

FOUNDERS

Jan and Herb Conn

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NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCKCLIMBERS

UP ROPE 1945-1947

It is seldom we can afford the luxury of looking into the past. You probably have some particular memory which you like to enjoy, whether your climbing has been devoted to weekends and short holidays or to long jaunts into mountains in far-away regions. If your memories are of the feel of hot sun beating on your back; the taste of perspiration as you struggle to achieve

some particular climb and the thrill of final accomplishment; the smell of the campfire; the taste of food cooked out-of-doors; the thrill of reaching the top of the mountain and seeing the countryside for miles around spread out like an unbelievable fairy picture; the sudden surprises like the little blue jewel-like lake nestling at the foot of the ridge just climbed; the tiny exquisite flowers that grow only in high places; the sudden movement and quick glimpse of some wild seldom seen animal as it takes shelter at your approach; the tumbling, torrential glacier stream and the feeling of smallness as you stand beside the huge granite blocks piled around the foot of the major mountains. If you have any of these memories, than this issue is dedicated to you.

Individuals and groups of individuals were rockclimbing long before Up Rope was born but like other "early civilizations" it is easier to go by the written record. Of course we could try to determine the age of certain pitons that are driven in the cliffs and some of our scientific members no doubt could work out the formula if they so desired. Of course our best advice on the subject is to test the rusty antiques carefully before you entrust your weight upon them.

Since Up Rope was born in November 1944 at the residence of the Conn's, we will start our journey from that time. World War II was occupying a lot of our time and several of our members were busy doing things like dehydrating fruit in Florida (Laurence Curl) and in school learning to be good soldiers (Sam Moore). Eleanor and Don Jacobs were in Indianapolis while Guinevere Scott was in California expecting Leo most any day.

We also had a meeting where Chris was elected chairman and where kodachromes belonging to Elizabeth Vos, Sterling Hendricks and Steve Yurenka were shown portraying scenes of Bull Run, Harper's Ferry, Echo Cliffs and Old Rag. The stork was busy dropping bundles at the Bradt's, Bennetts, Schlects and Siggers.

1945 opened with the usual celebrations and nostalgic memories. Carderock and Great Falls received most of the attention from local climbers both because of their proximity and because of gas rationing. The few trips made away from the local rocks were made in Fitzhugh Clark's station wagon and were to Bull Run, Seneca, Old Rag Mountain, Oventop Mountain and Pine Grove Furnace Shelter. On August 26 the first post-war trip for the purpose of reexploring the "restricted area" around Great Falls, opened for the first time since the war and important to the Rock Climbers because some of the rocks in the area had very good climbs on them.

The war ended in this year lifting a great burden from our hearts and minds and leaving most of us with the profound desire to eradicate all but the most deeply rooted memories. It takes a long time for everyone to get back home in a global war such as the one just past and so several of our members were still far, far away from home. Morton Churchill was overseas in the European theater; Charlie Daniels in the Pacific; Tom Culverwell and Dick Leonard in the China-India-Burma Theater; Laurence Curl was still in Florida; Art Lemback, Don Jacobs and Dr. Harold Stimson were all in California and Sam Moore was on Guam. Herb and Jan had resigned the editorship of Up Rope and were in the West having themselves one of those vacations you dream about before Herb joined the army late in the year.

Important climbing trips were made to rocks away from the vicinity of Washington by Don Hubbard, Sterling Hendricks, Chuck Haworth and Arnold Wexler, who spent two weeks climbing on Mt. Katahdin, Maine. Andy and Betty Kauffman were climbing in the Selkirks and Bill Kemper took in the Colorado Mountain Club's trip to the Elk Mountains. Eleanor Tatge made history with her unusual 10-day trip down the Potomac in her life-raft nicknamed the Sink-Stopper.

Five meetings were held in 1945 and movies of Mt. Hayes and the Skagit River country in north central Washington were shown. A list of qualifying climbs were selected and approved to be used for voting purposes. Chuck Haworth showed movies of the Katahdin trip and the Kauffman's showed slides taken on their last trip to the Selkirks.

The stork hadn't forgotten the Rockclimbers either, because babies were delivered to Elizabeth and Bert Vos and to Tony and Ruth Bonanno.

1946 wasn't much different at the beginning from any other year except that it meant there was another whole year in which there would be long weekends and holidays to spend rockclimbing.

Carderock had become by now almost an institution among the local climbers. Some of the climbs have been climbed so often that practically every handhold and even its shadow was known. As a matter of fact, with the expert instruction that some of the older climbers could furnish, some of the hard climbs of former years had now dropped in their estimation so far that, they had been heard to comment that former A climbs should be demoted to at least "C" climbs.

Transportation is still not as plentiful as in prewar days but Great Falls was visited with greater regularity than before. It was a favorite climbing area because there are more rocks there and they had not been explored as thoroughly as those at Carderock and therefore any day that the climbers felt ambitious new climbs could be scouted out. Some of the older climbs were still favorites as the "new blood" kept testing themselves to see if they are at least as good as those climbers of bygone days about whom they heard so much.

1946 could be considered unique in the changes made in the number of active climbers leaving for their homes and the gradual return of local climbers. Tom Culverwell, Morton Churchill and Charlie Daniels returned. In the same year we said "Hasta Luego" to Jimmy Maxwell who returned to Boston; to Mary Neilan who returned to Pennsylvania; to Chuck Haworth who went to California; to Steve Yurenka who left to attend graduate school at M.I.T.; to Sally Chamberlain who went to attend school in Switzerland; and to Ruth Anderson who returned to her home in New York.

Arthur Lembeck was in Kyushu, Japan in the early part of the year, Sam Moore in Iwo Jima and Bill Kemper had flown to Bikini and the last word from him had him stationed on Oahu. Laurence Curl was still wandering for we heard that he went west from Florida and returned through Indiana and Kentucky. Herb and Jan were still traveling as Herb was moved from camp to camp by the army.

The number of the climbers who managed to travel from Washington in 1946 reads like the rollcall of the membership. Andy and Betty Kauffman were in Alaska making the second ascent of Mt. St. Elias which they accomplished on August 16. Dr. Stimson and his family made a trip across the country; Gus Gambs was at the Bugaboo Creek Mountaineering Camp in July and in his own words; "My own exploits were confined to horse trips from Base to the two fly camps and from those alone at a snail's pace to the pine meadows, up to elevations of 6,500 feet, among the glaciers, ice falls and neve fields." Sam Moore, Chuck Haworth, Sterling Hendricks, Donald Hubbard and Arnold Wexler were climbing in the Selkirks. Helen and Chris Scoredos were exploring the Wind River Wilderness in Wyoming and later were joined by Eleanor and Dawn Tatge for climbing in the Tetons. Jan and Herb seemed to be everywhere climbing from New Hampshire to Texas and Colorado. Tom, Estelle and Kathleen Culverwell, Ellen and Lowell Bennett, and Arthur and Win Lembeck all visited Mt. Desert Island, Maine and other vacation spots. Laurence Curl wrote that he spent some time exploring the mountains of northern Georgia, chiefly the Blue Ridge. As far as the activities of the climbers still in town caving wasn't neglected for several trips were made to Schoolhouse and Hell Hole and other members visited the A.M.C. as guest of Fritz Wiessner for climbing in New York. The White Water Trip through the Smoke Holes of West Virginia seemed to have been the gayest of the canoe trips for those climbers who combine canoeing with their rockclimbing activities.

As could be expected all of this summer activity made for many interesting meetings. Outstanding of the meetings were Roger Morrison's slides of the Tetons, Major Jackman's 'Operation Musk Ox' pictures; Betty and Andy Kauffman's slides of their Mt. St. Elias trip and Dr. Stimson's flower slides and western shots, and Tom Culverwell's slides of China taken while in service. At a meeting late in December Arnold Wexler was elected chairman.

The marriages outdistanced the births this year as Christine Behrenberg and Sgt. Albert (Rocky) Combs; and Arthur Lembeck and Winifred Rodemeyer were married. The only birth recorded was that of Geraldine Valera Clark to Judy and Fitzhugh Clark. Tragedy saddened our group as we learned of the death of Dr. Charles C. Haworth, Jr. on July 22 while climbing in the Selkirks.

We now close the pages on 1946 and turn our attention to 1947 the year which we will bid farewell tomorrow night.

Early in the year Rockclimbers skated on that section of the canal near Carderock which furnishes them many hours of outdoor skating every year. Even though Carderock had its usual onslaught of climbers, more trips further afield were made. White Oak Canyon, Harper's Ferry, Little Stony Man Cliffs, Devil's Garden, Old Rag Mountain, Shawagunk Mountains and Seneca Rock were visited.

Andy and Betty Kauffman made trips into the Battle Range, British Columbia; Sterling Hendricks, Donald Hubbard, Pete Peterson, and Arnold Wexler also visited the Battle Range Section and although the two parties were in the same range they didn't meet. Eleanor Tatge traveled to Switzerland to visit our old friend Sally Chamberlain and to see a little of Spain and France.

The meetings were as interesting as usual with the Selkirk pictures of the previous summer shown by Sterling Hendricks. Colored slides of caves by John Meeneham were shown and were of especial interest to those climbers who had climbed in Schoolhouse and Hell Hole. Andy and Betty completed the pictorial trip to Mt. St. Elias by showing the motion pictures taken on the trip and later on in the year slides of their more recent trip into the Selkirks. The meetings were rounded out at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Silsbee who showed slides of their trips into the Canadian Rockies.

Two marriages took place that of Roy Britten to Barbara Hagan; and Franz Karban to Kathleen Culverwell.

Three babies were born; Eric Chris Scoredos to Helen and Chris Scoredos; Peter Irey Bradt to Jo and Paul Bradt; and Margaret Elaine Scott to Guinevere and Leo Scott.

* * *

December 24

Pim Karcher
Ken Karcher
Arnold Wexler
John Meeneham
Dolores Alley
Betty Alley

Billy Alley
Jack Wilson
Jane Showacre
Donald Hubbard
John Reed
Chris Scoredos

There was plenty of transportation available at the Hot Shoppe but the original plans to go to Herzog Island were changed to Carderock for lack of a boat. Ronnie's Leap, Beginner's Crack and the Barnacle Face were tackled by the beginners. Both Pim and Ken Karcher showed very good promise as climbers although it was their first time out. The Golden Staircase was led by John Reed with Chris Scoredos second and Jack Wilson end man. A crack next to the Butterfinger climb was tackled, climbed and rappelled by the entire group. The Spider Walk was successfully climbed by Jane Showacre, Dolores Alley and Arnold Wexler. Chris also lead the Spider Walk, something which to his knowledge had only been done once before. A face near Sterling's Rock Climber's Test was climbed by Dolores Alley, Arnold Wexler and John Meeneham. It was a tired but satisfied group of climbers who made their way home at the end of the day.

December 21

John Meeneham
Arnold Wexler
Jack Wilson

Jane Showacre
John Reed
Ted Shad

Chris Scoredos
William Golden

A hike along the Canal near the Falls on the Maryland side, a cut through the woods, and was it by design or accident that the group was soon seated near the Purple Horse Climb? (Said climb being recommended exclusively for the month of July. Remember it was only four days before Christmas and some ice skating was done that day). The attack began and several free rides resulted. Finally Chris worked his way across the face, around the corner and with the last handhold furnished by Ted he landed safely at the end of the traverse.

Meeneham, Arnold and Jane did some neat face climbing about 40 feet upstream from the Purple Horse Climb. After lunch, the group moved to the face near the Spitzenburg climb. Following Meeneham's and Chris's climb of the smooth face, John Reed decided to lead his team, consisting of Reed, Wilson and Jane on a riverline traverse. John made an unscheduled plunge into the Potomac and with the aid of Wilson and Arnold was helped to the shore. Jane was partially wet. After changing into dry clothing the group built a fire and soon contentment was restored.

While all these events were in the making, Eleanor Tatge was ice skating at Carderock on the canal.

December 25, 26, 27

Bill Schlect
Horace Wester
Ken Karcher

Pim Karcher
Arnold Wexler

Five incorrigibles spent Christmas Weekend in the Schoolhouse Cave-- with only the flickering light from two red candles to remind them that most people were enjoying turkey dinners, repairing electric trains, and sorting out their newly acquired neckties. Ken, Pim and Arnold arrived Thursday afternoon and immediately moved into the anteroom and set up housekeeping. In the evening Bill and Horace showed up to complete the party. Friday saw the group descend into the Big Room and explore some of the wells and passageways, then climb down to the Lower Passage for a trip to Jacob's Ladder. Saturday afternoon they pulled out for D. C.

It is interesting to note that the schoolhouse one of the landmarks of the cave area, has been sold to a local farmer and is being demolished.

* * *

December 28

The section of the canal used more often by the climbers was frozen solidly enough by December 16 for skating and many persons have taken advantage of this outdoor skating rink. On December 28 only one climber and one ice skater were present, all other persons who might have braved the winter winds were out caving.

* * *

LETTERS

Sally Chamberlin writes: "Switzerland is a swell little country as Eleanor has probably already told you if she has forgotten how tired she was biking with me. It seems strange, perhaps, that in this, the country of mountains I haven't touched a climbing rope, but that's the way it is. I spent the summer helping out on my roommate's farm, seeing parts of German Switzerland by train and bike and Italy by train, and taking a few weeks of summer school here and there. It was a most interesting and profitable summer educationally and it afforded me a good deal of pleasure to talk to the natives wherever I was even if it was in schoolbook German or crippled Italian. Last week I spent eight days biking (and pushing it) over the Furka Pass (2431 meters above sea level), the St Gotthard (2112m.) going down to Locarno in the Italian part of the country and coming back by way of Susten Pass (2262m.) Interlaken and Bern. Susten Pass was by far the wildest. I had clouds swirling around me all the time and only occasionally got a glimpse of a snowcovered peak when it cleared momentarily. Near the top it rained and snowed a little but not enough to cover the road. Today the weatherman reported 10 to 20 centimeters of snow in all three passes. I was lucky to have good weather last week. School starts Monday the 27th so I expect to be quite busy until March. Best Wishes to all."


* * *

Jan and Herb Conn's new address is: Mittersill Club, Franconian, N. H.

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At Long Last

Many climbers were happy to learn that Joe did survive his famous ascent.

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