

Maine Appalachian Trail Trip

-- Dan Styer

In the summer of 1978, when I was 23 years old, I hiked the Appalachian Trail in Maine. I didn't keep a diary, but afterwards I wrote three letters about the experience to my mother. Explanatory notes in square brackets were added in 2012.

27 July 1978

Dear Mom,

I'd like to tell you a bit about my trip.

I took the bus from here [South Hadley, Massachusetts] to Gorham, New Hampshire. The Trail crosses US 2 just a few miles east of Gorham, but I arrived at 11 PM, so I just walked out of town and camped in the woods near the highway. The next morning was somewhat cloudy (low ceiling). I couldn't see the tops of the mountains but I could see the sides. I found the Trail and headed north.

The range I started off on was the Mahoosuc Range, supposedly the second-toughest section of the AT. It's tough all right, but very grand. In the Mahoosucs I saw the nicest scenery I've seen since I've been to Alaska [July 1971]. The first peak, Mount Hayes, had an open summit which had excellent views of the Presidentials. It's funny that I never thought that I would start only a few miles from Mount Washington, but my planning was all focused on the Maine side, not the New Hampshire side. The trails were steep, and often badly eroded. I had rather poor weather (it rained three of the four nights I slept in the Mahoosucs), and this slowed me down. I missed the views from some of the summits, because they were in cloud when I passed them. My favorite mountain was Goose Eye. This mountain has three summits, and the trail between them was all above timberline. The climb up Goose Eye was outrageous. Two or three places the trail simply went up to the base of a 20-foot cliff, then continued at the top. There were only small cracks in the cliffs, and when I was there they were water-soaked. Sometimes I'd climb up on these rocks, and stop and think of how outrageous it was to do such a silly thing. But the view was fantastic! The Presidentials, the Carters, all the Whites, peaks scattered all over the horizon and everywhere else, near and far. I climbed Goose Eye on a very clear day. The day before I had been on the top of Mount Success, which is almost as high, and I could only see about 30 feet.

There were lots of ruffed grouse with babies in Maine. Usually twice a day I would disturb a family and the mother would go through her antics. Once I disturbed a duck family and the same thing happened. I don't know what the ducks were doing up in that spruce-moss-wood sorrel forest, but they were sure there. I saw several wild rabbits in the Mahoosucs, but only one elsewhere in Maine (at the base of Sugarloaf). Once I was standing around thinking about whether or not I should camp at a particular spot, and I heard a thump, thump, thump, ... It was a rabbit, running very quickly, and pursued by a

weasel. I startled them both, and the rabbit took advantage of the situation by running away.

That incident took place at the base of Mahoosuc Notch, and I did decide to camp there. You can ask Bill or Ellen about Mahoosuc Notch, I'm sure they'll remember it. The next day was cloudy, and I climbed up to Speck Pond in the cold and damp. It was quite a climb. The caretaker at Speck Pond Shelter had arrived the day before, so I was his first hiker. We had hot chocolate together. He told me about how badly the Maine AT Club volunteers kept up the trail: he said the trails were wet and there would be lots of blowdowns. In fact the wettest trail and the most blowdowns were in Appalachian Mountain Club, paid-trail-crew territory. (He was an AMC caretaker.) While I talked at Speck Pond, the weather miraculously cleared up. It changed from totally cloudy to absolutely brilliant clear weather. I climbed Old Speck (third highest in Maine) and enjoyed tremendous views. Old Speck is the last of the Mahoosucs. I camped that night at its base. It took me five full days to go 30 miles in the Mahoosucs.

The next day was a nice one: over one mountain, Baldplate, with excellent views, then down Frye Brook, past waterfalls and a small flume. I took a bath in Frye Brook. If I had known what was ahead, I would have stopped at Frye Brook Lean-to, but I didn't, so I kept going and ran into super mosquito flat swampy country. I tried to outrace the mosquitoes but couldn't, so I had to stop. As soon as I did I was covered with them. I reached into my pack and pulled out some Sportsmate II bug repellent. I had never tried it before. It worked perfectly! They really stayed away from me after that. Boy, was I happy. I recommend this stuff highly. It's a pleasant cream, doesn't smell too bad, and it only costs \$1.00 per ounce. (Cutters is now \$2.50 an ounce, and Sportsmate II is better than Cutters.)

I camped that night in a pine forest. The next day was very flat walking. Much of the trail was in poor shape: overgrown or swampy. I walked something like 16 miles that day (had to go fast to keep the mosquitoes away). At the end of the day things were better. I climbed up next to a truly lovely cascading brook, bordered with mosses, ferns, and birch, then through a spruce forest up the side of a mountain. I camped on a bank of moss, one of the most comfortable nights I've ever spent.

The next day I went over one small mountain, but then spent the rest of that day and all of the next in very pleasant gently rolling wooded land, with occasional lakes. It's nice to be down in the flats a bit between mountain ranges. It provides some variety. I should mention that this is all new trail, relocated off of old dull woods roads just a year or two ago. At the end of the third day in the flat country, I hitch hiked into Rangeley and got food from the post office. I got rides with three people, and two of them went out of their way to take me where I wanted to go.

Well. There's one-third of the trip. I'm tired of writing and I assume you're tired of reading, so I guess I'll send you two more letters of this length!

Love, Dan

1 August 1978

Dear Mom,

Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to continue the saga of Maine. I believe I told you that I got rides easily going into Rangeley. During my ride, a thunderstorm came up and drowned the car, but I was inside, hurrah! Going back to the trail, I watched the thunderclouds break up, and streams of sun showed out over Rangeley Lake and the mountains surrounding it.

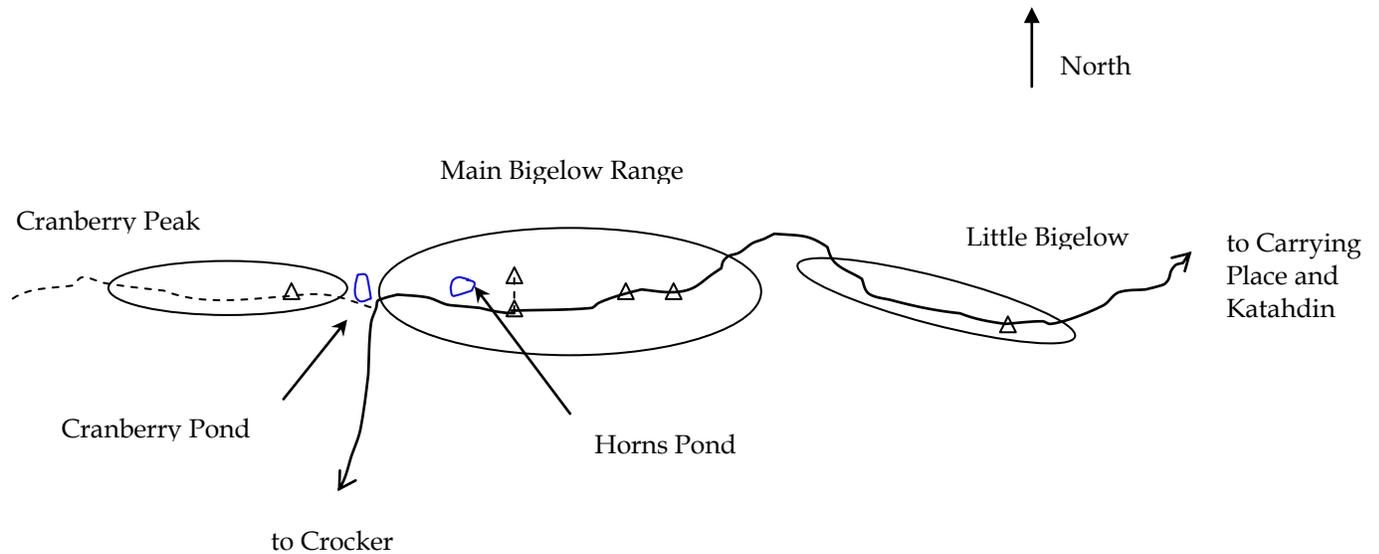
When I got back to the trail, I put on my pack and I was astounded at how much it weighed with all that food in it. Furthermore, the length of trail right ahead of me was the climb up Saddleback, which would be the steepest stretch I had faced since about a week ago. I tottled up to Piazza Rock Lean-to, where I spent the night with two inexperienced backpackers (it was their first trip out). They may have lacked experience, but they showed me a few tricks! These people baked bread on the trail! They got the recipe for "golden corn bread" on the back of the Quaker cornmeal box. It might call for, say, eggs and milk, so they put in an envelope of powdered eggs and some dry milk. They mixed up everything, using bisquick instead of flour. They tasted the dry mixture and added as they saw fit, then dumped in a appropriate amount of water. By now the cook fire had burnt to coals, so they put aluminum foil over their bread pan [an aluminum pie plate] and let it bake in the warm steady coal-heat. That's all there was to it! When I was there, they also threw in some wild strawberries too. I contributed the milk (they'd run out) so I ate two slices. Delicious. Also, the strawberries satisfied most of a minor craving I had for fruit and vegetables. It was quite a time consuming job, however.

The next morning I climbed Saddleback. I think it is my favorite mountain in all of Maine. Saddleback has four peaks: Saddleback, The Horn, Saddleback Junior, and Poplar Ridge. The first three are above timberline, and the sag between the first two peaks is also. (I suspect that this is the "saddleback" that named the mountain.) This makes for two miles above timberline without a break, plus an extra half mile or so on Saddleback Junior. I climbed the range on an absolutely clear day, with great puffy cumulus in the sky. I loved the wind up above timberline on the Saddlebacks. I didn't make any miles that day because I'd just sit down and look all over the earth and listen to the sky rush by.

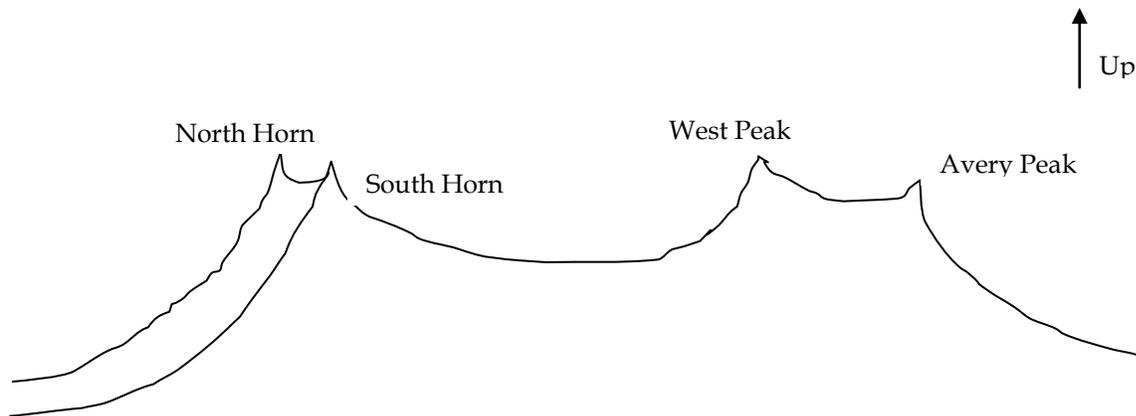
I spent the night at Poplar Ridge Lean-to. It thunderstormed and the next day was cold and cloudy. I walked about five miles to Spaulding Peak, but from its summit you couldn't see more than five trees away. I decided not to take a half-mile side trip to the summit of Sugarloaf (Maine's second highest peak) because I knew I couldn't see anything from the top. Also, I was quite tired. I took the AT down the shoulder of Sugarloaf. I didn't expect to see anything special, but I was wrong. The shoulder of Sugarloaf is a bare patch of rock which overlooks an incredibly steep canyon on Sugarloaf's side. You can also see the valley that that canyon empties into, a valley

walled by Saddleback, Spaulding, Sugarloaf, and Crocker ... all outstanding mountains. From whence I stood, not a sign of man could be seen. The clouds were in a flat-bottomed, solid bank only a few hundred feet above my head, but beneath the bank visibility was excellent. The combination overwhelmed me: the steep canyon covered with trees bending in the wind, the cascade down the canyon, the huge wild valley, the immense cloud bank only feet above me, and the wind pounding and whistling around me. I was glad it was so cloudy, because no summit view could supply the power and grandeur that this scene did.

I walked down from the shoulder and camped on the bank of that valley's stream. The next day I climbed over Crocker, then into the next valley, then up into the Bigelow Range. By now, two things were bothering me. First, my knees were in bad shape. They hurt a bit, and they cracked whenever I bent them much. Second and more important, I was losing a lot of the joy in walking. I felt like I was becoming a mechanical walking machine, just putting in miles for the sake of putting in miles. I thought that the solution to both problems would be a rest day. I camped that night at Cranberry Pond, in a col of the Bigelow Range, and when I woke up I just sat still and watched the sun rise over the pond. I just sat around in my sleeping bag doing a few chores, like fixing the rip in my pants. I don't think I got up out of bed until 10 o'clock or so. Then I walked (*without* pack) up a side trail to Cranberry Peak. I sat on the top a long time, listening to the wind. When I got tired of that I did some tensor calculus, and when I ran out of paper, I went down again. I walked (*with* pack) about two miles to Horns Pond, and settled down again for an hour or so. I like the Bigelows a lot so I'll draw a map:



Main Bigelow Range Enlargement



Well, to finish off the day I walked from Horns Pond to North Horn, and I camped on the bare summit. What a view! There were the long lakes, the glistening ponds, the peaks marching off to the horizon, the mile after mile of woods, but there was something else, too. In the east loomed the huge, mighty mass of West Peak itself, the highest point of the Bigelow Range. It was just incredible! So massive! So grand! So just plain *big*! It seemed to fill up the sky. I watched the sunset as I ate my “Noodles-to-Go” and hot chocolate. I snuggled into bed in a little clump of pines near the summit, but protected from the winds. Never again during this trip would I feel like a walking machine.

I woke up in the middle of that night. I don’t know why I did, but I’m happy for it. There above me was the most dazzling show of lights I could ever hope to see. The sky was perfectly clear and thousands of thousands of stars were out. The Milky Way

was a bright splash, not the dim cloud I'm used to. I had trouble picking out familiar constellations because of all those extra stars. I walked out to the summit and I could only see about four sources of human light. West Peak, which had seemed so overpowering and magnificent during the day, had shrunk under that sky to an insignificant screen, doing nothing more than blocking a star or two. It was big again the next morning, but it had no size to compare to the stars.

The next day I walked to West Peak and spent an hour or more watching and thinking. Then over Avery (footnote: I saw Katahdin from Avery!!) and here and there and, well eventually I ended up on the bare summit of Little Bigelow. This would be my last sizable mountain for some time, and I wanted another night like the last.

Well, I didn't get one. A few clouds moved in ... I could see the stars (they were only little clouds) but they didn't shine as if they were trying to poke a hole out of heaven, like they had last night. However, what the clouds took away in stars, they gave in sunset. Do you see from the map that Little Bigelow is slightly displaced from the rest of the line? Well, I think that perhaps Little Bigelow has the best view of the entire range, because you can see not only the lakes and the forests and far away mountains from Little, but also you have a beautiful view of the nearby mountains, namely, the entire rest of the Bigelows. As my good luck held, I watched the sun set right behind the main range of the Bigelows. It was a fantastic show, changing every moment. I could see the mountain shadows rush across the valleys, and they left the valleys purple. The sky was all manner of colors.

Beyond the Bigelows it is mostly flat until after Monson (my second food pick-up). I spent my first night at East Carry Pond Lean-to. There was a nice view of the Bigelows over the lake, and a mother duck with babies, and it was nice to be in the lowlands for a change. The next day I walked only seven miles to Pierce Pond Lean-to and the Carrying Place, which I have described elsewhere. Perhaps I didn't tell you that, when I was waiting for dinner, I took an absolutely grand swim in Pierce Pond. That pond must be the best swimming pool in Maine. The right temperature, a nice bottom, and good scenery.

[The Carrying Place was a sporting camp deep in the woods just a few hundred yards from Pierce Pond. It, like all the Maine sporting camps, caters mostly to hunters. I purchased a dinner there and ate it in their dining room overlooking a waterfall. I was the only guest at dinner. I remember that there were canned green beans, and I was so famished for any vegetable that I ate three servings ... which was all the green beans they had in their kitchen. I wrote my mom a letter from the Carrying Place, which is the "elsewhere" mentioned above.]

The two days after Pierce Pond I tried to go fast. And I did (almost 45 miles in two days). But I still enjoyed the scenery. The big friendly trees of the lowlands were nice to look at. These two days sort of reminded me of French Creek State Park [in Pennsylvania, where I had done a lot of backpacking as a teen]. Very pleasant walking through woods. I found and devoured many wild strawberries in these two days. I got to the Monson post office one hour before it closed. I packed my food, but somehow my

new stock of toilet paper got lost in the post office waste basket. That's life. I ate a banana split and a cherry sundae at the local ice cream shop (my craving for fruit dictated the banana). I still had time to walk five more miles to the next lean-to.

Love, Dan

14 August 1978

Dear Mom,

I'd like to continue telling you about my trip to Maine. My last letter left you off just a bit after my last food pickup in Monson, but I'm going to begin this one a bit earlier, namely at Pierce Pond Lean-to, right near the Carrying Place. That's because the two days that it took me to walk from Pierce Pond to Monson really didn't fit in with the last letter's contents, and it does with this one's.

When I left Pierce Pond in the morning, I resolved to do some fast walking. First, I wanted to see what it was like to walk fast. Second, I needed to in order to make up the time I had spend slowly admiring the Bigelow Range. Third, I was running a bit short of food, so I wanted to pick up my food shipment as soon as I could. I was able to make excellent time. The first day I had a gravel road down to the Kennebec River. I was canoed across it. I spent a bit of time in the town Caratunk buying food (just doughnuts and raisins) and reading Katie's letter. Then I had more road walking for seven or eight miles ... until the Pleasant Pond Mountain. At the base of the mountain I saw a small strawberry in a sunny spot. I pounced on it! My hunger for fruits and vegetables was growing. The mountain has a open summit but the air was very hazy, so I didn't see much. There were four people there making a day hike, and they gave me a bit of apple and a whole orange!! The woods after that one mountain were pleasant, with nice trail, no grades, etc. Very enjoyable, very easy walking. At places there were strawberries, and I pounced on them. That night I was going to stay on the peak of Moxie Bald Mountain, but I was so tired that when I got to Joes Hole Lean-to, four miles south of Moxie Bald, I decided to stay there. I made dinner and, after I finished, I was attacked by mosquitoes. I walked up to the peak to sleep.

The next day was not so pleasant. It was entirely level, no hills *at all*, and mostly along hot dry lumber roads, with occasional swamps. At lunch I finished off my raisins and doughnuts from Caratunk. I was amazed to see them so quickly gone. I made it to Monson one hour before the post office closed, and then I ate a banana split and a cherry sundae. I walked five more miles to a lean-to, only to find it filled up. I ate a cold tin of tuna for supper. I thought I'd fall right asleep, but the mosquitoes kept me awake. (They didn't bite – I had on good insect repellent – but they buzzed like crazy.) I guess being hungry kept me awake too, but I was too tired to cook. I had walked about 45 miles in two days.

The next day looked like it would be pretty nice. The land was hilly but not mountainous, there were three ponds, a waterfall, and a mountain lookout near the trail,

and there didn't seem to be any of that hot, dull road walking. (This was all from hearsay. I had lost the relevant map.) I was dirty, so I planned to take a bath in one of the ponds. As I walked on, the day got hotter. The three ponds were shallow and muddy-bottomed, so I skipped the swim. Instead, I bathed in the stream that fell over the waterfall. It got hotter and I got hungrier. The mountain lookout was there, but the air was so hazy that I couldn't see anything. And late in the day, when it was hottest, humidist, and buggiest, I found out that I was wrong about the roads: I had three miles of dusty road to walk before I got to the lean-to. The way I did it was to sort of blank out the world around me and think of fresh fruits and vegetables.

How enjoyable it was to get to the lean-to! There was only one other person there, the spring water was deliciously cold, and a large brook tumbled down through boulders nearby. I prepared myself a huge dinner: A packet of tomato cup-a-soup (which does wonders for curing vegetable cravings) and a whole envelope of macaroni and cheese with a can of ham mixed in. Chocolate for dessert! That evening, I had a dip in the stream to cool me off. I was happy. At last, I said to myself, I'm leaving these hot, wet lowlands. The next day, you see, I was going to climb over the Barren-Chairback range.

The Barren-Chairbacks are rather low mountains, only around 2000 feet, but they're quite rugged. Also, I climbed them with a full pack. The first mile of that first day in the range I gained something like 1200 or 1300 feet. I ate lunch at the summit of Barren and later took a side trail to Cloud Pond (and Cloud Pond Lean-to). I wrote in the register something like "I'm glad to be up in the hills again. To me, that lowland walking just isn't worth the effort." There were some thunder clouds in the air at Cloud Pond, but I pushed on anyway. I climbed down Barren, over Fourth, and I was descending into the sag between Fourth and Third when the storm broke. I remember standing in a grove of huge hemlock trees, hiding under my poncho, and thinking about how utterly tiny I was next to these mountains and this storm. That was when I convinced myself not to go farther, so I set up my tarp, ate my baked beans, and wrote you a letter.

All during early morning of the next day water droplets on the conifer trees reflected the sunlight like tiny Christmas ornaments. In the quiet of the morning, I surprised a white-tail deer. When I stopped and watched it run away, a chickadee with brown sides scolded me. (I've looked up that brown-sided chickadee. It's a far northern species, and Maine is the southern edge of its territory.) The storm had made a beautiful cold, clear day. Perfect for climbing. I took a side trail to the summit of Chairback. Chairback is the first peak I can remember where I definitely could not hear a single sound of man. Pennsylvania's hills are too low and too close to people. So are Vermont's. The Mahoosuc Range had distant traffic and paper-mill noise. It's possible that you couldn't hear a sound of man from Saddleback or from the Bigelows, but those ranges had so much wind that I couldn't be sure. But here on Chairback I was certain: not a single man-made sound. Wouldn't it be great if we could tape record all that quiet, then play it back when the model airplanes are flying?

At the base of the side trail, in Chairback Gap, I started down the AT. I didn't go far when I looked up and saw a huge moose drinking from a spring near the trail. A few moments later he saw me too. He raised his head and stumbled away from me down the

trail. What huge antlers he had! I was so satisfied with my wildlife day that I wrote a note to myself about it. But more was coming!

I walked down off the range, heading for Gulf Hagas. I passed a beaver pond or two, then I was stopped by a clicking sound. Two weasels ran down from the side of a hill across the trail. They hardly acknowledged my existence. They seemed to be playing a game with each other. Whatever, it *looked* like fun. My final wildlife of the day came on a side trail at Gulf Hagas. I was walking up the trail, and two moose (a cow and a young bull) were walking down it. Again, I saw them first. I froze. They saw me and stopped, assessing the situation. The cow went off the trail, traveled in a wide circle around me, and stopped when she got back onto the trail. The bull waited a bit. Then he snorted, and I left the trail to let him by!

Have you heard of Gulf Hagas? It's a ravine with cliffs and waterfalls, and it is reached by a network of side trails from the AT. I walked all the side trails, but was rather disappointed. It wasn't nearly as nice as Ricketts Glen [in Pennsylvania]. At one place I went swimming, and I "rafted" through a small rapid with just my body for a raft.

I slept a bit north of Gulf Hagas, and the next day I walked over a few mountains, the largest and last of which was White Cap. This range offered my first view of Katahdin since I had seen it as only a bump on the horizon from Bigelow. The view from White Cap was particularly impressive. The day was clear with a few huge, billowy cumulus clouds.

From White Cap to the base of Katahdin is a long section, about 60 miles, of very level trail. I had been fearing this section: lowlands, I said to myself, have roads, and heat, and bugs. But I was wrong! This section of lowland was so remote that it had no roads! And the storm had taken care of the heat and bugs. I had a thoroughly delightful four or five days: swimming in ponds, picking raspberries, admiring the huge virgin white pine. In fact, the only thing to disturb my enjoyment of the country was the fact that I was very rapidly running out of food.

You see, my food lists were initially made on my Georgia trip [on the Appalachian Trail, 29 July – 8 August 1973], and they have been refined on my subsequent trips, all of which were under ten days long. Apparently I get hungrier the longer I've been out. The food I needed to buy at Caratunk was the first sign of this, but I thought then that it was only a fluke that I was hungrier between days 10 and 20 than between days 0 and 10. Once I got up into day 23 or so, I knew I was definitely eating at a rate that would ... well, I'd eat myself out of house and home. In fact, my ten day supply of peanuts, raisins, and granola lasted exactly five days.

The day I finished my granola I made emergency plans. I had more dinner food: envelopes of noodles and soup, etc., than I needed, but less lunch food. I had just exactly one tin of meat per day. I decide to have more noodles, or soup, or whatever for dinner than I was used to, and to save the tin of meat for lunch. For breakfast, I had powdered milk. As you can imagine, I got pretty hungry. I can still remember some of the exact

places where I sat down to eat, and some of the exact smells and tastes that ran through my senses.

When I got to a little country store on Abol Bridge, I ate a fair amount of junk food (mostly little pies) and I bought more to carry with me.

However, I shouldn't give you the impression that the only thing to this piece of trail was hunger. There were two of the most beautiful lean-tos I've seen on the AT: East Pleasant River Tote Road Lean-to and Cooper Brook Falls Lean-to. East Pleasant is located in a grove of white pine, including several of those huge, awe-inspiring virgin trees. Right in front of the lean-to, the darkness of the grove opens up into the bright splash of light let in by the river. The river is clear and fast running, but not tumbling. There are boulders in the stream and joe-pye-weed on the side. Cooper Brook Falls is only seven miles down the trail. Cooper Brook dances and slides down fifty feet of rock, then rests in a huge clear swimming hole. The lean-to is right above the swimming hole.

There was sunset at Nahmakanta Lake. Indescribable.

There was the forest near Rainbow Lake. The forest was pure white birch, the forest floor was pure fern. I remember thinking "This is a fairy woods."

There was the rock outlook called Rainbow Ledges. The view wasn't great, but the blueberries were.

There was swimming in Lower Jo-Mary Lake. The beach was scattered with all different colors of pebbles.

There was the water from Rainbow Spring and Potaywadjo Spring. Both large springs with cold, smooth, delicious water.

Best of all, there was a lake called Pemadumcook Lake. The trail never touches the lake shore, so when it got within sight of the lake, I walked off the trail to see what the lake was like. I walked through a grove of old cedar trees. (We hardly ever see old cedar here, it is killed off by competition with other trees before it gets old.) They have trunks with delicate geometrical designs, and wood that's so smooth it's soft to the touch. I picked my way to the shore, then glanced up to the lake. There, high above the lake and the hills surrounding it, was a soaring pink granite mass. It was so high, its walls so steep, that it seemed not to be part of the earth. It seemed a flying mountain, hanging in the sky in all its grandeur and magnificence. It was Katahdin.

Well, now I've brought you up to Abol Bridge, where I ate those pies (lemon, pecan, and "chocolate éclair"). Soon after I left the store, it started raining with a vengeance. Also lightning and thundering. It was quite a storm! It broke the spell of good weather that we had had since the storm on Fourth Mountain. I spent the night at Katahdin Stream Campground, and the next morning I joyfully left my pack at the ranger station and began the ascent. What a joy to do one mountain without a pack!

I climbed up to the waterfall. I had expected it to be smaller than it was when we saw it on our Nova Scotia trip [in 1964, when I was nine years old], but I hadn't expected it to shrink *that* much. Also, the swinging bridge was replaced by two logs with cross slats. I kept on climbing. It amazed me that I had been able to climb so far (remember, we went up to timberline) when I was so young. There's some pretty tough climbing even below timberline!

I was surrounded by clouds, but occasionally they'd break through and I'd have views of the Owl or OJI, two nearby mountains. The Owl has an east face (the one that I saw) that is nearly vertical. I saw some more views of it after I got above timberline, but the clouds closed in very densely as I walked up the steepest part of the slope, and I could only see the rocks around me. The steep part seemed to last for miles. I rested three or four times before it leveled out. Once the trail levels, however, it becomes *very* level. You see, on top of Katahdin is a flat land strewn with boulders. It's called the Tableland. I walked for a mile over almost level land, with no views at all. It was as if boulders were moving in from the clouds in front of me, then vanishing into the clouds behind me, without me walking at all. Occasionally the clouds would open up a bit and I could see a big rock pile on the Tableland, and when the trail began going up the rock pile, I realized that that was Baxter Peak. The air cleared as I climbed the rock pile. I reached the summit and it was impossible to believe I was done. To the south, the air was clear down to a solid blanket of clouds which was, itself, well above timberline. To the north, the entire Katahdin basin was full of clouds, right up to the rim. All I could see, in every direction, was rocks heaped on rocks.

Love, Dan

P.S. You might want to know how I got home. I was on the summit admiring the rocks when four Dartmouth Medical College students walked up. We talked for a while and then one of them asked how I was getting home. I said "By thumb" and they offered me a ride to Hanover, New Hampshire. We got there late that night, and they offered me their apartment to sleep in. The next morning they let me off at an entrance ramp to Interstate-91, and the fourth car that passed picked me up and took me to Holyoke, Massachusetts. I then took the bus back to home.

Appalachian Trail (Maine), 19 June – 16 July 1978

Start at US-2 near Gorham, New Hampshire

19 June: in white birch grove by US-2

20 June: beyond Trident Col

21 June: Gentian Pond Shelter

22 June: Carlo Col Shelter

23 June: climb Goose Eye; camp beyond Mahoosuc Notch

24 June: Grafton Notch Lean-to

25 June: beyond Frye Brook Lean-to at “mosquito haven”

26 June: beyond Elephant Mountain Lean-to

27 June: beyond Sabbath Day Pond Lean-to

28 June: resupply at Rangeley; camp at Piazza Rock Lean-to

29 June: climb Saddleback; camp at Poplar Ridge Lean-to

30 June: South Branch Carrabassett River

1 July: Cranberry Pond

2 July: North Horn of Bigelow (starry night)

3 July: Little Bigelow overlook

4 July: East Carry Pond Lean-to

5 July: Pierce Pond Lean-to

6 July: Moxie Bald Mountain

7 July: resupply at Monson; camp at Old Stage Road Lean-to

8 July: Long Pond Stream Lean-to

9 July: north slope of Fourth Mountain

10 July: climb Chairback Mountain; camp beyond Gulf Hagas

11 July: White Cap Mountain Lean-to

12 July: Cooper Brook Falls Lean-to

13 July: swim at Lower Joe Mary Lake, drink from Potaywadjo Spring,
view Katahdin over Pemadumcook Lake; camp on sand beach
of Nahmakanta Lake

14 July: birch forest at Rainbow Lake; camp at Hurd Brook Lean-to

15 July: Katahdin Stream Campground (in a lean-to)

16 July: climb Katahdin, leave via Abol Trail