



The Cottage and Tower.

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
GREYLOCK COMMISSION.

JANUARY, 1918.



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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PITTSFIELD, MASS., Jan. 1, 1918.

To His Excellency the Governor of the Commonwealth and the Honorable Council.

GENTLEMEN:— Enclosed please find the annual report of the Greylock Reservation Commission.

Very respectfully yours,

FRANCIS W. ROCKWELL,
Chairman.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

REPORT OF THE GREYLOCK RESERVATION COMMISSION.

This Commission was first appointed by Governor Roger Wolcott in June, 1898, under the act of 1898, chapter 543.

Until 1900 they were arranging for the transfers to the Commonwealth of the property of the old "Greylock Park Association" (recorded Nov. 4, 1899).

After that transfer the first land purchases were made from the 1898 appropriation, which were recorded in 1900.

The first annual county appropriation "for care and maintenance" was made in 1900.

A ROAD OVER THE MOUNTAIN.

By chapter 226 of the Acts of 1900 the county of Berkshire was authorized to build and maintain a way across Greylock Mountain. Under that act the then board of county commissioners — Col. Frank S. Richardson of North Adams, Mr. William P. Wood of Pittsfield, and Mr. William C. Dalzell of Egremont — built a road from the summit southerly, four-fifths of a mile, at an expense of about \$12,500.

The work was done by contract by John Polcaro. It was quite an undertaking at the time, there being no completed road from the south. Much rock cutting and long retaining walls were necessary. This was the first piece of road built.

Mr. Wood, the last survivor of that board of county commissioners, died Sept. 29, 1917.

The lower part of the road authorized by the act of 1900 (chapter 226), running down toward New Ashford, called the Cooke and Robbins Road, has not yet been made a county way.

The same county commissioners, with the exception of Mr. Dalzell, who had been succeeded by Mr. Henry D. Sisson of New Marlborough, in continuing the road work in 1904 and 1905 built two portions of the road farther down the mountain (to replace portions of the steep temporary road), known as the Cut Off and the Switch Back roads.

These three portions of the southern road were built under the act referred to. Afterward, under the act of 1906, the so-called Rockwell Road was built by the county commissioners, — Col. Frank S. Richardson, Mr. Henry D. Sisson, and Mr. Arthur W. Plumb of Pittsfield.

MOUNTAIN ROADS.

These are minuted in the report of January, 1914, on the first and second pages.

The divisions of the southern road, "named for convenience of reference and working," are minuted on pages 18 to 20 of the report of January, 1914, as well as the other roads.

See the road and trail map at the end of the January, 1915, report, and a short description, on pages 6 and 7, of the approaches to the summit. The division names of the mountain roads may be found on pages 4 to 6 in the report of January, 1913. In the report of January, 1912, page 5, is a minute of the road west of the Greylock peak. For the Adams road see report of January, 1911, page 5. These roads were built for horse-drawn vehicles. They were narrow, with many curves. The southern, or Pittsfield, road is now used by automobiles. It needs widening and has but few turnouts.

Owing to the terrain the changing of all these roads to accommodate the automobile travel would be expensive. The North Adams road is very steep, and would need to be changed somewhat and improved if automobiles were to go over the mountain. Naturally, the greater share of the county appropriations thus far have been expended on these roads.

The Greylock Reservation is one of the best assets of Berkshire. In the end, an automobile road will go over the mountain as an addition to the Mohawk Trail. Whether it should go near the Hopper Trail to Williamstown, or from the summit direct to North Adams, is a debatable question.

Naturally, the roads over the hills into and out of the county come first; the internal roads of the county next; but Greylock roads, like the roads into and out of the county, will add greatly to the delight of the public at large.

THE RESERVATION APPRECIATED BY THE PUBLIC.

Greylock has been a point of interest for more than a century. The reservation is appreciated more and more as time goes on. The excursions over it are made in groups of two or more pedestrians. Often single persons seek out its varied attractions. Often large parties of pedestrians roam the reservation. Both in summer and winter the reservation is appreciated. Automobiles go up the southern road, and this season the Berkshire Transportation Company Red Bus Line, carrying 11 persons, has made weekly trips from Pittsfield to the summit, or when parties were ready.

Pedestrians come from the trolley station in Lanesborough (11.2 miles) to the summit over the southern road; from North Adams, about 7 miles over the Notch and Bellows Pipe trails; from the arch bridge at Cheshire Harbor (trolley), 5 miles over the Cheshire Harbor Trail; from Adams, over the town road and upper part of the Cheshire Harbor Trail, about 8 miles, or by way of the Bellows Pipe Trail; from Williamstown, over the Hopper Trail, about 8 miles. Others climb the mountain from all sides.

While the accommodations at the summit are primitive, the county people put up with them, cherishing the hope that in time they may be improved. Women and school children climb the mountain trails. The greater number climb the Cheshire Harbor Trail from the trolley, 5 miles below in the eastern valley. Many go up at night to see the sunrise. The reservation is well known to the people of Berkshire of all ages, while many from abroad visit it each year in increasing numbers. To see large groups of young lads and lasses and grown people tramping up to spend the night; to watch the automobiles climbing up and down; to find on a summer's morning 150 to 200 persons who have brought their blankets and camped on the ground to enjoy the morning hours; to see the boy scouts drilling on the mountain top; to read the names of persons from this and other countries who register;

to glance at many articles and squibs in the press; to hear of the tramps of students and young persons who have climbed all over the mountain; to know of one young man who for eighteen Sunday mornings before his Bible class took trips to the mountain; to read the Greylock Guide, published this year, showing the trails and paths written by a young man now in the service of his country; to read over the list of books and articles written about Greylock as set forth by title in the reports of 1916 and 1917, — surely all this convinces one that the reservation is enjoyed and appreciated.

Many of these Greylock climbers are now in the service. To know Greylock thoroughly is a liberal education.

THE TOWER AND SMALL BUILDINGS.

From the old Greylock Park Association (incorporated in 1886) came the steel tower, still in good condition, an old log stable, which has been slightly enlarged, and a small shelter, now replaced by the little cottage, and a roadway from North Adams, $5\frac{2}{3}$ miles in length. The stable and cottage do not meet the present-day requirements.

THE RESERVATION WORK OF 1917.

Usually the work begins in April or May. This year the season was late, the first trip being made on May 25. The conditions are set forth in the following article taken from the "North Adams Evening Transcript" of May 26, 1917: —

Fighting their way through a blinding snowstorm and being obliged to cut and force their way over roads which were blocked with fallen trees, was the unique and unusual experience of Greylock Commissioner W. H. Sperry of this city when he made his trip to the Greylock summit yesterday. Mr. Sperry was accompanied on this trip by Superintendent Jared S. Adams of Pittsfield and Samuel Martin of this city.

The party left this city early yesterday morning in a double team, and for the first part of the distance found the North Adams road in very good condition. The party found no difficulty in making the ascent until they reached Wilbur Park about 3 miles from the top of the mountain. Here they encountered a big snowstorm which lasted a couple of hours. To encounter a snowstorm the very last part of May was something of a novelty, but the trio of men went on their way, and, a short distance above, found their way obstructed by a huge

deadwood beach tree 24 inches in diameter. They hewed their way through this and went a short distance further, thinking that now perhaps the passageway would be easy for them. This was not the case, however, for before they reached the mountain top they were obliged to cut their way through or remove 21 trees of good size.

It was 3 o'clock when the men reached the summit, and here they felt sure that their trials were ended. They found 2 inches or more of snow on the ground, but this was a trivial matter, and they felt that soon they would be in shelter in the Mountain House. It was a very surprised group of men that reached the house and found it had been broken into. The conditions which existed were almost indescribable. It was found that fires had been built in the barn and in the kitchen sink, and in the cellar were 2 feet of solid ice. Everything was in such a state that it required only a short survey to make sure that it would be impossible to open the Mountain House for Memorial Day. This will be a disappointment to many, for large numbers always try to take the trip to the summit of the State's highest mountain on Memorial Day. For the first time in the history of Greylock Mountain as a reservation it will be impossible to open that house, for if it were possible to arrange matters so that the caretakers could get there to prepare for the opening, it would be next to impossible for parties to go there by auto or by team.

Not only did the party experience difficulty in reaching the summit, and after their arrival at the summit house, but they also found travel difficult when they made the return trip to this city. They came back by way of the Pittsfield road. Here they encountered drifts from 1 to 5 feet deep of snow and ice. Some of these they were able to pass over, for the snow had not melted, and the drifts easily bore the weight of the heavy team. Others were so very high that Mr. Sperry and his party were obliged to take passage through the fields. They took the Pittsfield road to Adams and arrived home about 8 o'clock last evening, after a day filled with varied and strange experiences.

The commissioners will send men to the summit the first part of next week to finish the work of breaking out the roads and preparing the house for the opening, which will not be before the first part of June.

This was a late season, as shown by the following report of Mr. Adams, the superintendent: —

Mr. ROCKWELL: — You have asked me for a brief report of the work done on the reservation in 1917.

The heavy snows of the previous winter, saturated by the heavy rains of March and April, formed almost solid ice several feet in thickness. This, followed by the late cold spring, prevented our doing very much with the roads before late in June. The most of the roads came through the winter with very little damage from winter and spring

storms. The work began on the Pittsfield end of the Rockwell road, and was continued through to the summit, doing the usual spring repairs, going over the entire road with the grader, cleaning ditches and sluices and repairing bridges, culverts, etc.

In several places the road was considerably widened. About 6 miles below the summit nearly a mile of narrow road was torn up and a very much wider road constructed. In several places nearer the summit steep places in the road were cut down and the road was made wider. A large part of the road to Stony Ledge was practically rebuilt.

A bridge was built on the Adams road and the usual repairs made. The work was found to be expensive this year on account of the high cost of labor and teams, teamsters in Adams demanding \$8 per day, and refusing to work for less, while teamsters in Lanesborough would not work for less than \$7 per day. The Lanesborough teams were employed. We paid \$2.50 for laborers.

J. S. ADAMS.

The parcel of land referred to on page 8 of the report of January, 1916, was not obtained, as a majority of the Commission did not deem it best, after the matter had been fully investigated, to purchase or take it.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE REPORTS.

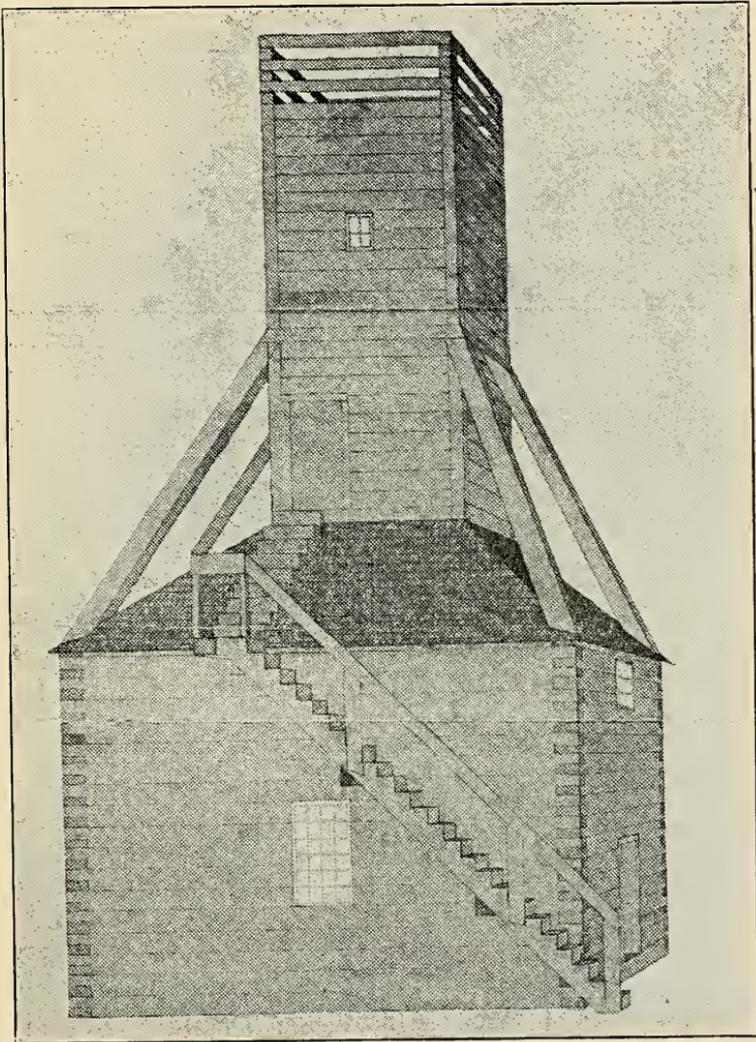
The originals of most of the cuts appearing in these reports have been used by permission of Mr. Charles T. Barker of 20 Oxford Street, Pittsfield, Mass., a lover of Greylock, who has taken several hundred photographs around the mountain in recent years.

The original cut of the old Greylock tower may be found in Col. William H. Phillip's "Berkshire Hills," a historic quarterly, July 6, 1906, page 157, where is printed the contract under which the wooden tower was erected.

This contract "for building an observatory on Greylock" is signed by James H. Coffin, Caleb Brown, N. E. Pierson, committee for Williamstown, J. E. Marshall, George Millard, committee for Adams, Gad Smith, Contractor, dated Williamstown, July 21, 1840. At that date North Adams was a part of the township of Adams.

FRANCIS W. ROCKWELL,
WILLIAM H. SPERRY,
ARTHUR B. DANIELS,

Commissioners.



The Old Greylock Tower of 1840.

(By permission of Mrs. Wm. H. Phillips of Amherst.)

