today:

The Simpsons, mother, son, and a friend from Texas, they have hiked 1000 miles of the AT.

7 in a group -- 5 boys under 12 years of age in one family and 2 other friends staying overnight in Peters Mountain lean-to.

Barb Miller doing sections of the AT at a time.

Hank Finerfrock and daughter Jan who maintain this section of the AT. Both had attended ATC at Boone, NC. Over 1000 people there.

2 in group -- 2 women hiking opposite direction to Barb Miller and will swap car keys when they meet so as to have transportation away from AT.

We got up at 6:30 am today and both Rick and I are feeling good. Cleaned up our lounge area here at the firehouse in Duncannon and started hiking by 8:15 am. The weather was foggy and overcast, but not raining and our spirits were high because of our rest. We crossed a very old toll bridge at the north edge of Duncannon called Clarks Ferry Bridge crossing the Susquehanna River. This bridge was one of the oldest toll bridges on our trail and I experienced a thrill as we crossed it. It had a weathered look that almost spoke to you in an effort to tell you of it's past days.

We headed up the steep hill after crossing U.S. 22 and the railroad tracks. Very rocky and passed three lean-tos one of which contained six little boys and their leader. This was Peters Mountain lean-to. Nicely built shelter and full to the limit as this group relaxed and enjoyed "just roughing it." They were eager to hear

the tales of Georgia to Maine (Ga --> Me) hikers and curious as to just what was carried in their backpacks. So an inspection was held much to the glee of these little boys all perched in a row on a log in front of the hikers (Rick and Dick) listening to every word said. A wonderful picture.

The trail besides being rocky today was shadowy and fogged so as Rick moved ahead of me on the trail it was like following an apparition through heavenly clouds. He moved in and out among the trees as if floating free. As we approached our goal we were disappointed to learn that the shelter had been torn down (too near the highway and not able to be maintained properly because of heavy misuse by picnickers) state highway 325 not far off. We found a nice campsite near a spring and set up our tents. Rained off and on all night, we ought to sleep good tonight. We learned that the Hawaiians and Azel Ames are just ahead of us by 1-1/2 days, so we can catch up to them. Sally Sheldon has gone home for a couple of days and intends to go to Mt. Katahdin in Maine and hike back to her home in Massachusetts to complete her hike.

July 14, 1975. Monday. Weather: Rain all day long, it stopped about 6 pm, but remained cloudy. Hiked: 16 miles. Goal: Swatara Gap, Greenpoint Village Pavilion in the park.

Woke up with rain pouring down on us at our campsite. Up at 7 am and packed up wet in the rain after eating half in and half out from under a hastily rigged rain cape poncho spread from tree branches.

Passed through (2) abandoned mining towns where only stone foundations remain as signs of previous owners. The rain was our only obstacle and being wet all day wasn't anything new only with fresh water. Saw a pretty lean-to newly constructed in 1973 by the BFMCC of Pennsylvania. All stone and nicely terraced with spool table around a 12" diameter pine tree, piped spring running through the shelter area at the edge of stone patio. Big stone fireplace and stone wall bordered the patio. A real "Ramada Out" as it was named by the hikers. We didn't stay there as it was 2:45 pm when we arrived and more hiking was in order for the day. We reluctantly left this paradise passing two other hikers only today. Azel Ames is only 1/2 day ahead of us now and the Hawaiians are going at a rather easy pace and we are rather eager to catch up with them. Jane and Joe left word in a "register" saying "Hello, Rick, Dick and John 7-13-75" so we know that we will see them soon.

The wildlife is getting scarce except for a little mouse that ate a hole through Rick's pack the other night and got into his food bag to sample the Heartland cereal. Tonight we are lucky to camp under a private park pavilion and sleep on the picnic tables. There is a small grocery store across the street and the lady in charge said we could use the pavilion and keep dry from the rain which was on it's way down again. The thermometer reads 68° and it is humid.

We hung our clothes to dry overnight. Dogs barked, mosquitoes buzzed, but we slept good. Our clothes need airing and smelled a little better in the morning. There was a tornado in Baltimore, MD we heard. A baby flicker is making his way from tree to tree as we go to sleep. Heard one towhee today and some thrushes. Time for bed. Rick is eager to catch the others so he can shoot the bull with them. He has formed a good friendship with hikers on the trail and looks forward to spending time with them.

July 15, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Cloudy all day and overcast with sun sporadically breaking through. Hiked: 17 miles. Goal: Boy Scout Camp on the Shikilamy Trail.

Up and hiking by 8 am. Found Azel Ames down the road where he had stayed the night in a garage. Stopped to have coffee with him. Azel hiked all the rest of the day with us.

The trail was on asphalt road for several miles before swinging over a river and up the trail, some rocks and some flat walking. We made good time. Passed two groups of scouts and felt sorry for them, they carried 1 gallon cans with bales in which to carry water, not the proper container, but standard equipment at the Boy Scout camps and required less expense and served several purposes. They were thirsty and complaining and asked us how far it was to the next water source. We hiked ahead and found the water source, filled our containers just in time as the scouts came rushing up and riled up the small spring. They drank cloudy water anyway.

A couple of views today for a change with rocky openings instead of trees on the overlooks. Stopped at Hawk Ridge to rest on a nice overlook. No hawks in sight at this time of the year. It is an excellent place to bird watch. About 7:30 pm we arrived at the Boy Scout camp that Azel had checked out. He was a good scout and went off the AT to see about getting us permission to use their facilities. They gave us lean-tos to sleep in with bunks, mattresses and we had showers where we washed some clothes. Then after buying some candy bars and ice cream, we had a good night's rest. By 11:30 pm we finished our meal and crawled into bed. There are five in our group and we each had our own lean-to (several empty lean-tos in this campsite). Azel took one where he could snore to his hearts content.

July 16, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Cloudy and rainy until about 3 pm then cleared until 6 pm then rained again. Hiked: 17 miles. Goal: Port Clinton church pavilion.

Up at 7 am here at Boy Scout camp and had a nice rest in these Adirondack type shelters. I'm sure Azel snored to his hearts content knowing that the noise would bother no one having taken a shelter all to himself. The two boys, Tom Nosal and Dennis Spafford, took a separate shelter so Rick and I could be alone in a shelter. Never did figure out why we all split up like this, but stranger things can happen I guess.

We had breakfast at the camp chow hall for \$1.50 each all we could eat of cooked cereal, scrambled eggs, bread, jam, cocoa, coffee, milk, a real feed. Met some very nice guys at the camp, Dennis Spangler, John Knight -- camp administrator and doctor (not necessarily in that order). "Breezey" is in his 80's and a camp legend, other young counselors and a bunch of leader scouts. Last night the Order of the Red Arrow ceremony was being set up and a lot of great secrecy took place. It brought back memories to me of when I took part in the ceremony at Camp Newkirk near Ann Arbor when I was a scout. It is an honor to be selected by your fellow scouts to be initiated into this organization.

We finally left Camp Shikilamy about 9:30 am and hiked 17 miles to Port Clinton arriving about 8 pm after some long road walking. Met 2 young people, a boy and a girl, doing a section of the AT, also a man and his son (58 and 28) from Washington DC doing 100 mile sections of the AT each vacation until the trail is complete.

We stopped at Neys lean-to about 2:30 pm for lunch after a very hard "straight-down-the-road" hike of six miles. Rick and I found a blueberry patch and

stopped earlier to eat berries and break up the monotony of this six mile walk. We arrived that Port Clinton as the sun pecked a hole in the clouds enough to shed some cheeriness onto the day's long hike. After getting some directions to the park pavilion at the local grocery store we walked the short distance to the park. Our quarters for the night were quite spacious and one other hiker from Connecticut occupied the pavilion and he had a police dog with him. He had a sister that was attending Michigan State University, but he wasn't very conversational and all he thought important was that his dog could scare anyone successfully. Its hard to understand some people not knowing what motivates them. Their thoughts leak out when they talk and sometimes don't make sense and I'm sure this young man had a lot of thinking to do and hiking might be the way for him to sort out his thoughts.

The mosquitoes weren't even out so the warm night let me sleep only partially covered by my hot sleeping bag. Rick is suffering the same trouble and so our bags require airing each day to keep them civil smelling. It felt good to lay down and sleep even on a hard wooden floor. I'm sure that it will rain tonight and it will be nice to have our equipment dry to start hiking in the morning.

July 17, 1975. Thursday. Big white clouds in the sky this am and then about noon the sun came out and stayed out the balance of the day. Hiked: 14 miles to Dan's Spring 3 miles shy of the Allentown lean-to. Dan's Spring made a good spot to camp.

Foggy morning soon it cleared up after we stopped and bought groceries enough to last us to Delaware Water Gap here in Port Clinton. Started hiking by 9 am and the trail was rocky and rather uncomfortable walking, but we had a beautiful trail that wandered through woods and ridge lines where we saw deer, the birds sang and a lot of views for a change. Mostly farmland in patchwork designs from the trail. The heights in Pennsylvania are not as high as in Virginia's Blue Ridge Trail, but still nice. We have been lucky with the rain coming along just in time to wash our sweaty bodies off the heat makes us sweat from the least exercise and our clothes need the rain to stay clean while we are walking. Soon the sun will dry them out while hiking. Our shoes remained wet and socks, too, but when hung on the backpacks soon dried. Dry socks do wonders for helping to dry up wet boots. We arrived at our campsite after passing through what appeared to be training area for boys and girls in a cadet training area, then some asphalt road walking past farms and finally an ascent to a beautiful ridge line. Our campsite was secluded among the trees with a gushing spring some 300 feet down the mountainside and very cold and clear. Had a good nights sleep.

July 18, 1975. Friday. Rather warm and humid today with 78° to 80° temperatures and a hard rain between 7 and 8 pm. Hiked 12 miles to Bake Oven lean-to about 46 miles from Delaware Water Gap.

From Dan's Spring our trail was over a variety of size of rocks with the usual climbs and descents being minimal and not as interesting as yesterday. The warm weather is better than straight rain so we are enjoying it, but our gear is close to mildewing and needs a good airing.

It looks like Azel Ames won't be hiking with us as he never caught up with us yesterday. His feet were bothering him and he would hitchhike from time to time to cut down on the rocky trail walking. Sally Sheldon we learned from the Hawaiians has gone home and plans on hiking south from Katahdin breaking her hike into small segments. The Hawaiians, Jane and Joe Keopuiki, were laying over at the Allentown shelter and after talking with them, we sadly departed not expecting to see them

again.¹ Both of them were skinny and had decided to quit hiking. The rocks were troublesome and Jane's knees were sore and she wasn't enjoying the hiking. They planned on packing up and hiking into Delaware Water Gap for a day and rest. Then head for Maine and Mt. Katahdin where they want to start hiking back south.

Later today we came across a mess on the trail where someone had left beer cans empty and full, plastic sheeting and pretzels. Looks like they got caught in a rain storm and just ran away, so we cleaned up the mess, keeping the beer and pretzels and wrapping up the rest in the plastic and carefully stowing it under bushes for we couldn't carry it due to the size of the bundle. The Bake Oven shelter was one and a half miles ahead and at the shelter Rick and I had a beer. Boy! did that beer taste good. The pretzels added another dimension to our evening meal, too. I took a bottle bath from the cold stream later by soaping down and carrying bottled water quite a distance away from the stream and rinsing off. After several trips back and forth with the water I had a great feeling of cleanliness and relaxiliness if its a good word to use. We were alone until about 8 pm when a group of 18 scouts came in and set up camp. They were noisy but experienced hikers and were careful not to leave trash around. On a 50 mile hike, they were headed for Delaware Water Gap. A cool night and it had rained just before the scouts came in -- poor guys set up tents and crawled in wet to sleep. Both Rick and I had a good night's sleep.

July 19, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Good, 70° in am and some fog earlier, but sun burned it off by 10 am. 78° in pm and sunny. Hiked: 13 miles with our goal a campsite in the Blue Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Up at 6 am and caught up my writing in my diary as we had been arriving late at lean-tos and the rain kept me from doing much writing the last couple of days. Checked on clothes washed out night before, but found them wet. The humidity has been high and rainy weather doesn't permit drying.

Last night's rest was nice and one 4 legged creature raided the packs with small damage. Those bags of moth balls or crystals were very effective and I must ask Joan for more as ours have all evaporated.

Scouts left at 8 am and we started out at 8:30 am. Rocky going for 1st half of day with some large rocks to negotiate and a very rocky slope, too. Crossed Lehigh River and proceeded to scale the rock-covered slope, striped bare by forest fire and industrial smoke that poisoned the ground cover. We filled up on blueberries keeping a pint for breakfast. Passed the scouts and came up on a very interesting lean-to with unique bunks all around the walls. Had our late lunch then proceeded up the aforementioned rocky slope. Found a road on top of the rocky ridge and walked for what seemed miles looking for a water source. This is Blue Mountain and, for us, it seemed like Dreary Mountain for it was barren and the trees were fighting for their very lives to survive the onslaught of industrial air pollution. The campsite wasn't anything spectacular and while hunting for the water source we came up on Lynn Sandusky, another AT hiker. Lynn is 27 years old and a newspaper man and unemployed out doing the trail for an ego ride. He is camped a hundred yards up the trail from us and I noted that his bed was a very light net hammock swung between trees and his cook kit included a pressurized white gas tank and burner which furnished a quick hot fire with the click of his igniter tool. I expect we will see more of him as we progress along the trail.

Another church group today furnished us with a good lead for accommodations and food when it's leader suggested we stop at the Boy Scout camp called Nobebosco near Simmsville here in New Jersey. Very interesting Indian names used by the scout

camps and the number of camps along our routes shows the good being done in this youth oriented organization.

July 20, 1975. Sunday. Rather humid when we awoke this am in our campsite beside the AT with the sun blotted out by overcast skies, hope for a break from the moist air later in day with a cooling trend and torrential downpour mid afternoon. Thank heaven we reached our goal Leroy Smith lean-to before it began. Hiked 12 miles.

Up by 6:30 am and hiking by 7:30 am which is good. The trail was very rough, but we did get a view or two that added the usual nice variety to our day's walk. The sky got dark about 2:30 pm as we made the shelter and then burst into a two hour rainstorm with thunder and lightning. Of course this ended our hiking for the day. Joe Bell (caretaker) was at the lean-to when we arrived and he talked with us for a while. The lean-to is new and on weekends a caretaker is always on duty to protect it from vandals and general bad treatment when the trail is used heavier. Joe belongs to this area's section of the AT. About 4 pm Lynn Sandusky arrived all wet, but happy to have a place to rest. Our friend Azel Ames had stayed here last night after coming in about 12 midnight (according to the register at the shelter). So now he is ahead of us once again. He said that he would be doing some night time hiking and I guess he has commenced. Last night while sleeping I had heard a footstep making it's way up the trail close to our campsite and no doubt it had been Azel.

July 21, 1975. Monday. More humid and overcast weather for part of the day, then sun and very warm. Hiked 20 miles with Delaware Water Gap as our goal and picnic tables under a roofed area behind a Tastee Freeze in town.

We enjoyed a good night's rest at Leroy Smith lean-to and left about 7:30 am. The weather is clearing and a little cooler as the morning progresses, but still humid. Lynn Sandusky is still at the lean-to, but should catch us later. The trail is rocky and hard to walk on, but we should be in Delaware Water Gap tonight.

We left the trail to break up the monotony today of stones and I believe a desire to see some civilization. We hitched a ride into Stoudsburg, Pa for supplies and to cash a check at the bank. However the banks wouldn't cash a check, in fact all the banks refused to cash my personal check because they said this area is all resort and checks are not a good risk. What a blow to us. But we had some cash and got some food to take out and eat. Perched on some steps leading to an old warehouse we munched our goodies and really enjoyed them. Afterwards we stopped at an Exxon gas station to wash up and the proprietor gave us a reprimand for using his restroom as a place to bathe. We exchanged a few words neither of us coming out ahead and departed. Not a warm reception again. We stopped at the Chamber of Commerce and complained about the very unfriendly attitude of the merchants and cited the banks and the Exxon station by name and suggested some improvement in good will be given to hikers such as ourselves. We had a very friendly conversation with the executive secretary and office secretary together. Don't know if it did any good.

By 3 pm we had hitched a ride to the edge of Delaware Water Gap some eight miles away. A truck picked us up packs and all into his front seat we went. At least some one cared to help us, we decided. Walked a mile into town and stopped at the "Pack Shop" where we cashed a check no questions asked. We were referred to a combination grocery, restaurant and Tastee Freeze where we were welcomed and invited to use their picnic area and pavilion to sleep under. We slept on the tables and stayed dry under the pavilion, ate Tastee Freezes and bought supplies, packed them and wrote letters. We found the post office and received mail and package from

Joan. We called home and Joan about 9:45 pm and got all the home news². Ought to be in Cuddlesbachville, NY about July 26, 1975 as planned and will call Dena Peterson and Donna Nye per their returned card to us. Sent our letter to Kelty concerning our bad padded belts on our packs in hopes of getting some replacements. Had an excellent night's rest.

July 22, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Sunny with temperatures ranging from 76 to 80° all day. Hiked: five miles (5.2) with our goal Sunfish Pond and the Gravey Spring campsite.

Started a very leisurely day by getting up at 6:30 am and preparing pancakes with butter and syrup, fried eggs galore. Rick and I ate until the food was gone. We boiled eggs for lunch and with two leftover pancakes, apple butter, too, we got another nice, tasty, meal from this food. These leftover taste ticklers lasted until one pm.

We finished writing letters then packed up hiking gear no longer needed and returned them to Michigan. Stopped at the post office with the carton now filled again after receiving items from home by mail. Stopped again at the visitor center located in the Gap and looked around. A beautiful place. Both Rick and I are great sightseers, and we enjoyed looking at the displays and the river which funnels through here called the Delaware River. This is the Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area and is a very popular resort for easterners dating back to the early 1800's and 1900's. High bluffs soar up from this gap and the AT follows north out of the gap very steeply and passes several rushing streams where over-used campsites show many people enjoyed the beautiful scenery. What can one do when the population loves the trail to death? The Sunfish Pond area is beautiful with open forests and rocky shore line. No cottages allowed and the lake is protected even prohibiting swimming. The water is clear enough to drink, but we were suspicious and used the Gravey Spring which flows some half mile down the hill from the lake. We camped well back in the woods and found excellent leaf cover on which to sleep. Our day was a very happy day and did get us off to a good start in New Jersey. If we can average 12.5 miles per day for the next 69 days we will complete our hike by October 1st 1975. We need some extra days to allow for layovers and bad weather at Mt. Katahdin should we have to wait before ascending. Looks like Rick and I can master our goal with a little to spare.

July 23, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Bright and sunny today with temps starting at 66° about 6:30 and going into the lower 80's. Hiked 15 miles with our goal six miles beyond Blainstown Road in New Jersey on the AT. A tight squeeze for two tents.

Our day was great, Rick almost stepped on a 40" timber rattler in the beautiful yellow, gold and black phase. A real beauty (see his picture). Rick is always stopping to poke into the brush along the trail when he hears a noise. This time he used his foot to part the brush (blueberry bushes) and uncovered the tail of this big snake. It coiled only when we teased it with an 8' long stick and then it struck the stick. Rick got a beautiful picture as Mr. Snake slowly crawled across a large flat rock. The trail was rocky and similar to Penn. trail. Our rest in Delaware Water Gap helped us overcome our ill feeling for such a tough walking trail. Anyway the rocks were worn down and rounded providing less of a bruising bump on the sole of our boots. Nevertheless our feet were still sore at night. The sparse growth along Kittatinny Ridge provided us with good clear scenic views of the Delaware River on the west side.

Sunfish Pond came into view again after we left it. It looked like a silver dollar on the landscape as did other water impoundments on the east side of the trail. This made for a very interesting day and puts New Jersey far ahead of Penn for beauty. We are shooting for a minimum of 15 miles a day for hiking from now on. Rick is definite about this and makes my day easier knowing of his driving desire to attain a last-week-in-September arrival at Mt. Katahdin, Maine. The birds are hiding in the trees these days and only their songs tell just who they are. Towhees, cardinal, mourning doves, vultures, jays, thrush (kind?), are the most prevalent. Our shoes get a Sno Seal job periodically and should hold up good. The soles show a lot of wear from the rocks, but will get us well into Maine, I'm sure. Rick just picked us a carton of blueberries for our breakfast. We had long white rice, veg. soup, parsley and instant potatoes and all mixed together tonight for dinner and tea to wash it down. Boy was it good! We saw a lot of scouts today because the Kittatinny Ridge borders Boy Scout, YMCA and YWCA camps. At least 3 B.S. and 2 Y camps are in this area. Hikers are welcome anytime at these camps and knowing that we can go down to them anytime for meals, lodging and showers is a nice feeling to have.

New Jersey has shaped up to be a very impressive state. Passed a young black hiker carrying a guitar in case today. He said he was headed for San Francisco as soon as he reached the highway I-80 some 12 miles south of here. He said he was going to "live out there" and he had all his worldly possessions on his back pack and in his guitar case. He carried the latter in his hand. Hope he makes it.

July 24, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Sunny and bright am temp is 68°, cloudy most of the afternoon with a heavy rain about 7 pm. Hiked 17 miles and stopped at Masapacong shelter, 5 miles shy of hwy US 23 NJ.

Up by 6:30 am and hiking by 7:45 am. Had blueberries for breakfast courtesy of Rick. Terrific!! Got along good on the trail with rocks making slow going periodically. A thru hiker caught up with us later (Clay Chase), we are camping with him tonight. We stopped at a bakery today about 1:30 pm and gorged ourselves on pie and ice cream, cookies and bread. Enjoyed a real stripped down bath at a pump just down the road from the shelter. Also enjoyed a rainstorm that crashed, flashed and blew the trees in a fantastic show of strength. Viewed the holocaust from a nice warm sleeping bag and felt extremely secure. The rain lasted most of the night and raccoons invaded the 2 trash cans outside the shelter. Then a mother and her baby coons came to the shelter and ate a fresh loaf of bread left hanging from the rafters by our hiker friend in a very available spot. I wish I could have taken a picture of the raid. A noisy bunch and I just couldn't deprive them of their pleasure so I just sat and watched the whole thing, poor Clay must have had to go without his peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for a day or so after. Next day he left Rick and I in the dust.

The trail in New Jersey is now running over stone slabs which are actually huge stones buried, but pushed up from the ground. Oak and maple scrub growth makes the brush very stiff and it rubs one's leg as we push through it. Its bad when it has just rained, then our shoes and socks become soaked. Rock surfaces are dangerously slippery with rubber soles making it extra bad. The lugs on the soles offer very little gripping effort. Luckily we haven't fallen yet. Saw several Boy Scout groups again today which were led by determined, sweaty adult leaders. Felt sorry for them because they were obviously not enjoying their duties. The lean-to tonight is a big stone affair, 8 sleeping capacity and has a new tin roof on which the rain plays a steady tatoo.

July 25, 1975. Friday. Weather: 68° temp and cleared up somewhat about 5 pm. Hiked 5 miles to rendezvous with Dena Peterson and Cuddlesbackville, NY camp Wenasco.

Took a little more time getting started today because we knew that it would be a short hike into the pick-up point US 23 hwy NJ where we would meet Dena Peterson. Very rocky going to the highway where we stopped at High Point State Park and had coffee and hamburgers. Our appetites were enormous, but our pocket book only permitted a low profile approach to food. Saw our 3rd bear of the entire trip and of course it was in a cage here in the park.

Called Dena Peterson at Camp Wenasco and she came to the park and picked us up. She is camp director and runs a very well organized camp. Her staff are all girls with good background and well liked by the campers. Its a Girl Scout camp with horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, backpacking and other activities. Size of camp is 260 acres with woods, spring lake, and a panel bus for transportation. Our room has one bed and an extra mattress over which we spread our sleeping bags. Shower and bathroom, free meals, with our contribution being a backpack question and answer session when requested by Donna Nye, a rapid fire type person and is a good camp assistant director with three additional duties including swimming, program and general organization. We have been given a nice welcome and asked to stay as long as we want. These girls (Deana, Donna and Ann) have had contact with Joan. Anne Hoffman is a staffer in charge of outdoor and backpacking activities. She took Rick and I around the camp and into town for supplies and a McDonalds hamburger stop. These girls are eager to return Joan's hospitality which they received while they visited her in Lansing as volunteers at the Arboretum and going to Michigan State University as students.

Both Rick and I are enjoying a restful day here at camp headquarters, a large two story house. Our bedroom door stays open and from time to time people, dogs and cats all stop in to visit with us here on the second floor. The house houses the staff, is a recreation center, office and is a kitchen commissary. All meals are prepared at the tent platforms out in the camping areas by the campers themselves. Each tent unit comes to the commissary for their food which is then taken out to the tent area and the girls do their own cooking.

Tonight there was a campfire and Rick and I showed our hiking gear and explained each item and how it was used. The girls were all very excited about it and asked about the trail. Donna then played and sang songs to the music of her guitar. A great time for Rick and I.

July 26, 1975. Saturday. Weather: excellent with sun and clear sky. Temp. 75°. Hiked 0 miles. Stayed at Camp Wenasco all day.

A day of rest, breakfast scrambled eggs, toast, fruit, tomato juice, cheese, milk and hot chocolate. Rick and I are all hands and arms. Donna laughed and so did the other girls at our appetites because we cleaned up all their plates of leftovers. We always had 3 to 5 others at the table and it was a picnic sitting on the porch of the old house and listening to the problems of the day.

Rick and I didn't do a thing all day except at 10 am Anne Hoffman drove us to Port Jervis (her day off) in Dena's car where we got our laundry done, bought groceries and then went to a McDonalds for a real feast of hamburgs, fries and shakes. We got back to camp about 2:30 pm and took naps and wrote letters. Our evening meal was chicken, beets, corn, mashed potatoes, salad, Kool Aid and brownies for dessert. The evening found us taking a nature walk around the edge of the camp led by Anne. She showed us her Frostline backpack and sleeping bag she made and her Olympus camera.

Then she took Rick and I on the special nature flower trail and saw cardinal flower, various types of trees and stone fence, went by the spring-fed lake smooth and quiet with fish jumping. Back to the headquarters building to make popcorn for the girls while they were in a meeting. Rick and I got to sleep about 11 pm.

July 27, 1975. Sunday. Weather was sunny with 68° and a great day for hiking after a great layover day. Hiked 15 miles. Goal is Hwy 94 NJ and campsite by a nice lake.

Up by 7 am. Breakfast of French toast, juice, scrambled eggs and all we could eat. The help is off today so Rick and I set table as well as cleared after the meal and did the dishes. The girls all go to church and Dena took Rick and I to Hwy 23 at High Point State Park to start hiking about 10 am. The trail was great for a while then it became road walking and continued for 14 miles (hard on the feet). We passed an old cemetery about noon -- stopped and ate lunch (sat on the ground leaning against the stone wall which fronted the cemetery). We looked at the headstones to see which was the oldest date, 1823.

The rest of the day we passed houses, talked with people, got water from them, one family gave us ice tea to drink, too. The lemon and sugar in the tea was a surprise, but we drank it up thirstily and thanked them.

Passed new subdivisions and a nice lake. Wondered what will become of the trail when these homes are complete. A man was putting his lawn mowing equipment away by the lake and we stopped to talk with him about eating our dinner at his picnic table and he gave us cold beer and told us to camp in our tents there which we did.

Lots of mosquitoes today. Rick didn't sleep well, but I managed to eliminate the mosquitoes inside my tent and slept well. This is really a small park with mown grass and nicely kept. I don't imagine many hikers camp here because of the openness to surrounding houses. We are fortunate tonight to find a spot to set up tents in such a populated area.

July 28, 1975. Monday. Weather: Started out cloudy and 66°, but the sun came out periodically, hiked 17 miles and stayed at the cottage of Roger Brickner on Greenwood Lake, New York.

Up at 6 am and, great wonders, hiking by 6:30 am! Road walking again, by 9 am we were wishing for the coolness of the woods. By 10 am we found our AT heading into Waywanda State Park and A.S. Hewitt State Park undeveloped. Through swamps and woods, some nice rocky hillsides and summits with limited views. All the streams stank and had soapy foam on them which was a sad sight. We came out on a rocky top and found a painted line on a huge rock marking the state boundary between NY and NJ. Later we saw a long lake laid out before us (Greenwood Lake, eight miles long). The trail continued over a line of smooth-topped rock formations, red & white and, in between, colored.

We came upon a sign on the trail "Free lodging for all hikers especially thru hikers," "Free ice tea 50 yds down blue blazed trail," "Cottage 1/4 mile down blue blazed trail." Needless to say Rick and I stopped, found the tea sitting on a rather wobbly table and we sat on the two rather wobbly chairs and relaxed. The ice tea tasted good. It was 5:30 pm so we decided to visit Roger Brickner's cottage 1/4 mile down a very steep trail. The last 12 feet was down a ladder into Roger's backyard. Roger wasn't home, but soon arrived with some friends and we had hors d'overs, wine and a shower. We made dinner outside on the picnic table with our own food by candle light while Roger and his friends ate inside. Soon we were treated to a nice dessert by our host, it was unbelievable hospitality. There were five

of us hikers and we all slept on the floor or on three beds at the rear of the cottage. Roger is a social studies teacher in the New York school system who likes to hike himself. Each year he plays host to 50 to 150 hikers.

July 29, 1975. Tuesday. Weather is sunny and beautiful with temp about 75°, cool breezes all day. Hiked 9 miles to Fitzgerald Falls campsite.

Up at 7:30 am to a lovely breakfast of blueberry pancakes, toast, jam and coffee all furnished by Roger. This man loves people and thru hikers especially. He hikes, too¹, but I suspect loves to hear stories about the trail right from the mouths of the hiker himself. One of our group is a 14 year old hiking the trail for the first time and obviously only going a short distance. He needed to call his mother by phone so she would pick him up in the next small town. More of Roger's courtesy was to take the boy to the town (15 miles away) where he called his mother and she came and got him. After breakfast Roger drove us down to Greenwood Lake for swimming and sailing in his boat.

By 12 noon we were on the trail hiking again and managed to get in 9 miles. Our trail was over more rocky surfaces with good views of eight mile long Greenwood Lake. The balance of the day was tough because of the mosquitoes which were extremely thick in this area. Yesterday and today are the first days we really got bitten badly. The Cutters repellent works fine until the sweat washes it away. It is miserable hiking when clouds of bugs are following you and engulf you the second you stop. Oh well, a little bad with all the good we've had is a small price to pay for our grand experiences. Our campsite tonight is by Fitzgerald Falls and very pretty. A 30' falls is merrily singing to me as I write this memo. What a memorable day!

July 30, 1975. Wednesday. Weather is sunny, clear skies, 76° temp in am and higher later. Hiked 16 miles to a campsite at Lake Toriati.

Saw 4 deer, 4 black snakes, 2 hawks and possibly an osprey with their lonely cries following us through the woods and over streams and bridges. I'm impressed with New York and it's woody beauty.

Entered Harrison State Park section of Palisades Interstate Parkway, and the trail became open as it wandered through sparsely wooded forest and by lakes where I took a swim about 2 pm. Very refreshing and only needed to remove my shoes before diving in. Our campsite was in a campground and quite noisy from a group of boys and fathers higher up on the hillside. Heard a thump during the night and upon investigating found a hiker (Lynn Sandusky) sheepishly re-attaching his hammock to the tree. What a rude way to be awakened by having a rope break when sleeping in a hammock.

July 31, 1975. Thursday. Weather: very warm and muggy later in the day. Our goal is Ft. Montgomery campsite in backyard of the Roberts family. Hiked about 11 miles today through pretty woodlands and rocky park land. Good views on occasion, mostly green hills, super highways and blue sky which are all the same each time. Saw deer, black snakes, Silver Mine Lake, towhees, thrushes, two elderly people doing the AT in short bits -- both in their 60's.

1st Maine to Georgia name appeared in the register at Lake Toriati for this year. Rye Southerd of NY. Today seems like one of those fresh unforgettable type days as we cross bluffs with views, streams that are cool and peaceful. Crossed

rocks that seemed like floors embedded in the ground. Bear Mountain bridge tomorrow.

Met a young couple hiking a section of trail, Kathy Hoffman (originally from Howell, Michigan) now a New Yorker. Very warm today. Upon reaching Fort Montgomery we looked for a suitable place to camp after buying supplies at a grocery store. Decided to try the nice green lawn in back of the post office, saw a policeman and asked him if it would be OK to do this. Mr. Pfikey suggested taking us to some friend's home outside town about one mile (Roberts family). Very nice family, a son, 2 daughters and we set up tents in their large grass covered yard. They wanted our story and we talked a long time at their picnic table before turning in.

August 1, 1975. Friday. Weather: Sunny, bright clear skies with temp in the high 70's. Hiked 10 miles to Indian Lakes lean-to.

We were up at 6:30 am and preparing our favorite meal of pancakes and syrup with fried eggs. Our hosts were soon up (the Roberts) and Mr. Roberts brought out a full cup of coffee for me (Rick wasn't up yet). Made a full box of Aunt Jemima pancake mix into 7" x 1/2" thick pancakes which were great. The box (large) makes about 14 to 16 of these pancakes. We will eat the leftovers as we hike along the trail using honey to sweeten them up.

Started hiking after talking for an hour with the Roberts at the picnic table about 9:30 am. Had 3/4 mile walk back into town and another mile to the Bear Mountain Bridge to cross the Hudson River. Our opportunity of getting a ride via Mrs. Roberts into West Point to see the "Plebes" had to be passed up, but she gave us a booklet telling about the area (see booklet on Revolutionary War and History of the Hudson Valley). Hitched a ride to the bridge where we paid our toll (5 cents each). Took pictures of Exxon fuel barge going under the bridge. Met two men coming from Maine (thru hikers, Malcom Gillis and Chris Konkle). These were the 1st north to south hikers we had seen. Malcom is 42 years old while Chris was about 22 years old. Malcom took pictures, names, addresses, etc. He is enthusiastic for a hiker reunion in the coming years. He was getting all the names and addresses of all the hikers he met and plans on contacting them.²

Meeting these hikers right in the middle of the bridge added a lot of flavor to our day's hike. Later in the day we met another Maine to Georgia hiker, Gary Bishop from Georgia. Our day started quite late and by 5 pm we made only about 9 miles so we stayed at the Indian Lake lean-to.

The lake was about 1/2 mile away, it had been a warm day so Rick and I went swimming. A beautiful trail took us to the lake where the fish jumped and the voices from a children's camp across the lake echoed over to us. The water was smooth as glass and very beautiful as the sun got lower and lower.

The only bad point in the day occurred just before coming down to the lake. We needed fresh water so found a well a short distance from the lean-to. While dipping the water from the well I twisted my knee to keep from falling into the well. A bad turn of events. The water wasn't deep, fortunately for me, but I did the twisting to keep my whole body from taking a dunking in the cold water.

We have a rather interesting companion this night. Jerry Flemming, a local man who is spending his vacation at the lean-to. He has lived here in this area as a boy and was re-living some past experiences. He is about 40 years old and very talkative, but Rick and I couldn't feel comfortable with him. He indicated he had just gotten out of a hospital of some kind. However nothing happened and after putting "Atomic Balm" on my knee for the night we hit the sack.

To go back to about 1 pm, Rick and I had just completed a very steep ascent. We were hot and sweaty so when Graymoor Monestery came into view we remembered Malcom Gillis' comment to be sure to stop here for refreshment. The monestery was perched on a hill and looked like some tremendous institution. After walking over green pasture land we came to an asphalt road and found our way up to one of the buildings. This was a re-hab unit for curing men, apparently alcoholics and down and outers. It wasn't occupied, but the men in charge saw our back packs and invited us in and asked if we would like showers and something to eat. So we did. Free sandwiches, pop, jelly cakes in front of TV. A nice stop for midday.

August 2, 1975. Saturday. Weather: Beautiful and sunny but very hot with 90 to 100° temp -- Monte Rosa Lodge at Hopewell Junction, NY. Did 13 miles today.

Up early and got underway with a stiff knee, wrapped my knee in an ace bandage as support and after some walking the knee loosened up. A lot of road walking and some cooling off in Canopus Lake. Met 2 other hikers and together we crossed some beautiful woods passing Torrey Memorial lean-to and with the promise of a good meal at MaMa Rosa's we beat a hasty trail to Monte Rosa Lodge arriving there while a full blown golf outing was in session. Not knowing about the proprietors feelings about dirty sweaty hikers, I walked in to ask about accommodations. Mr. Rosa all but threw me out telling me to wait outside, so I did with the other hikers Rick, Lynn Sandusky, and Chip Broad.³

We attracted the attention of the customers and they came outside to talk with us and asked about hour hike. Soon we were given a place to clean up and sleep. A nice separate house with clean beds and sheets and shower. We eat about 9 pm in the main house where the golf banquet was being held, and enjoyed a superb meal. Mr. Rosa is Italian and his wife is the chief cook and bottle washer with a couple of daughter-in-laws as waitresses. Mr. Rosa is the bartender, host and cashier. Their house is large, made of stone with some additions to it to allow for large seating area on banquets etc. We stayed in another house on the premises which contained bedrooms only and bath. In the main house the kitchen was equipped with a huge black wood stove on which Mrs. Rosa did the cooking and supplements with a smaller gas stove. The balance of the place is a farm with goats, rabbits, sheep and several other buildings. The flavor of the place is of an Italian farmsite. The story behind it includes the myth that this was the site of a rather large whiskey still operation in years past.

Mr. Rosa had two sons who were in their twenties and would eventually take over the restaurant business. Tragically, they both were killed in an auto accident a mile or so away from the home at night. Now there is no one to take over the business. Sad.

We finished our meal about 11:30 pm and went to bed. This completed a rather long day. The Monte Rosa Lodge was in our guide books and we all needed showers so the lodge was a nice place to end our day and be free from mosquitoes.

August 3, 1975. Sunday. Weather is sunny with clouding condition and temp again in the 90's. Hiked 19 miles today and ended up at Edward R. Morrow Memorial Municipal Park.

Awoke at 5:30 am and began bringing my log up to date while lying in a bed of clean sheets, cool and comfortable. It is quiet and breakfast will be served at 7 am. It is easier to think at this time of day and one's mind recalls the activities of the day before. Soon the others are starting to get up and take a

second shower before leaving for the dining room. Again we ate all we wanted, scrambled eggs, toast, bacon, coffee, marmalade. Got a picture of Mrs. Rosa then left the Lodge about 8:30 am. The trail was mostly on roads today with a nice old cemetery (Knapps Homestead Cemetery surrounded by an old stone pile type of fence, 1803 Headstone death date) and a raccoon sitting in a tree watching us and calling. Time about 9:30 am. Most of the roads we walked were lined with stone fences and were very striking as the sun slanted through the trees on to the road and fence. Our hike today was a tough road walk and very hot.

About 7 pm we arrived at our goal and the park was nice. We paid \$1⁰⁰ per person for all this and it rained during the night so we stayed dry. A perfect place for a hiker.

The night was warm, but cooled off later. There are five of us here at the pavilion for the night with room for a total of eight sleeping on the picnic tables. Rick's feet really reacted upon this road walking. The balls of both feet became sore and the little toe on the left foot got a blister on it. We have one more day of this road walking before getting into Connecticut where we will find more off-the-road hiking. Got to bed at 9:30 pm and because of the mosquitoes we put up our tents and slept in them to keep from getting eaten up. But about 3 am it began to rain and it continued all night. Our tents got wet on the outside. Ha Ha!

August 4, 1975. Monday. Weather: Cooled off to the low 80's and rained hard, stayed at Pavilion all day here in Pawling, New York.

I moved inside last night and slept the balance of the night on a picnic table in the pavilion. I worried about getting my sleeping bag wet. Rick stayed in his tent and slept like a baby without getting wet. His feet are still tender and I'm thinking about laying over here for another day to give his feet a chance to rest up. Mine can use it, too. Its raining right now 8 am and the forecast for the next two days is intermittent showers, so at least we will have some "roof" protection. We have a town to re-supply from if necessary. The trail goes through Pawling, New York and then, in 17 miles, goes to Kent, Conn., our goal for the next day's hike. Went into Pawling, NY only 1/2 mile down the road for supplies and washed Rick's sleeping bag. It sure needed it. Used a tumbling type washer and then hand squeezed it until most of the water was gone. It took a couple of hours to dry it in the dryer. Met Sandy Sawyer (grand daughter of Bill Sawyer from Ann Arbor, MI). Bill was the leader of the choral union at U of M. and also played organ at the Michigan Theater. Sandy is visiting her father, Wilson Sawyer here in Pawling, New York for a week. She is nice and was interested in Rick and I. Her little 6 yr old boy (overactive) put on my empty backpack and ran all over the laundry with it on his back.

The bank cashed a \$15⁰⁰ check for us so we had some money. The weather held off and it was a nice 76° all day.

August 5, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Sunny day expected and got up to 90° temp. The woods were wet but cooler. Skies were clear. Hiked 17 miles. Goal: Campsite on the northern border of Connecticut about 3 miles south.

A beautiful day to hike, clear, cool and the views should be great. Our trail takes us over some roads, past beautiful farms and homes (Thomas E. Dewey's is one of them). The roads are lined with striking stone fences, pine and fir trees and

lend a colonial setting to the whole section. Gradually our road walking bored through to our feet, but with good weather, who can complain?

Wabetuck proved to be an interesting village with it's old water wheel, furniture store of plain wood furniture all handmade displayed in an Early American home including a beautiful kitchen with wall cabinets also all handmade. Truly a work of artists. Then a pottery shop, silversmith and all by a pretty river. Rick and I spread out our sleeping bags and tents to dry and then enjoyed a nice picnic lunch. Spent about half hour walking around after lunch. The rest of the day we hiked towards Kent, Connecticut and crossed the state line about 4:45 pm.

Now we are camped separately with Rick camped down hill from me and mad (not real mad), because I selected a campsite after he had gone way ahead of me. (Now that I think of it, it is me that is mad and I am tired). We had just gotten water and knew that a campsite had to be agreed on. Close contact was necessary, but we are not in agreement so are eating and camping on our own tonight. We will meet at Rick's campsite in the morning and have breakfast together. Its a nice night and the weather should be very nice. My campsite resembles an old charcoal hearth with a big hemlock tree off to one side and the floor of the woods is covered with leaves and tree mulch which makes a wonderful bed. Our animals, birds, flowers and so on seem to become a second choice in interest. I'm sorry about this, but Rick's sore feet and eagerness to get miles in each day leaves us apart in distance with me behind. So a lot of our discoveries aren't shared. The road walking has cut into our nature interest, too. However, history of the area through which we walk is now the prime interest with the Housatonic Valley and Hudson Valley coming up. We have booklets on these valleys which tell us of their background.

After a short rest this evening, I packed up and joined Rick at his camp spot. He had found an old charcoal hearth area, too, all covered with leaves, and good ground cover. We set tents up and got a good night's rest.

August 6, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Cloudy and cooler with rain starting about 3:30 pm. Hiked 14 miles with our goal being Mountain Brook shelter.

The day was nice and sunny and after hiking about seven miles we arrived in the town of Kent, Connecticut (5000 people in population) stores all designed in Early American style. Some older homes were converted to stores so the one main street was still like a residential street. We enjoyed the feeling of early American life as it must have been at one time. Bought supplies at grocery and fuel at hardware store, stopped for a sweet roll and coffee, paid a visit to City Hall for historical information. The people were friendly and seemed to want to help us.

We headed out for the trail 4/10 of a mile outside town. The trail follows a bluff above the Housatonic River and the large stones along the trail for a short way are spoiled with "graffiti" by youngsters of high school age. But soon this blemish ceases and the beauty of the woodlands take over. From here until we arrived at the shelter we climbed over, under and around rock with precipitous cliffs and all this was done in the rain. Rick's shoestring had to break while we were in the process of a steep descent. Got a picture of him tying it. Hope it turns out (quite overcast and dark). We met another Maine to Georgia thru hiker today, Wayne Biller of Delaware Water Gap, Penn. (see picture of him and Rick standing in the rain). If some of the scenes we see under the shade of the forest trees could be photographed a large portion of the trip would be forever captured (through the eastern seaboard states of New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts) in quiet old world beauty.

I again talk about the stone fences we see as we walk through the woods. It looks like all the boundary making by early settlers was done by building stone fences. Then "time" moves in and trees grow taller, rocks turn green from moss and moisture. A stream forces it's untroubled way through or over a tumbled down break in the stone fence to make a sparkling watery ribbon across the trail. The sun sends soft golden shafts of light through the tree branches and I stop for a moment to enjoy this hidden splendor. I want to imprint it on my mind and think back on it in later years, for I'm sure that I shall not pass this way again.

Connecticut has a beauty of it's own. As the rain came today it took almost thirty minutes before the water actually penetrated the trees to get us fully wet. The coolness of the day made the rain uncomfortable and Rick and I were glad to reach the shelter of the Mountain Brook lean-to. It was located some distance off the AT and Rick scouted ahead of me to locate the shelter quickly for I was becoming quite cold and losing energy. He found the side trail and returned to haul me along and soon I was inside my sleeping bag getting warm. The Housatonic River was some 500' away from the shelter and trees surrounded the lean-to. The darkness inside was soon pierced by the light of our Svea stove as we cooked the meal of instant rice, macaroni, sardines, and vegetable soup. The meal tasted so good especially as it was raining outside and we were inside on a dry dirt floor. The lean-to was built in 1939 by the C.C.C. of logs and very sturdy. The rain came down all night and continued the next day. Another hiker arrived later (Lynn Sandusky our news reporter from Illinois). A young couple kept us company, too. The peace pipe was passed.

August 7, 1975. Thursday. It rained all day with the temperature in the 60's. Hiked 14 miles to Red Mountain lean-to (log with dirt floor).

Slept until 7:30 am mostly because it was cooler than usual and the sleeping bags felt good. The rain was intermittent yet and our hiking day wasn't to be without a good soaking. We got underway by 9 am and hiked 7 miles into Cornwall Bridge, a village 4 corners where we picked up supplies and had coffee. The rain persisted and so rather than be miserable all afternoon on eight miles of muddy trail, Rick and I hitchhiked to within 1 1/2 miles of the shelter. Then walked the road to where the trail crossed and within 500 yards we were in a dry place by 4:15 pm. This put us two hours ahead of the trail time arrival. After putting on dry clothes and some warm food we were happy and comfortable in our sleeping bags by 6:30 pm. There has been very little animal action due to high people action. Scout camps, family hiking, group hiking probably keep us a great racket and deer, etc. are not as tame. We have a light breasted thrush hopping around the lean-to now, probably a veery.

August 8, 1975. Friday. Weather: Rain until 4 pm still cloudy. Hiked nine miles to Pine Knoll lean-to. Rained all night and cooled to 57°.

Left the lean-to about 8:15 am and the wet undergrowth whipped our shoes, socks and legs until they were soaked. Again even with shady light under the trees, the beauty of our surroundings lingers in the early morning light. Wet clothes become part of the toll for enjoying the quiet changing scenes. Through hemlock, yellow and paper birch trees, stone fences and many streams our wet trail leads us to the Pine Knoll lean-to, nine miles away.

By noon we reached the lean-to and put on dry clothes, crawled into our sleeping bags to warm up. The rain was cold today and our hands became stiff enough to keep them moving fast. However soon we were warmed up and enjoyed some hot soup,

crackers, honey, peanut butter. Soon Nancy and Rick Quintner arrived (a couple from Connecticut) wet. They are doing the whole trail, having started April 12 and are a nice young couple. Rick smoked grass with them and we swapped stories about people (hikers) we had spent time with along the trail. The mosquitoes bugged us all night.

Later this evening Lynn Sandusky came in and set up his hammock inside the lean-to and we all enjoyed the company of each other while it rained outside. The roof leaked, but missed Rick and I by inches. I believe this will be the coldest we will ever get. The moisture really got to me.

August 9, 1975. Saturday. A beautiful sunny, clear day all day with cool breezes and 75 to 80° temp. Hiked 13 miles to a campsite near Bear Mountain, Connecticut, 5 miles shy of northern Conn.-southern Mass. border.

Finally got a decent day to hike, sunny rays hitting the wet leaves, flat, even wide trail to prevent wet shoes and socks. It wouldn't have mattered because our shoes and socks are still wet from yesterday. Some stiff climbs and descents slowed us up this am.

At 11 am we hit a restaurant at Falls Village and had pancakes, potatoes and coffee to go along with our early morning breakfast of oatmeal. Also picked up supplies at a grocery 1/2 mile further.⁴ I've been lucky with personal check cashing where the hikers are a common passersby. The nice day makes it harder to hike many miles because we are stopping to admire the views. Crossed a pretty park and over a bridge where there was a dam. Hiked until 6 pm. Met Amy Schrak, Con Borgstein and Steve Long going north to south on the AT.⁵ All thru hikers.

August 10, 1975. Sunday. Sunny 80° temp and a nice day with some hazy cloud cover. Hiked 14 miles to "Jug End" campsite inside Massachusetts. A nice piped spring -- Hurrah!

Our day was great with several steep ascents and even then we put in 14 miles. Massachusetts has some tough hills to climb and with rocks, too. Rick is happy during the day and put out with me if I oversleep in the morning (like today, I slept 'til 6:45 am). He wants to get our hike day started and can't wake up unless I get him up and so our battle goes.

Passed through some unusually beautiful areas today, cliffs over Mt. Race and down Sage Ravine on the Mass-Conn border and ridge crest walking approaching Jug End. This term "Jug End" means the mountains come to an abrupt halt and drop into a valley.

Camped in a sheltered area where the ground was covered by rich black mulch and a piped spring close by furnished sweet, cold water. The trail follows a dirt road at this point and we are perhaps 100' off the road. But more about this day's hike.

After some roadwalking we moved into the woods where waterfalls slide down smooth rock surfaces leaving a silky veil where the early morning sun pierced the tree branches.

My mind must be other places tonight. The north to south hikers are having a party in Salisbury to celebrate their survival. I guess the first month in Maine and New Hampshire was really tough on the north to south hikers and many dropped out because of cold rain and boggy trail and black flies. We shouldn't be bothered by any of these things in September.

Rick and I are trying to hold down our desires for the extras in our grocery dept., like coconut, chocolate, candy, pastries and gosh how we miss them. But the

cost to our heavy appetites becomes a flood of demands making it even harder not to buy them. We'll survive!

We live for the mail drops because of the surprises Joan puts in them and also gives us an excuse to take a day off, do laundry, repair clothes, shoes, etc., and live it up a little. The expense of the huts in the White Mountains haunt me because of several things. Ann and Smitty will meet us there and I'm concerned about their equipment preparedness. I should know that they have had good previous experience, but somehow I am worried.

Rick and I will hike for maximum distances over the Whites in order to eliminate shelter stops and thus expense. However, I would like to spend one night in a hut (Madison Hut if possible) to enjoy the spirit and comradery of the other hikers.

Its 8 pm now and we start early tomorrow.

August 11, 1975. Monday. Weather: Foggy until noon then excellent balance of day with sun, some haze and a little muggy, very little breeze. Hiked 16 miles and our goal is Wilcox lean-to in Mass.

Very foggy this am cool weather, but comfortable walking. Road walked quite a while (some 5-1/2 miles). The trail is being rerouted and, at present, we skirt some farms, pass through fields, farm pastures and into wood lots on hillsides. The trail was skimpy and hard to find due to private land restrictions. Some steep climbs and rock ledge walking with constant ascending wore me out. Rick held up good, as usual, and got ahead of me a lot. He is eager to get to Dalton, Mass and enjoy a day off.

The animals we see are only domestic or human and lack the excitement of the wilderness. Got to the lean-to about 4:30 pm and that shows us what an early start does (7:45 am) for a good day's hike. Looks like we will do this as often as possible. Eight Girl Scouts were in charge of the lean-to so Rick and I tented about 50 feet away from lean-to and got a quiet night's sleep. We had a campfire with the girls (all about Rick's age) and answered questions on our equipment and trail experiences. The girls were from Conn. on a 4 day training hike prior to going to the White Mountains in New Hampshire next week to hut hike. We shared some delicious Richmoor brownie cookies and finished up their leftover combination peas, noodles and tuna Richmoor meal like "good thru hikers should". About 9:00 pm Lynn Sandusky arrived and slung his hammock across and above the girls sleeping in the lean-to on the floor. About then the heavens opened up and lightning flashed, the rain came down. Luckily the trees sheltered us from the driving rain and we spent a dry night inside our tents.

August 12, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Rained all night, but sun stayed out all day and dried us off. Got some thunderhead clouds, but they never shed a drop. Hiked 20 miles with October Mountain lean-to as our goal.

Packed up wet this morning about 8 am after an oatmeal breakfast and the trail was fairly flat with two ascents and some minor descents, but went through a lot of swampy spots on the trail where water was settling.

About 10 am we stopped at Tyringham, Mass. and bought bread, meat, cheese, milk, donuts and ate on a grassy bank of Hop Brook. The village was a picture of New England stiffness, complete with white buildings. On the road coming into town we passed some large estates, very neat, white fences and long lanes and stone gate posts leading up to the houses. However, it is this kind of landowner who refuses to let the trail pass over his land and keeps the road walking to it's maximum.

The day was warm and one section of the trail took us past a secluded pond (Finerty Pond). I couldn't resist a swim. It only takes a minute; drop the pack, shed a shirt, shorts and socks and shoes, dive in, rinse off. No need to wipe off, just put on your clothes wet and the air dries you off as you hike.

The balance of the day was spent walking through a lot of swampy land and woods. Met a family of five hiking four days, another hiker from Chicago, Ill.⁶ We stopped on a "Hiker Bridge" crossing U.S. 20 highway and spread our wet gear out on the concrete surface. It was dry in minutes, but we all lay down for a nice snooze in the sun. About 3:45 pm we continued on through swampy trail for the total 20 mile day's hike to October lean-to.

August 13, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Sunny and beautiful with temp about 75°, got warmer later in day. Hiked 10 miles and the Dalton, Mass. family home of the Woods was our goal. Not a pre-planned stop, but certainly one of the nicest surprises for us.

About 7 am Mr. Fish, a kindly old gent who loves the trail, the hikers, and this particular lean-to, came into the lean-to for some conversation. A big man with a slow easy way about him, told us about his routine of cleaning the lean-to and keeping it repaired. He had brought in a gallon of fresh water and left a fresh tomato for the 1st hikers to arrive the day before. We got the tomato and shared the water with Lynn Sandusky last night. Another visitor came last night, a porcupine climbed on the roof and stamped around over Lynn's hammock and kept Lynn awake. Rick and I camped outside in our tents as was our custom. We heard Lynn get up and explore the area about 1 am to see what the noise was. Pretty soon there was a thud and then Lynn went back to bed. The porky had a slide off the roof hitting the ground and scurried off into the woods.

Our trail for the day was mostly roadwalking, relocations and mostly downhill with steep descents. As we entered Dalton, Mass. we were hailed by a car from Illinois. The parents of a Chicago thru hiker (Mark Muzell) were looking for him and we had seen him the day before, so we directed them to his approximate location. They wanted to take him to Cape Cod for a couple of days relaxation. Later as Rick and I proceeded into town and the post office, a station wagon waited for us to cross a busy intersection then a woman and her daughter asked us if they could give us a lift to the P.O. and they then invited us to stay at their home for our layover in Dalton, Mass. They gave us beds with clean sheets, blankets and we used their bathtub. They fed us dinners and breakfasts. The Wood family are long time residents of Dalton and are ardent hikers, too. We really enjoyed them. They took us the next day out to do shopping and gave us directions on how to return home.

August 14, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Beautiful and sunny in the 70's and 80's. Hiked zero miles. Rest day spent at the home of the Wood family, Dalton, Mass.

A nice breakfast of cereal and eggs with juice greeted us this am. Mrs. Wood and Linda sat and talked with us while we ate. Mr. Wood had gone to work at the Crane Co. (Paper manufacturer) earlier. We were given a ride to the P.O. to return some equipment to Joan via P.P and to the shopping center to do our laundry and spend the day getting supplies and eating hamburgers at McDonalds. About 4 pm we hitched a ride back into Dalton (3 miles away from the shopping center). Got ready for supper with the Wood family and to bed about 10 pm.

The Wood home is right on the main road coming into Dalton, Mass. and the AT passes the house, too. The Mrs. and one daughter are hiking the Long Trail in Vermont

and are very interested in hiking in general. The family has been host to many hikers as their diary attests and we count ourselves lucky to have been guests of such wonderful people.

August 15, 1975. Friday. Weather: Cloudy with sun but cool, too. Hiked 17 miles. Our goal was the ski shelter on Mt. Greylock.

This is a nice day and after a beautiful breakfast at the Wood home, Rick and I took off. The trail wandered out of town through the "Crane Paper Co." estate property. (Note: This company makes cloth base high grade paper for making U.S. paper money). We enjoyed a sunny, cool hike over nice woodland on logging roads over some ledges and a summit called the Cobbles. We passed through Cheshire, Mass. where we stopped for a picnic lunch of cheese, honey, graham crackers and water. Close by, the cement monument of a 1300 lb. cheese stood representing a cheese that was sent to President Jefferson in Washington in 1801 showing what could be produced in Cheshire in one day.

About 6 pm we arrived at Mt. Greylock (3491' elevation) after traversing steep ascents on Jones Nose, Saddle Ball Mountain (3239'), Mt. Filch (3110') and Mt. Williams (2951'). A nice stone shelter provided us cover for the night. Hard concrete floor didn't even phase us as we slept like babies after 17 miles of steady hiking.

The Massachusetts War Memorial on the summit of Mt. Greylock was impressive. The evening turned cold and after a very pretty sunset we turned in.

Met Clay Chase, a hiker with a sandy beard and a Swiss Alps sapa (hat). He managed to leave his supply of wieners outside his window at the Basom lodge, we learned later. Poor guy always seems to have a misfortune. He's the hiker who lost his homemade bread to the raccoons.

Rick and I climbed into our sleeping bags and cooked our meal between us on the concrete floor all cozy and warm.

August 16, 1975. Saturday. Weather was "iffy" -- overcast with some sun and temp at 58 in the am and rose to 70° later. Hiked 17 miles with our goal the Seth Warner lean-to just inside Vermont's border.

Up at 6:30 am. "Long day" (Long Trail starts at the border of Vermont) and proceeded to descend from Mt. Greylock. The trail passed through heavily overgrown brush, across a river which we negotiated by leaping from large rocks to smaller rocks and slipping into deep water once at the Vermont-Mass. border.

The trail passes around the edge of the town of North Adams, Mass. and we decided to go into town where we could get Rick's shoe repaired. The hooks had pulled out on one shoe. While there we sampled a delicious McDonald hamburger and shake. We were accompanied by Lynn Sandusky who also needed shoe repairs, but the shop didn't have supplies for his Pavetta shoes. We got a ride from the edge of town to the shoe shop in a wholesale candy truck. Then on the way out of town we were picked up by a man who belonged to the Green Mountain Hiking Club. He offered to get us to the trail head after a stop at a large shopping center. Then, upon departure from us, he gave us a Long Trail copy of a guide book and a small bottle of brandy. We saved the brandy until evening when it was enjoyed by the three of us. We passed a beautiful waterfall passing through dense green woods gradually ascending. Three young girls were skinny dipping under the waterfall and it seemed so natural to us that we just waved and passed on up the trail envying them the cool refreshing

feelings they must have been enjoying. Reached the lean-to and it was full, so after moving up the trail for about a mile we tented in the woods.

August 17, 1975. Sunday. The skies are still overcast and its foggy this am. Temp was 60° all day, hiked 17 miles. Our goal is 9 miles beyond Congdon lean-to in Vermont.

Heard an owl this morning, the first one in a long time. Flushed grouse, too. It seems good to see and hear wild creatures again because the immense human activity since we left New York has curtailed any sign of the silent animals of the woods. Now we are entering a wilderness where humans are outnumbered by wilderness critters and the critters are more friendly and less shy.

Stopped at Congdon shelter for lunch. The caretaker is a girl named Gloria who completed the AT in 1974. She is in charge of the lean-to and collects a dollar per head for all hikers that stay in the shelter overnight. The next shelter is 14.8 miles away and we just covered seven miles by lunch.

We had a good climb through pines and hardwoods this pm that slowed us down or we would have made our campsite before 6 pm. We were tired at 6 pm so we made camp 5 miles shy of the next shelter, which had been torn down we discovered, and a trail relocation was or is finished. Glastenbury shelter actually is the next shelter and just out of our reach (5 miles) tonight so we again slept on good old Mother's lap of soft leaves and clubmoss. Good sleeping.

Porcupines were around and so we are hanging packs, food and shoes on dry nights now. The salty taste and smell lure the porky and he gnaws very frequently on anything of this kind. We saw many boards on the lean-tos that were almost gnawed in half by this little creature. I take my shoes into my tent on wet nights for safe, dry keeping.

Lynn Sandusky has been hiking with us off and on for the last two weeks and he just now came into sight. A nice fella and very talkative. In fact he even talks to himself (that's not unusual for a "thru hiker"). Wrote three post cards to Barb & John, Dena & Donna, and Ann Hoffman. I'll catch the young man coming our way tomorrow who walked in with us today from the highway #9 and give him our mail to post. He is doing an overnight and plans to return to Penn. tomorrow (Keith Shayham).

August 18, 1975. Monday. Foggy as usual in the morning until 11:30 am. Then we got breezes and the sky cleared, but some clouds remained with the temp at about 64°. (I sure enjoy this thermometer I brought along as it gives me something to tie facts down with). Got in thirteen miles today. Our goal we actually made was Story Spring lean-to.

Up at 7:30 am. Our tents are very wet from the heavy dew so we packed them wet as usual after a cereal and hot milk breakfast. I slept good, Rick says he didn't. Lynn always sleeps good in his hammock and gets up only after someone else does. We are hiking by 8:45 am and the woods is pretty with a blue-green haze over everything and it hangs over us as we progress down the trail. Rick always sets off at a good, fast pace in the morning and is soon lost to sight. Lynn is always 30 to 60 minutes behind me so I have a nice quiet walk and listen, watch and wait for peace to take over. The haze with rust brown tree stumps mixed with the deep green of the blueberry plants color makes an impression on my mind that I won't forget. Bunchberry is common ground cover and it's clusters of red berries among masses of green leaves is very striking. Its edible and has a very plain taste,

however my taste buds at this time say that it is delicious. No doubt my body needs the ingredients that this plant has thus making it unusually tasty to me. So I ate some -- Uhhmm!

Passed our first spring in 5 miles with some more close by for a change. This section of the trail was just relocated and we are worried about the water supply. Our guide books aren't up to date. But now we feel more secure knowing the water is here.

Coming up to Glastenbury shelter the trail was fairly level and is a pleasant walk. Here we find another completely enclosed shelter with four walls and a wood stove. Certainly nice on a cold rainy day if a hiker needs to warm up. We had lunch here and dried out our tents and other gear, wet from last night's foggy rain. Six people here in this shelter and they are still here at 11 am. Must be they aren't early risers or are really enjoying leisure living.

The summit of Glastenbury is on the AT with a fire tower about 1/4 mile away from the shelter and so we climbed up the 75' structure. We were above treeline and from the platform could see 360° panorama with blue sky, white clouds lazily drifting by. An unbelievable view of Mt. Greylock in Massachusetts to the south and Mt. Kilington to the north (not quite clear yet).

Lean-tos (and shelter -- 4 sided) are more plentiful from here to Shelbourne Pass so its not likely we'll be tenting much. Rick will be happy because of being with more people and also thwarting the rain possibilities thus eliminating packing away wet gear. The trail to Story Spring lean-to took us past extensive beaver ponds with active houses or lodges in them. Although there is a pond close to the lean-to it is on a bluff and back in the woods and hidden. At 7:50 pm the sun is a beautiful yellow and shines through the trees into the shelter now. Wish my camera could capture the picture. Rick and I set up our sleeping bags and did our cooking, writing, and reading while the food cooks.

We had company later when a young couple boy and girl arrived. They were very quiet and obviously quite in love. This hike for them contained more than the fresh outdoors because they were quite active and noisy during the night. Certainly a perfect setting for their lovemaking and being very matter-of-fact, they proceeded to actively engage in all the normal approach and completion cycle of their passion.

August 19, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: 48 to 64° during the day. Full moon last night and sky clear. Sunny all day. Hiked 20 miles with our goal Bromley shelter in Vermont.

8:00 am started hiking and the trail is flat most of the day with some slight ascents and descents. The descents slow me down as I always want to be sure my feet are on a firm surface. The trail has a lot of tree roots on it and they are wet and slippery. Rick took a spill and slid into a rock shin-first, but outside of hurt pride and a verbal outburst of, "I'm sick of this trail," and broken skin, he went on to greater efforts with much more determination and kept telling me, "No, Dad, we gotta make Bromley shelter," when I suggested setting up our tents for the night. And we did reach Bromley shelter by 6 pm after passing several hiker couples hiking Maine to Georgia. I can't conceive of their ever making it, but their spirit really counts and they certainly had that.

Ellen (caretaker at Bromley shelter) is 19 years old and lives alone in her tent June 1st to August 31 and watches over the 4 sided shelter. Her fee of \$.75 per night per head is not much and she doesn't enforce it's payment. We decided to tent rather than sleep in the shelter, as the ground was pine needle covered and

offered softer rest. Besides, other hikers in the shelter were noisy. The bunks were hard and bumpy. The shelter was equipped with table, stove and was clean. Slept good and had a moon all night.

August 20, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Cold, 50° temp, clear with some white puffy clouds, sunny, good hiking weather. Hiked 15 miles to Big Branch lean-to.

The night was quiet and both Rick and I slept good. At 8 am we were up and hiking by 9 am. The trail was pretty with lots of pine, spruce and hemlock on the ridges and in the gaps. The boggy areas in the gaps are beautiful green with some impassable areas that had boardwalks built across the bogs built by the Y.C.C. who are young kids in their teens that work in teams constructing water catches, drains, etc. They are paid \$10⁰⁰ per day and housed and fed. They seem to be good workers.

Some nice views of the surrounding valleys and mountains made each ascent a nice, rewarding trip. The sky was blue and clear and breezy fresh. The temp is getting down some and we must call Joan to confirm my letter requesting cold weather clothes.

Ruby crowned kinglets and pewees are singing and another I can't identify. Haven't mentioned the wide varieties of fungi, but they are everywhere in all colors, delicate reds, greens, blues, and browns and all kinds. Rick has been getting pictures. He got one of a porcupine late today as it was climbing a tree. We haven't seen any porkies yet, this is the first, but have seen where they busily gnawed away shelves and benches in the lean-tos. Many other fellow hikers warned us of the destruction they had suffered. One man (John Meeks -- thru hiker) had his water bucket punched in a couple of spots.

The Big Branch lean-to is next to a very nice river that is just like the Peabody in New Hampshire. We drank water from it after boiling. There are four others in the lean-to with us, all in one group and, as usual, very interesting. People all are different and they entertain you without knowing it.

Cold night and in bed by 9:00 pm.

August 21, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Temperatures at 7 am 44°, 62° in the pm. Skies are clear and sunny we stopped at Sunnyside shelter (3 sided with doors on 4th side) after hiking 13 miles this day.

Up by 7 am and we were cold. Better get some warmer sleeping bags. The trail was refreshing this morning. Met Nancy Babcock from Vermont hiking alone and she followed us the rest of the day using us as a "pace setter," she said. Had a picnic at lunchtime at Greenwall lean-to.

The weather remained cool this am. All our walking was on flat woodlands and only one sharp ascent, Peru Rock, only 3429' in elevation. Passed other lean-tos and met other people hiking the trail. Seems to be more hikers here in Vermont and reminds us of the traffic in the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

Vermont is a beautiful state to hike in and everyone knows it, too. The lean-to provided good shelter with wood stove, table and doors to close out the cold if needed. It rained all night but we were dry.

August 22, 1975. Friday. Weather was cloudy with some sun, but it was colder, temperature 50° by 5 pm. We hiked 13 miles today with our goal Cooper shelter on Killington Mountain and Jeb Brugmann from New Jersey as our host.

A nice warm night inside the shelter and dry while it rained all night. Good sleep and it was 8:30 am when we hit the trail. Couldn't tell whether we were going

to get more rain or not as the sky was threatening, but the cold temp even made it seem like snow was possible.

Some steep going ahead today with Mt. Killington at 4390' elevation. This is the first 4000' peak we've climbed since Mt. Rogers in southern Virginia and we'll see if we still have that stamina to climb without stopping for breathers. Lucky we won't climb to the summit as the trail misses it by some 350', but the hillside was all small pine trees nestled under the protection of older trees.

The AT and the Long Trail are one trail for about 90 miles and we are now traversing this section. Our path cuts a steady ascent through dense tree growth and as we reach the summit approach levels out with a gradual thinning of undergrowth with some bunchberry now showing. Passed Tamarack shelter and it was full of hikers, the cold wind was blowing into the shelter and I and Rick decided to go another mile to Cooper shelter hoping for warmer quarters. Our hiking companion Nancy Babcock was staying at Tamarack and we didn't see her again after that. Cooper shelter has four walls and a stove so our decision was wise to move on to this warm, inviting haven. We met Jeb Brugmann and ten other very nice people and slept inside a stone shelter. We slept three people to a bunk, plenty of room, warm and good on the hard boards the bunks were made from. But the weather was such that warmth was the most important comfort requirement. Some folks even climbed to the summit tonight to buy an expensive dinner at the Mountain Top Lodge, but Rick and I, being a little light in the pocketbook, enjoyed our hiker's fare.

August 23, 1975. Saturday. Weather this am was cold, 40° with clear blue skies and sunny. Hiked seven miles to Mt. Meadows Lodge.

Before leaving this am some of the hikers wanted to lighten their food load because they were getting off the trail today. So Rick and I received some food gifts to help sustain us. It was nice to wake up to a warm room and lots of good company.

Hiking by 7:30 am after taking a couple of pictures. A nice sunrise and a privy shot. Very interesting the way the outhouse was propped up on the side of the hill to level it. Some settling had given it an unusual tilt.

Met Doug Crawford "thru hiker" from NH going south to Georgia. Our trail is beautiful this morning and refreshing. Some nice views, too. We are headed for Mt. Meadows Lodge, \$4⁰⁰ for 3-B's (Breakfast, Bed and Bath) also free dinner for one if we do the pots and pans in the kitchen. Our path lead us over Peco Peak and past Peco Camp lean-to to Sherburne Pass where the AT turns leaving the Long Trail and becomes just the AT. Maintained by the Dartmouth Outing Club. We met Ben Ralston, the ranger for Gifford Woods State Park. Mr. Ralston invited Rick and I into his cabin where his wife served us breakfast. Then we signed his official thru hiker register. A very nice experience for Rick and I. A short hike brought us out on a pretty little lake called Kent Pond and a sign saying "3 B's for \$4⁰⁰" with an arrow pointing the way. Rick and I had heard about the place on the trail from other hikers and so we were ready for a layover from hiking. We got some nice bunks in the mens dorm, took showers and signed up to do the pots and pans for one free meal. Good experience for Rick and I.

Called Joan this evening, she sounds great, the cough she had is still plaguing her, but she is doctoring. Great news -- Dave will join us at Pinkham Notch with Ann and Smitty. (Oh yes, met Maury Wintturi, friend of Ed Garvey at Gifford Woods).

Rick and I were invited to join a lady and her two children at the table for dinner (Mrs. Herzog). She treated us to wine with our dinner and we entertained with stories about the hike we were on.

Met Bob Paiva (Long Trail hiker) in the dorm. He was there when we went to bed. Very talkative young man and good company. Cooled off tonight and the moon came out. Got a nice sunset picture with my 110 Kodak. Hope it turns out. Slept very well. Earlier we made trip into a shopping center close to Rutland and hitched a ride both ways.

August 24, 1975. Sunday. Weather turned cloudy with some rain and 50° temperatures, decided to lay over so no miles were hiked today.

Mountain Meadows Lodge is a ski resort with instructors, restaurants, repair shop and outfitters shop mostly for winter business operation. However, they are open in the summer for motel and restaurant customers. Its a family owned operation with two boys about 24 years old and with lots of sports interest. Canoeing, hiking, etc., are all enjoyed by the whole family. Its no wonder they cater to the hikers.

Well, anyway, Rick and I woke up to a gray sky and were glad that we were not hiking. Breakfast was great and we ate our fill of cereal, eggs, french toast, coffee, orange juice, toast and jam. By now it was raining outside and looks like it will do so all the rest of the day. Wrote a letter to Ed Garvey about the new 2 volume set of books on "Hiking the Appalachian Trail". Should hear from him in Monson, Maine, concerning availability of the introductory samples we saw yesterday at Gifford Woods State Park that Maury Wintturi had. The books are beautiful and will cost \$19⁰⁰ per set. We'll try and get them for this price, but could go as high as \$38⁰⁰ per set. The books are a nice composite of trail experiences which include some excellent photography and will be a great addition to our library.

Our evening meal again was great and Rick and I did the pots and pans in exchange for one free evening meal. Our trail companion Lynn Sandusky came in tonight and will stay a while. The rain finally stopped about 4 pm, but a fog has moved in to stay. Took a nice nap this pm and now feel rested. We have averaged one day off every 10th day so far and I believe this is a healthy way to enjoy our hike. Rick is happy and more relaxed today. Tomorrow a 15 mile hike will take us to Topman Hill and a unique shelter called the Hobit Hut.

August 25, 1975. Monday. Weather: Overcast all day with fog and temperatures at 60°. Partially sunny in the pm. Hiked 15 miles making our way to Gulf lean-to.

I am writing the day's events by candle light and it is only 6:30 pm. This shelter is dark and doesn't help me much. Rick and I got up for a whopper of a breakfast at the Mt. Meadows Lodge. There were five hikers there and us, and of the seven only four ate like they should have, so I can only guess that four were thru hikers. Again as yesterday the menu included cereal, eggs, bacon, toast, jam, coffee, milk, french toast.

At nine am we hit the trail and covered 15 miles today by 4:30 pm. Mostly flat woods, stone fences, and pine trees to keep things green. Can't get over the great amount of rust colors like fall is on the way. Soft leaves make the trail a cushion of comfort to walk, and so easy on the feet.

Just finished dinner and Rick is working on a campfire. I asked him how he felt about the end of our hike getting close. He said, "Its got to end sometime." I see other hikers with a far away look in their eyes when asked this question. Today as we left Mt. Meadows Lodge a hiker (Kathy Smith) made a decision having gotten

this close to Mt. Katahdin and the end of the hike, decided to save this treat for another year and will hike instead straight up the Long Trail to Canada. Myself, I am very sorry to see the end coming, but I know that I will be returning with Joan, Barb and John many other times and this makes one happy.

I tried to read some of Rick's post cards he sent to Mr. Beaty, Mr. Stiles and Mr. Hill, but he made me stop reading them. Also, I'll send a request for permits to hike in the White Mts. off in the mail at the next stop. Hope we get an answer by the time we arrive in Hanover, NH. At least we will be on record as hiking this area.

August 26, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Same as yesterday, overcast am with sun in pm then more overcast. Hiked 17 miles. Goal was Happy Hill cabin, DOC maintained.

This day has been one of the more spectacular days of hiking from my standpoint. The type of terrain over which we walked was typical Vermont with beautiful green hillsides, woodsy trail, partially hidden farmhouses and barns all in white and red. Hilltop views to set your eyes to watering and your head to shaking at the unbelievable gentleness of the landscape. At Cloudland shelter where we stopped for lunch we met the Coopmans from Massachusetts. They hiked the AT in March early from Springer Mountain, GA and were far advanced on the trail, but in the Shenandoah National Park the bears raided their backpacks tearing them to pieces to get at the food. This stopped the Coopmans cold. But after getting new packs they went to Mt. Katahdin in Maine and started south on the At to meet their former stopping point. Rick and I enjoyed a real talk with these folks and our lunch went too fast.

The lean-to was built in 1972 and was in good shape. Met about 12 other hikers today, families, partners, kids. Found a comment in the register at the Hobbit Hut written by Sally Sheldon, dated July 17, 1975. She had started hiking with us at Springer Mountain, Georgia and continued on the trail for about 1000 miles, stopping close to Duncannon, Penn. to return home in Massachusetts. She then went to Mt. Katahdin and hiked south and did some AT in Vermont, too.

The Hobbit Hut was built by a landowner for his children and all the bunks, windows, door, table, chairs, rail fence around the hut and etc. were in small dimensions for people about 48" tall; thus the name. The hikers were given permission to use this place by the owner and many unusual comments were written in the register. We spent some time reading them.

The Happy Hill Cabin was not occupied when we arrived so Rick and I enjoyed the solitude, built a fire in the large inside fireplace, cleaned up the kitchen (a lot of trash left there) and fixed supper together. We had collected some green apples along the trail so after peeling them we made apple sauce using some brown sugar purchased at a grocery as we came through New Hartford earlier. So we ended the day with happy hearts and full stomachs and had a good night's sleep.

August 27, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Overcast and foggy with a promise of clearing which it did by 9 am. Sunny the balance of the day with temperatures in the 70's. Hiked six miles to Hanover, NH and Dartmouth College campus. Delta Theta Chi fraternity house.

Up at 7 am and hiking by 8:15 am. Brought out a 15 lb load of trash from the cabin in an attempt to preserve the cleanliness of the premises and leave a nice place for the next hikers. Reached town and prevailed upon a trash hauler to dispose of the trash we brought out. Our trail was all woods and some road walking. As we drew near Norwich (suburb of Hanover) the houses were typical New England design,

very neat, well painted, clean, very pretty. The barn and house combination made them very large, in true farm style to allow the farmer to get to the barn in winter weather without getting outside into the snow and cold. Also I suppose some animal heat helped heat the adjacent rooms.

Crossed the Connecticut River and walked uphill to the town and college campus. Met another hiker coming from Maine and doing the AT in sections. A nice guy from Virginia and we ate lunch with him at Blair Hall, but didn't get his name. The lunch was an "all you can eat" affair for \$2.25 each and brother did we eat. 2nd and 3rds of everything along with drink machines, ice cream machines and freezers all located in the same dining hall on a help yourself basis. A large salad bar was there, too, to be eaten at our leisure. Rick and I had a surprise as we walked down the campus green. Shrieks and yells hailed us from two long lost hikers, Wendy Elliott and Susan Bartlett who ran up to us. They had just returned from a two week layoff from hiking the AT. And now were resuming their "thru hike" of the AT. They were our companions on the trail earlier and very good buddies. They were looking for a place to stay overnight like we were, so both the nineteen year old girls with us approached the fraternities (as we had been advised by other hikers) for free lodgings. Being the end of the semester most fraternities were closed, but Theta Delta Chi put us up for as long as we wanted at no charge. Its a rule of courtesy instigated by DOC (Dartmouth Outing Club) to give all thru hikers bed, bath free of charge. We have a recreation room with wide cushioned benches to sleep on and kitchen, refrigerator, facilities, showers, TV and phone. Sue and Wendy got a room on the 3rd floor all to themselves.

We picked up our mail at the post office, then wrote letters and rested from 1 pm on. A very nice short day.

August 28, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Sunny and beautiful with 70° temperature all day, hiked zero miles, spending a rest day at Hanover, NH.

Horrors! We overslept and missed the all-you-can-eat breakfast at Blair Hall. It broke our hearts, but a good night's sleep kept our hearts light and we went into town for a nice breakfast at the restaurant. Got mail, took our Kelty hip belts in to get them repaired. Looked at some sleeping bags thinking that we needed warmer ones. The "Cat's Meow" by North Face has a nice new design which appealed to us for \$57.⁰⁰. Haven't figured out how to get it without a check (I'm out of them). Later: Decision is not to buy the bag, but get along with what we have and add clothes to our bodies to combat the cold. We have plenty of extra clothes.

Spent the rest of the day writing letters and saying good bye to Wendy and Sue about noon. Took their pictures in front of Library Hall on the campus green. They really didn't want to leave and kinda went strolling around town before they took off for the trail located right off the main street. Rick and I have the same problem when we spend a nice rest day in an attractive town. We bought our food for the trail and our night meal. Ate hamburgs, onions, tomatoes, milk, sweet rolls, and did our cooking in the kitchen. In bed by 11 pm.

August 29, 1975. Friday. Weather is cloudy and a slight chance of rain, temp in the 60's. Still at Hanover another day.

Up at 6:30 am and we went to Blair Hall for breakfast and a terrific meal to remember. One letter at post office from Bob Proudman at Pinkham and we won't need a permit in the White Mountains. Now if the Laconia office answers my letter we are all set. No other mail so everything else will have to be transferred to PO at Glencliff, NH. We picked up our pack hip belts from the repair shop and they ought to last us. Joan said last night that she had sent our letter on to Kelty 10 days ago. Now we will see what Kelty will do for us on replacement belts.

Did some laundry and grocery shopped. Ate a late lunch at the frat and a late dinner, too. Packed our backpacks in preparation for a departure tomorrow am after sending our package back home.

Its raining outside now and has been since 4 pm. Hope it clears up for tomorrow. 10 pm now and time for bed. Took a quick walk through the Library Hall and saw a Dr. Seuss display of this famous author. Guess he was a Dartmouth man. It was closing time and so we didn't spend much time there, but wished we could have.

August 30, 1975. Saturday. The weather is rainy and cloudy with temperatures around 63° and prospects slim for better conditions for the rest of the day. Covered 15-1/2 miles by the end of the day making our goal the Trapper John lean-to built in 1973 here in New Hampshire with nice spring water nearby.

Well, we got apples to taste today as we walked along the road after mailing out a package at the PO. We did some woods walking and the skies stayed cloudy, but no rain until about 2 pm and then continued for the balance to the day. We got wet and also fogged in, missing some nice views at Holt's Ledges. The DOC cabins are very nice and we are finding them unlocked, so if its necessary we can stay at them. We ate lunch at one today, it was a large cabin, enough room to easily handle 30 people. One large room with fireplace and a rear room for a kitchen and large loft area. Dartmouth Outing Club says that if they (the cabins) lock them up, they are broken into anyway and maintenance costs are less if no repairs have to be made on windows and doors. We cleaned the cabin up before leaving because the last users left it a mess. We found the Trapper John lean-to, a new lean-to, with five other hikers there, but they made room for us. Another thru hiker was there who said he was from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Mark somebody. He wants to finish by Thanksgiving in Georgia. It dried up a little during the night and we heard owls hooting.

August 31, 1975. Sunday. The weather started out foggy and 60°, but by 10 am the sun was out and the skies cleared leaving puffy white clouds in blue sunny skies. Hiked twelve miles today stopping at Cube lean-to.

We will not get to Glencliff until Tuesday. This will allow a post office stop when the PO is open. Its a very small highway private home type post office.

Our trail is beautiful and climbs the first in the series of mountains approaching the White Mountains, 3240' elevation Smarts Mtn. We took pictures from the fire tower and ate our lunch in the sunny grass beside the fire warden's cabin. What a delightful picnic on the warm earth with pines whispering in the wind by us. A small brown mouse nearby sniffs around for tidbits other hikers or us might have dropped, grasshoppers, dragonflies sail by us or land on our packs to inspect for identification and a very peaceful quiet surrounds us. With our Sunday and Monday holiday our trip to Glencliff can be delayed because the PO will not be open until Tuesday and so we are slowing down and enjoying our hike through a very beautiful

section of New Hampshire which I doubt we will ever see again. We plan a very leisurely walk staying at the lean-tos. However, the days are going fast and our holdups are somewhat of a worry as our deadline of October 14th comes closer, Mt. Katahdin shuts down October 15th.

September 1, 1975. Monday. Our weather slides down to 46° inside the shelter with possibly lower temps along the way. Sunny but cool today with a high about 60°. Hiked 12.8 miles to our unexpected shelter lean-to, Wachipauka 1/8 mile up a steep trail off the AT.

Our day started nicely; sunny, with cool weather. Cube lean-to had been built on the site of an old cabin or homestead that had burned down a long time ago. All that was left standing was a great stone fireplace and the rough, raised ground where the foundation had been. This was situated about 25' from our lean-to which was a very rough affair and furnished just the needed shelter, only a few mice were around at night and not bothersome. I had a slight head cold or hay fever stuffiness, but slept like a log. Breakfast included cooked apples from last night and we added some extra (apples, cooked) to our meal. We seem to be finding apple trees now and we have added this item to our diet. Cinnamon and brown sugar now occupy a place in our packs to complete the apple sauce menu.

Mt. Cube was right on our doorstep and by 10 am we were on top. Saw other people today because of the holiday. A young man stayed with us at the lean-to (Don Maula from New Jersey) and is doing the AT in bits and pieces - seemed restless, but a nice fella. The summit of Cube Mountain was rocky and we had a clear day to see Mt. Moosilocki and the Sandwich Range south. Kinsman Notch and other White Mountains are hidden by some mist. By noon we have entered the White Mountain National Forest and at this point we ate our lunch. The rest of the day was a fairly level walk until we got to Wachipauka lean-to. Then it was 1/8 mile ascent on a side trail. Sometimes I think we are crazy to go off the trail for a lean-to. But Rick worries about getting rained on and having wet tents so we go the extra distance to relieve this tension and we aren't even sorry.

We picked up two beautiful thoroughbred hound dogs that had just had an introduction to porcupines. Both of them had a nose full of quills plus quills in their feet, heads and chest. We couldn't get them to stop following us so for the five miles to the lean-to we had company. They slept at the shelter and after a scuffle they decided who was boss and settled down. They wanted to move into our beds, but we booted them outside where they found shelter under the eaves of the lean-to. It rained all night long. About 8 pm our hiker friend Lynn Sandusky came into the lean-to. He had rested up for five days at Mt. Meadows Lodge and was running long hiking days to try to catch up.

Again Rick and I made apple sauce for our meal to supplement the macaroni and cheese and tonight it really tasted good. The outhouse was another of those strange memorable structures and it looked out over the most unbelievably beautiful valley. One had to squat before backing into it. There was a slight backward tilt to the seat affording a very comfortable position from which to relieve oneself (see slide). Being an old lean-to, Wachipauka shelter was low and in bad repair and chances are that it will be discontinued as a regular shelter and left to rot away.

We got to bed by 9:30 pm.

September 2, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Cloudy and overcast until 3 pm. Then mist and rain until 7 pm. Hiked 15 miles and our goal was North Woodstock, Cascades lodge.

A slope away from the shelter went down to a lodge overlooking Wachipauka Pond. A beautiful sight this morning with the swirling mist raising off the water. Got to hiking about 8:45 am and we lost the hound dogs shortly when they gave chase to some animal in the woods. After three miles we arrived at the whistle stop called Glencliff and the post office, picked up a letter from Joan. No food drop yet so it will be Gorham before we get it. Wrote a letter to Joan and a card to Hager Fox. Then hit the trail again. 4810' and two hours of ascending took us over the most beautiful trail to the top of Mt. Moosilocke. It began to rain as we descended the northern side of the mountain. The trail was partially constructed with cuts in the stone face of the mountain, but then again only hand holds on the tree roots intermittently appeared and we had to be very cautious due to the precipitous and wet surfaces. The trail was beautiful even though dangerous as it paralleled Beaver Brook cascading merrily alongside the AT, the steam rushing, dropping ever downward. It rained while we descended making our footing extremely hazardous. The trail utilized cedar blocks fitted into the stone and by arranging huge stones into a stepping stone fashion. The men who built this section of the trail did an unbelievable job and only serves to strengthen our belief in the goals of the AT hiking clubs who maintain this trail.

We were soaked completely by the time we reached highway 112 and decided to hitch a ride into North Woodstock and a dry lodging and supplies rather than tough it out with wet equipment and do it in the morning. Luckily we got rides right away and got a room at the Cascade Lodge containing a double bed, single bed, range and sink. Lynn Sandusky shared the quarters with us and the \$5.⁰⁰ per head charge was fair. Grocery shopped for our evening meal and had a stew to end all stews. Enjoyed showers and soft beds tonight. We'll get our supplies in the morning and give the town the once over before returning to Kinsman Notch to begin our ascent over the Kinsmans.

September 3, 1975. Wednesday. Overcast and very cloudy with fog in the mountains and woods, hiked 7 miles to Eliza Brook lean-to.

Our night of sleep was beautiful at Cascade Lodge. We were up by 8 am and put away eggs, cereal with coffee for breakfast. Picked up supplies after a short walk to Woodstock where the bank cashed a check for me. By 1 pm we took a taxi to Kinsman Notch our starting point some five miles outside town. The trail was steep and slippery due to the fog and yesterday's rain. As I sit here on the edge of the lean-to floor, the fog still engulfs us, but it could change with some wind. Snow was reported on Mt. Washington last night and it is cold here tonight.

Our trail was all through pine, over rocks covered with moss and boggy spots. A very weird feeling seemed to follow us as we hiked, kind of like we were the only people on earth. Didn't meet another soul which was nice. The lean-to was built of logs and in good repair. Two other couples are here with us tonight who are hiking sections of the trail. We will try for Greenleaf Hut tomorrow some 15 miles away. Quite a hike and one that John Crandell and I did in 1972. I am looking forward to it. Rick is a great spirit to be with and is always chattering about something. He keeps me on my toes. To bed now -- its almost too dark to write (7:30 pm). Eliza Brook rushes down the mountain here beside the shelter and should put me to sleep.

September 4, 1975. Cloudy and overcast again this morning with temperatures in the 70's late in the day. Sun was out between 1 and 5 pm. Hiked 15 miles to Greenleaf hut in the White Mountains.

Wet fog all night at the lean-to and we were off and hiking by 7:30 am. Steep climbs to South and then to North Kinsman mountains. By noon we made it to Lonesome Lake hut. The trail after the Kinsmans was woody and slabbed the mountainsides, then from Lonesome Lake it was more woods with Cascade Brook Trail following a lively brook down to highway 3 called Webster Highway. Then through Franconia Notch and up and up Mt. Liberty via the Whitehouse Trail and Liberty Spring Trail to the Franconia Ridge trail. This was a long, steep climb and slightly monotonous.

We met Dave Burg and his wife birding along the trail. They were newlyweds on a honeymoon. He is writing a book "Birding in the Berkshires".

Rick is excited as I am about crossing the long stretch of mountains on the open ridge with the sun shining. Not many days of sun honor this open ridge and weather can be tough at times on this section of the trail. We took lots of pictures crossing the side of Mt. Liberty (4460' elevation), Little Haystack Mountain, Mt. Lincoln at 5106' elevation. Then on to Mt. Lafayette, 5249' elevation. At this point we took a side trail to Greenleaf hut one mile down the side of the mountain. The wind began to blow as we descended off the main trail and we were happy to know that soon our goal for the day had been reached. The fog moved in covering the summit of Mt. Lafayette which we had just left.

There were nine people in the hut with a cat and two dogs. We cooked our own food, and ate it, then John, the caretaker in charge made spaghetti and we were invited to help ourselves. Yum! Our wood bunks feel good with the soft mattress tonight. We ate again and again and got to bed by 11 pm.

September 5, 1975. Friday. Just perfect weather, sunny, 70° temperatures with some white clouds floating by and blue skies. Hiked 10 miles to Guyot lean-to far up in the White Mountains of beautiful New Hampshire.

Made 1.1 mile ascent from Greenleaf hut to the summit of Mt. Lafayette following blue blazes and then rock cairns that marked the trail to the main Garfield Ridge Trail (the AT). We started out about 9 am and had a sunny-foggy-sunny ascent. Met another thru hiker at the summit and he accommodated Rick and I by taking our picture with our camera. It was windy and cold on the open ridge so Rick and I hurried over the 3/4 mile open crest to the descent into the timberline and by 12 noon we ascended Mt. Garfield (elevation 4488') to see beautiful views of the mountains we had just come over the day before (Mt. Flume and Mt. Liberty).

The trail from Mt. Garfield to Galehead hut was woody and rocky going. We arrived at Galehead hut about 4 pm where we had coffee, tea, or cocoa choices for \$.15. The break here afforded us a chance to enjoy a 1/2 hour break and talk with the hut caretaker who was there for just one more day before going home to Massachusetts. Another man will replace him for the balance of the season until October 15th at which time this hut will close up until next year June. After September 1st special low rates are available to hikers who want to sleep inside and cook their own meals. The fall is really the best time to hike in these mountains with the color changes taking place and less crowds of people to contend with.

After leaving Galehead hut we ascended for 110' to the top of South Twin Mountain (elevation 4980') and found another spectacular 360° view of all the White Mountains with the tallest, Mount Washington (elevation 6288'), to our north and east direction. Unbelievable and a sight never to be forgotten. Its impossible to capture the beauty even on film because of the continuous panoramic effect presented. On the descent we met a father, mother and their 4 and 6 year-old boys coming up the trail, each little fellow carrying his own backpack. They had started

out from Zealand hut at a pace of one mile per hour. It was now 5 pm and they had another two miles of very tough ascent and descents to make before reaching Galehead hut. I commended them for their endurance as the kids were pooped and the parents were lifting them up and over a lot of rocks at this point.

Found Guyot lean-to and gratefully got into our bags before preparing our meal. It was chilly and we were cold. It got dark before we finished our dinner at 8 pm. A quick washup of dishes. Lots of mice here, but they didn't get into our food for some reason. We were lucky, I guess. Slept wonderfully on the soft humus floor of the hut.

September 6, 1975. Saturday. Awoke to a very hazy sky and rain. Hiked 4.5 miles to Zealand hut.

Up by 7 am. Rick and a sore spot on top of his left big toe and with the lousy rain we decided it was a good day to hole up in a dry comfortable hut. If the rain lets up we may go the 4.5 miles to Zealand hut. Guyot lean-to is one and a quarter miles off the AT so we definitely planned on getting wet. Hope to get to Pinkham Notch by Tuesday to meet Dave Brigham, Ann and Smitty who will join us for a limited time on the AT. Boy what a treat for us. Hope to get a message off to Pinkham Notch for Dave to let him know where we are!

Our lean-to door this morning framed a beautiful sight of shadowy mountains, their skyline foggy with drifting clouds, settling in the tiered valleys between us and skyline. We decided to get started -- rain or not -- and by 1 pm we arrived at Zealand hut. This cooler wet weather also cools our ambitions for hiking any great distances and we prefer to keep dry. Our daily average miles are dropping as we pass over rougher terrain, but with such fantastic views all day long, who cares about speed. Today however wasn't a banner day for hiking with fog, wet trail and sore toe so it seemed sooo good to put gear in a dry place at 1 pm, curl up on a nice soft mattress and take a nap. Woke up at 4 pm all rested, cooked a batch of applesauce and nutmeg to spice it up along with our rice-tuna mix.

There are some 24 people here tonight including 7 and 9 year-olds who are very noisy. To our surprise, Wendy Elliott and Susan Bartlett were here when we arrived about 1 pm, but they moved on to Ethan Pond shelter 5 miles further down the trail. They are enjoying this portion of the AT by hiking slower. Our hut tonight is like the previous huts with mens dorm with blankets, mattress, bathroom (no showers), central dining room with kitchen at the rear of the building. There is a lively stream that flows off the mountain beside the hut forming pools periodically and on a decent day a person could bathe in it. Of course, its a no, no and would soon be polluting it's lower outlet end, so we won't bathe.

September 7, 1975. Sunday. Weather: Brisk, sunny with some clouds floating lazily overhead. Temperature 50°. Hiked 13.4 miles to Mizpah hut. (This hut is the largest of the nine huts maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club of New Hampshire and is sumptuous compared to the other huts. But it still is remotely located, with all the building materials brought in by air. All the food is carried in by hut persons over some 5 miles of very steep trail to the kitchens (the hut is at 3800' elevation) where it is prepared by hut persons in the 16 to 19 age bracket).

Rick and I woke up after a great night's sleep. We saw the morning skies clearing and our spirits climbed to even greater heights. After we made our own breakfast and accumulated surplus food from other hikers who were leaving the trail

today and didn't want to carry extra weight out. We managed to cut our costs of the hike in this manner all along the trail as it is a time worn tradition to assist other hikers in this manner.

About 8 am we headed out on Ethan Pond Trail which was dry and clear. It lead us along White Wall Cliffs and Zealand Falls. The yellow birch leaves are falling and dot the dark wood's floor making it a game to distinguish sun spots and leaf spots from one another. Rick and I stopped to see the Ethan Pond lean-to taking a short side trail which amounted to hopping from one rock to another along the shoreline of Ethan Pond. With a caretaker this lean-to is kept neat and clean. Today it had a full house which included Wendy and Sue who had gotten up early to go into town for supplies. They would be coming along behind us later. By noon we had hiked 7.6 miles to Crawford Notch and ate lunch by the Saco River (pronounced Sacko). Then we ascended Mt. Webster, a very steep, long climb. The views were terrific and our pictures should be great. The whole Presidential Range is in full sight from Webster and from Mt. Jackson it is even better. We are excited about these sights as it is the beginning of the trail for which both Rick and I have been looking forward. Old familiar places like Dolly Copp campground and Pinkham Notch lie below us where we spent some great earlier camping times with Joan, Ann, Dave and the Crandells.

Our pictures include Mizpah hut, most recently built of the huts (1964-65) and quite large in size having an upstairs and very large dining hall which accommodates over 60 people. We enjoyed a nice bedroom (standard wood bunks with blankets and mattress). The evening meal was grand with the usual country style of servings all you could eat. The breakfast the next morning followed the same routine and our stomachs suffered sooo gorgeously. Our bunks let us get a good night's rest, however it got colder during the night and I transferred to my sleeping bag in the middle of the night in preference to the three wool army style blankets furnished.

September 8, 1975. Monday. Weather: Cloudy but clearing and eventually a sunny day. Temperature 50 to 55 degrees. Hiked 11 miles to Gray Knob shelter cabin on the Randolph Hiking Club side of Mt. Adams one mile off the AT.

After a tremendous breakfast of sausage, eggs, cereal and biscuits we set out for the open summits of the Presidential Mountains. It was exciting because the weather was holding beautifully with sunny fair skies and a cool wind. Mizpah hut is on the slope of Mt. Clinton and a short climb put us on top, being bald we could see for miles all around 360°. The same was true for Mt. Pleasant (Eisenhour). Both Franklin and Monroe are taller (5004' and 5385' elevation) and more rugged, the trail slabbed these two mountains. There are side trails to their summits, but we didn't take them because of our desire to get over the open crests while the good weather held.

By noon we were at the Lakes-of-the-Clouds hut having gone through some thick patches of clouds, saw a lot of people, rocks and most satisfying views. The short descent to Lakes-of-the-Clouds was nice and gentle, with a pond at the base of Mt. Monroe. The two small lakes are behind the hut and below Mt. Washington. Clouds pass over the hut in an ever changing spectacle of sun, mist and white fog as we approach the hut. After coffee and cold pancakes at the hut Rick and I started up Mt. Washington in a changing atmosphere of clouds, mist and fog passing a white cross marking the spot where a hiker perished while climbing the mountain, got lost and died of exposure to bad weather that occasionally assails this mountain without

warning. Within two tenths of a mile from the top of Mt. Washington (6288' elevation) the wind gusts reached 72 mph (learned later in the day) and we decided not to go to the summit on a side trail and continued on around the mountain crossing the tracks of the cog railway at the water tower location. The AT then goes over and around Mt. Clay (5532' elevation), Mt. Jefferson (5715' elevation) and Mt. Adams (5798' elevation). The trail slabbed the sides of these mountains and was grassy, rocky with a lot of scrub pine. The climbs were enough to slow us down even without going over the summits here and by five pm we were glad to reach the junction of Lowe trail with the AT. A ten foot high rock cairn marks the spot and we decided to descend one mile to Gray Knob cabin for the night. Our next best campsite was too far away, Madison hut being a full service hut at this time of year was expensive so we opted for the free lodging at Gray Knob cabin.

After a mile descent down off the back side of Mt. Adams, we hit treeline and a little further the most interesting little cabin maintained by the Randolph Hiking Club. Usually a caretaker here collects \$1 per person and there is a nice wood stove, bunks, sink and running water and dishes. However the caretaker had left for the season and we stayed for free. Only one other person was in residence when we arrived. Kathy Mitchell from Lansing, Michigan who was hiking for a week on the Presidentials was glad to see us and being very young, energetic and from our home town had lots to say. About 30 minutes later our constant hiking companions, Sue and Wendy, arrived and we made our dinners and all sat around a candle-lit table warm and cozy. It was delightful!! Our quarters were separate rooms with double bunks and wall table. The mattresses were soft and comfortable. The bunks were made with crooked saplings for end posts as was the interior of the cabin. Truly a rustic setting giving the impression of belonging to a crooked old woman and a crooked old man. We slept good.

September 9, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Sunny and 70° after the misty fog was burned off the mountain slopes. Hiked 6 miles to Pinkham Notch. Camped with Ann, Smitty, David, Ron at the Peabody River site.

Started out from Gray Knob cabin in a fog which blew across the open crests of Mt. Adams. Our progress up the slope below treeline was slow and labored, but we were eager to arrive at the Madison hut for coffee and cakes. AT 10:30 am we did. At 11:00 we started ascending over Mt. Madison, but Rick and I were not too enthusiastic about this ascent into the clouds and got psyched out about it. So we chose another trail which lead us down immediately instead of up and then down.

The Madison Gulf Trail was an experience neither of us will forget as it took us down the mountain in an almost vertical fashion. If there hadn't been trees and brush beside us all the way, it would have resembled a cliff-like descent. Parapet Creek followed this trail down and needless to say we made good time. Boy, oh boy was it ever down, rock by tree by root, by rock for what seemed like hours.

We were descending into Madison Ravine along the north slope. The trail passed beautiful waterfalls and crossed bright sparkling streams cascading off the mountainsides. We joined Wendy, Sue and J.B. Burritt⁷ at the trail crossroads (Osgood Trail and Madison Gulf Trail) and paused for lunch. We then began meeting people who told us about Ann, Smitty, Dave and Ron who were waiting for us at Pinkham Notch. Did our steps ever quicken -- Wow! What great news! Soon we met them on their way up to meet Rick and I and we all had a loud greeting and hugging session. From there on the trail was short, because of the company we were in. We all headed for the Pinkham Notch AMC camp where we decided our schedule for the next day, where

to camp, etc. Wendy and Sue joined us at our campsite alongside the Peabody River about 10 miles north of Pinkham Notch on highway 16. We feasted on Joan's casserole and homemade bread, talked about what had transpired on all fronts around a campfire, then crawled into our tents and slept to the river's gentle rush over and around the stones.

Dave's car became our great transport carrying 8 people and 8 backpacks. Later in the evening Rick and I returned to Pinkham Notch to get J.B. Burritt and call home to talk to Joan. However, J.B. had scored with the camp people with his guitar music and singing, getting food and a place to stay for the night.

September 10, 1975. Wednesday. Sunny weather with some wind and high cirrus clouds this am. Looks good for all day. Temperatures in the 60's. Hiked six miles to Carter Notch campsite below the huts.

This is a great morning with bacon and eggs for eight people eaten on the banks of the Peabody River. Our tent site was nice and cozy and a warm night helped to increase our comfort. After breakfast we broke camp and piled into Dave's car again and headed for Pinkham Notch where we mailed letters, cashed checks, weighted our packs and prepared to hike. All of us are in high spirits and a visitor took our picture.

The trail around Lost Pond and up Wildcat Mountain proved to be a good test for our first day all together: lots of puffing and good humor, laughing, sweating, making the ski tow on Wildcat by 1 pm we had lunch and talked about the very steep ascent since our start at 10 am. Pretty good time considering the weight on our backs and the number of people. By 4:30 pm we had arrived at Carter Notch where there is a camp site. Of course all of us were happy about stopping and calling it a day. A well protected campsite surrounded by pines, a campfire made it delightful and we all shared a macaroni and cheese one pot meal. No animal activity although its good porky country.

Sue and Wendy caught up with us after borrowing Dave's car to pick up supplies and mail and will be our companions again. Dave was very generous to our friends on the trail. Its so nice to be with the kids -- How lucky can a guy get?!!!

September 11, 1975. Thursday. Sunny and beautiful all day. Hiked 14 miles over the Carter Moriah Range to the Rattle River lean-to.

Here we are again having fun eating breakfast around a campfire. Got underway by 8 am and climbed Carter Dome, South, Middle and North Moriahs and by 7 pm we had descended to Rattle River lean-to. It was quite a day and all of us, after 13.6 miles, were tired and happy to see we had the stamina to do the entire distance. The sun slanted through the trees making our trail an isle in a cathedral with the birds as the choir. The swampy areas between the mountains have been nicely boardwalked. I suspect this kind of trail care is the only way to protect the trail from overuse. However, it does make it too civilized and many people are against this treatment. But the trail must be protected and the environment preserved.

The flashbacks of our 1971 hike over this same trail were vivid as we covered familiar ground. David, Ron and Ann took skinny dips to cool off in the stream coming from North Carter and added this experience to their fun-packed trip. Sue and Wendy soon caught up to us after a night at Carter hut and joined us for the night at the lean-to. Luckily the weather smiled on us giving us a perfect day for excellent hiking and views of the Mt. Washington range across the valley. It was dark as we

pulled within sight of the shadow which turned out to be the lean-to. We ate in the dark around a campfire and slept like logs. Fun!!!

September 12, 1975. Friday. Weather changed to cloudy, gray skies and rain spatters with fog all day. Temperature in the 50's. Hiked 7 miles to Gentian Pond lean-to.

Very early start at 6:00 am. I went to Gorham, NH with Dave and Ron for supplies and a McDonalds breakfast. It was a short mile and a quarter from the lean-to to highway 2 then 3 1/2 miles to Gorham. Boy, did that McDonalds taste good. Our trip back to the trail consisted of hitchhiking (including 1/2 gallon of ice cream) where we met Rick, Ann and Smitty. Then we hiked to Gentian Pond lean-to up steep muddy slopes and across several swampy areas. The rain was a nuisance and our shoes got soaked good, the kids all were happy, laughing and joking as they hiked along knowing our trail would be short and the shelter would soon come into view. After yesterday's 13.6 mile walk this 7 miles was a breeze even in the rain. Do you get the rationalization? Rain, mud and no sun make even the shortest of hikes TOUGH!

We did relax when the shelter came into view. White-throat sparrows hopped around our feet and even into the lean-to. A snapping fire with a touch of Johnny Walker whiskey (courtesy of Dave) [Editor's note: It was actually Hiram Walker's Ten High whiskey and we figured Ten High would be sufficient to get the 6 of us high] soon made everyone warm and congenial. Our group soon merged with others, J.B. and Rick Kock brought the total to eight. Later a large group of girls arrived, one of whom seemed about in the throes of hypothermia. Soon her friends had her in a sleeping bag and relaxed. Their trail had been from the north and rather difficult, their clothes were wet and they soon changed while J.B. played his guitar and the candle light put all the anxieties and fears to rest as the shadows danced on the walls of the shelter. A very memorable night indeed. This is Dave and Ron's last day of hiking so its back to Michigan for them.⁸

September 13, 1975. Saturday. The fog lifted this morning and we had sun all day with a haze on the horizon. Temperature about 50°. Hiked a good 11 miles to Full Goose lean-to, 12 capacity and fairly new.

Got up by 6:30 am, waded through the sleeping forms on the shelter floor to the fireplace outside where we made a breakfast of warm milk, cereal and coffee. Our feet first had to be put into cold, wet socks and stiff hiking boots. The campfire was already going and soon Dave and Ron began purging their packs of food they wouldn't use going back to Michigan. We of course added it to our packs. So with good-byes to our family and friend we watched them head for the highway on a side trail where they then would hitchhike a ride back to Pinkham Notch and the car. Then the rest of us headed up the trail over Mt. Success (elevation 3590') and by noon we had gotten some five (5) miles over a series of ridges, eating lunch of hot cocoa, sandwiches of honey and peanut butter and the last of the bread bought in Gorham. Hope Dave and Ron stop at Hanover for one of those super all-you-can-eat meals at Blair Hall at Dartmouth College. I took pictures on this day to take advantage of the sun which hasn't come out very often. There were a lot of short ascents and our crest walking was difficult as we picked our way over rock walls, muddy low spots, our 45 lb packs carried food necessary to sustain us on this inaccessible section of the trail.

The views today have been beautiful and in most cases were a full 360° from bald summits. We crossed the border from New Hampshire to Maine today and the extreme remoteness is magnified by the roughness of the trail. However, the hikers are thicker on the trail and we aren't alone anymore. The mice at the lean-tos bored holes into our bags of food, but, with food so plentiful, they didn't eat very much. The lean-to was a large shelter with room for 12 or more hikers and after a supper including apple sauce we settled down for the night with J.B. playing us to sleep with his guitar.

September 14, 1975. Sunday. Its foggy this morning and cold with the temperature 36°. Some clearing at noon and again about 4 pm. This was a rest day for us and we stayed at the shelter (Full Goose).

Awoke at 7:30 am and can't seem to get into a hiking mood so Ann, Smitty, Rick and I will rest this day and remain dry. The wet, foggy weather looks like its here to stay. We are in our sleeping bags talking about the trail. The caretaker has hiked the full length of the AT (Josh Rubinstein) and so we reminisced about our hikes while the juncos, white throats, ground squirrels and mice moved in and out of our lean-to. We have a rather precarious trail to hike tomorrow and it is best if our weather is dry when hiking it.⁹

About 4 pm our day of private ownership of the lean-to stopped as other hikers began to arrive. However, we enjoyed music by J.B., letter writing, pancake lunch, apple sauce breakfast with our version of cereal, raisins, coconut and some naps.

Our temporary caretaker here is a hiker Rick and I met on the trail at Hot Springs, NC. Josh Rubinstein is enjoying a few weeks of isolation before returning to the city grind. Non-paying positions like this seem to appeal to hikers who don't want to return to civilization; so free food in exchange for watching over the lean-tos to keep vandalism down suits many young hikers and serves the purpose AMC pursues. A new atmosphere pervades the shelter as other hikers arrive tired, wet and eager to get into a more comfortable setting. Ann and Smitty are a nice couple to be with and they are devoted to each other. They were happy to have this day of rest, too; the peacefulness was stimulated by laughter, music and set a mood to remember. The new arrivals soon enjoyed this setting and all eleven of us became good friends. The night is clear and it looks like an excellent day for our hike through the Mahoosuc Notch is in store for us.

September 15, 1975. Monday. Clear, sunny and brisk air is 36° this am. Warmed to 60° by noon and sun stayed out. (Still at Full Goose Shelter). Goal: Grafton Notch lean-to tonight.

After a nice night's sleep we woke up to a sun-filled sky. The sun's rays pierced the wet pines and birch branches around us making everything sparkle. The changing leaves showing red and yellow gradually dot the green landscape. Yes, fall weather is here and wants to take over. I can feel and see it. As we leave the lean-to after breakfast, the ground squirrels, white throats, juncos and mice move in to take over. The trail today was interesting with rock formations filling a gully 1 mile long. It took us three hours to negotiate the notch with huge boulders clogging the notch and our trail led over and under these rocks. Snow and ice lay under many of the rocks and we could hear a lively cascading of water somewhere under us, but couldn't see it. Rick's progress and reaction was a surprise; the constant decisions and back straining efforts really tore him apart mentally. It was with great effort he finally got through. We would talk and discuss the best routes to

take and this seemed to help. We were about one hour behind Ann and Smitty who really enjoyed the challenge of the rocks and our lunch together at a beautiful mountainside stream was a delight as we discussed our ups and downs of the escapade for the morning. This location resembles many of the gorgeous mountain streams seen in the White Mountains (Imp shelter, Zealand hut, etc.). Rock formed the bed of the stream and as the water coasted over the surface it caused the sparkle and tinkle noise so characteristic.

We rested, ate, rinsed out clothes and dried socks before going on. Our next obstacle for the day is Old Speck Mountain (elevation 4180') and the views were outstanding. Color changes painted the landscape and our cameras worked overtime, but just can't capture it all. About 6:30 pm after a long descent we crossed Grafton Notch and in .3 mile made the lean-to where we stopped. It was dark before we finished our meal of bisquick, cinnamon and sugar rolls (by Dick and Ann), beef stroganoff and mashed potatoes -- a very good meal. Ann and Smitty slept in their tent while J.B., Rick and I took the shelter. It had been a perfect day for me and Rick was happy all afternoon as he followed close to Ann chattering away like a boy with a new friend.

September 16, 1975. Tuesday. The sun tried all day to break through the clouds, but with minimum success. Temperatures were in the 60's with white clouds in a thin layer that covered the sky all day. We hiked 11 miles and arrived at our campsite: "C" Surplus Pond in Maine just 6 miles shy of Squirrel Rock lean-to for the night -- "our goal".

Up at 8 am and off on the trail from Grafton Notch lean-to and it looks like an uphill day, but one of the last ones we'll run into until Sugarloaf Mountain. Our hike of yesterday was one to remember with waterfalls galore. Surprise -- even more today!!!!

Mt. Katahdin is forever on our mind as it draws nearer and nearer. Ann and Smitty are true hikers and are very willing to do whatever Rick and I want on a mileage basis.

As we climbed the wooded slopes of the west peak of Baldpate Mountain (3680 feet) we enjoyed quiet, green trees and solitude, but soon, on reaching the summit, the bald summit of east peak broke into view and again our imaginations ran wild wondering how different the peaks were. The climb up the bald slopes was another challenge emphasizing the continuing dramatic Appalachian Trail. More view, strange landscapes and a burning desire to see what was beyond the trees at the base of the mountain. East peak elevation is 3820 feet, we still wanted more.

The descent to Andover B. Hill road was a delight for it gave us a continual, visual, even physical feel for Fry Brook with it's many canyons and waterfalls. The trail drops fast and we had to be careful not to fall or trip in the eroded trail where roots and rocks were exposed.

I have only a vague recollection of this area from Andover B. Hill road to the campsite, but the Maine woods can offer silence and peace unless you hear the distant singing of Smitty as he plows along the path ahead of the pack. We never said a lot as we hiked, but saved our conversation for the campfire at night where we shared the day's experiences, the impressions one hiker had of scenery was always different than another so what a wonderful chance to relive the day's walk.

September 17, 1975. Wednesday. Cloudy with a chance of rain and by noon it was dripping wet and by night it was sunny and bright. Hiked 16 miles. Our goal was a tent site 2 miles beyond Elephant Mt. lean-to in a pine grove.

Up early and after a scrambled egg breakfast by "Smitty", started hiking. The trail was wet with dew and in 20 minutes our legs and shoes were soaked from where the grass that overhung the edges of the trail whipped our legs as we walked. The temperature was in the 60's and before I knew it I was sweating and had to stop and strip from long pants to shorts, remove my wool shirt and settle into the business of hiking.

We had mostly pine woods to go through and the footing was slippery with tree roots that criss-crossed the trail and very pretty everything seemed to be cast in a green haze. We passed through a primeval forest that had been hit by a hurricane in 1938. The trees that had succumbed to the storm all lay on the ground in rows just as they had fallen resembling dead soldiers after a war. The ground and trees were covered with a carpet of rich green moss. Everything seems to be tinted green here in the woods. I think this was a long day for Ann and Smitty and our tent site was enjoyed. All of us are tired after 16 grueling miles of wet, up and down walking.

I keep leaving the back of my next log sheet bare thinking that I might get time to write more about our day's hike, but darkness and a weary body stops any further story telling.

September 18, 1975. Thursday. Our weather is cloudy with temperatures in the 50's all day, 48° this am. The nights are cool, crisp and, gee, but the sleeping bag feels like a person's best friend. Its hard to leave it in the morning and if nature calls in the middle of the night and I can't hold out, it becomes a nightmare to rush out to the woods to relieve myself and rush back to warmth and security. After all these miles of hiking and nights of anxiety of nature's call, I still dread the short run out and back into that sleeping bag. Our goal for the day is Rangely and Mrs. Judkin's guest rooms.

A very quiet night in the woods without noises or animals. Of course, after hiking 16 miles I doubt that much would arouse me from my sleep, however we are miles and miles from any hub of human activities so the peace and stillness of our surroundings is not surprising. Up by 6 am and heated water over our fire. Oatmeal, tang, coffee, and a mixture of Heartlands added to the oatmeal with honey or brown sugar got this old body off to a good start.

Our trail is a series of ups and downs, but rather easy going. We took the Bemis Stream Trail in preference to climbing Elephant and Bemis Mountain which made us or rather let us enjoy our surroundings more. Strenuous hiking detracts from the beauty around us and steals our eyes away from the glorious sights, a hanging hornet's nest (very large), a trickling stream, birds, deer and the changing leaves of the trees. Fall weather is upon us and the smells of wet ground, leaves in the wind and on and on.

We came out onto a road (highway 17) and the sight of Mooselockmeguntic seemed to stretch miles and miles into the distance as the trees faded away to our left leaving us with a sense of awe. No blemish of humanity or physical objects touched it's shore. Our point of view was above the lake some three hundred feet and a refreshing sight though only one of a peaceful continuous course of sights for there was more to come. A slight climb and we entered the strangest woods, all saplings and they seemed to be on guard as if protecting their carpets of moss and piles of aged tree stumps quietly waiting for winter to move in and cover their beds of leaves.

Maples, birches and pines; the reds, yellows and greens paint the woods a bright happy color. Our cameras can't do justice to what we see so we don't take pictures knowing the dark interior won't permit enough light to expose the picture. Maybe we can return another time to just take pictures and relive this wonderful trip. For the time being only memories remain.

By 12 noon we stopped at Sabbath Day Pond lean-to for a hot lunch of tuna, instant rice and lemon-lime-tang drink. The lake (pond) was beautiful and the lean-to is only some 20' away. The big boulders at the waters edge afford good seats to sit on and dream or watch fish, ducks or birds.

The next stretch or trail was all woods walking with very little elevation change and I lead the way to highway 5. Being eager to get to Rangely we swung out at a brisk pace. Soon we all got the urge to see civilization and by 5 pm had covered 17 miles for the day. At highway 5 we hitched rides (2 separate cars) into Rangely.

We were beat and upon learning that Judkins had a reasonable price for rooms, we all headed for the house only two blocks from the center of the village. At \$4.00 per head per night we got showers or bath, washed our clothes, repaired Ann's soles to her boots with small brass wood screws and glue.

We decided a good meal was a must (tasty, that is). Ann, Smitty, Rick and I found the restaurant. "The Red Onion" where we got spaghetti, parmesan zucchini, beer, bread, and a large pizza. Later at the room we had cookies and milk with J.B. and another hiker, both of whom had arrived earlier in the day.

Our beds were a welcome sight after two weeks on the trail. It was late to get supplies or do a laundry so will do it tomorrow and try to get our hiking in later in the day.

September 19, 1975. Friday. Weather: Rain all day. Hiked 1.8 miles to Piazza Rock lean-to.

Up at 8 am, our soft beds were nice for a change and with our stomachs still full from the night before, we felt good. Took another shower, had breakfast and walked into town to shop and do the laundry. Smitty found a gasket for our Svea stove (it was leaking around the filler cap and would burn while we cooked). Ann did our laundry while Rick and I got supplies and repacked for the hike. We headed for the edge of town and hitched rides out to the trail head just as it started to rain. A short walk to the Piazza Rock lean-to and we decided not to continue in the rain. There are a total of eight hikers here now and we all are enjoying J.B.'s guitar music now as our candle flickers in the center of the shelter. We are all keeping time to the music and singing or humming while the rain beat a steady tattoo on the roof of the lean-to. It will be hard to get out of the sleeping bag tomorrow if it is still raining. The shelter always becomes a home after spending the night in it and we always seem to be leaving our home never to return each day, so its doubly hard to depart if the weather isn't cooperating.

Piazza Rock lean-to is located just below a huge rock jutting out of the mountain side and is quite picturesque. Being off the AT on a blue blaze trail, the rock doesn't show up until you go looking for the privy. Well, you always find the rock, but never find the privy and, oh well, who cares, the wind, trees, plants, etc. are friendly as you sit on your heels enjoying what nature intended. There is more to this day, but it will never be written because time and daylight doesn't permit.

September 20, 1975. Saturday. The day was overcast and rainy, but some sun sporadically shown through the clouds for a couple of hours. Temperature is 52°, and steady in the lower elevations. Hiked 9 miles to Popular Ridge lean-to on the far side of Saddleback Mountain (elevation 4116') and east to Popular Ridge (elevation 3120').

A quiet rush of fall greeted us this am. A rushing stream, dripping rain drops from the trees overhead, color full yellow, rust and red leaves dotted the forest floor. White and yellow birch trees all rustled a song of freshness for our memories as we walked the early morning trail. The swampy portions of the trail slowed us down and our feet, socks and shoes are constantly wet. Especially mine as I admired the beauty of a pretty little stream and then took a step on a rock and slipped with both feet shin high into the cold water. I couldn't get out before my feet, shoes and socks got completely soaked. It was hilarious as I sat on the bank of the stream soaking my shoes as it seemed. Ann, Smitty and Rick enjoyed a good laugh.

As I sit here writing in the lean-to the usual one only cigarette is being passed around and we all take a puff on it sharing our experiences in total. Marijuana has no punch unless it is chain smoked and seems no more harmful than the usual alcoholic drinks.

We decided to have a short hiking day today as our lunch was taken about 3 pm and lasted until 4 pm. With 7 miles to go to a very bad lean-to we decided our present lean-to was a better one having fresh water and the shelter of 1963 vintage was in better shape. Other hikers we passed advised us of the condition of the next lean-to which had holes in the roof and no good water source. So we stayed, sewed up holes in shirts, socks and gloves and pants and enjoyed a fire in our fireplace even with wet wood. There are seven of us here now and we'll enjoy a cozy night and J.B.'s guitar and candle light.

September 21, 1975. Sunday. The rainy morning gradually cleared away and the afternoon was very pleasant and sunny. Hiked 17 miles making our campsite at a super location called Stratton Pond.

Started out with a rainy ascent of Spaulding Mountain (elevation 3998') and on a muddy trail. The views came later as the skies cleared after crossing the foggy summit of Spaulding. Our trail then took us over Sugarloaf Mountain (elevation 4237') after leaving a broad plateau between the two mountains. This is a significant feature for Maine which enjoys a lot of swampy dips between the mountains. As the second highest peak in Maine we had a rather strenuous climb to the top. However the views were something else and with fall colors in full swing the sight was unbelievable. Smitty and Rick have slides to prove it. Our descent down the ski slopes was strenuous even though we were going down. The unending jolts on the hips, legs and knees would have crippled all but the best legs. I fell once skidding down over some rope nets used to hold the snow in place during the winter cutting my finger.¹⁰ A sunny afternoon made our day so when we tired of descending the ski slope, we simply lay down on the hillside. Of course the AT paralleled the ski slope, but we elected to stay on the wide open hillside and enjoy the advantage of a warm sunny afternoon.

I must admit to being put out at Smitty's tremendous energies for when we approached the campsite I, being very tired, wanted to stop and camp on a wooded site. But the rest of the group had talked with some other hikers who told them about a campsite on Stratton Pond and pushed on to the site. Obstinate me. I set up my own tent before reaching the site intending to camp alone. However, I was

less than a block away from this very beautiful Stratton Pond and my dear son Rick returned to convince me to put my tent back in my pack and come to this better location which I did. So much for a tired old man!

What a sunset we had! The sunrise the next day was even more effective with a back drop Sugarloaf.¹¹ The camp site was on a raised knoll overlooking Stratton Pond as quiet and peaceful a place as anyone could ask for. Yes, loons sang to us in the late evening as we sat around our campfire.

September 22, 1975. Monday. A beautiful day, cool with clouds. Hiked 17 miles. Goal turned out to be a campsite on Bog Brook below Little Bigelow Mountain just shy of Flagstaff Lake.

This day is another bonus day with sunny summits and spectacular views. Our departure from Stratton Brook Pond campsite began with an egg breakfast, cereal and hot coffee. But even earlier a beautiful sunrise that I have pictures of hopefully. My anxieties of getting to Mt. Katahdin before closing down the mountain by October 15th are mounting and the speed of hiking is interrupted by steep, strenuous climbs, but I believe that we are going to make it OK. Today we decided to travel the hypotenuse of the triangle and take the Ranger Trail up the Bigelow range of mountains not going to Horns lean-to, but headed directly for Avery Memorial lean-to. Our selection of trail cut a lot of miles off the regular route and took us up the very steepest ascent. Well, we made it and in the process saw the grandest view. With the sun egging us on to the top where suddenly we came into full view of Flagstaff Lake which spreads out for miles and miles. The lake just seems to ramble out and around in an "ink blot" shape showing white sandy beaches and woodland lakeshores galore. Finally after some group pictures on the summit of Avery Peak we headed down Little Bigelow Mountain. Smitty's backpack frame was cracking and finally gave way. He quickly tied it together with 1/8 diameter cord while we got dinner ready. Surprising how dependent a person is on his pack frame.

Our meal tonight is macaroni with tomato sauce furnished by J.B. Its a family type meal with all of us contributing. Our appetites are only surpassed by the grand friends next to us and the surroundings we are in. The food would be very commonplace under any other circumstances.

Today another of those decisions had to be made whether to stick to the actual AT or take a short cut in order to complete the hike before Mt. Katahdin is closed down for the season. No one knows the inner torment I suffer about these decisions. For it means the possible chance that I may never hike these trails again and that as a "thru hiker" I will be cheating on the tradition of walking every step of the way on the official trail. My anxieties however have mellowed with the help of such carefree fellow hikers as J.B., Ann, Smitty and Rick. We always seem to enjoy any unofficial section of the AT more than the official section.¹²

September 23, 1975. Tuesday. Weather: Raining, temperature in the 60's, cloudy and finally sunny about 3 pm, then more clouds in the late afternoon and evening. Hiked 20 miles. Goal: Pierce Pond lean-to.

Our tents are soaked after last night's rain so after a breakfast of hot cereal and coffee we packed up wet and started off hiking at 8:30 am. The rain wasn't anything other than a fine mist and as we got in under heavier tree cover the pitter-patter of rain on the leaves added a friendly sound to our morning walk. The trail wandered through maple, birch, pine and beech trees with all manner of colors catching the eye from fall leaves on the ground and flying in the air.

As I sit here in the lean-to tonight recalling the day's events and movements, a loon calls like a forgotten voice from across Pierce Pond. How beautiful to just let nature surround you in your moments of thought shaping a memory for the future.

Our group gathered here tonight counts seven with J.B., friend Al, Rick, Dick, Ann, Smitty and Greg from Maine now hiking the AT south until weather catches up with him. Well, now you can guess after 20 miles of hiking we are pooped. This was our first 20 mile day, but a necessity to put us in position to cross the Kennebec River before 9 am tomorrow. The river rises above wading depth after this time and pulp wood is released to float down to the Millinocket paper mill. We must be across the river before this occurs and we must hike 3 miles before reaching the river so time is of essence. It seems funny now, but trying to locate this lean-to after dark tonight was rather hairy for me. I didn't have a flashlight. The trail was over slippery rocks, the only flashlight we had was starting to give out and besides that I was really bushed. So I slipped, slithered and chirped to Rick, Ann and Smitty who were ahead of me until I practically ran into the side of the shelter (see the slide that Rick took for proof of haggard looks).

The elevations today were steady and allowed us to make good speed, but I'm afraid Ann and Smitty are tired of this constant race horse hiking and will split off from us at Monson, Maine. Can't blame them one bit. They understand our urgency to complete the trail by October 4 to 7th before Mt. Katahdin is shut down for the season. It has been fun hiking with them and we'll be able to talk things over after we meet again at the end of the hike and return to Michigan. This shelter tonight resounds with the call of the loons and its great. Watching the fall weather makes this section of the hike exciting and our every step is a new experience of smell, color and suspense as we look for moose (after finding tracks and droppings), see the leaf patterns on the ground and cross meandering streams, skirt ponds made by beaver requiring us to tight-rope walk logs and wade rushing streams.

The lean-to is on a slight rise of ground overlooking Pierce Pond and the shoreline is all large rocks, the mountains are in the background making for a beautiful sight even though all that is visible is an outline. We had eaten our meal on the trail prior to darkness and then hiked late to get to this shelter. A short guitar session by J.B. put the lid on a nice, but tiring day. The loons are calling - - - .

September 24, 1975. Wednesday. Weather: Foggy with a rainy condition which lasted all day and temperatures in the 50's. Hiked 10 miles to Pleasant Pond lean-to outside (north) of Caratunk, Maine.

We needed an early start today even though our total miles are low because in three miles we arrived at the Kennebec River where we waded the river. We had talked with other hikers and learned from previous books that the crossing or wading is safest at a wide spot in the river where ripples in the water indicate a degree of shallow depth. We spotted a large "AT" painted on rocks across the river as we approached our entry point and sure enough there were ripples in the water. Ann and I reached the point first, but didn't see the AT paint on the opposite shore until we had explored the shoreline further along.

As we returned to meet the others a moose moved into view in a small clearing and watched us. He wandered slowly around the field and wasn't even frightened as we all took his picture. He seemed more curious than we about this meeting for he just stood and watched us for about 5 minutes.

We commenced our crossing with me leading the way. My walking stick was a great help when my shoes would slip over rather slimy rocks on the floor of the river and cause me to stumble. The stick acted like a third leg and steadied my body and backpack against a swift current which pushed continually trying to upset me. We all left our shoes on to give us protection against the unsure footing in the water. The water reached our thighs and was cold, but we soon gained the far side of the river without mishap. We had a million laughs about this crossing with six people gradually making their way across the rippling waters. After me came Smitty, then Rick, then Al and J.B. Ann had wondered ahead of us on the trail so she soon saw us crossing and came across passing both Al and J.B. No one fell in, but many a foot slipped on the slippery rocks.

Our next step was to find Caratunk and Pleasant Pond. As our trail went through the small village, a stop at the little store proved a delight for there all six of us shared a gallon of ice cream and some good guitar music while seated on the floor of the store. Mr. Mitchell is the postmaster, general information dispenser and, as it ended up, our taxi to a point close to the shelter (some 2 miles down the road).

As I write this page, J.B. is playing his guitar and we are all singing. It is 2:15 pm and we are at the lean-to early, the rain is making the leaves, trail and glorious wilderness very wet. After our leisurely trek from Caratunk, the ice cream, and cookie break at the general store and after a wood gathering spree, our afternoon is slowly being whiled away at a relaxed speed. Our campfire snaps and crackles with lots of wet socks and shoes drying around it.

Rick's foot is stomping out the beat of J.B.'s music and he is very happy now. We will be in Monson, Maine on Friday and will stay for two nights before our final lap of the hike starts to Mt. Katahdin. This will put us there about October 6th, 1975. Our evening is very nice and, thanks to J.B. and the music, our spirits are high. Its getting cooler and the rain returned for a short time, but nothing to worry about. Other hikers are passing the lean-to, but continue on to the other campsites. This Indian Summer weather in Maine is cold, but it doesn't stop the hiker.

September 25, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Rainy off and on most of the day with temperatures holding about 49°. Hiked 13 miles to Moxie Bald lean-to 16 miles shy of Monson, Maine.

We didn't want to leave our sleeping bags this morning because it was cold, however by 8:30 am we were on the move. Beautiful yellows, golds, red and green leaves made the trail seem very special as it followed some short ascents through woods. There was time to enjoy, stop, breathe deeply and get a whole new perspective on this northern woods, so different from the southern ranges. The crispness, swampy knolls, bright fall colors all tell me that the final steps are being taken and our long trek will soon come to an end, that we are actually in Maine, the most northern state in our lower 48, and the last state in which the Appalachian Trail travels in a northerly direction. Monson, Maine is the beginning of the end of our hike, then only ten days remain in this total experience. This is all the thought I need to put spirit in my soul and spring into my steps. No -- I'm not glad to see the end of this trail for my life has a new dimension now and I can control the "race" to fit my physical and mental needs in my life, but it is necessary to my "walk" in life within this new dimension. This isn't the end of my walk because I will return many times to this trail to enjoy it's limitless open spaces.

Our hiking companion, J.B., is an interesting man. He is sitting beside me now here at the evening campfire writing in his log. We don't share our written words, but our thoughts are similar, I'm sure. He says "listen to the trees, they talk to you". He is forming his life as he walks, making decisions that will place him in his society. He is concerned for Rick and wants him to think about himself and be important in his own light. J.B. says this isn't taught in school.

The last summit we crossed before arriving here at the lean-to was Moxie Bald (elevation 2630') Mountain 1.7 miles from the lean-to and the first mountain from which Mt. Katahdin could be seen. However, a haze obscured our view. As I came down the mountain this afternoon to the shelter, a loon called and I thought how far away this place actually was from civilization. Like the moose yesterday turning around and returning a step or two to watch as we trod on his feeding ground, then plunged into his river.

Tomorrow we are going to be in Monson. By 5 pm our appetites will rage then be fulfilled. Our conversation turns now to or rather returns to Full Goose lean-to where we stayed over an extra day. Smitty made pancakes and syrup as he sat next to Annie in their sleeping bag with the rest of us eating them as he made the cakes (we took two hours of enjoyment and laughter that day at Full Goose shelter), just eating pancakes.

As usual it was a quiet night in this Maine woods and only Rick's gentle snore told of the presence of others.

September 26, 1975. Friday. Looks rainy this morning and it is overcast. The temperature is 48° -- cold! Rained off and on all day with a foggy sky. After 14 miles, we reached Ken's Hostel.

To begin the day we had a warm breakfast of oatmeal, cinnamon, brown sugar and coffee after which we started walking at 7:30 am. Our day was to be rather easy with a stop for lunch eight miles later at Breakneck Ridge lean-to. From Bald Mountain Pond to Blanchard the trail followed an old tote road. We did surprisingly well speed wise and by 10:30 am we arrived at the lean-to. The weather was brisk, cold and wet with a pelting rain and not inspiring our desires to linger very long left the shelter after a quick snack lunch. The last four miles into Monson, Maine was on asphalt pavement and being low in spirits, wet and cold we hitched a ride into Monson on a logger's pickup truck. What a relief to arrive in town and knowing there would be warm quarters in which to sleep tonight. By 2:30 pm we located Ken's Hostel.¹³

However a brief description of the trail: mostly flat with much wet grass, muddy spots, rooty pathway and stones all covered by the newly fallen leaves of fall, which made us tread cautiously so as not to turn our ankles. Not much climbing, the land is relatively flat and permitted us to hustle to get to Monson.

The post office was on the main street (the only main paved street) and our mail was a treat. Rick and I got our replacement belts for our backpacks. A letter from Ed Garvey on the two volumes about the AT (not available any longer at the special price) and letters from Joan.

We got some cots at Ken's place (the old church), showered and relaxed. This old church is a sight with a row of tables down the center of one huge room and cots along the sides. The floor actually divides what used to be the open hall where the pews were into two separate floors. The curved area and a voice at one corner of the room creeps over the ceiling to the people at the far end even in a low conversation. The acoustics are very interesting and the approximately 30 people

there are very sociable. This is a kind of collecting area for all hikers getting ready to make the last trek to Mt. Katahdin or just ponder whether to continue south or wait for the rain to subside if headed south. One hiker, a tall man (6' 8" at least) has 3 pizzas and is slowly consuming them as though he will never get another.¹⁴

Ann, Smitty, Rick and I shopped together getting wine, pancake mix, etc., to fill in around the food Joan sent to us in the mail. A kind of celebration took place and we consumed three gallons of ice cream with the help of J.B. and friend Al (from Keene, NH).

Lots of other hikers are here tonight, a full house. Ann and Smitty got a separate room by some miracle and we used it to do our grocery packing, drinking, and conversation to get away from the other hikers. It was at this point that Smitty and Annie decided to leave us and return to their friend's home in Vermont to await the arrival of Joan who is coming east to pick us up after the hike ends.

September 27, 1975. Saturday. Weather was again foggy and rainy until 3 pm then broken clouds with sun. Temperatures in the 50's. Hiked five miles to Old Stage Coach Road lean-to.

The dormitory was quiet, but was not an easy place in which to feel comfortable. Up at 7:30 am, breakfast was fun with Ann, Smitty, Rick, J.B. and Al all chipping in orange juice, milk, pancakes, coffee and cocoa by the ton. Ann and Smitty left us about 2 pm and got a ride to Vermont with another hiker in a car. They will return to Keene, NH where they will meet Joan about October 4th. Rick and I packed up about 3 pm and headed out for the trail when the weather broke. By 5:30 pm we got to Old Stage Coach Road lean-to. The trail was pretty as the sun warmed up the woods. Some road walking made our feet sore quick after so much woods walking the weeks before, however we soon met J.B. and Rod (from Iowa) at the shelter where we enjoyed a beautiful silent night with the fresh air of the fall weather to soothe us to sleep.

September 28, 1975. Sunday. Weather was sunny in small amounts and by 3 pm the foggy accumulations turned to rain. Hiked 17 miles to Cloud Pond lean-to.

Definitely a gorgeous start today with sun then cloudy skies and just a touch of briskness to the air. The trail passed through beautiful northern woods all day long. Pine, maple and beech covered our steady footsteps with fall leaves and occasionally we climbed around rocks. Barren Mountain was a good challenge to us at the end of the day with the steady patter of rain to hurry us past autumn sights which should have been enjoyed longer. A rainbow ending in the multi-colored forest at our cliff's edge was a gorgeous sight and we managed to capture it on film. It was late when we arrived at the lean-to and after scurrying around the meal was consumed and dishes washed up before darkness set in. Snug in our sleeping bags we soaked up J.B.'s music and dreamed about our past walks and drifted off to sleep. Hip to hip, 6 men and 1 girl slept fitfully, but soundly.

Note: We crossed (forded) Little Wilson stream barefoot today. See picture of J.B. and Rick.

September 29, 1975. Monday. It was clear, cold and sunny with early morning temperatures at 46° and warming to 74 degrees. Hiked 17 miles to White Brook lean-to.

Up by 6:30 am and it had warmed up during the night enough so that we couldn't see our breath anymore. A breakfast of special gorp mix from Joan with warm milk, coconut and coffee. Got started hiking by 8:10 am and our day was to be easy at first. But soon the trail took us onto a road. The hard surface played havoc with

my feet. Having just gotten another pair of boots from home which, although broken in, weren't adjusted yet to my feet and pack weight of 55 lbs. I suffered on this day's hike. To make matters worse, a toothache appeared on the scene filling me with all kinds horrors of leaving the trail to find a dentist. Finally the trail moved off the road into the glorious woods again (thank heaven). Eight miles of road walking and I hope the last for the time being. Anyone passing me on the road would have laughed good seeing a hiker laying on the ground with his feet propped up against the tree in an effort to relieve the throbbing. Rick would continue on ahead of me, but soon I would catch up with him.

We got to the lean-to about 6 pm. The shelter was in a pretty location next to a lively stream with huge boulders surrounded by pools of clear, cold water. White Brook was a fitting name. Our tent was close to the stream on a level chunk of ground. We left room for J.B. He spread his sleeping bag on the ground so as watch the stars while he drifted off to sleep. This was his favorite way of enjoying the beautiful wood's atmosphere. I couldn't have agreed more. However Rick and I preferred the security of cover over our head not caring to have to move in the middle of the night if the weather changed to rain and it frequently did.

This particular shelter introduced us to 1-1/2" diameter saplings for a sleeping platform and we didn't care to sleep on them. Well, not really introduced because we had the same type of platform on two previous occasions and, believe me, its torture. Maine accommodations are of the simplest and most convenient construction.

A J.B. musical at the shelter served to calm us down and our tired bodies did the rest and we soon retired. Rick left a food sack on the ground and, yes, a ground squirrel bored his way into the granola package. However, the little fella must have eaten before raiding the sack because only a sample was taken, including one of gorp.

September 30, 1975. Tuesday. Clear, beautiful, with sunny skies all day today. Cool 45 to 60° temperatures made our 15 miles to East Branch Tote Road lean-to a very enjoyable walk. Katahdin is 60 miles from us tonight.

Our night of tenting by the White Brook Stream was pleasant. J.B. slept outside our tent so that he could watch the stars until he fell asleep. We saved a space inside our tent for him in case it rained. But the night was perfect. Up at 6:30 am and on the trail by 8 am. I couldn't get Rick around as fast as I'd like, but we seem to be making progress in our hiking and my eagerness to get to Katahdin sometimes puts me in a nervous state of mind. Poor Rick. Well, this is what our walk together is all about and if he can put up with me and still be pleasant, then he'll be better equipped to deal with strangers further along in life. We are making good progress and there aren't any problems (except my tooth).

The trail was very flat today and the swish, swish through the leaves on the forest floor put a tempo to our pace. The pictures of yellow, gold, reds, and greens will be forever printed on our minds and memories. The limbs of the trees served to stripe the sun's rays as it shone on the carpet of gold. The silence when we stopped to rest was a totally peaceful experience. The smell of fall in Maine is unmarred by man-made pollution and should be preserved through all eternity.

When White Cap Mountain popped out of the woods Rick and I elected not to ascend to it's crest for a first glimpse of Mt. Katahdin. We are sure to see the mountain a lot between now and Saturday (our scheduled arrival date). I suspect deep down neither of us care to see the end of this experience come to an end any sooner than

necessary. Of course bad weather could set in and we wouldn't be able to see the mountain at all until our arrival at it's base. Anyway, we aren't going to have bad weather!!! Our desire to arrive early at the shelter put us there by 4 pm. Being pooped I took my sleeping bag into the woods a short distance away to take a nap on soft pine needles in the sun. Boy, what a blessing! My toothache is still with me, but seems to be less painful. I should be able to get some sleep tonight, worrying about having to get the tooth fixed isn't good for me, and taking 2-3 days off for this purpose would cause a delay which we can't stand at this point. I am quite eager to end the hike and get back to our nice home in Lansing. Whoa!¹³ this, this me thinking like that?

Rick is now determined to see this hike through to the end. His knees are bothering him and make it hard to bend down real far. He grunts when he climbs over rocks on the trail that require a high knee bend. But with some rest, I'm sure this problem will not persist in his regular every day activities at home. Our feet are undergoing a shoe adaptation and we are suffering sore rub spots. But, again, this will leave us after our feet adjust to the different shoes. Rick went to a tennis shoe on his right foot today because of a big toe knuckle irritation. It worked out OK after walking 3 miles this way, one hiking boot and one tennis shoe.

Rick prefers our using one tent now because of the roominess, airy feeling and, if it rains, the water doesn't follow the wall of the tent down underneath to the floor. The water drops to the ground and is soaked up there.

As I lay here in our tent tonight writing by candle light, I hear Rick laughing down at the Shelter and I'm happy that my boy is comfortable and content in our last days of hiking. It is 8 pm now and we both will sleep good. My candle is about used up so I'll stop.

October 1, 1975. Wednesday. Another clear, sunny day, with temperatures this am at 46°. Our goal is Potaywadjo Spring lean-to some 18 miles away.

We leave the lean-to about 7:30 am to the tune of squirrels chatting, Canada jays calling or scolding whichever it is, but at least the noise is not man-made and its refreshing. The trail came to a swamp or flooding created by beavers and so up on fallen trees, thickets and marsh grass we climbed right over the top of the beaver lodge itself to pickup the trail again in the woods. The sun is shining and streaming down through the tree branches. Its so freshening and pretty here this morning as we walk, I wish that it would never end. The distant rush of Cooper Falls and stream is audible through the woods and we soon will be there. Rick is ahead of me this morning and probably looking at the stream.

The Cooper Brook lean-to is about 1 mile away. I like to enjoy the peaceful feeling in the woods so I stopped just off the trail in a sunny spot (to prolong a choice walk) and am adding my thoughts to the log book. J.B. just passed me as I sit here, but continued on after reporting the sighting of a moose about 2 miles back. I'd seen the tracks when I came through earlier and Mr. Moose must have been close by then. I'm surrounded by forest plants, mosses, and leaves, its so pretty and quiet here. It takes one minute to write a sentence and 5-10 minutes of thought and relaxation so if I don't want to dream away the whole day I'd better get on my aching feet. Another 10 miles to go yet.

Wow! What a day, sunny, temperature at the 78° mark by my thermometer. Woods walking is a dream as our feet swish-swish through the leaves just like yesterday. Saw one large garter snake (dark phase) and yesterday we saw 2 very coppery colored garter snakes. Again I am tenting out in the woods near the shelter which has a

sapling platform. But tonight Rick is going to try the platform to see if it has gotten any better from his memory of the others we tried to sleep on. I believe he really thinks it will rain tonight and he detests packing up wet the next morning. But J.B. may end up out here sleeping under the stars knowing he can scramble for the tent if it rains.

I can't seem to exclaim enough about the fresh air and good earthy smells. The water has all been drinkable and we haven't used any halazone since back in southern Vermont. Passed a beautiful lake this afternoon (clear, isolated and silent) open to the blue sky and glitteringly pleasant. Joe Mary Lake the site of Antlers Camp, an old deserted place that was used by hunters. Maybe still, I don't know, but the few buildings there were all dilapidated with the beds, stoves, etc. turned over, windows broken and porches slanting off center in a state of decay. Rick, J.B. and I fell in love with the place and talked of owning it ourselves and what could be done with the camp.

Another interesting thing was the corduroy roads we traveled here in the wilderness where the trail crosses and re-crossed. They must have been over 100 years old. A dam or two and old bridges all decaying and alone leave one with a lonesome feeling. Because of the isolation, quiet and relaxed atmosphere that seems to prevail today, the warm sun, etc., I believe it to be a hermits paradise of sleeping and fishing and eating day in and day out. You have to see it to believe it. Well, such was our day, its dark and eight o'clock so I'll get some sleep.

October 2, 1975. Thursday. Weather: Ugh! Cloudy and very overcast, rain most of the day with temperatures in the high 40's and low 50's. A short ten miles put us at Wadleigh lean-to and pond shy of Mt. Katahdin by 30 miles.

Our night was dry, breezy and leaves rained down on the tent all night because they covered the surface when we woke up. At 6:30 am with the threat of rain we quickly packed up tent and gear and moved to the shelter where we made breakfast. A shower started, but stopped long enough for us to get underway about 7 am on a very wet and slippery trail. Some boggy areas slowed us down. By 11 am we had walked six miles to Nahmakanta Lake lean-to and lunch. Ordinarily it would be easy to assume that this was a tiring journey, but not so with the panorama of fall colors, surrounding us, warm friends and a son (untiring) to hike with to top it all off. Then!! a weekend of completing the AT coming up. WOW!! this is really living.

Our next 4-1/2 miles (a short day) to our goal for the day was over level trail, through beautiful woods and, at 10 am, the first glimpse of Mt. Katahdin from the lakeshore of Nahmakanta Lake. A few moments of silence served to show all of us each had his own private thoughts on this occasion. The grand climax of hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia some 2000 miles to the south, to the northern terminus on Mt. Katahdin was beginning. The view was very grand indeed! J.B. sat on a rock several feet from shore in deep thought and great meaning vibrated from his concentrated position. It was indeed a momentous occasion.

Our steps quickened to reach Wadleigh pond lean-to and get on with the business of eating and sleeping for tomorrow we would be in sight of Mt. Katahdin most of the day.

October 3, 1975. Friday. A beautiful day, but cold with temperatures at 32° at 7 am. Clear skies and sunny. No freeze, but the snow on the top of Mt. Katahdin was clearly visible and on the neighboring peaks. Skies clouded up about 4 pm and

some drops of rain landed on us about 6 pm. Our goal is Hurd lean-to some 16 miles away.

We got up at 6:30 am had a fast breakfast and started hiking by 7:45 am (a leisurely start really because one enjoys the early morning sounds of birds, smells of fresh air and the early morning silence broken only by a clatter of an occasional hiker's pan hitting another pan in packing for the day's walk. Our spirits are high as we near the end of the line. The trail to Hurd lean-to passes Rainbow Lake which is one of the prettiest lakes in the state of Maine, with all wooded shoreline and an excellent view of Mt. Katahdin from a prominent point at the end of the lake. The rock outcroppings along the shoreline emphasize the beauty of the pine tree lined shore. The trail follows the shoreline gradually wandering away deeper into the woods of maple, beech, and birch. The fall colors virtually shout out their brilliance in chorus as we walk. This stretch of trail is in the lowlands and remains at this low elevation of approximately 1000' until arriving at Katahdin campground at the base of the Baxter-Katahdin range.

Today Rick soon outdistanced me and only at noon did we meet for lunch and then again at 5 pm at the shelter. I'm slower going over roots and small rocks that clutter the trail than he so rather than make frequent stops we decided it was wiser for each of us to travel at his own pace. The trail is so well marked that we can't get lost unless it is dark. But no fear of this as we will arrive at the lean-to long before. There are lots of moose tracks on the trail which leads the hiker to believe that he is surrounded by moose and a wary eye is kept both behind and ahead as he walks. Its an eery feeling!! Moose aren't afraid of man most of the time and often stand close to people watching them like cows in the pasture.

It will be only 20 miles to Baxter Peak on Mr. Katahdin and after we reach Hurd shelter tonight. What a feeling it is being this close to the final mile of our hike.

The trail went over Rainbow Ledges today where the rock rises above ground to a high elevation and the bald rock surfaces are dotted with lichen growth. The bare ground affords an excellent view of Mt. Katahdin (see pictures).

Our lean-to has the regular sapling type sleeping platform and though not as comfortable will keep us dry. About 4 pm the sky clouded over and rain drops started to fall. Rather than chance a wet tent going into the final stretch we decided to sleep shoulder to shoulder with eight other hikers in this shelter meant for six (one of the hikers, Bob Steeneck, is 6' 7" and his feet hang out over the bunk space when stretched so he slept with his knees bent most of the night). Slept nice and warm with body temperatures in abundance and normal.

The loons are singing on Hurd Pond a little ways away from the shelter. We call them "looney tunes", but the quiet that surrounds us as we listen makes for a much more solemn feeling than cartoons.

We caught up with Susan Bartlett today (of Sue and Wendy fame), she had been delayed by, 1st Wendy's bad knees, then a stay at Ken's in Monson (church lodgings) as proprietress, of the "Church Inn", then as a waitress at a wilderness lake camp (Chairback Camps) and finally by J.B. who left us to catch up with her yesterday. Its nice to have good companions.

The rain didn't materialize, but darkness set in quick tonight and we were asleep by 8 pm.

October 4, 1975. Saturday. Our weather is unbelievable with clear, sunny skies, 44° temperatures which held until late in the day. Hiked 11 miles to Dacey Pond campsite.

Yes, this day is a delight, trail is easy and level and by noon we were at Dacey Pond (cabins). Sue, Wendy, with J.B. and some of his friends who met him there are ensconced in a couple of cabins. We can see Mt. Katahdin across the pond a bear 12 miles away (7 miles to Katahdin Stream campground and 5 miles up the mountain to Baxter Peak and the end of the AT). We enjoyed lunch on a boat dock with warm sunshine covering us and a friendly little red squirrel begging food from Rick. We had picked up additional food supplies at Abol Stream, then given a ride from there to Dacey Pond by friends of J.B.'s where we are guests of J.B.'s at the cabins. Joan should be arriving soon, but until then we will rough it.

Our ascent of Mt. Katahdin is controlled by the weather and we have requested permission, but as of now the mountain has snow and ice on the peaks making it dangerous to climb. Each morning a report is issued on the climbing conditions and from this make our plans accordingly. Forest rangers control the hikers in order to protect them from serious injuries and possible death from exposure. The mountain has been closed for 4 days because of snow and ice. Our hopes are high for tomorrow and by 7:30 am we will know. All hikers must start for the summit by 9 am and not later if the mountain is open.

It takes a long time to do the ascent and it is our intention to climb to the peak (AT northern terminus) and go down the opposite side of the mountain to Roaring Brook campground where someone with a car will pick us up and return us to the starting point.

The balance of the day has been spent resting, writing in the library cabin here in the camp where a fire burns merrily in the fireplace keeping the room warm. Rick is out wandering around and exploring. A lot of folks have come into the library and talked with me while I bring my log up to date.

I left a note at the office for Joan telling her of our plans and hoping that she will anticipate our movements. Don't know when she will be arriving, but soon I'm sure.

It feels comfortable in here with the Franklin style stove throwing off heat. Even with the sun shining outside, the slight wind off Dacey Pond makes it chilly.

It will be fun tonight with J.B. and his friends preparing a spaghetti dinner of good variety. I can hear J.B. and the others playing their guitars and harmonicas; their music will be delightful.

My toothache is OK and doesn't seem to be getting any worse, but I did have a gold filling drop out this morning as I ate my breakfast. So there will be a dental call when I get back to Lansing.

Later: The dinner was a combined effort with the following ingredients on the menu. Italian bread, spaghetti, special sauce of mushrooms, whole tomatoes (small), eggplant, onion, tomato paste, tomato seasoning mix. To drink there was wine and champagne. A special toast was drunk to the completion of the hike and to it's participants and to the good companions celebrating this occasion. Music played by J.B. put the mood in perspective, with Tom (a friend) accompanying on another guitar. A truly unforgettable evening with warm friendly group on an eventful day. The beginning of the end of our full 6 month hike. By

10 pm we were stuffed, and stumbled to our sleeping bags to sleep on the front porch of one of the cabins.

October 5, 1975. Sunday. Weather was great! Clear, cool and sunny all day. Hiked 11 miles from Katahdin Stream campground 5 miles up Mt. Katahdin and over the peak to the Roaring Brook Trail (at Chimney Pond) and parking lot.

Our sleep on the porch was nice with crisp air and 40° weather holding all night. Quiet reigned supreme! Got up early, ate a quick breakfast and rushed to the main office to get the weather report on hiking conditions on "the mountain". By 7 am we would know whether or not we could start climbing. The word was, "Yes!!" So we quickly climbed into the van for a short ride to the Katahdin Spring campground where we were to begin our ascent.

Note: The intervening trail, Abol Bridge to the starting point, would be hiked tomorrow to allow us a "sure" crack Mt. Katahdin today.

By 9 am we had signed up at the ranger headquarters at Katahdin Stream and departed for the peak. The trail was a gentle ascent at first and soon turned into rocky going. The trees dropped away as we climbed and the rocks became boulders over which we had to creep slowly. Some iron rungs had been placed into the stone in past years, but were rusted and broken from tumbling rocks during storms. Luckily we had brought only one pack with a bear minimum of protective clothing and food for one meal. Both Rick and I had some thought as to our balance and ability to negotiate the precipitous climb. But our determination to complete the hike prevailed and by 11 am we reached the open rocky crest. The 1st summit opened onto a flat tableland of intermittent rocks much like giant stepping stones. This tableland crossed the top of the mountain for 1-1/4 miles to Baxter Peak and our northern terminal of the Appalachian Trail.

The renown Thoreau Spring is on this tableland and now a sunken spring that can just barely be touched as we lay on our stomachs. However, water was not a problem at this point and so we didn't stop for any more than a sample. By noon we arrived at the peak and the end officially of the hike. There was very little emotion and a tired sigh of relief escaped my lips as both Rick and I approached the sign identifying the peak as the "Northern Terminus of the Appalachian Trail". A ten foot high cairn of rock completed the footage needed to make the mountain (elevation 5257') a full one mile in height. We ate lunch at this time and talked about the hike with our companions, Sue Bartlett, Wendy Elliot, Duane Gould, J.B., Bob Steenech.

From our perch among the rocks on the peak we could look back over the many ponds, bogs, forests and lower mountains that preceded our climb up the Hunt Trail to the summit of Baxter. The weather was undeniably beautiful and we savored every minute as if we would never pass this way again. The wind was sharp and we were happy to have our down jacket, wool hats and wool shirts on our bodies. Our view included the lakes on the west, the Katahdin mountain range of 13 peaks to the north, the chimney pond directly below us on the east along with the spectacular Knife Edge high above and a trail some of us would use to descend to our waiting transportation.

The weather was holding nicely and controlled our schedule to and from the mountain; so, with some sadness, we departed the summit. The group we were traveling with decided to use different trails down the back side of Katahdin to our rendezvous point at Roaring Brook campground parking lot, while Rick and I decided to use the

Saddle Trail down to Chimney Pond campground and then take Chimney Pond Trail to Roaring Brook campground. The others selected the Knife Edge, Keep Ridge and Taylor Trail route arriving about 30 minutes later than Rick and I at the parking lot. They had an exciting hike we learned as the Knife Edge Trail is exactly what it is named for with steep drop offs on either side for some distance and precipitous for most of the way.

By 5 pm we all were in the van headed back to Dacey Pond. The eleven occupants of the van (8 men and 3 girls) ages 17 to 50 had shared in the final experience of completing the hike. They were happy, carefree and the mixed desires to be independent was apparent as they resisted the surrounding, increasing civilization when drawing closer to returning to a humdrum lifestyle. Each hiker had been a single individual out in the wild, walking and fending for himself, learning that others have feelings much like his own, but expressed in other ways, ways which are very acceptable, but approached with a free spirit and a sincerity rarely witnessed anywhere. I, personally, felt privileged to be a part of this group.

Joan, Ann, Smitty and Barb were waiting for us at Dacey Pond when we returned. They had arrived almost a half hour after we had headed for Katahdin Stream and the final ascent on the Hunt Trail. There were enthusiastic hugs and kisses and pictures taken.

Our evening was capped with an all-contributing meal and a new face (Richey Koch, caretaker from Gentian Pond lean-to, who joined our group at Katahdin Stream shared our cabin facilities).

We were all tired and by 10 pm it was lights out.

This ends the saga of Rick and Dick as hikers on the Appalachian Trail. There have been many exciting events that can only be recalled as our lives unfold in the years to come. With patience and determination I'm sure that we will set foot again on many miles of this trail. The beauty that surrounds the walker and solitude with peace supreme can only be enjoyed after reaching the summits of the peaks along this national monument.

The following notes were summaries of the days after the trail hike. Our group varied in size and only Barb Crandell's car size limited the number of companions who wanted to accompany us on this jog of the trip to Acadia National Park on the Atlantic coast. We numbered eight with all our backpacks and other gear. Wow! What a load. Oops nine for a short distance as we dropped off Duane Gould between Millinocket and Acadia somewhere.

But let's begin again with the next day after.

October 6, 1975. Monday. Weather: Sun filled the day time with some clouds later and scattered rain showers. Hiked nine miles between Katahdin Stream, Dacey Pond and Abol Bridge.

Stayed another night in the cabin at Dacey Pond enjoying the autumn-colored panorama of the pond, shoreline and Mt. Katahdin in the distance. The morning gave us a blanket of mist covering the pond (lakes in Maine seem to be called ponds) which was slowly burned off by the sun by 10 am. We decided to hike the section of the AT we missed -- Katahdin Stream through Dacey Pond to Abol Bridge. Joan and Barb took the car around to Abol Bridge after dropping Duane, Sue, Wendy, Rick, Dick, Ann and Smitty off at the Katahdin Stream.

About 5 pm at Abol Bridge after a very pretty trail, flat and paralleling the Nesowadnehunk Stream and Penobscot River including two beautiful falls, Big and Little Niagara. We met Joan and Barb part way and returned to the car at Abol Bridge. At this point four moose crossed the lumber company blacktop highway and plunged into the Penobscot River (a bull, a cow and two calves). We watched them gracefully swim away, our eyes and minds full of admiration for their freedom and daring.

Again our day was full of fun and good companionship. We returned to Dacey for a delicious meal and quiet night's sleep.

October 7, 1975. Tuesday. Another beautiful day, this time with clear skies, temperatures in the 50's. Goal: Bar Harbor, Maine.

Loaded Barb's car and left Dacey Pond headed for the eastern seaboard, Bar Harbor and Blackwood campground. The landscape seemed flat and less interesting than in past days. After walking slowly across mountains, valleys and watching carefully our every step each day on the AT, this civilized look of the landscape didn't really hold any meaning or contain the things vital to a daily hiking routine. To put it in Rick's words, "culture shock" confronted our thinking head on. We enjoyed our first stop for gas, mail, groceries and baked goods with 1 gallon of ice cream. We all sat on the curb and spooned the ice cream from the carton as one person. (See pictures).

October 8, 1975. Wednesday. Today we bid Sue, Wendy and Duane good bye at Bar Harbor after staying the night at Blackwoods campground. There were some tearful good byes and they went their separate ways. Dinner at Tripps. Stopped at Seal Harbor.

October 9, 1975. Thursday. Great weather again, stopped at various gift shops, ship moorings, saw old sailing ships tied up for good and rotting in their own berths (see pictures). L.L. Bean in Freeport was open at 8:30 pm and we bought some equipment. Lucked out and got an efficiency for six. Enjoyed submarine sandwiches in front of a nice fireplace. Asleep by 11 pm.

October 10, 1975. Friday. Temperatures in 50 and 60's. A nice cabin with showers, a fireplace and soft beds. After a self prepared breakfast then packing up, we headed for New Hampshire via Lewiston-Norway-Bethel, Maine to Gorham, and then to Pinkham Notch where we set up camp at the same spot on the Peabody River when hiking through in September.

Took a short hike up Tuckerman Trail to Crystal Falls. At 6 pm we had a great dinner at Pinkham Notch with ham, potatoes, soup, biscuits, green beans, milk and cherry pie (all you can eat).

Again we met Kathy Mitchel who had returned to Pinkham to live and work. She honored us by finding her way to our campsite and played her guitar by our campfire. She is a great person.

In bed by 10:30 pm in tents on a soft bed of leaves.

October 11, 12, 1975. Saturday and Sunday.

The days are cloudy with rain prospects and periodic sunshine. We enjoyed being together and shared simple roadside picnics, made up jokes, watched the autumn colors and just got re-acquainted again. Barb, Joan, Ann, Smitty, Rick and Dick sorta had to accustom themselves to each other after spending a varied existence in the last 10 days of roughing it, semi-roughing and then back to modern conveniences. For some it was a welcome return and for others it would close out an experience of a lifetime.

Reference Notes

1. Roger Brickner has let us return his hospitality by coming to Lansing, Michigan and staying overnight on his way to visit other hiker friends. Address 39-72, 47 St., Sunnyside, NY 11104. Phone 212-361-7580.
 2. Malcom Gillis mailed us a list of all the hikers he met on the trail. Also set a date for a "Hiker reunion" to be held at Harpers Ferry July 18, 1976 at the "Hill Top House Hotel". The reunion was a great success and about fifty hikers showed up. John Crandell, Rick and Dick came from Michigan to attend it.
 3. Lynn Sandusky started hiking from Springer about April 10 and caught us near Leigh River, Penn. We hiked with or leap frogged with him the rest of the way to Mt. Katahdin. He finished the trail after we did. We have heard from him since, he is joining the Peace Corps and went to the Fiji Islands for two years. His home is 1016 N. 8th St., Mt. Vernon, Illinois, 62864 (his parents home).
- Chip Broad, a 19 year-old experienced hiker was having trouble with his light Kelty pack. The frame was breaking and he got another at Pawling, NY. Never saw him again after Pawling, NY.
4. As we entered the restaurant another hiker (Mike Maher) was eating breakfast with a friend. Mike had traveled by bus to a point on the AT and was hiking a section that he hadn't done yet. Mike caught up with Rick and I and we talked a while. As a friend of Ed Garvey's daughter, Mike had visited the Garvey's home in Falls Church, VA. We enjoyed Mike's company and then a little over a year later, Mike visited us in Lansing, Michigan while there to see some friends at Michigan State University.
 5. Lynn Sandusky was perched on a park picnic table eating his way through a thick sandwich. But having just loaded up with groceries Rick and I kept on going. Amy Sheck, Don Borgstein and Steve Long all completed their hikes at different times we learned later by letter. Amy and Don split up with Don moving south and Amy back home with intent to finish the trail later. Steve Long, from Florida, completed the trail the following year. Their pictures are in the slide file now.
 6. Met Mark's mother and father on a street corner in Dalton a day later. We reported his well being to them and they were happy to get word on his whereabouts because they planned on taking him off the trail for a few days of R & R. They gave us oranges and bananas -- what a treat.

7. Wendy Elliot and Susan Bartlett started hiking the AT about the same time Rick and I started or a little later. They caught up to us and passed us in southern Virginia. From then on we hiked close distances from each other all the way to Mt. Katahdin. Joan, Barb, Ann, Smitty, Dick, Rick, Duane, Sue and Wendy all took a short trip together to Acadia National Park and camped there together for a few days. Both girls are about 19 or 20 years old, very energetic and extremely good company.
- J.B. Burritt is a companion hiker that carried his guitar with him all the time he hiked the AT, some 1500 miles. He gave us good comradeship when we hooked up with him in Vermont. Played guitar by candle light many nights in the lean-tos. And he has visited us in Lansing on one occasion. At present (1980) he is building a berm type home in Canaan, New Hampshire. He is an accomplished electrician, carpenter and logger with a flare for scouting, frequently leading groups on extended hikes in the northeastern mountains.
8. Dave furnished a ride to Lansing for Kathy Mitchell, the girl Rick and I spent the night with at Gray Knob cabin. It seems that she put a note on the bulletin board asking for help to get back to Michigan and Dave on his return to Pinkham Notch found her note and gave her a ride right to her door. Kathy has since returned to New Hampshire where she became a regular helper, worked in Gorham, met a young man whom she eventually married (Michael Johnson) and, in 1981, they brought a son into their life, Adam Drue Mitchell Johnson.
9. The Mahoosuc Arm section of the trail is all giant boulders and requires removal of the packs on occasion to push or shove them through places where only a body will fit. It was a rather trying day for us, but another experience that will be remembered forever. John Crandell and son John did this section together in June and July of 1981 and had a very good time doing it. John Sr. wrote an article about it which appeared in the Appalachian Trailway News, November-December 1981 issue. [Editor's note: See Beech-Hurst Family Heritage Book Volume 3, page 93].
10. My finger didn't heal up until 3 months later. It was cut on a clamp that was driven into the ground holding the nets and must have infected the wound. I had no ill effects, but kept a band aid over it until, finally, the wound closed up.
11. In 1979, John Crandell, Barb Crandell, Dick and Joan and Rick returned to Sugarloaf Ski resort for the AT conference. We stayed in the mountain chalets (chateau) eating, visiting, drinking and enjoying the activities. We loved the area and revisited Rangely (the Red Onion was closed on the day we came into town) and had a memorable breakfast in a kitchen with our hostess doing the cooking right beside us in her own homey style. Later, John and Dick hiked a portion of the AT, highway 4 south to Sabbath Day Pond where we camped, and the next day went onto highway 17 and hitchhiked a ride into town meeting the girls later.
- Rick was dropped off at Monson, ME. We all hiked into Stage Coach lean-to where Rick would meet up with his friend Jim Hilton now hiking the AT alone. The two of them would hike 200 miles to Mt. Katahdin then return home together.

12. Because of the changing landscapes and requirements to make the AT a scenic trail, relocations are constantly being made. Also, land acquisition by the USFS. ATC require many relocations adding to the beauty of the hike, making the pathway more permanent and providing greater excitement to this great pastime. My anxieties were groundless and, in a way, only small concerns of an unexperienced participant. At this writing I have the added challenge to revisit these sections of the trail and hike them. Its like putting pieces of a puzzle together.
13. This is an old church operated at that time (1975) by Ken, a local gent who charged \$2.00 per head, and a hiker could have whatever was available to sleep on; floor, cots, table or mattress, for hikers going both north and south used this place. A shower was \$.50 extra, and you had to wait in line and, when your turn came, must go to the basement of the church via a rough stone staircase and along a giant wood pile to an alcove to the shower. Private if you hurried for others (both male and female) were waiting their turns. A kitchen was available, too, with a gas stove and a table around which everyone sat if they had business (making meals) there. As of this writing (May 12, 1982), the Appalachian Trailway News comments the "the Old Church" is operated by 2000 miler Mimi Eller with a charge of \$4.00 per night. Still a bargain for a weary hiker.
14. Bob Steeneck from New York was hiking the entire AT and his mother and dad were rendezvousing periodically with him as he progressed. They have a camper so are enjoying a vacation of sorts following their son on the trail. Bob wrote an article about the AT which appeared in the New York Sunday News, May 23, 1976 which has a picture of Rick, Sue, Wendy and Duane at the top of Mt. Katahdin. When Bob slept with us at a shelter, he generally had to keep his knees bent to keep from hanging out of the shelter. The result of being tall and sleeping on 6' floors.
- We met another hiker here (Vic Walton) whose great, great grandfather was Potter of Potter Park in Lansing, Michigan. We couldn't believe his travel gear; a cardboard box all tied together with rope. He gave us some story about having his backpack stolen and now was going home with clothes loaned to him. Weird!! Got a letter in Lansing from him later.