

RISE OF THE ADIRONDACK HIGH PEAKS: THE STORY OF THE INCEPTION OF THE ADIRONDACK FORTY-SIX BY ROBERT MARSHALL, GEORGE MARSHALL, AND RUSSELL M.L. CARSON

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INTRODUCTION

On August 3, 2018, the Adirondack Forty-Sixers will commence a three-day celebration of the 100th anniversary of the climb of Whiteface Mountain by the “forefathers” of the organization: Herbert Clark, Robert “Bob” Marshall, and George Marshall. Whiteface is one of forty-six so-called High Peaks that are in the heart of the Adirondacks, selected based on criteria set forth by the Marshall brothers and Clark. The Adirondack Forty-Six peak list (or ADK 46, for short) is one of the most popular among avid hikers in the world, and to climb all forty-six peaks means qualifying for membership in the Adirondack Forty-Sixers organization, which assigns the hiker a number (indicating their order of membership since the inception of the organization) and awards them a patch. Herbert, Bob, and George were the first to climb the ADK 46, and when the Adirondack Forty-Sixers was formed, the gentlemen were assigned numbers 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Today, as of this writing, there are at least 10,871 hikers who have been recognized as having completed the ADK 46.

MORNING MISTS OVER FALL FOLIAGE REFLECTED IN CONNERY POND, ESSEX CO.,
ADIRONDACK PARK & FOREST PRESERVE, NY

While the history of the Adirondack Forty-Sixers is well-documented, that of how the ADK 46 was arrived at has been insufficiently described. This paper serves to fill a gap in the history of the ADK 46 by shedding light on the process of how this list was created over time, through collaboration and, at times, stretching the rules.

FIRST – THE INSPIRATION

It appears there was no one moment or piece of literature which spurred on the Marshall brothers and Clark to climb the High Peaks of the Adirondacks. The brothers were certainly inspired by their father, Louis Marshall, who brought his children from their home in New York City to the family's summer residence of Knollwood on the northeast shore of Lower Saranac Lake (Brown 2006). The elder Marshall took his boys on walks through the woods surrounding Knollwood, and as teenagers the two would embark on long excursions of up to forty miles for a day. Louis also played a critical role in the passage of Article VII of the New York State Constitution, the famous "Forever Wild" clause, which provided for the protection of the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves (Lance 2011). This strong desire and devotion towards the preservation of wilderness regions was passed along to Bob and George, who followed in their father's footsteps. Although such inspiration from their father may explain the younger Marshalls' heartfelt fondness for the wilderness and their active conservation efforts in adulthood, their endeavor to climb the Adirondack Mountains and craft a list of those which would be known for generations as the ADK 46 appears to have been inspired by more proximate causes.

Herbert Clark, who served as the Marshall family's guide during the summer beginning in 1906, took Bob and George on their first mountain climb of Ampersand Mountain on August 13, 1916 when the boys were fifteen and twelve, respectively (Lance 2011). George, recounting their experience in *High Spots*, "Some Reflections on Ampersand Mountain," said the views on the way to the summit, let alone on the summit itself, captivated them. George recalled that when they came to the ladders, "Herb Clark was afraid that if we craned our necks too hard in our effort to see everything, we might fall" (Marshall 1934).

The reports of the surveys done of the Adirondacks by Verplanck Colvin in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were also influential. According to George in his article for *Ad-i-ron-dac*, "Adirondacks to Alaska: A Biographical Sketch of Robert Marshall" (Marshall 1951):

For years the reddish-brown reports of the Topographical Survey of the Adirondack Wilderness were obscured in shadow at the bottom of the bookcase until one day Bob discovered them. Immediately he became enthralled by these accounts of the explorations of Verplanck Colvin and Mills Blake. [...] This opened our eyes to new possibilities and, when soon thereafter Bob read Longstreth's The Adirondacks, we determined to penetrate those mountains, which previously had been accepted as a scenic backdrop along the skyline across the lake, and see what lay beyond.

The presence of Colvin's survey reports in their home should come as no surprise when one considers Louis Marshall's role in encouraging the State to protect the forests within. Colvin's influence on the Marshall brothers to explore the Adirondacks is further exemplified by a June 30, 1979 letter from George to Adirondack historian and author Philip G. Terrie (Terrie 1994):

There was a definite influence. We greatly admired him [...] We read the Colvin Reports, especially the accounts of his extraordinary trips in the mountains and into the Adirondack wilderness. We were also interested in his hypsometry and mappings and drawings, and they excited us too. ...Colvin, because of what he represented in his Adirondack exploration and enthusiasms, could not have helped stimulating the enthusiasms of two young Adirondackers.

One account of what spurred Bob and George on to climb the High Peaks is given in the chapter "The Story of the Adirondack Forty-Sixers", in the *The Adirondack High Peaks and the Forty-Sixers* (Hudowalski 1970). The authors write that an unnamed French-Canadian guide proudly exclaimed to the boys, "I have climbed them all!" He did not specify what mountains or ranges, but impressed the boys enough that they sought to climb any peak at least 3,500 feet in elevation. While this and similar accounts seem intriguing, I could not find any evidence from the writings of Bob and George to support any of these stories, so at best they should be chalked up to amusing Forty-Sixer folklore.

HIGH PEAKS PEAK-BAGGING BEGINS

The dawn of Forty-Sixer peak-bagging came on August 1, 1918, when Bob, George, and Herb, along with Carl Poser, commenced the climb of their first such peak: Whiteface Mountain. Following his ascent from the northern head of Lake Placid, along Whiteface Brook, Bob said Whiteface was "one of the hardest peaks I have climbed," but considered the view from the summit "not all it was cracked up to be" (Marshall 2006, 27). Twenty-six days later, the trio would go on to climb the highest peak in the State, Mount Marcy (Marshall 2006, 31), along with the next highest peak, Algonquin, and its neighbor, Iroquois Peak, over August 27-28 (Marshall 2006, 37). Algonquin was then known as "MacIntyre," and they dubbed Iroquois "Herbert Peak" for Herb. They were unaware it was already named Iroquois (or Clinton, to some) at the time, having believed that the peak we now know as Marshall was named Iroquois. Bob was so captured by the views from Iroquois that he wrote, "It is my firm opinion that not ten people have been fortunate enough to behold the finest of all Adirondack mountain views." Iroquois would be the first of thirty-four out of forty-six High Peaks they climbed without trails to their summits.

The year 1918 would be the first in their eight-year adventure of climbing the ADK 46. According to letters of correspondence between the Marshalls and Russell Carson, as well as tables of their climbs written up by Bob and George, there were apparently no additional High Peaks they climbed in 1919. Bob's table contained just the dates of his climbs for the

forty-two High Peaks, whereas George's contained those for all forty-six. In addition, George's table contained dates for each of the three men, and the time of arrival for most of their ascents; a "?" next to a date indicated it was uncertain if or when the person climbed the peak. In Bob's table, he climbed Phelps on August 27, 1919, which he then negates when he writes to Russell and says, "I doubt if I reached the main peak on August 27, 1919, but was right on the main ridge almost on the top. It was so foggy that I'm not just sure where I was" (letter from Bob to Russell, March 14, 1924). Bob, George, and Herb may have climbed other High Peaks that year, considering they were camping on the Opalescent River near Lake Colden on August 25, 1919 (letter from George to Russell, December 10, 1923), but no peak-climbing is mentioned.

Bob, George, and Herb seemed to get "organized" in their endeavor to climb all Adirondack peaks they deemed High Peaks in the winter of 1920-1921. According to George in the preface to the 1973 reprint of Russell's *Peaks and People of the Adirondacks*, during that season they made the decision to climb all forty-two High Peaks, based on their criteria for what constitutes a High Peak (or "individual peak," as they called it) (Carson 1973). Bob clarifies this decision in his 1922 article "Climbing 42 High Adirondack Peaks" (Marshall, *New York Evening Post*):

Two years ago we got an ambition to climb the ten highest mountains in the State, and when that task was completed we set out to scale all the mountains in the State over 4,000 feet high, which, so far as we knew, had never been done before. Having completed this we felt almost certain that we were the first ones who had ever done it.

The ten highest peaks in the State which Bob and Herb (George was not with them on all) climbed by the end of the summer of 1920 are, in order of ascent: Whiteface, Marcy, Algonquin, Iroquois, Colden, Skylight, Haystack, Basin, Gothics, and Dix. Bob did climb other High Peaks prior to completing the ten highest, such as Giant and Colvin.

THE INCEPTION OF THE ADIRONDACK FORTY-TWO

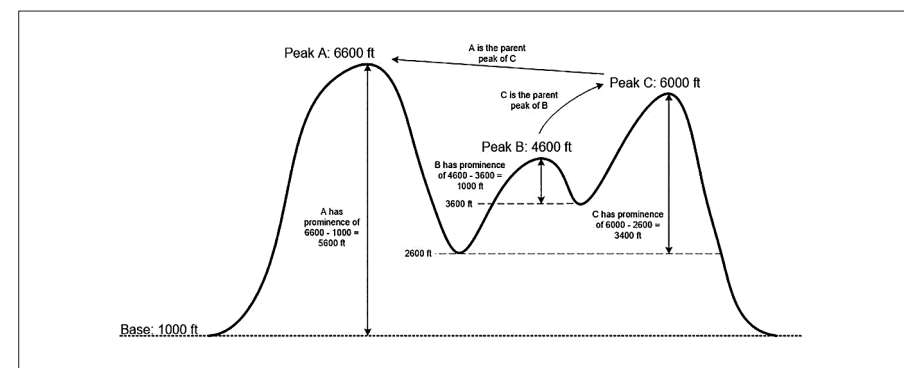
When Bob, George, and Herb embarked on their epic endeavor to be the first to climb a specific set of Adirondack peaks, they initially wanted to climb those over 3,500 feet. Bob stated their initial criteria, and their reconsideration of peaks over 4,000 feet instead, in a letter to Russell Carson dated October 30, 1923:

When we made our list of peaks in the Adirondacks over 3,500 feet, from which we made up our minds to climb all those over 4,000, we used rather arbitrary standards to determine which of the countless peaks shown on the map should be considered as individual. The rule we worked on was that an individual peak should either rise at least 300 feet on all sides, or be at the end of a long ridge $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the nearest peak.

Thus, they did not use a rule from a pre-existing mountain list to define what an Adirondack High Peak is. Their rule was comprised of two criteria: the 300-foot rise-on-all-sides or *Prominence Rule*, and the $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile end-of-a-ridge or *Distance Rule*. It was not until they started their correspondence with Russell Carson in 1923 that they adjusted their criteria to include peaks at 4,000-foot elevation. Of the forty-six High Peaks, eight satisfied the Distance Rule: Iroquois, Esther, Donaldson, Phelps, Emmons, Dial, Grace Peak, and Couchsachraga. The $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile specification in the Distance Rule may not be arbitrary considering that when the trio climbed Iroquois in 1918, it only had about 55 feet of rise on all sides but was $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile from its parent peak, Algonquin. Could the Distance Rule be related to this fact, for a peak they held in such high regard, or is this merely a coincidence?

As a technical aside, many peak-bagging lists are based on a feature called *topographic prominence* regarding the peaks in a specific geographic region. Prominence is the height of a peak's summit with respect to the lowest contour line on a topographic map encircling it, but containing no higher peak within. Figure 1 illustrates this definition, and Figure 2 clarifies this for Basin, Saddleback, and Gothics Mountains. Prominence is used as a cut-off point for selecting what peaks will be members of a list. The Appalachian Mountain Club's NH48 and New England 4,000 Footers lists use a prominence of 200 feet for peaks in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, whereas the Colorado 14ers list uses a prominence of 300 feet.

Figure 1. Illustration of topographic prominence.



When the trio devised their Adirondack High Peaks list based on peaks over 3,500 feet (it is unclear what role Herb had, if any, since writings from Bob and George do not elaborate on such), they came up with one hundred peaks. This was the first Adirondack One Hundred Highest list, although not equivalent to today's like-named list, as given in the appendix of (Goodwin 2004). The Distance Rule they included allowed other "interesting" peaks to be added, although as we shall see, this rule was not strictly enforced. Their decision to change the elevation from 3,500 feet to 4,000 feet may be that it yielded a list of forty-two peaks that was manageable, considering that much of their climbing was done over the summers spent

in Knollwood. This does not mean they refrained from climbing any peaks in the list of fifty-eight lesser peaks, since they climbed peaks such as those in the Sawtooth Range, but they concentrated on climbing these forty-two High Peaks (or the ADK 42, for short).

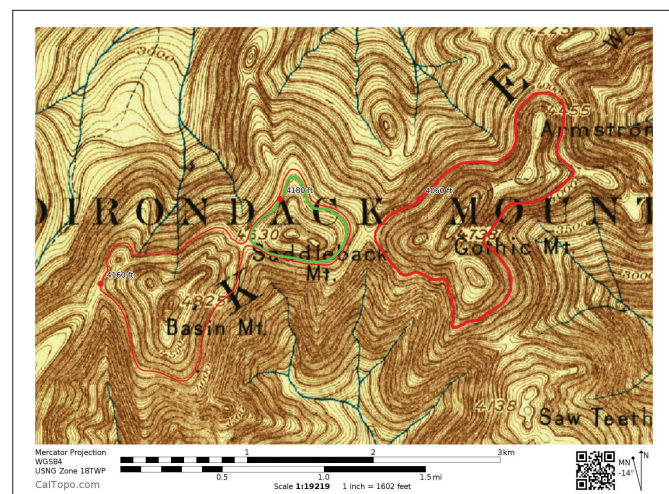


Figure 2. An example of topographic prominence, with the prominence contour lines labeled with their elevation. Basin has $4825 - 4160 = 665$ ft prominence, Saddleback has $4530 - 4180 = 350$ ft prominence, and Gothic has $4738 - 4060 = 678$ ft prominence. Basin is the parent peak of Saddleback (source: caltopo.com).

Over the course of the summers of 1921 and 1922, the trio pursued climbing the peaks remaining on the ADK 42. The summer of 1921 would prove to be their busiest, with twenty-five peaks checked off, including fifteen newly-climbed peaks on a thirteen-day trek (Marshall, *New York Evening Post*, 1922). During the summer of 1922, George climbed five peaks that Bob and Herb had previously ascended without him back in June of 1920: Colvin, Big Slide, Cascade, Porter, and Colden. This fact clears up the misperception that Bob, George, and Herb were together on their first ascents of all High Peaks, as purveyed by much of the literature. Records show that George was not with Bob and Herb on their first ascents of Haystack, Giant, and Dix. On closer observation, for the years 1920 and earlier, George climbed peaks after late June, whereas Bob and Herb made their first-ascents of eight peaks without George by June 20. Both brothers attended the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, a private school in New York City (Glover 1986); by June 1920, Bob would have been nineteen and George would have been sixteen. It is possible that his studies at Fieldston kept George from getting to Knollwood in the early summer, in time to climb with his two compatriots.

By September 1, 1921, George thought “the job” of climbing the ADK 42 was finished, at least for Bob, after they climbed Wright Peak on that day (letter from George to Russell, March 8, 1924). George tells of Herb not being with them that day, which means that Herb must have climbed Wright on another date; George’s table indicates the last recorded time Herb climbed Wright was on July 16, 1932, so a climb date prior to their finish on Emmons (June 10, 1925) remains a mystery.

George also tells Russell that, collectively, the trio did not finish climbing the ADK 42 until September 18, 1923, when they climbed Tabletop and Phelps. Bob admits to Russell that, while on a climb of Marcy in the summer of 1922, they realized they did not make it to the summit of Tabletop on August 17, 1921 (letter from Bob to Russell, September 23, 1923). Bob said they were in such a hurry that day that they were careless in ensuring they were on the true summit, implicitly trusting a trail sign that read “Tabletop Mountain” instead of following Arthur S. Hopkins’ pamphlet *Trails to Mount Marcy*. On September 18, 1923, the trio climbed to the summit of Tabletop from Indian Falls, then cut across a lumbered valley to Phelps, arriving on a summit left bare by the great fire of 1903. That date would mark the first confirmed ascent of Phelps and Tabletop for all three men. Considering Bob’s adherence to accuracy, these mistakes were likely discovered after Bob submitted his book for publication in 1922.

Another oversight was the discovery they did not summit Emmons (named South Seward at the time) when they climbed Seward and Donaldson (named North Seward at the time) on August 23, 1921. According to a correspondence with Grace Hudowalski, George said he and Herb discovered their mistake when they (along with Russell Carson and Charlie West) climbed Seward and Donaldson on August 11, 1924 (letter from George to Grace, March 1, 1951). At the time, they thought Donaldson was Emmons, and that the peak between the true summit of Seward and the true summit of Donaldson was Donaldson, thus believing they climbed all three peaks on that August trip. Correcting their oversight, the trio climbed Emmons on June 10, 1925, recognized as the date of their completion of the ADK 46.

When George wrote to Russell to announce their successful climb of Emmons in 1925, he closed by saying, “I feel pretty sure now that we have climbed all the Adk Mts over 4000 feet, with the possible exception of Esther, as I think we may not have been on the main peak when we climbed it” (letter from George to Russell, June 18, 1925). The date of the climb of Esther George referred to is August 2, 1921, as indicated in his table of climbs and that of Bob’s. George climbed Esther again on August 7, 1927. If the trio erred on getting to the summit in 1921, it is unclear when they may have successfully reached the summit of Esther during a second attempt. Since George’s table of climbs was written sometime after July of 1932, and the date of August 2, 1921 is not indicated with a “?” in his table, did Bob set George straight on whether they did reach the summit of Esther?

RUSSELL CARSON AND THE FIRST HIGH PEAKS GUIDE

Sometime around 1922, following what he believed was his successful completion of climbing the ADK 42 in September of 1921, Bob wrote a booklet which described the climbing routes to each of the peaks, the view from their summit, and the subjective view rating assigned to them. This booklet would be called *The High Peaks of the Adirondacks*, the first publication of the Adirondack Mountain Club. It is likely that Bob submitted the booklet for publication prior to the summer of 1922 when he discovered they did not make the summit of Tabletop.

Considering that Bob assumed at the time he did make it to the summit of Phelps on his solo hike of 1919, and George and Herb achieved their first ascent of Phelps on September 18, 1923, the booklet appears to have been written prior to all three completing the ADK 42.

Shortly after Bob's booklet was published, it caught the attention of Russell M.L. "Little Mac" Carson. Russell was a hiker, president of his insurance company, a captain in the New York National Guard, and a member of the Glens Falls Rotary Club. So influential was Bob's booklet on Russell's interest in the Adirondacks that Russell said it "obsessed me with the Adirondacks," and that Bob, George, and Herb "deserve a high place in the Adirondack Hall of Fame for what you have done for me" (letter from Russell to Bob, November 21, 1923). Russell used the booklet to promote an "Adirondack Mountain Climbing Contest" for the Rotary Club, the rules of which were described in Russell's 1922 brochure:

42 sealed slips, each bearing a number which is the height of one of the big peaks, have been deposited in a box and one slip will be drawn from the box each week for 42 consecutive meetings. Every member present at any given meeting will score the number which is on the slip drawn at that meeting. Appropriate prizes will be awarded to the winners and the five low score members each week commencing December 7 will be fined.

The club did not require members to climb the selected peak, while the contest ran from November 2, 1922 to August 16, 1923. Russell was asked by the directors of the club to write a brief sketch for each mountain drawn, which would then appear in the club's newsletter. Russell based the information on Bob's booklet, historian Alfred L. Donaldson's *A History of the Adirondacks*, and Thomas Morris Longstreth's *The Adirondacks* (letter from Russell to Bob, May 4, 1923). The writing spurred Russell on to delve deeper and develop a set of historical sketches describing the naming history of the peaks, who made the first ascents and when, and who cut the first trails to them. Over the course of five years of research on the ADK 42 (and eventually, the ADK 46), the collection of historical sketches would result in the publication of the first book on the history of the eventual ADK 46 in 1927: *Peaks and People of the Adirondacks* (Carson 1927). When Bob learned from Russell about his plans to write a book that is a historical profile of the High Peaks, Bob encouraged him in his endeavor, saying, "It fills a much-needed gap in the Adirondack literature."

PEAK-POLITICKING AND THE FINAL FORTY-SIX HIGH PEAKS LIST

Over the course of the 4 1/2 year correspondence between Russell Carson and the Marshall brothers, Russell would play a pivotal role in persuading them to add four more peaks to their ADK 42: Gray Peak, Cliff, Blake, and Couchsachraga. There was friendly negotiation between Bob, George, and Russell as to what peaks should be considered "individual" and added to the ADK 42; peaks other than the aforementioned four were also considered. Letters written between October of 1923 to April of 1926 reveal a concern on Russell's part of "breaking" the Marshalls' ADK 42, and letting Bob and George have the final say on suggested additions.

The initial list of High Peaks that Bob, George, and Herb made up contained forty-three peaks. The peak to the south of Colden that they named "Opalescent Mountain" (N 44°07.13', W 73°57.63') measured 4,164 feet in elevation. When viewed from Marcy and the Opalescent River, they deemed it not a "real peak" (aside from not complying with their criteria), so they omitted it (letter from George to Russell, March 8, 1924).

Russell first recommended that Cliff and Gray Peak be added, partly out of concern that he did not want to see anyone (except the three men) claim they were the first to climb all peaks 4,000 feet and over; Russell admits Cliff is measured at 4,000 feet but that is merely a "technical matter." As for Gray, he claims it is more of an individual peak like Skylight than a subordinate peak of Marcy (letter from Russell to Bob, October 14, 1923). In response to Russell's letter, Bob said that under their criteria, Gray did not qualify as an individual peak. Furthermore, they did consider the peak south of Colvin (which Bob called "Middle Colvin" in subsequent letters), Cold River Mountain (known today as Couchsachraga), Cliff, and East Rocky Peak Ridge (N 44°09'16", W 73°41'34"), but these peaks were only 4,000 feet elevation, and they would have climbed them but time did not permit them to do so (letters from Bob to Russell, October 30, 1923 and December 13, 1923). When it came to Gray Peak, Russell's push to get it added to the ADK 42 and his book seemed more out of admiration for the person for whom the mountain was named: Professor Asa Gray. Asa Gray (1810 – 1888) was a noted American botanist who served as a professor of Harvard University, studied the flora of North America, and authored the textbook *Manual of Botany of the Northern United States* (1848), long-considered the authoritative work on the subject. Although Gray Peak did not appear on the early USGS maps, it did appear on William Watson Ely's 1869 map *Colton's Map of the New York Wilderness* as "GRAY MT" (see Figure 3), and as "Gray Peak" on Colvin's 1873 secondary reconnaissance sketch of Mount Marcy and the sources of the Hudson River (see Figure 4).



Figure 3. The portion of Colton's Map of the New York Wilderness (1869) depicting Gray Peak as "GRAY MT" (source: The New York Public Library Digital Collections).

In a letter to Thomas C. Stowell of the ADK, Russell explains that the name “Gray Peak” was in use in the 1870s and, because of Asa Gray’s prominence and contributions to science, the peak name should be revived (letter from Russell to Thomas Stowell, December 2, 1923). Furthermore, although Gray Peak has neither a clear rise of 300 feet on all sides nor was at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from Marcy (it is 0.6 miles away, according to the 1895 USGS Marcy quad map), Russell expressed to George that he thought the map was wrong in the prominence shown (letter from Russell to George, February 28, 1924). In the end, George conceded that if it has special interest then it may well be added on (letter from George to Russell, March 8, 1924). Bob also conceded to Russell’s wishes after observing Gray from Marcy on June 8, 1924, agreeing that it appeared to be an individual peak (letter from Bob to Russell, June 10, 1924). Thus, Gray Peak was added to the ADK 42, and subsequently climbed by the trio on June 26, 1924.

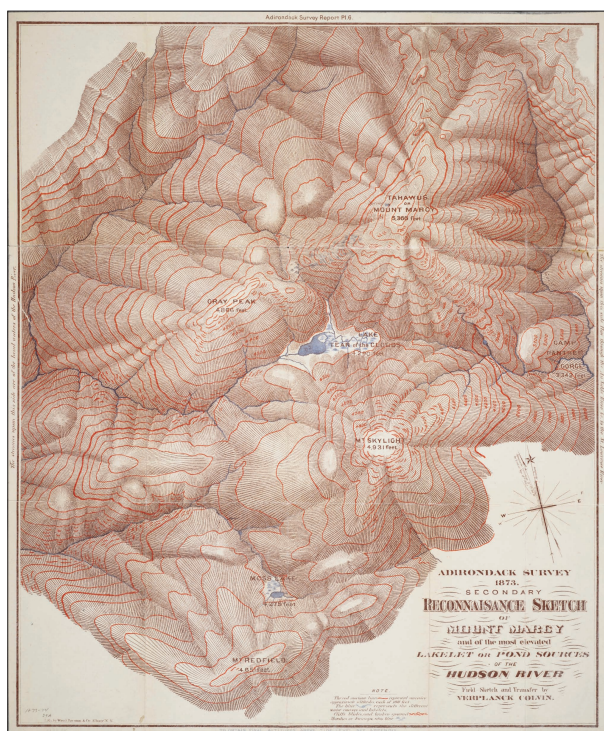


Figure 4. Verplanck Colvin’s 1873 secondary reconnaissance sketch of Mount Marcy and the sources of the Hudson River (courtesy of Adirondack Research Library at Union College, and Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.).

When it came to negotiating the addition of the peaks with an elevation of exactly 4,000 feet, Russell recommended omitting East Rocky Peak Ridge from the four Bob first mentioned, as he considered this peak unimportant and that “it might just as well not be advertised” (letter from Russell to George, February 28, 1924). Russell neglects to mention that the peak is almost 0.6 miles away from Rocky Peak Ridge. As for the other three – Couchaschraga, Cliff, and Blake – George said that there is no reason they should not be added. To prevent “breaking” the list of High Peaks over 4,000 feet, Russell said the three peaks could be included in a class by themselves, but Bob

assured him there was nothing “sacred” about their list (letter from Bob to Russell, April 17, 1926). Thus, Couchaschraga, Cliff, and Blake were also added to the list, expanding it to become the ADK 46 known today. The Marshall brothers and Clark would climb Couchaschraga on June 23, 1924, and three days later, Cliff along with Gray Peak on June 26, 1924.

Russell suggested four other peaks be added to the now-ADK 46, but negotiations on them did not get far. No Man’s Mountain (today’s Little Marcy), which Russell acknowledged did not meet their criteria, was suggested because it had been mentioned in print (letter from Russell to George, February 28, 1924). According to Russell, Little Marcy was called “No Name Mountain” by surveyor Daniel M. Arnold in his 1893 field notes, when running the lines of Township 48 of the Totten and Crossfield Purchase for the Adirondack Mountain Reserve. It was later referred to some as “No Man’s Mountain.” Like Gray Peak, George considered No Man’s Mountain a ridge of Marcy, but if it had special interest, it could be included. Russell then figured it was not as special as he thought and suggested it best be dropped (letter from Russell to George, March 20, 1924). In addition to No Man’s Mountain, Russell also suggested the peak south of Redfield (possibly [N 44°05’16”, W 73°57’38”]) and the peak southwest of Big Slide (today’s Yard). However, George felt they were merely just the end of ridges. The final peak Russell suggested was Boundary Peak, which he acknowledges would “break” Bob’s table of High Peaks and is unsure he should (letter from Russell to Bob, April 5, 1926). Boundary Peak is simply a hump between Algonquin and Iroquois, and clearly does not satisfy the Marshalls’ criteria. Perhaps the appeal of Boundary Peak to Russell was that it was allegedly the boundary line between the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes, which is between the two High Peaks so named in commemoration of them. As Russell explains in his sketch “Mount Iroquois” in his book, research failed to show a historical foundation for the existence of such a boundary line (Carson 1927). In response, Bob said he could not conceive of Boundary Peak as an individual peak and seems to disregard adding other peaks which do not meet their criteria when he concludes with (letter from Bob to Russell, April 17, 1926):

Just because someone happened to give them names would not justify individual mention any more than Little Haystack, the peak west of Big Slide, a peak in the Street Range, the southeast peak of Colden (which we made a separate peak in our original list), or the peak between Boundary and Herbert, which we modestly named George that day we fought our way through the mountain balsam to the second highest peak in the MacIntyre Range. You’ve got to draw a line somewhere as to what to consider an individual peak.

Reflecting on the collaboration between Russell and the Marshall brothers which led to the ADK 46, there is a third, unwritten criterion for what constitutes an individual peak: the peak has historical significance. We saw this subjective criterion applied to Gray Peak, although it complies with neither the Prominence nor Distance rules. Apart from being named in a surveyor’s field notes, Russell did not see much historical significance in No Man’s Mountain (Little Marcy). However, although this 4,720-foot peak has only about a 160-foot prominence, it is 0.77 miles away from the summit of Marcy (according to the 1895 USGS Marcy quad map), so it would have satisfied the Distance Rule. Likewise, an unnamed peak

northwest of Marcy at location (N 44°07'35", W 73°55'48"), which has 4,420-foot elevation and about 60-foot prominence, but is 1.2 miles away from Marcy and 1.3 miles away from Little Marcy, would also have satisfied the Distance Rule; this unnamed peak never appeared to be considered in the letters of correspondence. Two other peaks disregarded for addition which satisfied the Distance Rule are: the peak west of Big Slide (Yard), and a peak in the Street Range (likely the 4,009-foot peak on the western ridge of Street, at location [N 44°10'47", W 74°02'37"]). The reason Yard would have qualified under the Distance Rule is that, at 4,038 feet in elevation, it is at the end of a ridge and is 0.9 miles away from Big Slide. Likewise, the peak on the western ridge of Street just qualifies, being 0.78 miles away from Street.

If Couchsachraga, measured at 1.4 miles distance from Panther Peak, was considered an individual peak under the Distance Rule, then why were the four aforementioned peaks not deemed individual peaks? Why these technical details were overlooked is unclear from the letters of correspondence. To add to the confusion, there are four peaks on the original ADK 42 which lack the 300-foot prominence and seem to fall under the Distance Rule, but are less than ¾-mile from their parent peak: Wright, Armstrong, Upper Wolfjaw, and South Dix. Why did the trio include these peaks? South Dix is merely a placeholder of little historical significance given by the Marshalls. The reasons are unclear based on the letters of correspondence. Had these four peaks and Gray Peak been removed, and replaced by the four described earlier, we would have the ADK 45! But the reader must be reminded that this is in the context of measurements made on the USGS maps available to Bob, George, and Herb at the time. The measurements on USGS maps from 1953 place Blake, Cliff, Couchsachraga, and Nye below 4,000 feet, and MacNaughton at 4,000 feet (although the USGS presently recognizes MacNaughton as 3,983 feet). Regardless of these corrections, the Adirondack Forty-Sixers have kept the ADK 46 as-is.

WAS MOUNT EMMONS THE FINAL HIGH PEAK?

During my research of the climbs of the ADK 46 made by Bob, George, and Herb, determining when they made their first ascent of Blake met with conflicting information. Although Bob did not give a date for Blake (Blake was not part of the ADK 42), George's table includes no definitive date for a climb of Blake prior to their final climb of Emmons in June of 1925, for any of the three men. George has a date of July 10, 1922 with a "?" for Herb and himself, and a certain climb date (along with time of arrival) for Herb and himself on September 11, 1925. The only date given for Bob in George's table is June 10, 1920, but it includes a "?"

It is not possible that Bob and George climbed Blake in the summer of 1920 or 1922, for Bob told Russell they considered adding Cliff, Middle Colvin (Blake), Cold River (Couchsachraga), and East Rocky Peak Ridge, but they did not have time to climb them (letter from Bob to Russell, October 30, 1923). Bob reiterates their omission of Blake in a letter to Russell dated December 13, 1923. But the correspondence which came as a surprise is when Bob told Russell, "[Cliff, Couchsachraga, and Blake] were omitted because we did not have time for them in 1921. George has climbed all since then, while I have climbed all but Blake" (letter

from Bob to Russell, April 17, 1926). Furthermore, when George announced to Russell their celebrated climb of Emmons, he concludes, "I feel pretty sure now that we have climbed all the Adk Mts *over 4000 feet*, with the possible exception of Esther [...] After Blake, Green, East Tabletop and Sentinel are climbed, we will have been up all the Adk peaks of 3900 or higher; unless new peaks are discovered" (letter from George to Russell, June 18, 1925).

George mentioned Blake in the list of peaks which *all three* have not completed a climb of, which are not over 4,000 feet but are at least 3,900 feet. As for Bob's letter from April 17, 1926, he seems to imply George and Herb's climb of Blake on September 11, 1925.

Considering George's doubt as to whether they were on the summit of Esther on August 2, 1921, and that Bob may not have climbed Blake by time he wrote to Russell on April 17, 1926, these beg the question: when did Bob, George, and Herb truly complete the climb of the ADK 46? Given the upstanding character of these gentlemen, their attention to accuracy, and Bob's letter to Russell in noting their "kicksaw achievement in climbing the 46 high peaks" (letter from Bob to Russell, November 13, 1927), they must have completed all forty-six by time this letter was written. Apart from George's climb of Esther on August 7, 1927, it is unclear when Bob and Herb re-climbed Esther, assuming they still believed they were not on the summit in August of 1921. If George recorded times of ascent in his table for when either he or Bob made their first ascent of a peak from 1920 onwards (with Street and Nye being the exception), then why did he note such for just Herb and himself for Blake on September 11, 1925? The answers to these questions may lie in the writings Bob and George archived at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

RECORD FIRST ASCENTS OF THE HIGH PEAKS

The public became aware of the ADK 46 and the three men who became the first to climb them all when Russell Carson's *Peaks and People of the Adirondacks* first came out in print around November of 1927. The publication was met with considerable adulation and praise, especially from those whom Russell corresponded with during his research. Some of the feedback Russell received were corrections to some entries in his book, which are given in the editorial introduction of the 1973 reprint of *Peaks and People of the Adirondacks*.

One piece of feedback corrected the claim that the Marshall brothers and Clark climbed eight peaks which never had a prior recorded climb: Herbert Peak (Marshall), Street, Nye, South Dix, East Dix (Grace Peak), Marshall (Hough), Allen, and Couchsachraga. In a letter from Samuel R. Lockwood to Russell, dated November 20, 1927, he claims that he and a friend attempted to climb Dix from Elk Lake in 1913. Amid the confusing maze of lumber roads, they decided to just head to the top. Their pace through the scrub-balsam was glacial, but when they reached the summit, it was completely overgrown. After scrambling up a tree, he figured they were on South Dix. Unfortunately, the two had to make haste as they were chased off by the infamous fire of 1913, which was coming up the east side of the mountain. They managed to make it to Elk Lake in the dark, but looking back they could see the fire coming over South Dix and the ridge. George confirmed Lockwood's claim to Russell, stating, "From his description I agree

with him he was probably on South Dix. [...] Middle Dix is not burnt near the top" (letter from George to Russell, December 31, 1927); Middle Dix is the name given to Hough at the time.

Another first ascent that may have been done by someone other than the Marshall brothers and Clark is Street. In a letter from John S. Apperson to George D. Pratt, dated October 27, 1920, Apperson recounts that during a hike through Indian Pass from the Upper Works on the week of October 24, 1920, two unnamed people in his party "went through Indian Pass, over Street Mountain, down to Moose Pond and back by Preston Ponds." If Apperson implied that the two climbed to the summit of Street, then this ascent was done about eight months prior to Marshall brothers and Clark making their first ascent of Street. Although Bob notes in his booklet that the summit of Street was heavily wooded (Marshall, *The High Peaks of the Adirondacks*, 1922), there was a logging road along the upper slope of Street at the time (Goodwin 2017). No letters from Apperson to either Bob, George, or Russell were found disputing the claim of a first recorded climb, nor has any additional information been found to support that Apperson's two colleagues successfully climbed Street. Thus, the trio's record still holds.

Thus, Bob, George, and Herb were only able to claim seven first-ever ascents of the ADK 46. However, this in no way should dampen this historic achievement! For these early peak-baggers to accomplish this in the rugged, unforgiving terrain of the High Peaks region is a testament to their perseverance and orienteering skills.

CONCLUSION

The letters of correspondence between the Marshall brothers and Russell Carson reveal much more information on how they developed the ADK 46, and the progress the Marshall brothers and Clark made in climbing the ADK 46. This wealth of information revealed that there was much more to what these four men did than what much of the literature has communicated. Russell's correspondence with Bob and George was not simply him suggesting that they add on four peaks they overlooked, with his suggestions accepted without a second thought. Furthermore, the trio's endeavor to climb the ADK 46 may not have ended with Emmons on June 10, 1925.

Unpublished information in letters and tables paints a bigger picture of the trio's epic journey. By elaborating on the details of their journey, along with Russell's important contributions along the way, it is hoped that the information will garner more appreciation for the imagination and efforts of these Adirondack giants, which led to one of the most popular peak lists and, indirectly, to the creation of a hiking and conservation organization, the Adirondack Forty-Sixers.

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