

## He Took A Hike And Covered 2,100 Miles

**NEW SMYRNA BEACH** — On the first of May, Eugene H. Hadlow and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon H. Hadlow, will note the first anniversary of the younger man's seven month trek on the world's longest marked footpath.

Gene Hadlow walked the 2,100 mile Appalachian Trail, beginning a year ago May 1 and concluding Nov. 14.

According to his parents, backpackers have started out on the trail each spring for the past 60 years. Some intend to take a weekend hike, but many have dreams of walking the entire linear of the park.

But the Appalachian Trail Conference, governing body of the Appalachian Trail, estimate a completion rate of less than 10 percent, perhaps closer to 5 percent. So Hadlow's accomplishment is one few attain.

He started from Springer Mountain, in Georgia, as a "through hiker," a backpacker's term for one bent on making the entire trip. His parents said he was excited during the spring days, full of thoughts of the adventure and fellowship with other hikers.

He was impressed by the scenery of mountains, valleys, waterfalls, flowering trees and luxuriant plants. He told his parents he saw such wildlife as bear, deer, wild boar and snakes.

He went white water rafting in North Carolina, then was joined by a friend, Terrance Hamil, of Baltimore, Md., who hiked with him through Shenandoah National Park until they visited Hamil's family in Baltimore.

Once back on the trail, Hadlow stopped at the Appalachian Trail Conference in Harpers Ferry, W.Va., where he was told of the history, organization, ongoing work and future plans of trail management.

By August, many hikers were quitting because of heat and

humidity. But Hadlow chose a different strategy; in hikers' terms, he decided to "flip flop."

To do this, he left the trail at Delaware Water Gap in Pennsylvania and rode by bus to Maine to start at the other end of the trail. His goal would be reached if he walked back to Delaware Water Gap.

While in Maine, he visited a working horse farm and Acadia National Park. He climbed Mount Katahdin Aug. 18 and began the trek south.

During that walk, he experienced the changing colors of fall and some cold weather as he traveled through Vermont's White Mountains. He walked through snow as he crossed Mount Washington, which at 6,288 feet is the highest mountain in the northeastern United States.

Vermont's Green Mountains also were beautiful, but cold, he told his parents.

He reached Hanover, N.H., Oct. 17 and from that day on, walked steadily, and usually alone, until he arrived at Delaware Water Gap. He signed in Nov. 14, making his accomplishment official.

He became infatuated with hiking and camping while living in New Smyrna Beach. A 1975 graduate of New Smyrna Beach High School, he also was a Boy Scout, a member of a Port Orange troop and a frequent visitor to New Smyrna Beach troop's camping and hiking events.

He received a bachelor's degree in advertising and minored in geography at the University of Florida, and presently works at Nantahala Outdoor Center, Inc., Bryson City, N.C.

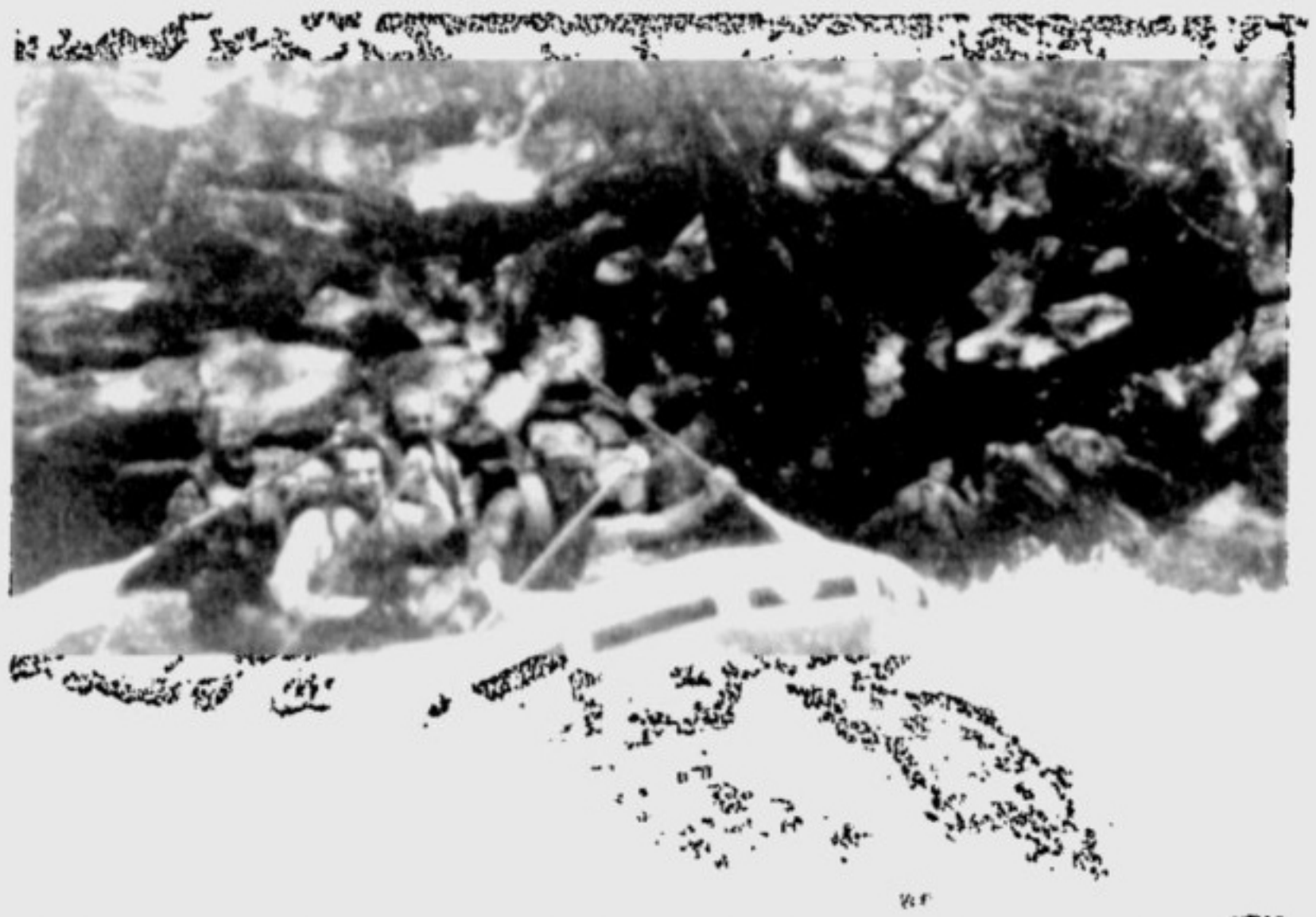
His parents worried about him during the trip, his father said, "particularly because of the animals. The bears and the snakes." They used a telephone answering machine to keep up with telephone messages.



Photos courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hadlow  
**GENE HADLOW IN HIS SUMMER TREK TOGS** — Hiking on the Appalachian Trail.



**TAKING A REST** — Gene Hadlow takes a break from his long journey.



**WHITE WATER RAFTING** — Enjoying the ride, Gene Hadlow takes a front seat for his rafting adventure.