

“Green Mountain Chronicles”
Oral History Transcriptions, 1981-1989 (bulk: 1987-1988)
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Introduction

This transcription is one of approximately 42 transcriptions of interviews with individuals conducted primarily in 1987 and 1988 in preparation for a radio program sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society entitled “Green Mountain Chronicles.”

John T. Cowles
Part 2

on when visitors had been through. The Professor, by the way, had um, spring water piped right into his house right off the mountain, and um, he had um, people who were willing enough and kind enough to bring him the necessities of food and so on from Waterbury usually on up through using the River Road or from Jonesville. There wasn't much of a store there then at Jonesville as there is now. So we'd, father and I, would always take up um, food to him and father would, on occasion, join the Professor in some trail work. But father was usually too busy on Mansfield to go over and do much on Couching Lion of the trail building that was generally supervised by the old professor, Willis Munroe. Munroe had a bandanna, red bandanna, so he was easily seen and he um, wore nickers, woolen nickers. You wear them year round. Father always did because there's durable um, and there're warm when there're wet, you know, there're not like um, nylon. They make you too hot or like cotton and polyester that make you freeze to death. They literally, you can freeze to death in polyester if it gets wet and the wind comes up. Well, anyway, um, one summer the old professor was up with a bunch of people doing some very difficult trail work out toward, actually um, Lincoln Mountain. They were down in the region um, well, there's a um, Breadloaf Mountain and then north of that, you know, as you come up through um, by Birch Glenn and Mount Claire Glenn you get to the summit of Couching Lion. So he was south of the Lion working on the trail in roughly the region of Breadloaf Mountain which now has still a big swing of the trail out westward so that, I guess if you knew how to, you could shortcut. But no honest person would ever shortcut. The Long Trail is too enjoyable cause you go out around that big swing on Breadloaf out toward Middlebury and um, you can get the views of the valley. And the Professor was very fond of that region because he was a Professor of English and he often taught at the Middlebury Summer School. The University of Middlebury College had its English Conferences and its summer sessions there and Professor Munroe was a very apt teacher, of course. And he spoke with something of an English accent, by the way. I love to hear him tell stories. He went out with the trail building crew along the ridges there and um, he was not um, keen of vision, by the way. He always had to wear glasses both reading or um, for distance. So he wore glasses when he was hiking. He never wore a protective mask or anything like it. A bandanna and glasses and um, blue shirt and woolen trousers and that was about the way the Professor walked. And always woolen long stockings and sturdy boots. Well, the Professor got lost. He fell off the trail and the others weren't near him and you know nobody knew how to find that man because they were moving at separate points maybe a half a mile apart on this rugged trail and the Professor just

disappeared. Well, that was late in the afternoon and I can remember um, somebody came away from the scene and called my father knowing he knew the mountains and knew the trails and said, "Judge Cowles, do you know the Professor's lost?" I can remember father answering the phone saying, "the Professor lost, it couldn't be. That man knows the trails like his own hand. It couldn't be." They said, "well, he's gone. We don't know where he is." Well father went up the mountain, to the mountain the next day and took his family with him. I remember going up there with him and we waited at the car down in Hanksville um, under the lee of a tin roof shed, it was rusty as a shed could be and um, hovered into that old shed and we too stayed overnight waiting for father who searched for the mountain man and didn't find him and this was the second night so he came up and down the trail father hollered. Father had a way of hollering in the mountains that was unmistakeable, Cowles' holler, and the Professor knew it. Well, you know, pretty soon after um, he started his hollering he decided that was kind of hopeless if the man didn't answer. He thought maybe the poor Professor did pass out, did actually pass away. He was along in years then. He must have been in his 60's at least. So he suddenly stopped hollering and listened. That was a pretty smart thing to do. He heard a faint sound of the Professor hoo hooing back. A very faint sound. Oh father walked and rambled and went off the trail, even stumbled over some logs and so on and finally found the old Professor. He had lost his glasses, falling over a log and his glasses had fallen away from him and he couldn't find them anywhere. So the Professor had no way of walking in the dark or the dusk and he'd apparently was in such a position he couldn't get himself up easily. So the old Professor was generally lost and would not have been found if my father hadn't heard the Professor's type of call in response to his type pf call. It was quite an interesting little thing. Um, these other people apparently hadn't hit this place quite the way father had, my father had. So he was very grateful and so was the Professor for having saved the old Professor at a point where he'd had been lost for all time on the side of a mountain. But um, you remember the shock to this family and going all the way out to Hanksville and staying there um, overnight while father did um, a day and a half of searching for this old Professor who'd already been out there for an overnight and um, didn't get any response until just that last bit. Father had come down um, off the mountain as a matter-of-fact on that first night with us um, and said "no, I can't find him. He's, he's we cannot find him at all." So he went up the next morning and said, "I'm going to find that Professor."

So he went Professor chasing (laughter) the next day and then came roaring down the trail, I can remember, about noontime that second day. He came down and said, "how we found the Professor" and he was yelling it way up the trail out of sight from us even as he came down from the Notch there um, let's see, I can't remember just what Notch it was that comes down to Hanksville but um, anyway he came down through roaring this successful expedition to find the old Professor.

MK: It's a great story.

JC: Yeah, but now we must say one thing more about the interest of the mountain --

1 John T. Cowles
April 3, 1987

Interviewer
Mary Kasamatsu

JC We must say one thing more about the interest of the mountains to people that can. This is part of the Long Trail. There are certain birds up there everybody should know and I am sure they don't. They won't hear them if they go up there noisily. You want to go quietly through the mountains if you want to see wildlife or hear it. There are two birds that are very much the favorite on Mansfield in particular. It would be the White Throated Sparrow which summers up there. It doesn't stay there very late. It comes through Burlington on its migratory route in spring and fall as it is returning from the mountains. We hear the tired bird in the fall coming through here singing a song that is not quite the clearest sharp beautiful tones of the White Throated Sparrow that you hear in the mountain top. You rarely see it. It is a very shy bird. That's again a good reason for people not being too talkative. Don't go up in large groups. Never go with less than two companions, ever on the trail, because if something happens at least two can carry the one who is incapacitated, but you don't want too many people. You will overload the ~~shelters~~ ^{bather} in shelters and all that kind of thing. I am a ~~fan of~~ going with minimum equipment and a maximum of care and consideration of the trail and its residents around you. The White Throated Sparrow is the clear call you hear almost invariably in the Green Mountains of this region, this latitude near Burlington. There is another one. There is the Hermit Thrush. Now the Hermit Thrush is more widespread on the mountains here and the Appalachian Trail. You hear the toehee the entire length of the Appalachian Trail. You will see it in Pennsylvania hopping along the trail in front of you in the spring time. The toehee looks like a Robin and sounds a bit like one. It has a chirp. Chirp, Chirp, Chirp, you know. It is quite a Robin like call and you think oh there must be a Robin up here. You may not see the toehee. They are hard to see, these birds. A Big Nose Thrush and some others are rare birds on the mountain, but it takes an expert, a real ornithologist to locate some of the rare birds of all birdlife and see them in the mountains. You don't see them easily. Recently of course, we have Wild Turkey imports into the Green Mountains which seems kind of strange. We also have of course now the Mockingbird here in the lowlands around Burlington. We have a favorite that comes back every summer and sings to us. We know it is the same bird by the way he sits in the same places, he sings the same songs and so on. Sometimes the variation he has

learned on the sojourn south. But the bird that I want to mention now that is another reason for the Long Trail, I am sure, is to look for the Hawks and look for the Ravens as well as the rare ferns, if you can learn them. You got to learn the ferns from someone who knows them and knows where to look for them. Ferns grow in certain places only. The Brauns Holly, if you know where to look for it, you'll find it. Like the luminous moss for example, which I have found repeatedly for people. It is a very rare moss. Shastastagas Madacia. You would never find it if you went out looking for it. You got to know where it exists and then look in those places and then you might see it. It is found quite commonly in the White Mountains in the Lost River Region. It is found in the Green Mountains much more than you would believe to exist and it is considered terribly rare. It is rare in terms of total extinct. But these Ravens now. There is quite a cluster of them. I think something like eight or nine that nest up in the upper region.

S. ■■■ The ranger said there were seven.

JC Seven. I am corrected by my friend here. The Ravens are a really interesting bird. They don't like human beings particularly. But they are tame enough where if you sit on the top of Mansfield, they will come and perch near you looking for scraps of food, crumbs would be the appropriate thing I guess. One of the exciting things that happened to me and my companion on the way up the mountain on the Cowles Trail which I should tell more about I guess, was to have the Ravens dive at you. They drop very quickly with their wings closed and then they will spread them out and come up with a sudden swerve upward like an airplane doing that terrible multiple G turn in a loop over the ground with very little ground beneath them. But these Ravens will dive down for potential prey, I guess, and you aren't aware of them until suddenly this swish and there goes that bird soaring up beyond you. It is really a very exciting experience when the Raven comes to look you over as you walk up the say the Cowles Trail on Mt. Mansfield. ~~Refa~~ here "To See" had that happen and we have never forgotton the excitement and fright a bit, the pleasure of that rare event of a couple of Ravens diving at us. It is at a tremendous speed and they are huge birds you know. They are twice the size of a Crow. They look enormous. You can get pictures of them quite easily if you are a good photographer. I have taken

several without a telephoto. Just wait until they are pretty close to you and then follow them with your camera so that you don't get motion of the bird across your lens.

MK You have touched on a number of things I wanted to ask you about. In talking about the use of the trail and the mountains for skiing in the winter. This was new. Vermonters did realize, and I talked with someone some weeks ago that had an experience of having a fellowship in Sweden when he was in college and had discovered in Sweden the pleasures of hiking in the woods, but being able to ski in the woods! Was [redacted] what the Green Mountain Club active in trying to promote skiing as a [redacted] sport?

JC You would be surprised. No. The answer is no. The Green Mountain Club was a summertime thing. My father was one of the very few who endeavored to go into the mountains in the wintertime. It was all snow shoes for my father. It was only after I had gone away to school and learned cross-country skiing is the thing and through the woods without a trail. You have to have the right skis. Now the current so-called cross country skis are really a little narrow gage racing skis with turned up tips and they aren't really good for off trail skiing. You have to have a prepared trail, like the Von Trapp Lodge has a ski center for the cross-country skiers. A lovely set of trails and there is one over here on the side of Couching Lion down in the Richmond area. But at any rate. The kind of skiing that I know and noone in Burlington - ? much around here would join me. It would be an import like the German colleague that came up here one winter and he went snowshoeing up the side of Mansfield one weekend and he went skiing with me to the top of Couching Lion on the other weekend. He didn't like it because it wasn't open enough to do the great shucking - . you can do off the alps with no obstruction. These trees were something he hadn't encountered before. But you know, you have to have the right skis. I have five pair of skis and I still ski. I am proud of what I would call general skiing. I have done the downhill thing with everybody around you, crossing your skis and ruining them. People being taken off the slopes with broken legs and lazily being

hoisted up to the top of the mountain just for the downhill ride. I don't go for that kind of thing. I feel that there are enough places where you can enjoy skiing either on the level or on a steep slope through the trees and through the woods or on a wood road or a snow covered side road as you do say up North Duxbury way. You can ski up there without great effort using your poles to help you on the way up the Herringboning and you can come down pushing yourself with the ski poles, skating as you go and enjoy life without all the fanfair of fees and lifts, people and whatelse. Believe me, there is nothing like skiing where there is no prepared trail. I'll tell you the time I went up Couching Lion. Well I have been up there a couple of times on skis. You follow the trail. It is a good idea to know where it is and know what the distances are, because you go very much slower than you ever would in the summertime. When you get near the summit, where it is rocky, you take your skis off of course and walk with your ski poles as they assist. I took my German friend up there. We went all the way up to what used to be what we call them tin huts. The foresters huts on the little plateau just before the final summit of Couching Lion. We walked from there up. To get the view from the top of the mountain. It is an awfully nice time to be up on top of the mountain, because the atmosphere is so clear. You can get these beautiful pictures of clouds and distances mean nothing to a good camera. I took my Retna, the 3C or the 3S, which is a compact little camera. I took some gorgeous slides. You should see my slide color photos from the top of these mountains. My father was not a photographer. Taylor was. Monroe was not. But color photography made now that additional attraction for the mountains. I have slides of my entire Appalachian Trail hike, all the way from back to Peak to Mt. Contadan down to the terminus of the trail in Georgia. Interesting pictures some I missed of the rattlesnakes and things like that. You are too busy thinking about where that rattlesnake is to get out your camera to fumble a picture.

MK Keep one eye on the rattlesnake.

JC Now snowshoes, there are some beliefs about snowshoes that ought to be mentioned. There is the wide one, which is the common one. My father liked the so called bear paw. They have no tail. It's a oval shaped snowshoe, wider at the front end where your foot is. Then there is another kind. I think they call it the trappers snowshoe

or they have fancy names. You can get them now with nylon. I prefer them with the regular rawhide rigging. The rawhide and leather bindings is better than what you get now. They have them now built even where they have spikes underneath so that you can go on ice and not slip. You can add them to your snowshoe. I have a set of those, clamp-ons they call them, but I don't use them. I think for your mountain climbing, the bear paw is still the best, because the tail of the snowshoe is a nuisance when it gets between trees and when you want to take a quick turn. Believe me, when you are in the mountains with balsam trees around you, you don't have much negotiating distance and skis are hopeless of course on that kind of terrain. So you pick a mountain trail for skis, but for getting really off the trail, I don't mean a ski trail, I mean off a regular backpackers trail, you want snowshoes certainly because you make better headway going upward too of course. Each step counts where with skis, you either have to have the skins or you have to have poles or herringbone or something like that. The mountains are accomplished with snowshoes when they are up in the upper reaches. It is getting late.

MK You have ???

JC I have time, sure. Now I can expand on anything that you think might be the attractive thing. I haven't said much about the Cowles Trail. I would kind of like to because that is one of my father's pets. He is a Latin Scholar. And he put Latin on that trail.

MK Let's come back to that. There are a couple of things I wanted to ask you before I forget about them. One of the things I wanted to get into a little bit, do you have any stories that you can tell about the Green Mountain Parkway?

JC The concept of the mountain road?

MK The idea from the reading that I have done, it obviously was a hot issue.

JC Controversial.

MK The Green Mountain Club took a stand largely against the Green Mountain Parkway.

JC Well their parkways now, excellent parkways, both through the Shenandoahs, Smokies and the Jefferson National Forest. I have hiked along with them, you

don't walk on them. Of course, you cross them or you go beneath them. Hikers generally don't care for seeing something like that, especially in a small state like Vermont. You see, you start chopping up our mountains with ski runs, that is bad enough. They have kept them out of sight of Burlington for the most part. They got now legislative prohibition of ski runs on a number of our mountains, certainly on the Couching Lion. I don't think they will be building more on Mansfield for awhile, but my goodness what they have done down there in Killington and Pico, they have spoiled those peaks completely with the lifts. They have made so much vandalism possible by summer visitors, just ride up and then they see a hikers lodge, they don't care what it means to hikers. I can remember that the 96 glass panes of windows in Cooper Lodge, that was a beautiful rock lodge near the summit of Killington, were knocked out at least twice in succession after being replaced at great labor by volunteer. Most of our work in the mountains is done by volunteer help and volunteer payment. The Green Mountain Club is well upheld to handle normal hiking needs, but not the repeated vandalism of burning down shelters and all that. So I don't think with the existing Long Trail, we would ever want a roadway that in any way came near it. Right now, it is bad enough to have a Gondola lift go up. To me, in one of the rarest parts of Mt. Mansfield within walking distance of Taft Lodge which is still standing. It is a miracle really that that lodge has not been burned down by vandals because they can plow through the woods there if they wanted to, but I think most people riding the lifts in the summertime are up for the view and thank goodness are lazy enough not to want to do a lot of hiking at the same time, because hikers by definition are going to walk up the mountain and have a sense of achievement as well as to enjoy the advantages and beauties of the mountain. I think that the Green Mountain Club, almost to a person, would say let's not have a roadway that in any way that parallel or comes within easy reach of the Long Trail. Now let's have a roadway if you want to over on the Worcester Range, which I don't mind seeing people put trails on it, even objecting to some of that. I would say sure let's get diversionary trails where the mobs that go up and down the Long Trail where the legitimate hikers find too many people sometimes. The White Mountains are pretty bad. I was up there in the high region of the White Mountains doing the entire trail as a long distance hiker and you earn your right to be up

21

there so to speak, by doing it seriously. Then you meet crowd after crowd of people who have advance reservations in those shelters. Believe me, I never use those shelters on the Appalachian trail purposely because there were nests of people who came up for the afternoon and evening and bring their beer with them and their dogs and their cats or their nuisances. They would ride up on horses down in the Virginia region and legitimate hikers couldn't use the shelters anyway. The litter and then the bears, the porcupines up here in Vermont. You find the porcupines mostly are around the shelters where people have littered. The Long Trail is being preserved with great labor to be a hikers trail even with those who come up during the day only. They are still hikers. But for the people who come up by car up the toll road or come up by a highway that in any way runs along the ridges of Vermont, I think we would all to a person say no, they can't exist simultaneously. They cannot co-exist. There purposes are totally different. It is bad enough to have snowmobiles that you encounter sometimes on the trails. Or, as I did down from Pennsylvania southward on the Appalachian Trail, you find people bike riding and ruining the trail literally. They short cut on the zig-zags meant for the hikers. They come straight down and of course destroy all the water diversionary effort of the park system and we have a very rigid law against any kind of motor vehicle going on the Appalachian Trail and I believe it is extended not only to the Appalachian Trail portion of the Long Trail which is all the way from Massachusetts up to the notch there at Pico, just north of Pico. The name escapes me. There used to be a lodge there. The Green Mountain Club had a lodge there and it was maintained as a commercial venture. What is the name of that turnoff where the Appalachian Trail turns east. About 100 miles north of Massachusetts. I will think of it shortly. Just north of Pico Peak. No, I think wherever they have experimented, it is bad enough now to get the Appalachian Trail a location free from necessary roadway hiking, because sometimes especially in the State of Virginia, the landowners are blocking the trail because too many people use it for the wrong purpose. I have seen signs up that say "This is no longer the Appalachian Trail. Hikers forbidden", or something like that. Well, you just go ahead at your own risk knowing that the owner might have a shotgun, because he means it. He doesn't want anybody out there. He has had his land spoiled or his livestock threatened or killed and so on. The non-hikers have

done some very real damage along the Appalachian Trail. They have had great difficulty relocating many miles at a great expense.

MK Has there been the same degree of problems in Vermont?

JC Vermont is getting it. I am of a new spirit. I am a little ahead of the Green Mountain Club in saying they should discontinue the Green Mountain Clubs Long Trail as a total Massachusetts to Canada venture. Everything from Killington Peak north should be abandoned as a trail because it is not of interest to most hikers except to go to Canada, circle the post 592, and come back into North Troy and say ~~they've done~~ the entire trail. They can make that trail to Jay Peak or ~~buses~~. That is good enough. Because they have trails all over there. They are developing it and there are landowners north of Jay Peak that are going to block the trail for certain. It would be very hard to get easements without a great expense and with the risk of liability. The club doesn't like to, but they are going to have to assume liability for damage by hikers. The hikers can't be found.

MK That is the worst stretch between ???

JC That would be the hardest stretch to get away from the landowners. The lumber companies that owned a lot of the land. University of Vermont owns the top of Mt. Mansfield and it has been very good about preserving it as a public parkway you might say for people on foot. The University of Vermont is interested in it for ecological studies for their students and the geology of the mountain is very very interesting. I am not a geologist~~s~~, but I have listened to the former state geologist here describe the geology of Mansfield. When I was the caretaker up there, he came up and visited me. I will tell you that that was quite an experience to know about the foliated shift and the glacial effects and the rare glacial rocks on top of the mountain. They are perched there only because the glacier took them there. I have some in my front yard, because Lake Champlain was a glacial terrain at one time.

S. ~~■~~ How about the first person who found ^{controversy} ~~sandstone~~ rock?

JC That is another one of the many little myths. I wish I could somehow dissuade people from thinking for example that Jim Taylor never had a car. Of course he did. He called his Model T Ford a Chariot of Democracy. He had a name for everything. He insisted that you always ride with the top down. Because in those days, you never had hard top sedans. There

wasn't such a thing. Now people are going to these sun view tops. Tops that you can slide back and enjoy the breezes and the sunshine. In those days, it was always a folding rubberized cloth top on ribs that you could fold back. And Taylor, I don't think I ever saw him with that top up except in the rare occasion when he would take a family in their good clothes and he'd stop inside a covered bridge and put up the top and put down the side curtains as they were called. They had these little twisted snaps, like buckles on an overshoe. Taylor insisted that everybody should drive with the top down. Because you can't see the mountains of course that is the reason. You couldn't go up Smugglers Notch and see the mountains without stopping and getting out of the car all the time if you road in a ordinary car, so he was a devotee of enjoying the scenery with a car with a top down in his Chariot of Democracy. By the way, some of his photographic stuff is interesting too. Taylor made me the speaker of some of the themes of Food Will Win the War, save it, don't waste it. When Herbert Hoover was the head of the Food Administration during World War I, boy I was a youngster then and liked to make speeches. I was making speeches in school and Taylor came along and he was my inspiration. After all, he would come out and really put on quite a speech for us to hear and when he didn't think we were listening, he would be practicing what he was going to tell the governor or some club. He got the idea of photographing me giving speeches about Food Will Win the War, don't waste it, for the benefit of the Food Administration. Well then wouldn't you know, before I knew it, he had made up a brochure, a large brown covered thing, I still have one, with a corded tie for its binding and he had the Lane Press do their best. He sent a copy of this brochure, I think he must have had two excellent copies, I consider it very very rare, I have one and I wouldn't give it away until I know where it is going to be, like the Vermont Historical Society. I think you should have it, not the Fleming Museum or the Wilbur Collection up in the Daily Howe Library. I have given them quite a lot, but that is one that is for Vermont. He sent it to Herbert Hoover who was head of the Food Administration then before he became president. Hoover right after World War I was head of the relief for the European countries that had been devastated by war, the food relief particularly. Then of course, Hoover Dam was built and I guess its name was changed to something else, Boulder Dam. But it is too bad, Hoover's name wasn't preserved there. So I have very strong feelings about the World War experiences that Taylor participated in. He was great on parades and all that kind of thing and picnics. We would take him on picnics down the little trolley that

used to go across the fields past Red Rocks down to Quincy Park you know where he had held his canoe. Another thing about Taylor apart from his talks to the four clubs, he was not a botanist. He tolerated father talking about the rare ferns. But he and father were very keen on classical learning. So when father built the Cowles Trail, he identified many of its natural features with little mottos and signs that he put up. Very modest little signs with his college colors, black lettering on orange for the Orange and Black of Princeton colors. He had a favorite minister in town, Percy Chandler Ladd of the College Street Church where many of our friends hovered that were interested in the mountains. The professors of the university seemed to be quite fond of Isaac Tipman Smart the minister there and later Percy C. Ladd tried to carry on that tradition of thoughtful learned sermons. I didn't think he was quite up to Smart. Dolly Smart by the way was one of the great features of the Green Mountain Club. The ministers daughter. She was out there hiking with all the rest of us. Our dentist, George Partridge and his family were great hikers. Sue Howard and her twin daughters and all. We had a lot of friends up and down the streets here ??? that I can see the homes of now were great mountain people. They would go out on outings at the drop of a hat. We would go out into to East Woods, we called it, before it came a development of houses down here towards the city limits and Holt's Woods. That was our favorite place. We all went out in Holt's Woods all the time, long before any golf courses out there. Holt was a publisher you know. Henry Holt. He would come out here to our house. He bought honey from me when I had a little table set out here at the end of the front walk. We kept bees and chickens, sheep. We had quite a little farm here and father was basically a farmer. He knew all these things more or less automatically. We kept the Horn Dorset sheep and you would get them from Holt's estate. We had quite a bit of scenery here. Father's garden was again like a golf course to him and it kept him in great shape for the mountains. He could hike up mountains anytime. He could spade a garden and do the whole plot in a day and think nothing of it. Well the scenic views along the Cowles Trail really should be mentioned. There are waterfalls, fern grattos, there are some dangerous places too. But I will never forget the one where I wish I had the sign. Some vandals stole it. It was a quotation from Virgil. Virgil Aeneas was one of the father's favorite reading in college and he had to learn Latin and Greek before he even got there. I remember he had to learn two years of Greek before they would admit him. They didn't give Greek up in St. Johnsbury. He somehow crammed Greek during the summer before entrance and passed the exam orally, I guess it, was, from the president

of the institution [REDACTED] and was admitted to Princeton without condition after having completed these requirements. He read Latin for pleasure. Father named a few things in good English of course. Like the lunch log which finally started disintegrating in the weather. That trail went near some very very old logging of virgin timber, when the trees were least two or three feet in diameter. Those big logs were up there and sometimes he and I in building a trail would have to cut through one of those logs. They were pretty well disintegrated by the time we were building the trail. The trail was built in 1930 - 1931 when I was caretaker up Taft Lodge. Father and I really built that trail all the way up through and located it. It takes you past caves with snow and ice way into the summer and they are lovely little ranges up through there. [REDACTED] Taft shared it with me. You would go up to a head wall for example. There is ice up there in late May or June even. Then you have to be very careful tentacles to go across the ledge to go on up from there or you can take a diversionary side trip. We built a bypass for the people that don't want to risk going up on that little foot hole of the ledge. My father had lunch log, he had a field of ferns and he used to name the ferns. Aspidium, it was the very common fern.

S. [REDACTED] The one you showed me. Wood spinows —

JC Spidimulosa. He would put up the Latin name always. He wouldn't put up the common name. The lunch log, yes. He didn't have a Latin word for that. Well one place where the trail fell off and he fell off one time coming down after doing some trail work. It was moss covered or leaf covered and the brook was right down there below you about 8 or 10 feet. He slipped and fell down in there and didn't get hurt. Well he had a name for that. There is a phrase in Virgil, I won't give the Latin, but at any rate, the decent into hell is easy. [REDACTED] is the way he had it on the sign. That is the way Virgil has it in one of the later books. Another one he put up which I think is one of the choice ones is the Latin for "Perhaps Some Day It Will Please You To Have Remembered These Things". It is a lot labor hiking and you may get hurt even, but " [REDACTED]" would be the Latin and my father would quote that now and then to me as we hike up the trail and would think we were in desperate straits when we really weren't. Perhaps someday it will please you to have remembered these things. Haa! Haa! That is the way I feel when I am talking to you, Mary. It pleases me to rehearse some

of these memories and I have a load of them here. If you wanted to come back, I could get a little bit better organized.

MK I would like to. I realize I am only scratching the surface.

JC Some of fathers early adventures on the mountain scouting out the trail.

MK Tell me about that a little bit. What is involved in building a trail?

JC The first thing you do is to get a pretty clear image on map and you use the geodetic survey maps of the U.S. Government. I have the USGS maps here for the entire Long Trail. I don't know who is going to get them some day. You can get them in greatly amplified form for certain regions. For example, for Mt. Mansfield to get down to a very large scale map where you can see practically every rock. You can see every house that is built around the place as of say 1940 or somewhere along in there. They are not new. They don't do them over except by photographic aerial photogrammetry. I used to do aerial photography myself and I know it is the easy way to do things. We have aerial photographs of Burlington. ~~This~~ is the best way to see where your property lines are. The assessors have in their office a illuminated underneath and you can see exactly where your line is and where they got that last dollar of tax. I mean it is true that aerial photography takes place of that. But it doesn't help you on hiking. You need to know the gradients you see. So these USGS maps tell you where the steep places are, because the little lines, the contour lines which say are at a 20 ft. interval are very close together. While going down into the notch, they are so jammed together it is like a solid black, whereas on the level on the highway approaches those little gradient lines are so far apart that you can see the green of the map to read them. Well you take a geodetic map with you and a compass. You have to have a compass. You never need a compass on a trail. I never carried one on the Appalachian Trail through 2,060 miles of unknown trail. I never carried a compass because you follow those blazes or you don't go period. There is no way around it. You have got to follow the trail. Not just for courtesy or for sticking with the rocks. You would get terribly lost even with a compass because the trail doesn't go straight south or straight where you

think it is going. But up in this countryside of our Green Mountains where most of the high mountains are treed almost to the summits. There are very few mountains that have a bare top where you could see where you are going. So that is easy. You blaze the rocks of course. You put a white blaze in a red circle, so you don't mistake it from the white of the feldspar or the crystals of the granite and so on. The next thing after scouting out the trail according to what the dequivities are where you think a trail is reasonable, then you actually plunge through the woods and blaze without cutting much at all except where you have to get through sometimes thickets of balsam with intertwined trees. You can spend an hour going I mean about 500 feet. You can spend a long time going a relatively short distance. So when father was blazing a trail along the ridges from Mt. Mansfield across to the Winooski River and that takes you over the Dewey and Mayo, Bolton and some pretty difficult country all wooded to the top. The trail doesn't follow exactly the summit of the ridge even now. But you try to and you can't always find the summit either. You can't see through this thicket of trees whether the ground is higher 20 feet to your left or 20 feet to the right. It is a very difficult thing. So you have to go with a compass and watch pretty carefully the map. As you do it, you do a temporary tying of colored ribbon or you use blaze as father did. He had a full scale axe. I always hiked the Long Trail with an axe back in the days when you would actually build a fire cage. I wouldn't think of building a fire with wood from the forest. You carry a small stove. You can actually keep your light load light. You learn from experience. Scouting is first and after that is blazing and then you slab. Slabbing is where you remove the small trees and make the trail straight. As reasonably straight as you can and then you get a trail crew. You have to. You cannot go it single handed. You have a trail crew come and there are standards for trail building set up by the Appalachian Trail Conference as a matter of fact. They are easily purchased and they now have a translation of them in terms of the Green Mountain Club. They have a book on trail building I think or they can use the one from the Appalachian Trail Conference which is the umbrella group for all of the different trail clubs that share in the Appalachian Trail including the Green Mountain Club. It is one of the Appalachian Trail Conference. I am a life member of that group as well as a life member here. You have to have a trail crew because what you do is to prevent erosion as much as possible by hikers. You don't do side hill trails and they have an awful

lot of side hill ones down there near the Bennington Reservoir, the southern part of the state. I hope they have got it back up onto the ridge. Sidehill trails aren't good. Secondly, you have to sometimes avoid rocky places where they are hazardous. They really are if they are wet. The Cowles Trail has avoided the worst of it, but it cannot avoid quite a bit of fairly rocky steep stepward walking toward the upper end. Above tree line is where you get into that kind of situation and there is not much else to do but to find good footing. So your trail may zig-zag all over the place. You may go five times as far as the straight line as a crow might fly or a Raven might fly. But you have to have a trail crew to build a trail that isn't going to be eroded easily. If it is soft ground, like mossy ground or the mold and humus as father called it accumulates underneath softwood trees. The hard wood forest are the easiest for trail building because they have firm good roots. They don't rot as easily and they provide good shade and all that. You try to protect the hiker too from bad weather. There are a lot of considerations in trail building. But the Long Trail had as its primary consideration following the ridge of the mountains you see. That is a pretty good motto if you can. There is no prettier set of views than the ones from Burnt Rock Mountain, but people don't know about Burnt Rock Mountain because there is no roadway next to it. There is no, as far as I know, chairlift that takes you up there for skiing purposes and people ought to get acquainted with some of these mountains. Carmill Mountain is another lovely mountain. It had a tower that sort of rotted away. I don't know what is there now. You would have to get above the trees to see the view. But it stands out on that whole ridge of mountains for miles either way to this little Carmill Mountain. There are a lot of such mountain peaks that ought to be developed and could be. We have this 50 daytime hikes booklet here in Vermont now, published by I guess the Green Mountain Club people and others who live near these outlined mountains.

MK That was part of the effort to divert ^{people} from ??? (~~fragile areas~~).

JC Yes, that was one motive certainly. But the biggest one was I guess was because here we have mountains let's have a good trail, let's develop it well and make it accessible to people and to protect the trail. As you build a trail, you protect the trail as well as the hiker. That is awfully important consideration.

MK How close together are the blazes?

JC The blazes normally in the Green Mountains are where you can see two ahead of you or two behind you, at any point you stand. Appalachian Trail Conference has the rule of one at least, minimum of one. You can over blaze. Of course you can cut too many slabs, but the best blazes are the ones that are put on with galvanized nails. The Appalachian Trail has a square blaze right by the door on top. Do you want to bring me the slab that commemorates my hiking that trail. And the Green Mountain Club doesn't have one with its logo on it, the way the Appalachian Trail people do. This is only rarely you will see this.

S. ■ A symbol with an A and a T.

JC It identifies the main trail when you have diversion trails nearby. It reminds people that it is a trail built by its Appalachian Trail Conference. But typically, the blazes are 2" X 6" in size and they are always white. A white blaze means that's the main trail. The off trail trails are usually a blue. My father used orange, which is much better really. A light blue is the best from a psychological standpoint as I know it from experimental psychology. The light blue stays visible later in the low light of ??? sun than any other color. Did you know that? Your car would be seen when green, orange, purple or any other car would be seen. Light blue is the color that the eye is most sensitive to at low illuminations of light.

S. ■ You never got to ~~candaleva~~ rock in the original
??? Clyde Smith.

JC Oh Well!! Well Clyde Smith got his item in the Free Press first, so he is known as the discoverer of the ~~candaleva~~ rock. I want to present to you or to the Historical Society or somebody. I don't have a great deal of faith in the Green Mountain Clubs archives for some reason I don't know, I have offered them things and they had a lot of changing hands down there in Montpelier and I have never known just how they take and treasure say these rarities. Now here is a letter to me from Robert A. Doray, long since past away, this was in his last years. In May, 25, 1964 he is writing to me. My father told me that Bob Doray he called him Bob and I hiked the mountains up here with him. He was a fern lover. Bob Doray would come up here summers from Greenfield, Massachusetts, which was his home and scour the mountain sides here for

some of our rare ferns. One thing that always intrigued my father was the thought that somewhere there has to be the Brauns Holly Fern in other regions of Mansfield than where we commonly found it. We used to find it under foot by the way in certain places. You find it under foot on the north slopes of White Face Mountain which is too bad, because it is not the best place for a good fern. But it is frequent in Vermont and I don't feel it is going to get ruined because it happens to be on the trail or near the trail where people might see that is a gorgeous fern. You must come back here sometime Mary and see these ferns. The fern that this man was looking for has a crest, like a crown, a circular arrangement of ??? all of them with a little light brown fuzz on the backside of the fern coming around to the side and a deep holly green throughout the year. It is a evergreen fern. Braun is the way it is spelled, not brown like you can name all the entertainers with those names or the Baseball players. At any rate, that is I think one of the finest ferns to grow if you can and you have to make sure it is the right soil, the right amount of sunshine. It has to have quite a lot of shade and good moisture. You will not find it in open gardens. It shouldn't be attempted to grow it there. It shouldn't be taken from the mountains. The florists and the Burpee and others are now selling ferns and they are expanding their holdings so you can buy now Maidenhair ferns, for example, which is a lovely fern. It is hard to grow. I haven't yet succeeded in getting some good Maidenhairs here from purchased. I haven't dare take them from the mountain side. I know where there are some very commonly ones there, but not easy to get to. Anyway, Bob Doray writes me, May 25, 1964, to tell me his experiences and how he discovered the candaleva rock. Now that doesn't mean to say that Pringle, the great botanist or some of the lumber people didn't stumble upon it. But this man was looking for the Brauns Holly Fern for my father and wrote back to him or told him rather I guess by telephone or by direct communication here in Burlington that he had found the Brauns Holly Fern. He said Judge, I have found something else you ought to know about. A most unusual geological formation where this needle of granite, this stone granite piece about 40 feet long, it is more than that I guess, but anyway, just to make a long story short, he saw this thing sticking right out of the mountain side. He had seen it from up above where he was exploring for the fern. So he came down to investigate.

It could be seen almost from the Sunset Ridge Trail, at the point where as Doray says here, it turns to the right. He was following father's Sunset Ridge Trail from where it gets up onto the rocks and then it turns right to go up the ridge on up to the Chin, up toward the Chin. Well he looked back and he saw this thing sticking out from the rocks apparently from his wandering off the trail looking for the fern and it was years before Clyde Smith wrote it up in the Free Press about this tremendous discovery of the Candaleva Rock and of course people have a trail to it now. It has been built so you can out there to see it. You can walk up onto it if your careful I guess. It is quite an unusual phenomenon. I haven't seen one like it anywhere in the Green Mountains or Appalachian Trail system anything quite like it.

S. █ Read from the letter, because he describes it very well.

JC He says "I do remember your father. We had quite a few very enjoyable, he calls it, bagging trips. I don't know if that is, it is not logging, trips together. I think he died doing the thing he liked best. I had told him how father had a heart attack on Couching Lion. We often talk about trying to locate the Brauns Holly fern that I found at least 25 years ago. This is 1964, so, 25 years ago, he says at least. That would take it back to 1940 or so roughly. But we never did get to it. I have found it since. As a matter of fact, you can ~~Candaleva~~ ^{tear} find it quite near the ~~Candaleva~~ rock and ~~the~~ and I have seen it. As I recall the occasion, I drove to the site of the halfway house where I left my car and took the trail to the Chin. That would be the Sunset Ridge Trail. I saw the clouds and turned back at a point where the trail bends to the east. Actually, it would be almost at least up that shoulder. I could see a long ledge to the west and decided to investigate for ferns. I remember I skirted this ledge at its base for at least a half of mile and finding nothing of any consequence, I decided to strike a line through the woods to where I had left the car. So he was coming back from that ledge he had seen from the trail, off to the west, as the trail turned east and the clouds had come. On the way back at the base of the same ledge, I found a very peculiar formation, a large slab of rock about 25 feet long, I am quite sure it is longer than that, about 40 I guess. It had broken away from the ledge and swung out nearly at right angles from the ledge but was held at its base to the ledge. This slab

was four to five feet wide as I remember. Before your father died, he sent me a Free Press clipping on which showed this very formation. That would Clyde Smith's you see account. Someone had come across it and taken a picture and a description. Now if I had this clipping, I would send it to you, but it is in a fern book I just loaned a few days ago to a woman in Monteray, Massachusetts. I will send it to you when I get it back. This formation is well worth seeing and I hope you can find it. It is at a point near this needle that I set a course for the halfway house. So that is entirely correct. You could go back, as he must have to what was then the Sunset Ridge Trail lower level where it is almost flat. I got about halfway back and I ran into the Brauns Holly. So he did find the fern on his way home. There were a lot of them. I didn't try to see how extensive the location was. So father remembers him for having found the Brauns Holly Fern on the western side of the mountain which is a dry side compared to Smugglers Notch which is shaded and wet and could support a wet loving fern. But the fern is located here on the west side toward Burlington. That is a very rare find. I have not seen the Brauns Holly Fern and we have looked a good many other places for the Brauns Holly where it ought to be or could be or might be. Your photograph doesn't lend itself very well to indicate the location of these ferns. I think I sent him a photo of a stand of the ferns somewhere near where he had found it. The picture was taken from the location of halfway house, it probably would serve. I have used a topographic map to show where I left the trail back of the halfway house and the approximate route I took after leaving the ledges, also the approximate location of the ferns. I hope you can locate. So he goes on about the ferns. He says very little about the candaleva rock. He didn't call it the candaleva, but he certainly described it. Your father and I found a nice stand of fragrant ferns just off the Sterling Pond Trail, also in the general local a smooth alpawoodsa and Green Spleenwort. I haven't seen a Green Spleenwort over there. I didn't attend a meeting last summer of the Fern Society, but I know where the male fern location is, near Woodstock. The Male Fern is another rare fern in Vermont. I have quite a few of them here. I would encourage people to buy specimens if they can and get the Male Fern going because it is widely known in Germany and it grows just about anywhere beside houses. Ferns are an awfully nice hobby.