

Excerpts from *Heaven Up-b'isted-ness!*

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On the formation of the Forty-Sixers of Troy:

During the early 1930s Bob Marshall's booklet, "The High Peaks of the Adirondacks," and Russell Carson's *Peaks and People of the Adirondacks* captured the attention of a small group of outdoor enthusiasts from Grace Methodist Church in Troy, in particular the church's pastor, the Rev. Ernest Ryder (#7), and two parishioners, Grace Hudowalski (#9) and Edward Hudowalski (#6)... Ed and the Rev. Ryder had not, originally, intended to climb all 46. According to Ed, their goal was 25 peaks, but when they hit 27 "by accident," they decided to climb 30. After reaching 30 they decided to climb all of them. The two finished arm-in-arm on Dix in the pouring rain on September 13, 1936. They shared a prayer of praise and thanks for their accomplishment.

Less than six months after the Rev. Ryder and Ed finished their 46, the duo organized a club, comprised mainly of Ed Hudowalski's Sunday School class, known as the Forty-Sixers of Troy. It was Ryder who coined the name "Forty-Sixer." The term first appeared in print in an article in the *Troy Record* newspaper in 1937 announcing the formation of the hiking club: "Troy has its first mountain climbing club, all officers of which have climbed more than thirty of the major peaks in the Adirondacks. The club recently organized will be known as the Forty-sixers..."

On Grace Hudowalski:

Much like Bob Marshall, whose love of the wilderness was his all-consuming passion, Grace devoted her talents and energy, in both her professional and personal life, to promoting the exploration of New York State and in particular the Adirondack Mountains. While in school, Grace developed an interest in storytelling. Following high school she enrolled in evening classes in creative writing and public speaking. Those interests led her to her first job with the New York State Commerce Department in 1945 as a publicity writer. She wrote travel releases highlighting the folklore and history of the state. "[If] I was to sell travel, the easiest way was to sell it by telling about the people who lived and loved and worked here," she explained. She was promoted to Travel Promotion Supervisor for the department in 1948 and served in that position until her retirement in 1961. Representing the state at travel shows throughout the United States and Canada, Grace spoke regularly on radio and television programs across the country. Her boss, Joseph R. Horan, director of the Travel Bureau, referred to her as "a super-saleswoman for New York State..."

Grace's hiking accomplishments and lifelong love of the Adirondack Mountains are legendary. She was the first woman to climb the 46 Adirondack High Peaks and the ninth person to achieve the feat. She made her first ascent of Mt. Marcy, the state's highest peak, on August 2, 1922, and completed her climbs of the 46 high peaks on Mt. Esther on August 26, 1937....

Grace hiked in men's composition-sole work boots from Montgomery Ward and blue checkered cotton shorts with pearl buttons. The shorts, which she wore on all of her climbs of the 46 high peaks, are part of the collection of the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake. She carried a small musette bag, which contained only a few items: lunch, a thermos of tea, a map, a sweater, and long culottes, which she wore when hiking the trailless peaks, and, at the request of her husband, when visiting Adirondack hermit Noah John Rondeau.

Verplanck Colvin's description of the naming and first ascent of Mount Colvin:

Colvin originally credited the naming of the peak to "the guides." He described the peak's first ascent in his *Report of the Topographical Survey of the Adirondack Wilderness of New York for the Year 1873:*

Rousing the men early on the 20th [August 1873]... we commenced our climb to the summit

of the next mountain eastward, which the guides had named Mount Colvin. The knowledge it was a mountain heretofore unascended, unmeasured and – prominent as it was – unknown to any map, made the ascent the more interesting. The indications of game were naturally abundant; the rocks and ledges geologically interesting; and, judging by the outlook from inferior summits, the view from the top could not fail to be superior... and reaching at length the height, its last approach a cliff almost impregnable, we drew ourselves up over the verge to find a seat upon a throne that seemed the central seat of the mountain amphitheatre. ...

On the Philosophers Camp:

Ten members of the Saturday Night Club who were guided down the beautiful Raquette River along the western edge of the Seward Range in 1858 were among the few who saw the area of the Seward Range in its purest state. William Stillman, an artist in the group, wrote that the Raquette “was a deep mysterious stream meandering through unbroken forest, walled up on either side in green shade, the trees of centuries leaning over to welcome and shelter the voyager.”

During the month of August, the ten men camped at Follensby Pond in the shadow of Mount Emmons. At the pond, they swam and fished and hunted, and they explored the region which few other men had seen. Towering pines, some rising more than 200 feet, dominated the forest near the pond. Large native trout were one easy fly-cast away, and there was plenty of game to hunt.

The ten men – no ordinary tourists – had come to the Adirondacks to get away from the stresses of urban life and the tensions of the time. Some of the most celebrated intellectuals of their day, the group included, in addition to Stillman, the poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson and poet James Russell Lowell. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, America’s preeminent poet, had been invited to accompany the others, but he demurred. He reportedly asked, “Is it true that Emerson is going to take a gun?” and concluded, “Then somebody will get shot.” Beautiful old-growth maples which shaded the campsite inspired the intellectuals to call it Camp Maple, but their guides quickly renamed it the “Philosophers Camp.”

Hikers lost in a whiteout on Algonquin:

Boxer and Sygman were in the mountains to hike under full winter conditions, and headed off toward Algonquin dressed for the part. They carried food for two days, a stove, and an Ensolite pad to sit on while they ate lunch. What they didn’t bring was a map and compass. In whiteout conditions, north can become south, east can become west, and a person easily can become lost. This is exactly what happened to the pair. Thinking they would return following their tracks, they struggled up through the maelstrom to top out on Algonquin. Unfortunately for them, the second they lifted their feet out of the snow, the swirling winds filled in their tracks with snow. Up that high, amongst the drifted, “teacupped” snow, tracks become part of a white jigsaw puzzle where every windswept wave and crest may be mistaken for a hiker’s last track.

Lost, following one phantom trail after another, the pair decided to head toward treeline and hoped to find the break indicating the trail. What they found was the start of a streambed, or drainage. It sure looked like a trail and it was heading down out of the worst of the winds and cold, so they followed it. With no compass they had no way of knowing that they were heading due west toward Indian Pass. The western side of Algonquin became a sea of snow, with spruce traps sucking the hikers into holes up to their armpits. The struggle didn’t last long. Knowing they were lost and in trouble, they found shelter in an impression in the mountain and dug in for the night. While wet from fighting through the snow, their wool and synthetic clothing was still trapping heat and providing valuable insulation.

The pair helped their cause immediately by firing up their stove and drinking hot chocolate. They also warmed up some jello. The stove ran out of fuel, but every little bit of warmth added to the body was doing a heap of good. The problem that could have potentially killed them came when Boxer, who had broken through the ice and whose feet found the water below, decided to take off his wet boots. Within minutes, his wet boots froze solid, and he had no way of getting his feet back inside them. The rangers who participated in the rescue felt this probably would have killed them had the following day’s search party not found them.

People and Places:

Horace Bushnell/Bushnell Falls

Horace Bushnell, for whom Bushnell Falls is named, is best known as the creator of America's first city public park, Bushnell Park in Hartford, Connecticut, and as the author of a dozen books. ... It was Reverend J. Twichell who took Dr. Bushnell to "his" falls for an overnight stay. ...after that very first visit "the fan-shaped cascade, a gem of beauty, [had been] called ever since then Bushnell Falls."

William A. White

One of the three founders of the Adirondack Trail Improvement Society (ATIS), William A. White first visited St. Huberts in 1864, riding his horse from Albany after having it shipped from Brooklyn where he was a furrier. He served as the first president of the ATIS from 1897 to 1927....An inveterate walker, when arriving for the summer, White often hiked from Westport to Keene Valley.

Old Mountain Phelps

Alfred L. Donaldson, in his chapter about Old Mountain Phelps in *A History of the Adirondacks*, includes this about the guide:

He was prone to nickname the natural wonders that he loved best. Mount Marcy he always called "Mercy." He held it to be the stateliest peak, commanding the finest view in the world. People would sometimes speak of the Alps or the Himalayas as having mountainous merit. But such idle talk annoyed him, and he would squelch it with a sneer. "I callerlate you hain't never been atop o' Mercy," he would say, and turn away in disgust."

Allen Mountain

The first depiction of Allen Mountain appeared not long after the mountain was named. Verplanck Colvin's large panoramic sketch, "The Heart of the Adirondacks," appears in his report of the Adirondack Survey for the year 1873. One of the peaks in the drawing is labeled "Mount Allyn." The peak is recognizably the mountain as we know it today. About the drawing Colvin states, "My sketch shows the core of region or section which should be forever preserved in its natural wilderness condition as a forest park or timber reserve for the benefit of the people of the State of New York..."

Nippletop

Hunters Pass was once known as the Gorge of the Dial and was probably so named by Emmons who, in 1837, also may have given the name Dial to what is presently Nippletop. The name never took hold as anyone viewing the mountain from Elk Lake was quick to observe, as Old Mountain Phelps opined, "The name suggests itself." However, the rather frankly descriptive name for the mountain offended some Victorian sensibilities. According to one story, a young lady once recorded these words in her diary: "Climbed N.....top with the delightful Mr. Phelps." When her father inquired about the missing letters, she blushed and answered truthfully. He was mortified and began writing letters – to the superintendent of the town of Keene, to Phelps, to the governor of New York – demanding a name change so that others might be spared a similar assault upon their gentility. ...