

Women of the Long Trail 1910-1940

/by

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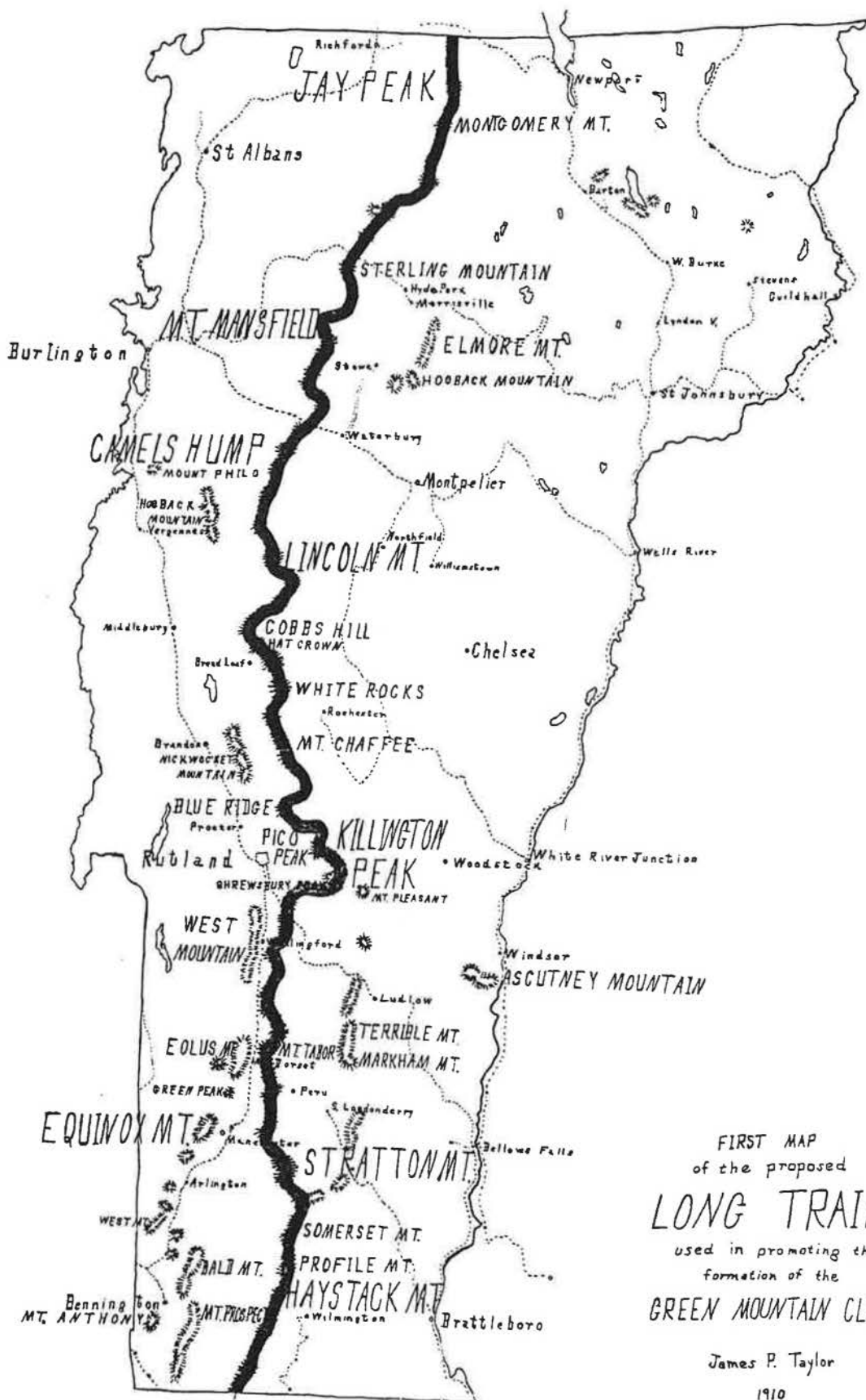


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Women of the Long Trail 1910-1940

"There were no ladies among the charter members of the Green Mountain Club. In 1910 ladies with their long skirts were rarely mountain climbers or hikers. The members of the Green Mountain Club are now about equally divided between ladies and men. What has granted ladies to enjoy healthful, delightful recreation in the Green Mountains equally with men? It has been the Green Mountain Club, in large part, as we all know."

--Clarence P. Cowles, Charter
Member of the Green Mountain Club

Introduction

The Green Mountain Club, the caretaker of the 267-mile Long Trail through the Green Mountains of Vermont, celebrated its 50th anniversary when Clarence P. Cowles spoke these words in 1960.¹ By then, women had enjoyed an equal share of the hiking in Vermont for twenty years. The events which brought about this change occurred within the thirty year span from 1910 to 1940. Women's rights activists challenged prevailing notions about the role of women in society. Women not only campaigned to vote, they ventured outside their homes to enjoy fresh air and exercise, tested their strength and endurance by participating in sports, and discarded their cumbersome long dresses for more comfortable attire. The Green Mountain Club promoted hiking in Vermont as a recreational pastime. It built a system of trails and shelters along the spine of the Green Mountains from the Massachusetts border to the Canadian line, published maps and guidebooks to assist hikers on the trails, and encouraged women's participation

¹Clarence P. Cowles, "Fifty Years of Notable Achievements, " Long Trail News, May 1960: 5.

on the trail.

All of these efforts made hiking more accessible to women and they became active members of the Green Mountain Club. Not only did the club add women's names to its roster every year during this period, many women played prominent roles as club officers, administrators, and long distance hikers on the Long Trail.

Conditions Limiting Women's Participation

During the 19th century, women in Vermont experienced the same cultural barriers as female mountaineers throughout New England. Custom maintained that women were too frail to venture into mountainous terrain; they belonged at home, tending to children and domestic affairs. In addition, arduous climbs left hikers covered with dust and perspiration, a condition unbecoming of a lady.

Female hikers were especially rare in Vermont before 1910 because mountaineering activity centered around the Presidential Range and neighboring peaks in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and Mount Katahdin in the Longfellow Mountains of Maine. Mountaineers generally overlooked the Green Mountains in the 19th century. Although mountains such as Mansfield, Camel's Hump, and Ascutney had footpaths, most peaks in Vermont were without trails to their summits. Unlike the more popular areas, the Green Mountains offered few shelters or lodgings for the convenience of campers. Mountaineers climbed to the alpine zones

of the White Mountains to enjoy the breathtaking views. Since Vermont had few mountains above the timberline, many hikers falsely assumed they would not find panoramic vistas on its mountains. For the most part, the Green Mountains remained untrod until the Green Mountain Club blazed a trail along its ridges.

Origins of the Green Mountain Club

Vermont became a destination for mountaineers throughout New England after James P. Taylor founded the Green Mountain Club in 1910. The club's charter members stated that their purpose was "to make the mountains play a larger part in the lives of the people of Vermont."² The club was divided into sections which corresponded with geographic regions along the trail. Each section assumed responsibility for building and maintaining the trails and shelters in its vicinity.

Under Taylor's guidance, the club started blazing the Long Trail along the spine of the Green Mountains. Members intended to create a trail from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border. Clearly marked trails and shelters would allow hikers to spend several days in the mountains without having to retrace their steps to exit the wilderness.

As the work progressed, the number of people using the trail increased. Hiking was no longer the spartan activity of a decade earlier. Shelters lay within a day's walking distance along the

²Paris, Louis J., "The Green Mountain Club: Its Purposes and Projects," Vermonter May 1911: 170.

trail. Although these buildings ranged in luxury from the wooden lean-to at Sucker Brook to the Green Mountain Clubhouse on Sherburne Pass, they all afforded protection from the elements and often allowed travelers to hike without the added bulk of a tent. It became fashionable to spend one's weekend tramping through the Green Mountains, primarily because the Long Trail system maintained by the Green Mountain club made hiking easier than ever before.

Women Join the Club

Almost immediately, some of these devotees were women. Initially, the Club was not quite sure this new-found interest among women was proper. Six months after the club's founding, Clarence Proctor Cowles, president of the Burlington section, wrote a letter to James P. Taylor, "Please let me know if we are right in taking ladies into our organizations."³ Although there is no account of Taylor's reply, he must have approved. Of the 35 members accepted into the Green Mountain Club in 1917, 15 were women. By 1918, 54 out of the 156 members of the Burlington Section were women. In 1924, the New York Section actually had an imbalance in favor of women. They temporarily adopted a "sex-balance" rule that made their 1924 membership of 298 consist of

³Cowles, Clarence P., letter to James P. Taylor, 15 Sept. 1910, Green Mountain Club Archives, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, VT.

149 men and 149 women.⁴

As a whole, the Green Mountain Club welcomed this trend. Women often cooked meals at the campsites, helped maintain trails, and made hiking a family event. A note in the club's newsletter, the Long Trail News, commented, "Increased members of the fair sex at the annual meetings is a noticeable tendency and a wholly commendable one."⁵

The Green Mountain Club encouraged women's participation in several ways. First, the club frequently made note when women participated in mountaineering activities. An account of the exploration of the cave on Mt. Mansfield in September, 1911, mentioned that two women were part of the party to descend. The Green Mountain News (as the Long Trail News was called until December, 1925) noted that during September 1922, 22 members of the Appalachian Club, including 14 women, hiked 73 miles from the Brandon-Rochester pass to the summit of Mount Mansfield. The Killington section reported a Washington's birthday outing at Mount Pico in 1927. Of the 26 people to summit the peak on snowshoes, 12 were women. By publicizing the presence of women, the club inspired even more to try the trails.

A second, primarily symbolic gesture came when the club built the Green Mountain Clubhouse on Sherburne Pass in 1922. Not only did the lodge supply luxurious amenities such as

⁴Waterman, Laura and Guy, Forest and Crag (Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1989) 447.

⁵Long Trail News Feb. 1929: 4.

electricity, plumbing, and a furnace, its designers included separate dressing rooms for men and women.

Third, the club enlisted the cooperation of the Vermonter magazine to publish articles touting both the scenery and the amenities of the Long Trail. Raymond H. Torrey wrote an article upon the completion of the trail in 1927 and proclaimed, "More than forty shelters are now built along the trail, a place for every night, at convenient distance apart....The Trail is safe for anyone: family parties [and] groups of girls make it every summer." ⁶ In May, 1929, the magazine published Edith Esterbrook's article, "The Long Trail Safe for Women Hikers". Esterbrook wrote, "The Long Trail is especially well suited for women's hiking because it is so thoroughly provided with conveniently placed shelters, inns, and boarding houses, on the trail or close by it."⁷ Perhaps the most famous spokesperson for the club was novelist Dorothy Canfield Fisher. The Green Mountain News listed Dorothy Canfield as one of its most distinguished members-at-large (members who were not a part of a particular section) in 1922. She published "The Long Trail" in the Vermonter in 1926. She was a featured speaker at the club's twenty-first anniversary celebration in 1931, and she contributed the opening chapter, "Hiker's Philosophy", to Footpath in the Wilderness, a book published by Middlebury College about the Long Trail.

⁶Torrey, Raymond H., "The Vermont Long Trail is Completed," Vermonter July, 1927: 100.

⁷Esterbrook, Edith, "The Long Trail Safe for Women Hikers," Vermonter May 1929: 77.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher not only wrote about the trail, she often participated in Club activities and hikes.

Fourth, the club promoted comfortable, non-constricting hiking apparel for women. After 1910, female hikers dispelled notions about their lack of strength and stamina in the mountains, but they carried an immense burden in the pounds of tight-laced stays, floor-length skirts and petticoats society dictated they wear. Women's hiking apparel had changed little since the Appalachian Mountain Club set forth its recommendations to women in 1887. It suggested wool ankle-length skirts, trimmed with hem rather than braid, flannel drawers buttoned at the ankle, cotton stockings, and stout but comfortable leather boots. Corsets were optional. Not only were women's dresses cumbersome, they could be dangerous. Flowing skirts snagged on branches or rocks, and frequently caused women to trip and fall.

By 1929, the Green Mountain Club issued much more sensible advice. An article in the Long Trail News stated, "Few modifications ... for equipment are necessary or desirable[,] for women will find men's equipment decidedly practical for trail work."⁸ The proposed apparel consisted of woolen underwear, knickers, a flannel shirt and a light sweater. Leather boots, well-oiled and about ten inches high, supported the ankles and cut down on blisters. A bandanna handkerchief worn over the head protected against insects and the sun. Women were none too glad

⁸"Equipment for Hiking on Long Trail, Especially for Women," Long Trail News July 1929: 4.

to know "there's scarcely any item of man's apparel from pants to suspenders that woman isn't entitled to and probably is wise to wear without fear of being conspicuous--indeed, a skirt in the woods is now as rare as a bald eagle."⁹

All of these changes made women more active participants in Long Trail activities. Female club members spent more time on the trails. In addition, they assumed responsibility within the club by holding offices and administrative positions.

Early Female Officers and Administrators

Among the first women to hold an office in the Green Mountain Club was C.P. Cowles' wife Laura. She was one of the women accepted into the Burlington Section before her husband wrote to Taylor and asked permission. Laura Cowles became such an integral part of the Burlington section she was elected to serve as its president in 1917.

Laura Cowles was also one of the first women to leave her skirts at home when she set off for the mountain trails. A winter outing up Mount Mansfield in 1910 was probably one of the reasons Laura abandoned feminine decorum for practicality in the outdoors. C.P. Cowles and Theron S. Dean, another prominent member of the club, guided Laura and a Miss Guthrie up Mount Mansfield on snow-shoes. Once again the ladies' long skirts were an impediment. The party ascended by way of the Forester's Trail

⁹Crane, Charles E., "Hobnails, Packs, and Lodges," Footpath in the Wilderness, ed. W. Storrs Lee (Middlebury, Vt: Middlebury College Press, 1941) 25.

to the Needle's Eye and used a rope to aid them up the steep, spruce covered passage to the top of the Forehead. C.P. Cowles wrote:

Coming down the northerly side of the Forehead, Miss Guthrie stepped on top of a balsam covered with snow, the branches gave way under Miss Guthrie's weight and engulfed her to her armpits. Dean and I took off one of our snowshoes and dug Miss Guthrie out of her predicament. The ladies wore long skirts, as was proper in those days.¹⁰

The pair was coated with snow when the party reached its lodgings at Stevensville that night. It wasn't long before Laura Cowles was borrowing her husband's knickers to wear on the trails.

During the first years of the club, Laura climbed the six highest peaks in the Green Mountains. She was an avid enthusiast of winter hiking and snowshoeing. During her tenure as president of the Burlington section, Laura began the tradition of the Washington's birthday outing, a weekend of snowshoeing, picnicking and cross-country skiing that is still popular today.

Laura Cowles shattered every antebellum notion about the capacity of women. She put herself through college at the University of Minnesota by teaching piano lessons and graduated in 1902. Laura played basketball and rode a bicycle during her youth, so she was already used to vigorous exercise when she first accompanied her husband on hikes in Vermont. Yet her medical records would have indicated that she was anything but strong. She delayed entering college because she was ill for two

¹⁰Clarence P. Cowles, typescript, Clarence P. Cowles Papers, Bailey-Howe Library, U. of Vermont, Burlington.

years with a ruptured appendix that resulted in peritonitis. In 1920, Laura was diagnosed as a diabetic. Withered away to a frail 72 pounds, she became one of the first recipients of insulin injections, which she took for the rest of her life.

Laura Cowles' history as a mountain climber actually contributed to the diagnosis of the disease. She noticed that when she started off on a climb her sight would be bad. When she got to the top, she could see clearly. This indicated to her doctor that intense physical activity was using up the excess sugar in her blood that her body wasn't able to metabolize when she was sedentary.

The memorial written at her death in 1958 proclaimed, "Laura Goldwyn Cowles was definitely a pioneer in opening the Green Mountains of Vermont for the recreation, good health, and pleasure of women as well as men, in winter as well as summer."¹¹ The trail up the west side of Mount Mansfield, built by her husband, who was by then Judge Cowles, was renamed the Laura Goldwyn Cowles Memorial trail in her honor.

Other women followed Laura Cowles' lead and became active club leaders. Laura Woodward was a charter member of the New York Section of the Green Mountain Club in October of 1916. She served as president of the section from 1927-29, leading day-hikes and overnight outings in the summer and on snowshoes in the winter. Laura Woodward helped to organize the annual bird census at

¹¹Clarence P. Cowles Papers, Green Mountain Club Archives, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, VT.

Wyanoke Lodge and Camp Thendara, the New York Section's headquarters in Harriman Park, New York. In 1929 the club voted her a life member in recognition of her contributions. In 1932 members named a camp on Jay Peak the Laura Woodward lodge in her honor.

Perhaps one of the most instrumental figures in the Green Mountain Club was Lula M. Tye. As the club grew, routine duties such as collecting dues, mailing notices, and answering letters required too much time for a volunteer position. The trustees voted to hire Lula Tye, of the Rutland Chamber of Commerce, to act as paid secretary for the Club in January of 1926. "Lula Tye was the club," said one member.¹² At least she was the voice of the club for many people. During her tenure she received and answered thousands of letters. For almost thirty years Long Trail News issues advised readers to "address communications on Club matters to Miss L. M. Tye, Secretary, Mead Bldg., Rutland, VT."

Lula Tye did not limit her activities to a secretary's desk. She participated in Long Trail outings and attended conferences throughout New England as a representative of the club. Tye served as Corresponding Secretary and Business Manager of the Green Mountain Club until June 1955. That year at the Annual Meeting of the Green Mountain Club the officers presented Lula Tye with an award for her many years of service. The Lula Tye Shelter was built at Little Rock Pond near Danby by the Forest Service after her death in February 1962.

¹²"The Lula Tye Shelter," Long Trail News Aug. 1963: 2.

Edith Esterbrook, of Boston, also participated in the club's organization. In 1926 Esterbrook and Mabel Brownell of Burlington became the first women elected to serve on the board of trustees of the Green Mountain Club. The club endorsed their election in the Long Trail News, "We are gratified that the large feminine membership in the Club should be represented, and trust that this experiment will prove a success."¹³ Club members elected Esterbrook to a second term and she served as a trustee until 1928.

Edith Esterbrook introduced many novices to hiking in the Green Mountains. In June of 1922 she guided three women who had never spent a night out in the woods on a 51-mile hike from the Massachusetts line to Prospect Rock in Manchester. Esterbrook proclaimed the outing a success, and her partners must have agreed. After a few days rest, she continued with two of these women, and a third who had joined the party, for 30 more miles from Middlebury Gap to Sherman Pass.

By 1923 Esterbrook had, in installments, covered all of the Long Trail between Johnson and the Massachusetts line, with the exception of the forty-two miles between Killington Peak and the Peru Turnpike. As she hiked along the trail during the remainder of the decade, she published accounts of her excursions in the Vermont, and kept the Green Mountain Club in the public spotlight.

¹³Long Trail News Apr. 1926: 4.

Female Long-distance hikers

Edith Esterbrook was among the first women to hike the Long Trail in parties comprised solely of women. Prior to 1920, females rarely appeared on the trails without male escorts. Over the next ten years, groups of women became more common on the Long Trail and a few women even ventured out alone.

In August of 1921, Nina Brown embarked on a three day hike from Brandon to Killington with two other women. Their party never reached Killington; they veered off-course on an old logging road. (Hikers frequently lost their way in those days, many stretches of the trail saw only occasional maintenance). They made their camp on the second night in an open meadow and hiked into Chittenden the next morning. Nina wrote:

If you want to feel like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, all you need, (providing you are a woman), is to appear in Chittenden, sometimes known as Slab City, with a pack on your back and wearing knickerbockers. For us base ball games stopped, doors and windows opened and out they poured--child work and child play all stopped, while from behind barns and houses, and from fields and meadows, dozens, hundreds, nay thousands, silently gathered.¹⁴

Brown's description obviously exaggerated the number of onlookers, and members of Chittenden probably objected to the appellation 'Slab City'. But her account illustrated that female hikers during the early 20's were still a rare enough sight to illicit stares.

In a few years, women set out solo for several days on the

¹⁴Brown, Nina A., "Beginner's Luck on the Long Trail," Vermont Feb. 1922: 35.

trail. Lois A. Cuglar, of Massena, New York hiked from East Clarendon to Breadloaf in June of 1925. The Long Trail News acknowledged her accomplishment, 46-1/2 miles of hiking with five nights spent on the trail, as "one of the notable achievements in trail history."¹⁵

Another female hiked solo along the trail in 1930. On June 23, Mary Cooper, a young woman of 24, left the Long Trail Lodge (as the Green Mountain Clubhouse was renamed in 1924) to hike to Cooley Glen Shelter and out to Warren. Mary was no stranger to the Long Trail. She often hiked its paths with her father Charles P. Cooper, the president of the Green Mountain Club from 1917 to 1925.

Mary met three men on the trail, one of whom knew her father. She wrote, "He seemed much amazed to think that I was hiking it alone, but he didn't exactly disapprove."¹⁶ Other than a few moments of panic when a storm approached and she realized she had lost the trail, Cooper never felt any sense of danger. The only menacing animals she encountered were those seen by all campers who hiked through the Green Mountains in the early summer: Black flies, mosquitoes, midges and porcupines. Of Sucker Brook lodge she wrote, "The place surely is porky ridden. I was wakened by the sound of chattering teeth...I went for him with the axe. Missed him, worse luck and now he's with me for the

¹⁵Long Trail News Dec. 1925: 4.

¹⁶Mary Cooper Bock, journal, Green Mountain Club Archives, Green Mountain Club Headquarters, Waterbury Center, VT.

night."¹⁷

Mary Cooper had two other minor complaints. She surprised herself by feeling lonely at her isolated camps in the evening, and she found her 12 pounds of food stores inappropriate. Mary based her supplies on the Green Mountain Club guide book's "Food for Two Men for 1 Week" and a recommendation in a mountaineering book by Kephart, "Food for 1 man for 1 week". She wrote that her meals were "too heavy, too starchy, and too proteiny. One girl for one week could get along nicely on 2-1/2 or 3 pounds less, providing there were in it considerably more fruit and vegetables than I had."¹⁸ Perhaps Mary Cooper sensed what has only recently become a commonly accepted fact: A diet rich in the complex carbohydrates found in fruits and vegetables is especially essential when undergoing strenuous exercise. In spite of these irritations, Cooper finished her journey on July 1 longing to set out again.

Mary Cooper may have raised a few eyebrows on her solo outing in June of 1930, but women had become quite common on the Vermont hiking scene by then. The marathon-hiking fad that swept the Long Trail four years earlier secured their presence and popularized long distance hiking for both men and women.

The End-to-End Phenomenon

No sooner was the Long Trail completed in 1926 than hikers

¹⁷Mary Cooper Bock journal.

¹⁸Mary Cooper Bock journal.

walked it from start to finish. Actually, the trail was blazed only as far as Jay Peak. From there, hikers crossed over to a road and walked the remaining few miles to the Canadian Border. The first marathon-hiker on the trail was Irving Appleby, of Roxbury, Massachusetts in July of 1926. Appleby claimed he covered the entire trail in just 14 days, 5 hours, averaging 18 miles a day.

Appleby's hike was clouded with controversy. Many club members doubted his story. Appleby failed to keep an itinerary, tended to exaggerate, and dramatically surpassed the average hiker's rate of five to eight miles per day. The following year, he broke his own record and finished the trail in 10 days and 10 hours. By then, many club members thought Appleby a brash, lying, glory-seeker and found reasons to doubt his second attempt.

A few weeks later Kathleen Norris and Hilda Kurth, from Schenectady, New York, and Catherine Robbins from Cornwall, Vermont, became the second party to trek the entire trail. They soon captured Appleby's place in the limelight.

Their accomplishment made headlines from Boston to San Francisco. Papers touted the trio's feat as a monumental first for women; a testimonial toward women's true potential. Ironically, the Three Musketeers never intended to make their trip a crusade for the women's movement. "We all just thought it sounded like great fun," said Catherine Robbins.¹⁹ They did not care about speed. "We were not trying to establish a record,"

¹⁹Catherine Robbins Clifford, personal interview, 3 June, 1993.

said Kathleen Norris. "Appleby established a record for speed over the Trail, but we traveled in comfort."²⁰

Kathleen Norris instigated the trip. Kathleen planned to hike the entire trail with her father the summer of 1927 after she graduated from high school. When Mr. Norris died during Kathleen's senior year, she sought partners to accompany her on the trail. Kathleen convinced Hilda Kurth, one of her former teachers, to make the journey. A few weeks later, Hilda met Catherine Robbins, a teacher in Brandon, Vermont, and persuaded her to join them. The trio dubbed themselves the "Three Musketeers" and left Williamstown, Massachusetts on July 25, 1927. They arrived at the Canadian line 32 days later on August 25.

The three women were young and inexperienced. Catherine was 25, Hilda was 24, and Kathleen was just 18. Kathleen Norris was the only member of the Green Mountain Club in the party. Her experience consisted of just a few short hikes on the trail with her father. She and Hilda Kurth made one training hike in Schenectady before they embarked on the Long Trail. They drove several miles out of town, parked the car, and walked back home to test their equipment. Robbins made no special efforts to prepare her body for the trip. "I was a farm girl," she said. "We didn't have to 'get in shape'."²¹

²⁰"'Three Musketeers' Make 300-Mile Trip over the Long Trail in 30 Days," Burlington Free Press 5 Sept. 1927.

²¹Catherine Robbins Clifford interview.

The women did make special efforts to organize their provisions. In order to keep the weight of their packs under twenty pounds, they cached goods at shelters along the trail before they started out, and had supplies mailed to post offices along their route ahead of them.

The Three Musketeers encountered the Green Mountains' inevitable rain, mud, mosquitoes, black flies and porcupines. But the trip had many highlights. Hilda carried a ukelele with her. She struck up a tune and the trio sang songs whenever spirits lagged. They enjoyed the spectacular views from Mount Mansfield and Jay Peak. One morning the women looked up and saw a plane fly overhead with Spirit of Saint Louis painted on its side. Charles Lindbergh was on his way to Vermont for an air show that day. At Hazen's Notch, just a few miles from the Canadian border, Harold French, a member of the Vermont State Chamber of Commerce, greeted them on the trail. He brought with him a photographer from the Boston Globe and a gallon of ice cream. Hilda Kurth wrote, "Never shall I forget the thrill and satisfaction of the gallon of ice cream in Hazen's Notch."²² Members of the Chamber of Commerce met the Three Musketeers at the Canadian Border and treated them to a steak dinner that evening.

James P. Taylor prompted the Chamber of Commerce's interest in the Three Musketeers. As the Chamber's secretary, Taylor saw the Long Trail as an excellent tourist attraction for Vermont and

²²Hilda Kurth Martin, letter to Harold French, 23 Nov. 1927, Green Mountain Club Archives, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, VT.

eagerly promoted any activity that drew attention to it. Kathleen Norris wrote to Taylor from the trail on August 20, "It is very kind of you to be so interested in our trip. We received so much discouragement at first."²³

The publicity the Three Musketeers secured for the Long Trail made them the darlings of the Green Mountain Club. Appleby was perhaps justifiably miffed. He wrote to the Long Trail News, "You didn't question or criticise [sic] the girls for just one good reason, because they were girls, young, pretty, popular, and unusual."²⁴ Appleby was no poor sport. He took the women out to dinner after they returned from the trail.

Word of the Three Musketeers' journey brought in hundreds of inquiries from hikers interested in becoming members or hiking the Long Trail from end to end. Kathleen Norris, Hilda Kurth, and Catherine Robbins spoke at the club's annual meeting in 1928 and gave accounts of their trip. The club invited them to its 21st anniversary celebration in 1931. Hilda announced she had married and was Mrs. Hilda Kurth Martin. She and her husband spent their honeymoon on the trail.

The Three Musketeers opened the doors for many female end-to-enders after 1927. In 1929 Teresa Folin, Frances Lane, and Olive and Agnes Watkins hiked the entire trail from Williamstown to the Canadian Border. The four women calculated they hiked 285

²³Kathleen Norris, letter to James P. Taylor, 20 Aug. 1927. Green Mountain Club Archives, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, VT.

²⁴Long Trail News April 1928: 2.

miles, including side trips in 29 days and 15 minutes. They did not see another hiker on the trail until they reached Montclair Glen Lodge on Camel's Hump, over 160 miles into their trip.

A third female party hiked the trail in 1933. Marion Urie and Lucile Pelsue planned their outing for over a year. While students at the University of Vermont they made several short trips on the Long Trail. They decided to hike the entire path after spending a weekend at Taylor Lodge in Nebraska Notch in 1932. Urie and Pelsue enlisted the help of Irving Appleby, who counseled them on the equipment and clothing they should bring.

The next summer the pair set out and hiked the trail in 28 days. Unlike their predecessors, Marion V. Urie and Lucile Pelsue completed the journey from north to south. Urie reported in the Vermonter that she and Pelsue were the second known party of women to hike the trail. Apparently, she had not heard of the Watkins' adventures four year earlier.

In 1939, a party of three Burlington high school seniors attempted the trail. Erika Heininger and Mary Smith, both 17 years old, and Natalie Beal, 16, started on June 25 and spent seven weeks hiking the trail from Williamstown to Canada. There were two separate occasions when only two of the girls hiked. Mary sprained her ankle and recuperated at home for a week before she rejoined her partners. Erika suffered from sore feet, and rested at home for several days while her companions hiked north. Thus, Natalie Beal was the only one to finish the entire trail. The girls' parents met up with them each Sunday and brought them

fresh supplies of food and clothing.

Erika, Mary and Natalie received more outside assistance than previous end-to-end hikers. They demonstrated that with enough logistical planning, anyone could hike the trail. Hundreds of women traveled the entire Long Trail after these early parties traversed its length. Female end-to-enders were so common they received just brief mention in their local papers instead of the nation-wide coverage of the Three Musketeers.

Conclusion

Women went from a rarity on the trails to an integral part of Vermont's hiking community in under thirty years. Whether they set out as adventurers or agents of social change, they helped dispel myths about women's capacity in the mountains. By the late 1930's, women participated in all facets of the Green Mountain Club. They hiked trails, ran meetings, built shelters, and led outings. The women who used and maintained the Long Trail after these early years had the Green Mountain Club and ladies like Laura Cowles, Laura Woodward, and the Three Musketeers to thank for paving their way.

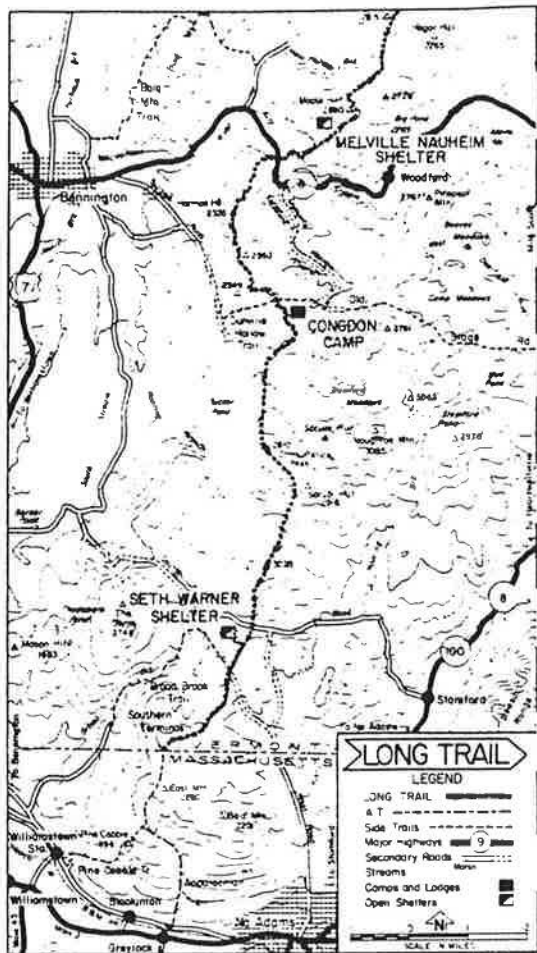
Epilogue

The 1930's also foreshadowed the end of an era for both women and men in the Green Mountain Club. Interest in the Green Mountain Club was on the wane. After 1931, when the trail was officially blazed from Williamstown to Line Post 592 at the

Canadian Border, the Club's task switched from creating the trail to maintaining it. Many gradually found trail maintenance a tedious chore. In 1937, a number of hikers set their sights on the newly completed Appalachian Trail, a 2100-mile path from Georgia to Maine. By 1940, many members forgot about mountaineering and focussed their attentions on the war in Europe instead.

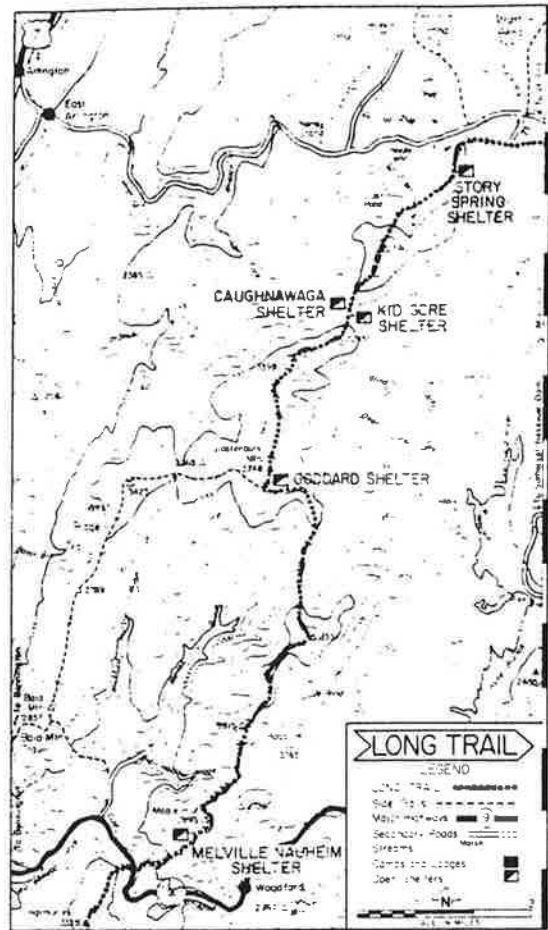
The Green Mountain Club and the trail fell into decline after 1940. Membership dropped, unattended sections of the trail disappeared under overgrown nettles and fallen logs, and shelters fell into disrepair. It was not until the hiking boom of the 1960's that the Green Mountain Club regained the popularity of its first thirty years.

Massachusetts-Vermont State Line to
Bennington-Brattleboro Hwy., Vt. 9



MAP FOR DIVISION III

Bennington-Brattleboro Hwy., Vt. 9, to
Arlington-West Wardsboro Road

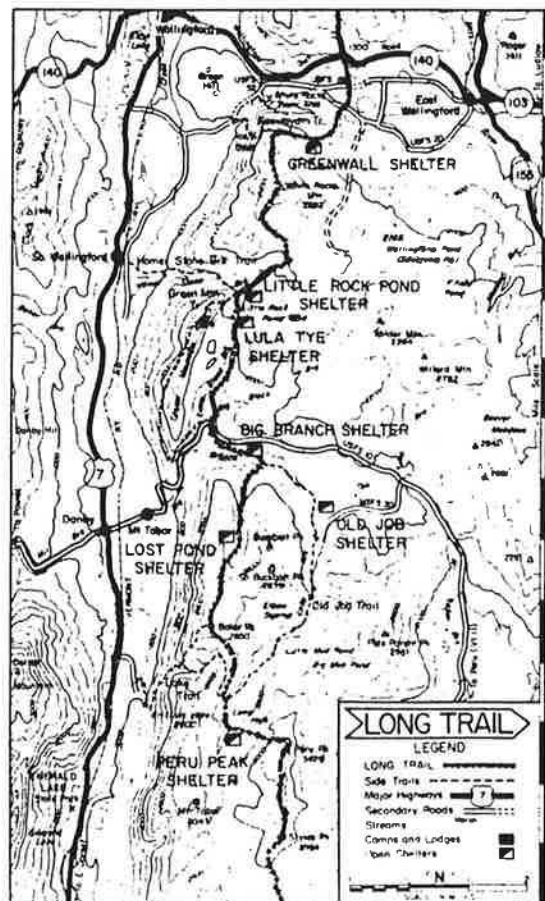


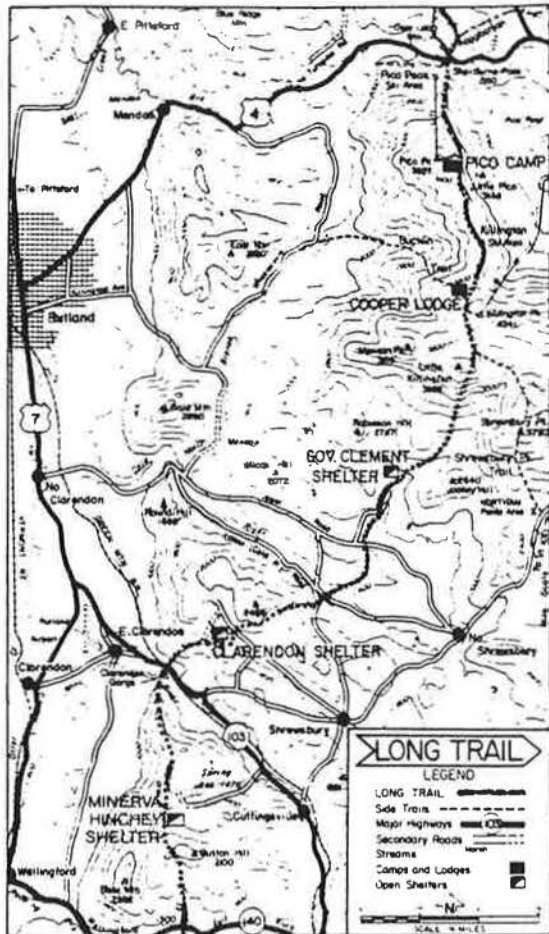
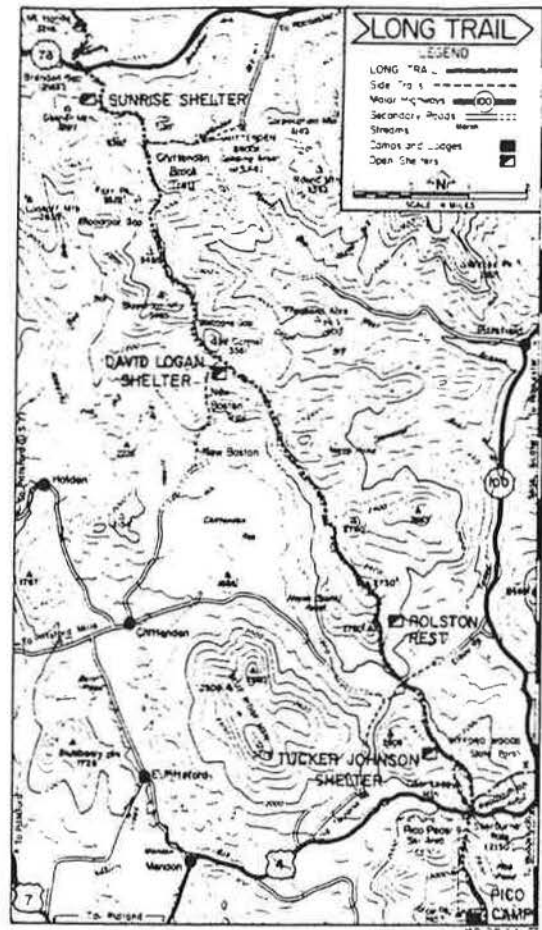
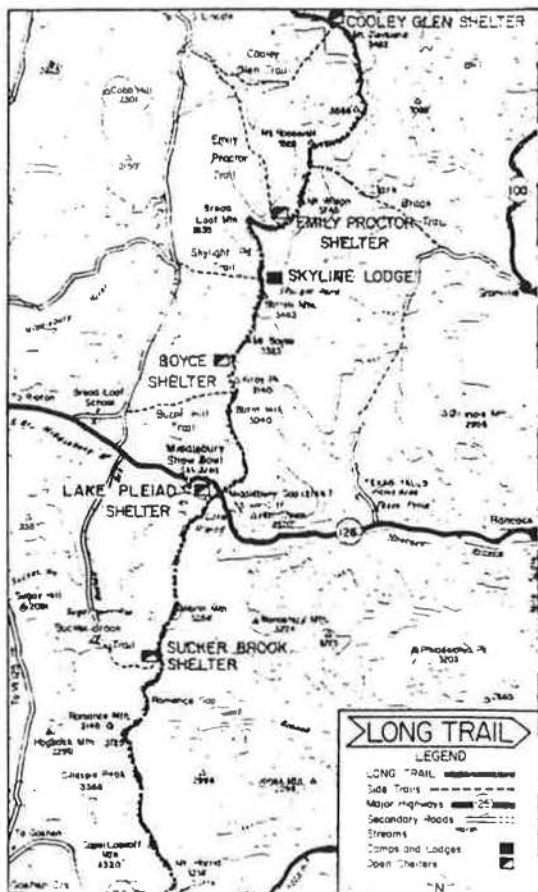
MAP FOR DIVISION IV

Arlington-West Wardsboro Road to
Mad Tom Notch



Mad Tom Notch to
Wallingford Gulf Road, Vt. 140



Wallingford Gulf Road, Vt. 140, to
Sherburne Pass, US 4

Sherburne Pass, US 4, to
Brandon Gap, Vt. 73

Brandon Gap, Vt. 73, to
Cooley Glen Shelter

Cooley Glen Shelter to
Birch Glen Camp
