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A VISIT WITH THE A.M.C. OF NEW YORK By Paul Bradt

We answered Fritz Wiessner's invitation to join his group of A.M.C. climbers Memorial Day on Shawangunk Mt., N.Y. with more action than words. In fact the words were so few that we left home without knowing where we were to camp or where to find our hosts. When we arrived late Thursday afternoon we had the luck to find a good camp site for our four tents, a small clearing in the woods about 0.1 mile east of the mountain, on the south side of U.S. 44, a point about 14 miles east of Kerhonkson, N.Y. The owner, Mrs. Anna E. Hayes, New Paltz, N.Y. lives across the road and a few yards to the east. She provides good drinking water and West Virginia hospitality, our highest form of praise.

With Thursday night sleeping cared for, and Friday's breakfast cooked and eaten, we went in quest of the great Wiessner. The mountain ridge for miles both ways is owned by Smiley Brothers. They operate the large hotels Lake Mohonk and Minnemetka and keep the grounds in fine shape. All the guards seemed to know Wiessner and those at Lake Mohonk said he had gone up to the hotel on the mountain top Thursday with enough equipment for us all.

The company provides transportation to the top, where we found the lake with cliffs on one side and the hotel on the other. Weissner and his charming rock-climbing wife were paged and were soon with us on the cliffs with Bill Shockley, leader of the A.M.C. trip of that weekend.

The rock is a silicious conglomerate (Shawangunk Grit, I'm told) bedded at just the right angle to provide wonderful holds. By noon we had done a few exploratory climbs around the Crevice, a beautifully practical chimney where ladders are provided for untrained rock climbers. After noon we tried a few named climbs pointed out by genial Fritz. Don led Arnold and Jim up the Overhanging Overhang climb, and I led Leo and Eleanor on the Gargoyle Route. Later I took over the easy part of a vertical crack. If we had known that it was going to rain next day, we would doubtless have climbed until morning; but we didn't.

The drizzle next morning turned into rain and the Bradts with their youngster headed for Indiana. The rest of the group went on an inspection tour of the rocks just above the road on the eastern face of the mountain. At lunch time they were joined by Hans and Mrs. Kraus, Otto and Mrs. Schneider, and a lady with "a musical but elusive Russian name." These notables demonstrated a very spectacular Lone Horseman Climb; but the Washington crew felt drenched, and kept a respectful distance--on the ground. That evening Bill Shockley visited our camp. However, the rain continued, and Sunday morning started the gang home. Nothing but high praise has been heard for the gracious hospitality of our hosts. Their climbing is superb, and they pick out most

elegant routes. If you are picking out a Wiessner route, head up for the nearest and biggest overhangs in sight, then climb out from under them. Reports indicate that the Saturday climbing was at least as good as that of Friday, and with more exposure. On the whole, the A.M.C. climbers seem to take long leads, with great care on the belays. We hope we can have them with us some time, either singly or in groups. We will try to give them as pleasant memories as they gave us.

BAKER ROCK By Sam Moore

On May 17, 1946, Don Hubbard and I had the opportunity of climbing on Baker Rock. For many years, now, the rock climbers have been driving past the rock, on the slopes of Elkhorn Ridge a few miles east of Petersburg, West Virginia, and speculating on the climbing which might be done there. Distant pastures always seemed to be greener though, so the cars kept going to Seneca Rock, Hellhole, Gandy Sinks, and the like. A few stopped briefly for a closer look and a little scrambling but didn't linger long. It was not until recently that our curiosity reached the point where we had to know something more about the rock.

A proposed weekend canoe trip down the Cacapon River gave us a fine excuse to slip away from town a day early for a little climbing. The drive over on Thursday evening ended with the car stuck in a muddy ditch on a country road not far from the Rock. Two jacks, several boulders, and a fence rail (which didn't help) and a rattley Ford truck (which did) finally got us to bed at 1:30 A.M. at the old quarry in Petersburg Gap. Don, as usual, slumbered happily on a forty-five degree talus slope, while I, on level ground but far from the 14th Street streetcars, spent a sleepless night listening to the whip-poor-wills.

Next morning, after securing permission from Mr. Harper, the owner of the land, we drove over a small pasture road to within a half mile of Baker Rock. The mountain has eroded here into a series of small ridges and valleys. At the gaps forming the entrances to these valleys the rocks jut forth from each side in a formation similar to that of Seneca and Nelson Rocks. The erosion at one point, moreover, has been so great that the exposed rock formation extends completely across the end of one of the ridges in a great fan of cliffs. Since this looked more interesting than the other cliffs, it became our target for the day. A small gap, or break, in the rock occurs in the middle of the fan, so we headed toward it as a potential starting point for an ascent of the north or south peaks lying to either side. Upon arrival it was found to be merely a walkup route to the hillside behind the rock. Reserving this until later we turned our attention to the remarkable series of pinnacles, invisible from the car, which rise from the hillside just below the main cliff north of the break mentioned above.

Four in number, these pinnacles were promptly christened K-1, K-2, K-3, and K-4 (starting from the break in the cliff) by Don, who explained that he no longer dared give free rein to his imagination in such circumstances lest cries of "alliteration, alliteration" be raised amongst the ranks. The rocky spikes were found to be from thirty to forty feet high on the side closest to the main cliff, varying from two to five feet in thickness. As part of the same rock stratum they lie in a straight line parallel with the face of the cliff and about eight feet from it. The outside drops off sheer for nearly a hundred feet to the laurel thickets on the hillside below.

Nos. 1, 2, and 3 were climbed in rapid succession with Don leading. In the interests of science a piton was driven into K-1 to see if the rock was really as loosely bound together as it looked. Fortunately it wasn't! The pinnacles were each easy and airy--a good spot for beginners to become accustomed to exposure. A complete ascent from the outside, however, would be another matter. The fourth pinnacle was more formidable and at first glance appeared to offer real difficulties. Closer inspection disclosed what Don declared was an "Achilles Heel" in the defenses, so after convincing ourselves that we could climb it

(verbally) we retitled it the Achilles Heel and left the first ascent for the next party. After all, it was lunchtime....

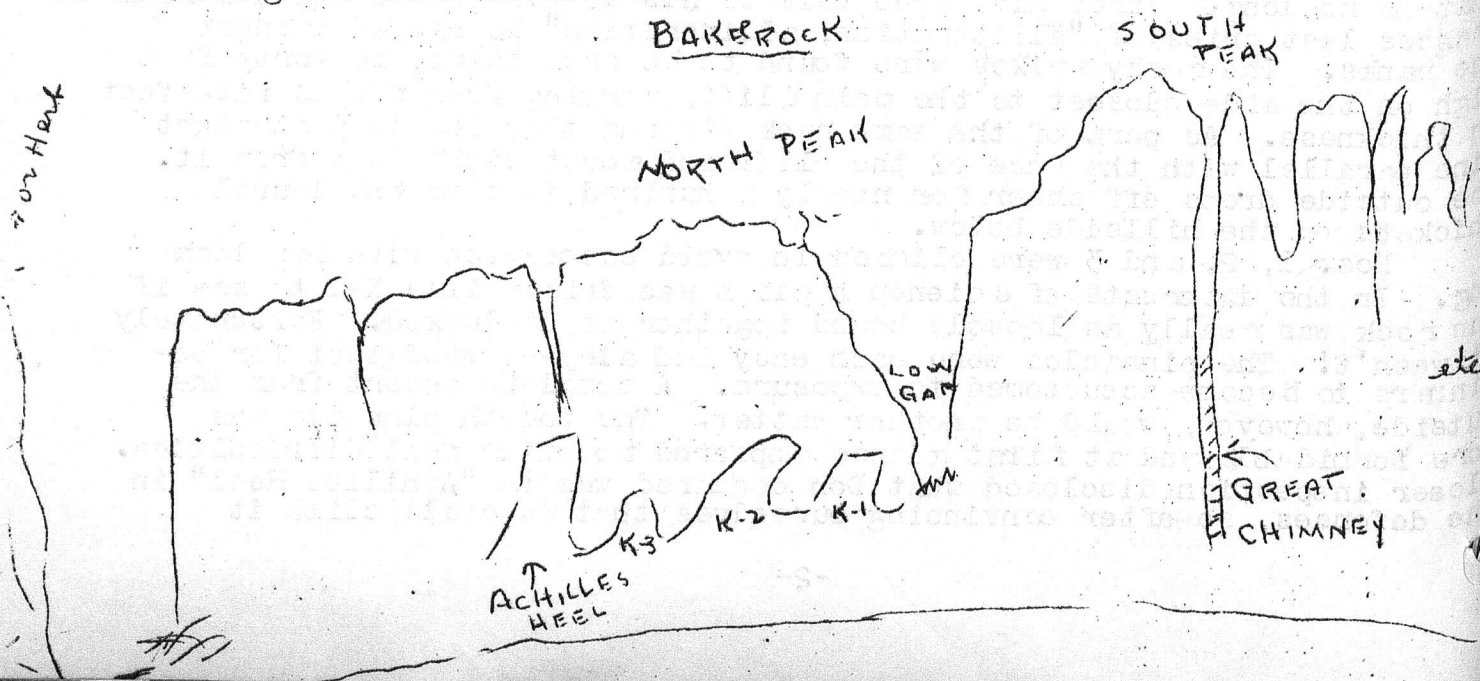
Scrambling through the low gap we were delighted to find that the summit of the rock was effectively guarded against Sunday picnickers by a hundred degree overhang of smooth cliff on the backside even though in some places it did come close to the ground. After a leisurely lunch we decided to climb the south peak, which looked more difficult. Scrambling twenty feet up from the gap we reached a broad ledge on the outside corner of the cliff. Roping up Don disappeared around the corner onto the outside face of the rock. Here he drove one piton before starting directly up the corner. Twenty-five feet farther another piton went in before climbing to a belay point up and around an exposed corner. Thirty feet more of easy climbing led to the summit. The route was relatively easy, plentifully sprinkled with good holds, but with elegant exposure on the precipitous face.

The top was nothing but a mass of poised boulders, sticking together without rhyme or reason. Apparently the lightning had been getting in some good licks. Sam built a cairn which Don claimed looked just like the summit--only smaller. That's the way the top is put together! Our original plan contemplated traversing the ridge south, but after moving a few feet we were stopped cold by an amazing sight. A slanting chimney completely split the cliff from top to bottom, dividing the south peak from the lower pinnacles farther along. Although of uniform width, the walls were just a little too far apart to chimney or to permit jumping across the top, and much too smooth to climb in any other way. A retreat was in order so "Ironpants" Hubbard arranged a free rappel from just below the summit down the back of the cliff. Sam wondered fervently how long it would be before he again was blessed with calluses in the right places!

An inspection of the lower portion of the great cleft revealed that it continued throughout the exposed portion of the rock, still unvarying in width. It appeared possible to climb the next pinnacle by face routes either on the inside or the outside of the rock, but this was left for another day. Retracing our steps to the north we passed by the low spot in the cliff and climbed to the ridge crest in back of the north peak. A short distance down the slope it was easy to traverse out on the rock and back along the edge to the summit.

Our day was over--except for the moment when Don stepped only six inches from a rattlesnake coiled in the path at the base of the rocks. Seven rattles and a button too!

We heartily recommend Baker Rock to beginners and experts alike as a new area, replete with potential first ascents, not quite as far away as the Seneca country. There's plenty of exposure on the easy climbs to add spice to the day's work. And for the expert whose life fails to have meaning unless he's dangling by a lone hangnail there are long face climbs and traverses with most of the South Branch Valley beneath the heels. In particular we'd like to recommend any one of the shallow chimneys starting up the face from the "K" pinnacles. There are other pinnacles, too, along the crest of the main cliff as well as on the other smaller rocks in the vicinity. There's one in particular that we're saving for Herb and Jan....



Ups and Downs

Thursday, May 30, Chris and Helen Scoredos struggled with the East Face of Camp Lewis to no avail. They met up with five small boys on a camping trip, to whom Chris gave lessons in climbing and rappelling. The boys were lively and interested, and did their best to take Chris down a peg when, in answer to their question, "What are you doing?" he replied "Practicing mountain climbing," and they came back with "Oh, then you aren't very good at it, if you have to practice!"

Chris Scoredos
Helen Scoredos
Helen Baker

Jan Conn
Paul Smeltzer

Sunday, June 2, Chris and the Helens spent the morning at Carderock on their favorite climbs. After lunch they met Jan, recently returned from Kentucky, and Paul on the towpath, and set out for Camp Lewis, where a good time was had by all.

Don Hubbard
Tom Culverwell
Sam Moore
Bob Rivello

Herb Conn
Jan Conn
Sally Chamberlin

Helen Baker
Mary Neilan
Eleanor Tatge

Brock's Gap

Sunday, June 9, 1946. Helen Baker's farm near Newmarket, Virginia, west of the Blue Ridge, was the objective. Here a small cave entrance inveigled our ten troglodytes into a small entrance room in a hillside, from which no one present was of sufficiently shoe-string-like dimensions to proceed further. Flashlights were furled as the retreat gathered in a fine large new barr where hay-jumpers had a hey-day. The white-water enthusiasts of the party were clamoring for action; but the river nearby turned out to be entertaining only to waders. The group piled into its cars and set off looking for rapids and cliffs. A rock jutting out toward the highway looked good to Tom, and proved to have a variety of interesting climbs. While a swarm of climbers were descending for lunch, Tom and Sam took to the nearby river with canoe and rubber boat, and were later joined by the swimmers of the party. Herb, Jan, and Eleanor formed a team to climb the highest, most difficult peak of the rock. The ascent was particularly notable for the large number of spectators who gathered. The climbers were clearly visible from the highway and adjacent roads, and from the peak a maximum of 55 cars parked at one time were counted. After the team had reached the summit, Jan made the first descent, en rappel, removing pitons as she went. Every hammer blow was clearly felt by her team-mates on their precarious perch about 200 feet sheer above the heads of the onlookers, on a thin blade of rock so narrow that it could be straddled. Upon reaching a level where she could do without a belay, Jan climbed upon a second peak where Don had earlier set a piton, across a 50-foot deep notch from, and slightly below the level of, Herb and Eleanor. Herb threw both ends of his climbing rope to her, and Jan tied them into the piton to form an aerial traverse about 25 feet long. The spectators were then favored with the successful crossings of Eleanor and Herb to Jan's side of the notch. After their hairs had settled back into place the team agreed that the route was not without its thrills, although they learned later that the ascent had been achieved in 1918 by Bud Weatherholz, who stood on his head on the summit.

The trip marked the last to be made from Washington by Mary Neilan, who is returning to her home in Somerset, Penna. She was rewarded by Don, in memory of her outstanding traverse of Arthur's Crossover, by a chromium-plated piton hammer. We'll all miss her unfailing good humor and her limitless supply of entertaining stories, and hope to see her again whenever she can join us.

Chris Scoredos
Helen Scoredos
Jan Conn
Herb Conn

Dolores Alley
Helen Baker
Sally Chamberlin
Arnold Wexler

Leonard Bolz
Sam Moore
Ruth Anderson
Bob Stephens

June 16, 1946. Today's Carderock trip was made an historic occasion by Arnold's starting out immediately on Herbie's Horror, climbing it, then repeating the procedure, scarcely taking time out for a breath between the two ascents. Of the other tried and true climbs attacked, Chris' ascent of the Spider Walk with the aid of Stimmy's Arm, the portable handhold, was among the more interesting. Sam provided some weighty moments with a packboard to which was attached a keg filled with rocks.

June 23, 1946. Chris and Helen Scoredos, who missed the group at the Hot Shoppe, had a private trip to Great Falls, Va. They climbed on the big face downstream of the Socrates Downfall.

Sam Moore
M. L. Maxwell
Sally Chamberlin

Dolores Alley
Ruth Anderson
Arnold Wexler
Leonard Bolz

Herb Conn
Jan Conn
Helen Baker

June 23. At Great Falls, on the Virginia side, the group went first of all to the river's edge, where Arnold and Sam proceeded to blow up and experiment with their new 4-man rubber life raft. When not pumping or paddling, the group worked on a vertical inside corner which only Herb and Jan succeeded in climbing. The climb may warrant further attention. Sam, who decided pumping up the boat was of more importance, put too much umph into it, and with a sudden psh-h-h the day's boating was a thing of the past.

After lunch those who didn't go swimming walked up to the Crack facing Juliet's Balcony, which Jan and Helen Baker climbed for the first time. This is Helen's second qualifying climb, the other being Jan's Face, at Carderock.

After more swimming and some fancy diving by Sally and Ruth, the crowd finished off the day with a little water line traversing.

Paul Bradt
Jo Bradt
Alan Bradt

Leo Scott
Eleanor Tatge
Mary Weilan
Don Hubbard

Arnold Wexler
Jim McDonough
Sally Chamberlin

Thursday to Sunday, May 30-June 2, 1946. Ten intrepid climbers met at a parking overlook in the Shawangunk Mountains, N. Y., late Thursday afternoon. Paul and Leo scouted out a pleasant field for tent-pitching, and Friday morning the group was early up and ready for action. With his beagle nose warm on the trail, Paul sniffed out a route leading along the foot of the mountains to a clover-leaf turn under and over a bridge, up a mountainside to a parking area. Here civilization necessitated a taxicab ride to the top of the mountains, a walk from a picnic house to a resort hotel, then on to cliffs across the lake from the hotel, where with unerring accuracy Paul sighted his quarry, Fritz Weissner, famous climber of the Appalachian Mountain Club of New York. Fritz pointed out several of the AMC's favorite climbs, described in an accompanying article by Paul Bradt.

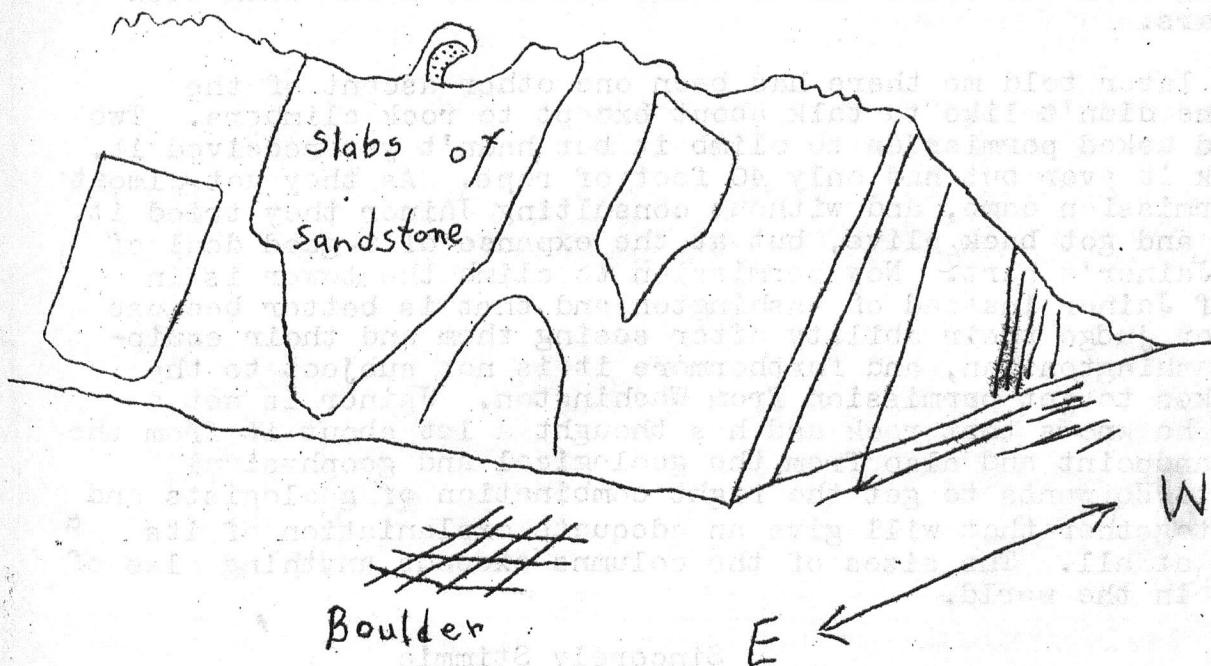
Saturday was as wet as the inside of a canteen, and the Bradt family left the party to continue their trip to Indiana. Of the remainder, part of the group made themselves comfortable in the cars, while others watched a second group of New York climbers, led by Hans Kraus, climb on the cliffs near the highway. The climbs were dripping with rain water and exposure, but notable gaiety, considering the circumstances, pervaded both climbers and watchers. Some hope was held out for a bright Sunday, but the rain persisted. Camp was broken early, and the homeward route pursued.

Administrative Mountain Climbing by Bill Schlecht

Out of respect for my advancing senility, I have been assigned to a phase of climbing appropriate to my maturity; namely, climbing in planes and automobiles. I was sent to Denver, Colorado and back by plane on Geological Survey business, and while there had a quick look at the foothills and the Rocky Mountain National Park. West of Denver about 10 miles are Green Mountain (so-called because it's dark yellow in contrast to the brown of surrounding country) with no cliffs, and north of it Table Mountain, two mesas capped with zeolite-bearing lava. West of them are steeply overturned sandstone and shales forming hogbacks and valleys: Denver and Rock Park contains some nice red sandstone formations; as a radical innovation the city takes no responsibility for persons climbing on them. At the town of Golden, west of the Clear Creek gap in the Table Mountain is a hiking trail up Clear Creek canyon. We climbed to Buffalo Bill's tomb on Lookout Mountain above Golden, but found that Enrico Caruso had been there first.

On a trip thru Estes and Rocky Mountain Parks we saw glacial valleys, cirques, etc. People were skiing near the highway. We thought we could see Bergschrunds thru field glasses, but the actual glaciers were hidden from the road by ridges. From a boulder at the foot of the hogback formed by great slabs of sandstone, appeared an overhanging knob (see illustrations) that should attract non-administrative climbers.

The biggest thrill of the trip was flying over Lake Erie from Cleveland to Detroit. On the trip back we passed the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and the great terminal moraine that stretches as far as you can see over Iowa and Illinois.



We hear from Stimmie epistle mailed from Yellowstone

The Black Hills region is very interesting. We all climbed Harney Peak 7242' above sea level, from Sylvan Lake. The trail is less than four miles but only about 1000ft climb. In returning, Julia and I came by a lower trail which leads past the Needles for which the mountail is noted. I couldn't resist climbing one about 60 feet high which was near the trail but the main crop of Needles which towers many hundreds of feet up above the pine forest would certainly get you and Sam and Cris. The granite of their Needles reminds me most of the Old Rag Granite. The variety of the vegetation is not large but I did stop to photograph some Shooting Stars. That night we found a beautiful place to camp in a pine forest at the top of a knoll.

Sunday morning we visited Jewel Cave National Monument where there was a graduate geologist to take us in parties down into the cave. The trip took over an hour. This cave is noted for its crystals of spar which covered most of the walls about 3" or 4" thick. Many of their walls have been eroded by sand laden water so that the points of the crystals are gone and only the bases show like so many hexagonal tile on a bathroom floor.

The passages were of good size but there was a great deal of stooping to get thru, tho no hand and knee work. The ranger had gasoline lanterns to light the way and there were plank stairs to lead up and down and there was a lot of up and down. He said he hadn't completed stairs up into the upper part of the cave which have the usual stalagmite formations. There were none of these formations in the lower part of the cave, only crystals and a little true coral. The largest room in the cave was no larger than the Hoday room but not as high.

The other item which reminded me of you was the Devils Tower in Wyoming. We got there Sunday afternoon. We could see it towering above the rest of the country for many miles before we got to it. The custodian of the National Monument, Mr. Jainer, said we were the first ones from D. C. this year tho he had had some cars from Md. When I spoke of the rescue of the parachutist a few years ago he found out that I knew something about rock climbing and told me the story about it and showed me on a model of the tower just what routes had been used by Fritz Wiessner and Jad Durance in their climbs and suggested we could walk around and see the routes. Wiessner had used one knee and one arm in a crack to climb 65 feet but Durance could not get into that crack so used a chimney spread of nearly 6 feet and got up that distance in about 2 hours. The rescue climb by Durance was made in a blizzard but a ladder had been brought up which reached 32 feet up to start with. The story is written up in Appalachia by Jainer. Personally I have no desire to make the climb. It scares me to look at it. Some of the rapells that was used in the rescue is still hanging from the rocks and we could see it from the path with our binoculars.

Jainer later told me there had been one other ascent of the tower that he didn't like to talk about except to rock climbers. Two boys who had asked permission to climb it but hadn't yet received it, came to look it over but had only 40 feet of rope. As they got almost thru the permission came, and without consulting Jainer they tried it, and made it and got back alive, but at the expense of a good deal of concern on Jainer's part. Now permission to climb the tower is in the hands of Jainer instead of Washington and that is better because he can better judge their ability after seeing them and their equipment than Washington can, and furthermore it is not subject to the delay it takes to get permission from Washington. Jainer is not a climber but he knows that rock and has thought a lot about it from the climbing standpoint and also from the geological and geophysical standpoints. He wants to get the right combination of geologists and physicists together that will give an adequate explanation of its being there at all. The sizes of the columns exceeds anything else of that nature in the world.

Sincerely Stimmie

NEWS NOTES

The current copy of Appalachia features an article Katahdin for Rock-Climbing by Arnold Wexler describing the trip he had there with sterling Hendricks, Don Hubbard and Chuck Haworth last summer. Eight photographs printed with the article show routes followed.

Leo Scott is getting shipments of the army's water repellant sleeping bag covers. They really are warm weather sleeping bags that can be used for cooler weather by inserting blankets at will.

The reason for doubling up with two issues today was the Bradt vacation fixing fences, painting the chicken houses etc in Indiana.

Sam Moore was climbing with Alan Smith, AMG (formerly of Washington) in the Quincy quarries and on Rattlesnake cliff in the Blue Hills, Massachusetts, on Memorial Day.

WILL WE
NEED THE
CANOE?



ONLY 10 MINUTES FROM BROADWAY

ON THE V. B. B&O. R.R.

THERE IS A CAVE, SAID HELEN. SHE DIDN'T MAKE ANY PROMISES. NONE OF THIS "MEASURELESS TO MAN" STUFF. SHE JUST LED US TO IT—



"SH-H-H!
IT'S JUST AROUND
THIS CORNER!"



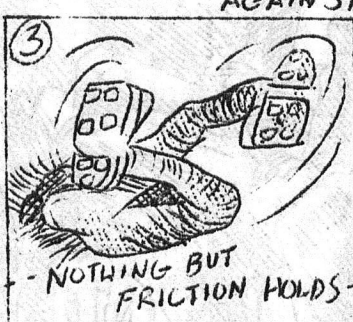
15
RUTH
ELEANOR
SALLY
MARY JANE
HERB TOM DON HELEN

THE BIG MOMENT—WHEN HELEN TENDERLY MOVED ASIDE A STRAND OF HONEYSUCKLE AND REVEALED THE CAVE

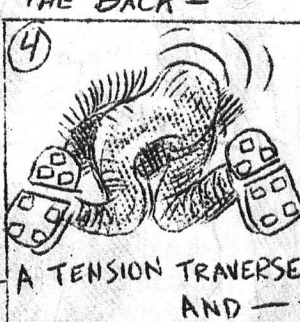
IT THERE WAS NO TIME TO LOSE. WE HAD ONLY 8 HOURS IN WHICH TO EXPLORE THE CAVERN—SO OUR LEADER WENT IN THE FRONT WITH A RUSH—AND SUFFERED A MILD CONCUSSION AGAINST THE BACK—



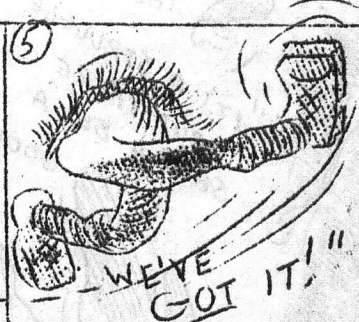
"ANOTHER PITON
RIGHT THERE—



—NOTHING BUT
FRICTION HOLDS—



A TENSION TRAVERSE
AND—



—WE'VE
GOT IT!"

6 THIS LOOKED INTERESTING—AND WE SPREAD OUT TO EXPLORE ALL THE OPENINGS—BEING CAREFUL TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER—

CROSS-SECTION
OF THE CAVE →

(NOTICE THE
RESEMBLANCE
TO A PRE-WAR
CHRISTMAS
STOCKING)



"I'VE HEARD OF
THREE MINUTE EGGS—
BUT A THREE MINUTE CAVE—!"

BACK TO THE
MINES—
BOYS—



"ROCKS!"
"WE WANT
WHITE
WATER"

7 "AND THAT IS THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE—THEY'RE DECIDING WHETHER WE'LL WORK ON THE BARN, THE SILO OR THE CHERRIES—"



HELEN
INTRODUCED
US TO THE
FAMILY—
AND THEY

SO WE LEFT THE HAY AND THE CHERRIES
AND HEADED WEST TO BROCKSGAP
WHERE ROCKY CRAGS COMB THE WIND

"HO HUM
IT'S JUST
BLOOD, SWEAT
& TEARS"

"WHAT'S DON
YELLING
ABOUT?"

"HE SAYS DO IT
BACKWARD-
THE CROWD'S
GETTING THE
IMPRESSION
IT'S DANGEROUS"

THE SLAB
IT'S A STRUGGLE
BUT THERE
SHOULD BE A
GOOD

VIEW!"

"AND BE SURE TO
WAKE JR. UP WHEN
THEY FALL -SO HE
CAN SEE IT, TOO"

"OH-O-O-O-O
SUCH TECHNIQUE
I'VE TOLD
EM A
THOUSAND
TIMES"

MEANWHILE-

THE RIVER RATS, SAM & TOM, WERE FINDING
THAT A QUIET
STRETCH OF WATER
CAN REALLY GET
ROUGH.
"THE WAVES AREN'T SO
WILD. BUT THOSE
WABS-!"

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