

**GLENN'S HISTORY
of
THE ADIRONDACKS
(ESSEX CO., NEW YORK)**



**Volume 1
RAMBLES AROUND THE
BOQUET RIVER VALLEY**

by
Morris F. Glenn

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Of
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October 1, 2019

DEDICATION--DOROTHY A. PLUM

Dorothy A. Plum has been a friend and, in years past, she has provided reference help for this series. Over the years, she has become a part of the very Adirondack history which she gathered for her major life's work, the *Adirondack Bibliography*. Today, the much used *Adirondack Bibliography* is frequently just called "Plum," in much the same "shorthand" manner as Alfred Lee Donaldson's *A History of the Adirondacks* is now referred to as "Donaldson." Her work with the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) and the Essex County Historical Society has removed her from the sidelines and put her into the mainstream of Adirondack history along with the likes of William C. White, Paul Jamieson, Edwin H. Kethledge, G. Glyndon Cole, Maitland DeSormo, and many others who populate the pages of her *Adirondack Bibliography*.

Dorothy Plum was the second of four daughters born to Edith Greeley and Harry Clarke Plum (Vassar and Harvard). At the time of her birth, her father, principal of the Cherry Valley school, was studying for the Episcopal ministry under the direction of William Crosswell Doane, Bishop of Albany. After his ordination, Father Plum served in Granville, N.Y. and then took his family to Kansas as a missionary under Bishop Griswold. From 1912 until his death in 1921, Dorothy's father was in charge of an Episcopal School for girls in Saratoga Springs. Dorothy spent her first two college years at the Albany State College for Teachers, transferring to Vassar as a junior and graduating in 1922. She worked as a student assistant in the Vassar College Library and, encouraged by one of her teachers, Professor Lucy Salmon, after a year of teaching, entered the pioneer library school in Albany. While working full-time in the New York State Library, she completed the two-year graduate course in three years. This was followed by a year at the Columbia School of Library Service--then back to the Vassar College Library. There, she was one of the early advocates of specialized college training for librarians. In this, she worked with one of the nation's best-known librarians, Melvil Dewey, originator of the Dewey decimal system for libraries. She served as reference librarian, bibliographer, and curator of rare books and special collections during her Vassar years.

While at Vassar, Dorothy took an active part in the organization of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. She was a Chairman of the Hurricane Chapter of the ADK after moving to Keene Valley and Vice President of the main ADK. Her two younger sisters were members of the Albany Chapter and through them, she was introduced to the charm and fascination of the Adirondack Mountains. Her sister, Nell Plum, was a 46er and Chairman of the Outing Committee of the Albany Chapter. Betsy Plum was active in the Albany Chapter, the "Cloud Splitter," and the ADK Archives Committee. The Forest Preserve, with its great verdant ranges, beautiful lakes and wild rocky streams, rapidly became the Plum's first love. Through Walter and Marion Biesemeyer, hosts of the Mountain House in Keene, they were enabled to buy a few acres on East Hill with an ever-changing view of Marcy as well as Cascade and Porter Mountains. She retired from Vassar in 1965 and East Hill in Keene was the ideal location for the Plum's retirement home. Here, Dorothy and her sisters lived and treasured the peace and beauty of the Adirondacks.

During those action packed years, few mountain oriented events took place without the assistance or participation of one of the Plums.

It was in Poughkeepsie that Dorothy's chief bibliographic project, which lasted 25 years, had its beginning. The Adirondack Mountain Club's President, Dr. Edgar B. Nixon, persuaded her to embark on a listing of books and articles about the Adirondacks. She was duly appointed Chairman of the Club's Bibliography Committee. With the help of the devoted committee members, the work progressed, and the first volume, recording Adirondack publications through 1955, was published in 1968. This was followed by a ten-year supplement covering items published through 1965.

Robert F. Hall wrote an editorial tribute to Miss Plum in the January 23, 1985 issue of the *Valley News* on the occasion of her retirement from yet another enterprise as Librarian for the Essex County Historical Society, Brewster Library. Your author remembers spending many rainy afternoons in the company of Dorothy Plum at the Brewster Library. When rain precluded out-of-doors activity, I would go to the Library to do some research and end up getting more information than I ever expected to find because Dorothy Plum was a virtual treasure trove of information for a neophyte author. In addition to the research hints and historical conversations, I always enjoyed the social aspect of our visit. She was one of those unforgettable people. In a listing of her many accomplishments, in the January 23rd, 1985 issue of the *Valley News*, Bob Hall summarized her work on the *Adirondack Bibliography* with:

"The first volume took 25 years of Miss Plum's life. She scoured local libraries for information. She made contact with individuals known to have Adirondack collections. She examined the card files of the State Museum, the New York Public Library and even the Library of Congress. There are more than 7,000 entries in the book.

For the second volume, seven scholars of the Adirondack Mountain Club and the State University of New York assisted Miss Plum. Their compilations testified to an increase in interest in our region and the proliferation of those who write about it.

Dorothy A. Plum at 93, of East Hill Road, died on May 16, 1994, at the Horace Nye Home in Elizabethtown. An account of the Miss Plum's work on the *Adirondack Bibliography* appeared in the Sara-Placid edition of the *Press-Republican* on January 18, 1985 under the title, "Dot's Bibliography Her Labor of Love." Another tribute entitled "The Plum Sisters" was printed in the April 1977 issue of *Adirondac*. Dorothy Plum's column, "The Adirondack Bookshelf," was a mainstay in *Adirondac* for many years. Her contributions to North Country history and, yes--to historians, have been many and, if human nature has run its predictable course--the thanks to her have been all too few. Thank you, Dorothy A. Plum!

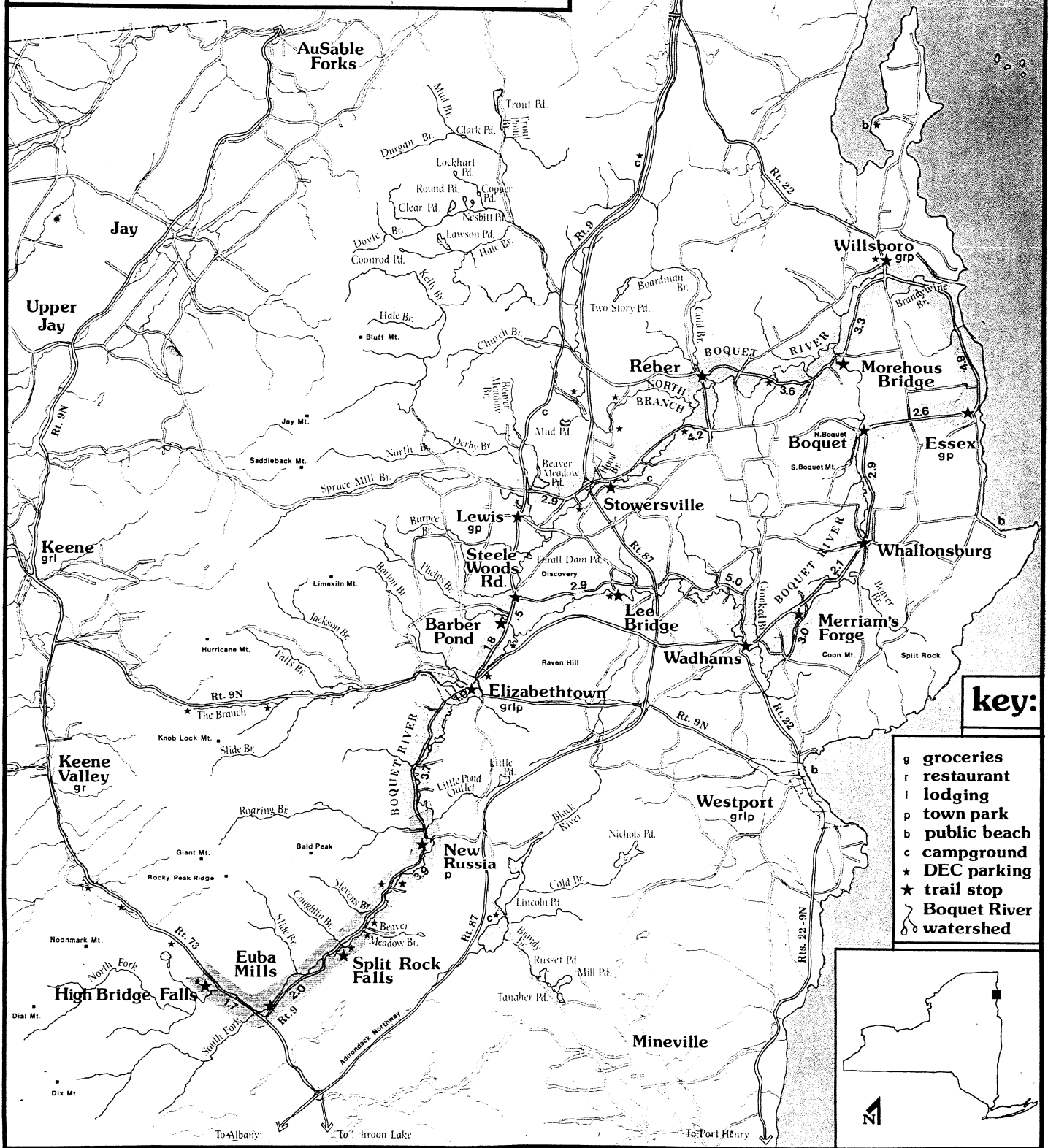
DEDICATION



Dorothy A. Plum was the librarian at the Essex County Historical Society when I first started my research there. She was a member from the earliest days of the Society and she was well versed on Adirondack history. Her first Adirondack Bibliography contained a listing of 7,212 titles and she followed with a second update of 10,641 additional titles. Realizing that more titles were being published, she followed up with a soft-bound supplement that covered the next three years. And, she was inundated by the output of Adirondack authors over the next few years and she attempted to get some help. She formed a committee of librarians and they too were swamped. The age of automation offers answers, but, a new Dorothy A. Plum has yet to appear.

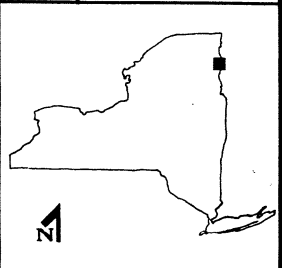
HISTORIC BOQUET RIVER bike trail - auto tour

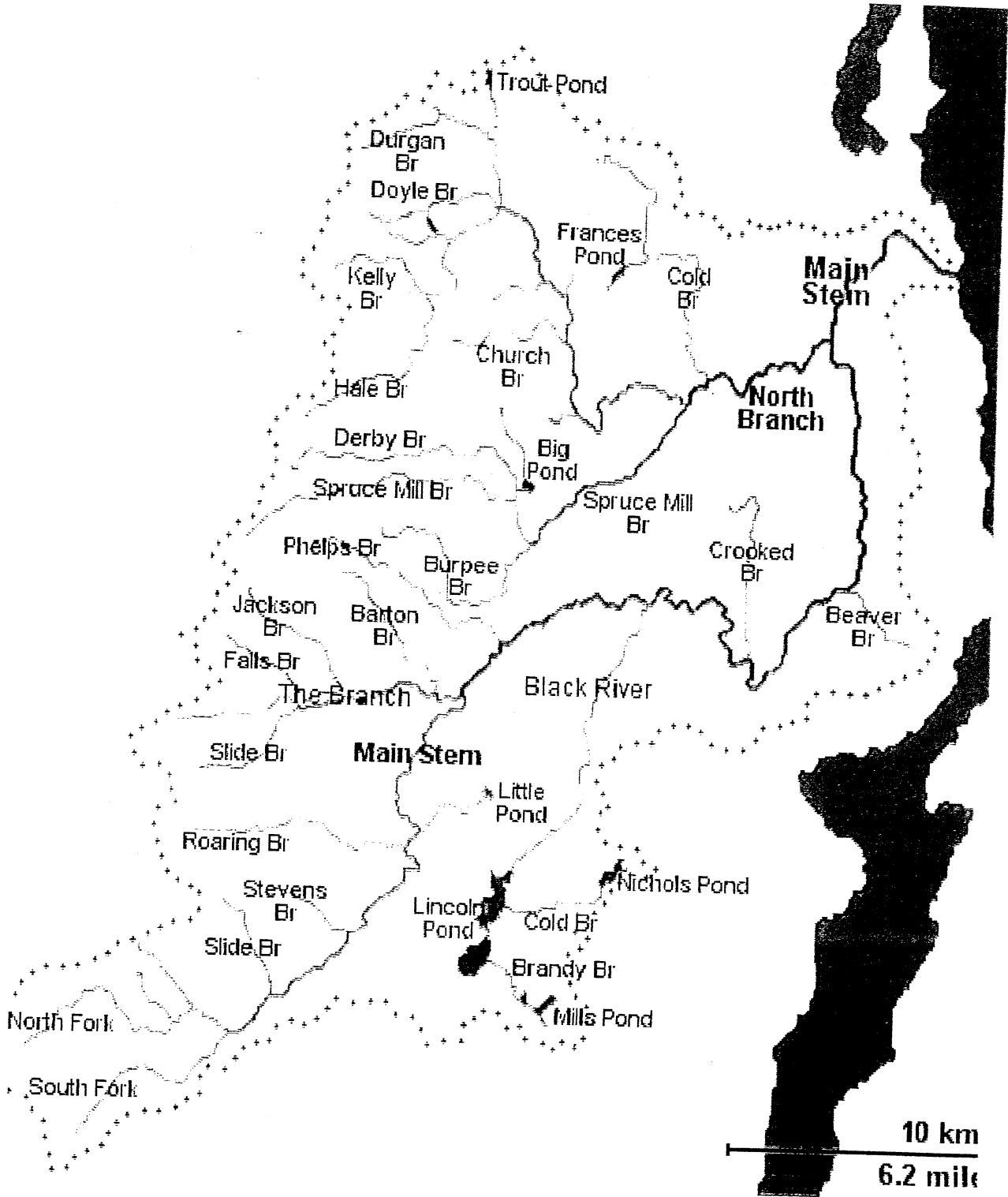
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BOQUET RIVER ASSOCIATION
Essex County, NY



key:

- g groceries
- r restaurant
- l lodging
- p town park
- b public beach
- c campground
- ★ DEC parking
- ★ trail stop
- Boquet River watershed





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When a writing project takes several years to complete, as has been the case with this one, and the author has rambled over many trails, the path starts to become indistinct. This is especially true when the author's path has led through forest, marsh, bog, hill, valley, as well as restaurants, hamlets, libraries, and museum collections. During these circuitous rambles, many people have served as "guide" and have helped in many ways. Therefore, this book is the story of people as well as of a river, rather loosely bound with a geographical string. I would especially like to thank the now, dearly departed, Ethel and Joseph Kozma of Wadhams, Ann and Gordon Sherman, Jr. of Westport, Howard and Anita Hayes of Essex all of whom have helped to tie the story to the land. I would like to mention the help and companionship of Emmett Coonrod who has also passed away just before Christmas 1988. It was a personal loss for me as well as for others in the Boquet Valley. All of these people and many others mentioned in the text have provided wise counsel and guided me to special places on or around the river.

Most of my trips around the Valley were taken in company of a group, self named "The Ironmongers." As the name implies, our group was searching mainly for remains of iron industry in the Boquet Valley. However, during our frequent rambles, no opportunity is missed to visit other meaningful sites. At various times, our group of Ironmongers has consisted of Richard Ward of Plattsburgh, James C. Dawson of Peru, John Moravek of Plattsburgh, Ross Allen of Willsboro, Robert Gordon of Hamden, Connecticut, and David Killick of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Although the early paths taken at the beginning of this project may now be growing indistinct, many of the way points will be memories. The Ironmongers, the library people that I have met, the map and manuscript collections that I have pored over, and the books I have read about our region--all have become a part of my life. This book began with the publication on March 25, 1991 of the *Boquet River Scenic/Historic Greenway* for the New York State Senate and the title is self-explanatory. From that point on things got complicated. I gave up on publishing the manuscript and gave the rights to the manuscript to the Boquet River Association. They couldn't come up with the money to publish the book or the illustrations. There were frequent false alarms given but the summary for the 20 or so years that they owned the rights were unproductive. I decided to take another attempt to publish it and I requested the return of my "overdue" rights to the manuscript which they gladly returned. I canvassed the market for a book on this small river and decided it held NO MARKET VALUE!

Now that I am preparing my collection as a gift for the New York State Library, an inquiry by a librarian has prompted me to bind a few of the books to make the series complete. This serves to explain why this volume is different from the others. I neglected to mention that it was Volume 1 of; **GLENN'S HISTORY OF THE ADIRONDACKS.**

INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT F. HALL

This book is the author's gift to the Boquet River Association to describe and promote an interest in the projected Gilliland Boquet River Paddlers' Trail along the Boquet River. Morris Glenn, the author, is well equipped to write about the Boquet River. He has written and published thirty-five books on the history of this region including limited editions, very limited editions, and the popular *Story of Three Towns*. That book, which relates the founding and history of Westport, Willsboro, and Essex, published in 1977, was my first initiation into Morris Glenn's fascinating story of the past events in our region. Morris seems to have a built-in divining rod which guides him to obscure sources of which most of us would otherwise be totally ignorant. This book covers a very limited area of Essex County but is perhaps the richest in the history, layer upon layer, of the county. But Morris Glenn is more than a historian. His description of the islands and the sand dunes at the mouth of Boquet reveals poetic appreciation of their natural beauty combined with profound understanding of their geology.

The author has unraveled the complex record of the origin of the river's name. The reader has his choice between a garland of flowers, a trough, a kind of boat, or one of several men with similarly spelled names. Most convincing to me were the conclusions of the late Koert Burnham, upon whom, for the most part, Morris Glenn has relied.

The historian performs an invaluable service in that he provides another dimension. He gives us a sense of what our people and land represented and from which we learn so much. Morris has recreated the era before the railroads and automobile when the rivers, canals, and lakes were the major inland highways for travel and transportation. With his help, we can stand at the river's delta and see, in his mind's eye, the teeming traffic of lighters, barges, and sailing sloops which was the daily caravan of other centuries.

Morris Glenn was born February 3, 1940, in an Appalachian coal-mining town in Virginia which had, he says, two names from which you could choose: Van Sant or Grundy. He graduated from East Tennessee State University, received a Masters Degree in Earth Science from Ball State University, and received his law degree from the Columbia School of Law, Catholic University, in Washington, D.C. He began his career as a government cartographer in 1960 but worked for over fifteen years as a sea-going oceanographer before returning to his chosen field of cartography.

This region's good fortune, in its appeal to Morris, comes from the fact that his wife, Ellin, born in Elizabethtown, was, during the years of her youth, a summer visitor at Whallons Bay and the Crater Club. In 1976, Morris and Ellin bought the "Eyrie," a Crater Club camp on the lakeshore. Morris was shocked, he says, that there was no written history of either the Crater Club or the towns along the lake. His research brought him into contact with Koert Burnham whose father, John Bird Burnham, had established the Club. He acknowledges his debt to Koert for much of his information on the Club which appeared in his book, *American Authors' Summer Retreat on Lake Champlain* (1979). Morris was fascinated to learn that Christopher Morley, an early visitor to the Club, had stayed in the camp which he and Ellin had purchased. His interest in Morley struck a responsive chord for me because in the early 1920's, as a copy boy on the *Mobile (Alabama) Register*, I

watched the exchange table every day for the arrival of the *New York Post* which carried Morley's beautifully written columns. Morley is remembered today mainly for his novels, *Kitty Foyle*, and *John Mistletoe*. Morris finds evidence that Morley spent time at Camp Eyrie and is certain that this excerpt from *John Mistletoe* refers to his stay there:

There was a porch that overhung the water, where one fell asleep hearing the small syllables of the beach; woke now and then, as one does in open air, to see always a different pattern of the planets. Usually the beam from Split Rock lighthouse was the only company in that small bungalow, except Thomas Henry Huxley. Once in a while however a friend camping farther along the shore stopped in to sit late beside the fire, to discuss symptoms in their wounded bosoms.... But mostly, he was alone, and turned in on the camp-cot on the porch surrounded by stars and in a happy confusion of ideas, a mixture of T. H. Huxley and the flutter of bicycling skirts.

...

There was a road, powdered thick with dust, that ran along the lake shore. At night it was a deep channel through pine trees where a dark ribbon of sky was granulated with stars. The water below it whispered to the stony beach with Tennysonian delicacy.

Morris told me that it was really "my desire to republish those wonderful words" and "an interest in how Christopher Morley came to be at my camp and the Crater Club that started my local history writing."

We, today and future generations will owe much to the members of the Boquet River Association for their past "good works" and especially for their work towards establishing a Blue Way trail for the river which Morris has documented so completely. It goes without saying that we owe a great deal to Morris Glenn for this book which provides a focus on this geography of the Boquet, so richly endowed with the history of our past.

Robert F. Hall

PREFACE

This book was begun soon after the National Park Service Study of the Boquet River made me aware that there was nothing specifically written about the Boquet River. Ever since my first book, *The Story of Three Towns*, was published in 1976, I have been interested in the Boquet River. Since I write for personal pleasure, I have always written about something that interests me and it was incidental that my new project would yield the only book about the River. However, it is always satisfying to undertake a project that will create something where there was nothing. This is especially true concerning the Boquet River because it was long overdue for some notice. It will be a very personal book, written around the general theme of a trip from Mt. Dix down to Lake Champlain.

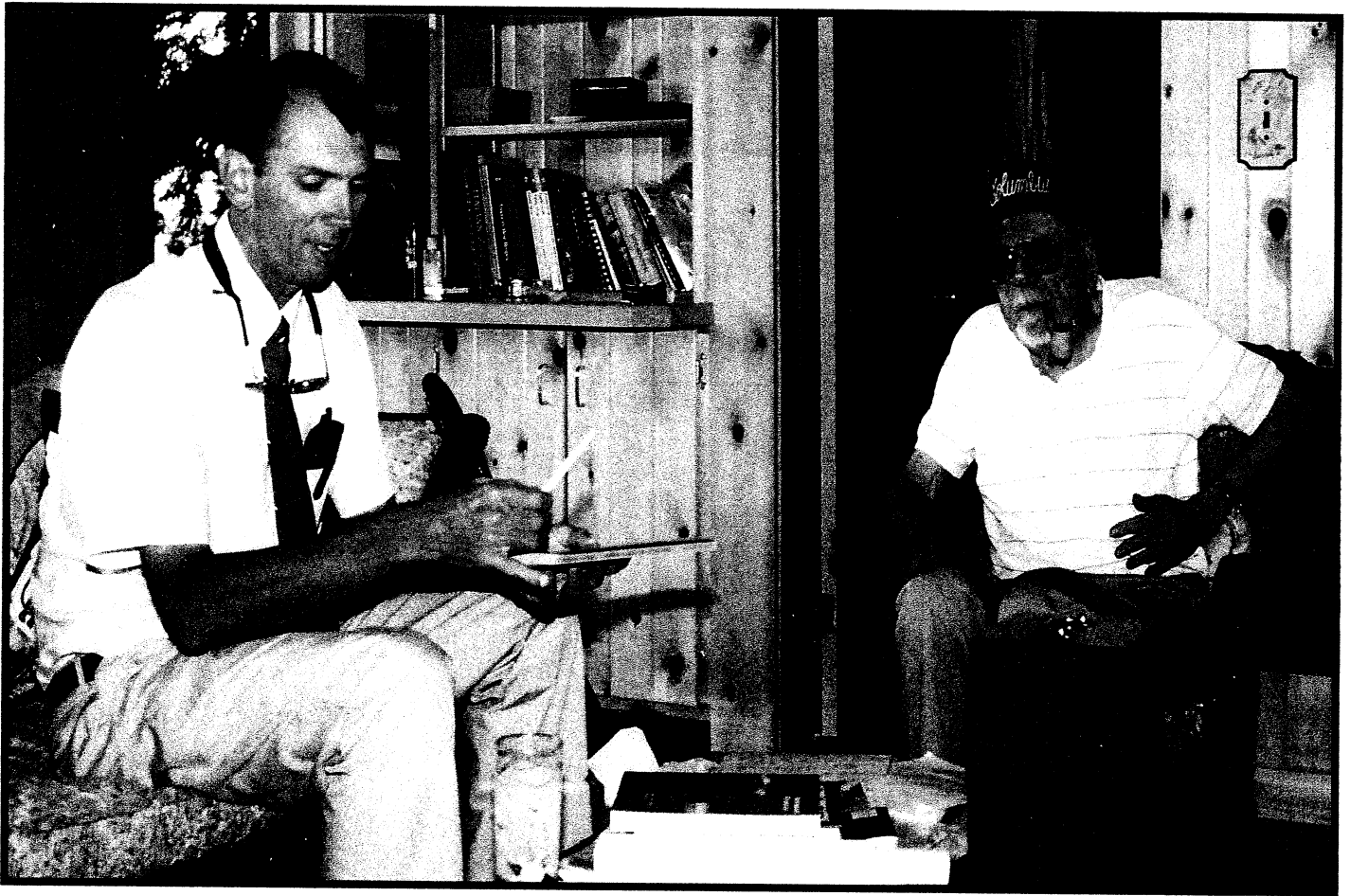
Early in the project, I assumed a sort of ownership over the Boquet River Valley which may explain some of my personal approach. I knew that I would have to share this ownership with many others, but that helps to sell books--doesn't it? However, standing on the heights of Mt. Dix, it is easy to think of all the Valley as being your very own for a short of time. So, readers should forgive the short bursts of proprietary interest displayed herein.

It was Robert Lewis Stevenson who wrote, "There is plenty to say, or to say over again." Although I do not want to republish what I have already published in *The Story of Three Towns* and *Coon Mountain*, some repetition is inevitable. For new documentary material, I must rely on only a few historical sources that have been quoted all too frequently. However, I might propose to use the analogy of a number of painters painting the same scene, whereby we are assured that each one will paint quite a different picture of the same scene. So, having read all of the prior articles on the area including my own works, I know that my use of these sources will now yield a different perspective. I will quote Stevenson again from the same essay, published in the April 1881 issue of the *Fortnightly Review*, wherein he described the advantages accrued by multiple looks at the same area with:

"... you may find something, however trivial, that may, if it does nothing else, take your mind away for a little change; and, if only for a few minutes, lead you round a bend in the road, or show you the hills and woods away in the distance. Hills and woods that you cannot reach, of course, but of which you can catch just a glimpse.... Rivers whose names you have almost forgotten. Little roads that lose themselves in moors and marsh, a few of the birds and flowers that you would meet upon your way.... So I will begin to write."

Robert Louis Stevenson caught the public eye with his *Treasure Island* (1883) but he is best remembered locally for his stay in Saranac Lake. He arrived in Saranac Lake on October 3, 1887 and remained under the care of Dr. Edward L. Trudeau until April 16, 1888. Descriptions of his stay in Saranac Lake are found in Clayton Hamilton's "On the Trail of Stevenson" and in my own 1989 Christmas printing entitled "Robert Louis Stevenson's North Country Christmas." Referring back to the above quotation, I might say that it is unusual for an author to find his thoughts so explicitly expressed by another author, especially one as important as Robert Louis Stevenson. So, in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson -- "I will begin to write."

INTRODUCTION TO THIS BOOK



Dr. James C. Dawson, on left, handing a pen and a copy of a new book* by Robert H. Hall, on right, to sign and personalize. I had just received a number of freshly printed copies from the publisher and Jim had purchased one. Photo was taken at my camp, Eyrie, at the Crater Club, Essex. I was pleased to have Bob ask me to be the editor of this book and to introduce my own new book.

*ROBERT F. HALL--PAGES FROM ADIRONDACK HISTORY (1992). This book was a collection of newspaper articles originally written by ROBERT F. HALL of Willsboro, NY. It was edited by MORRIS F. GLENN from the original newspaper articles. It turned out to be an extensive project to update and make the selected articles flow in a book format. However, many stories included have been catalogued in Google and have been quoted over the years since. It was a 152 page, perfect-bound book printed and distributed by Purple Mountain Press of Fleischmann's, NY. (Bob was a retired newspaper editor and was kept on a retainer by various newspaper and magazines.. I note than Bob's papers, all 23 boxes of them, have been given to the New York State Library, and that the contents mention my name.)

**A SPECIAL ROBERT HALL ESSAY ON THE
ADIRONDACK CENTENNIAL
(1892 - 1992)**

On May 20, 1892 New York State's Governor Roswell P. Flower of Watertown, New York, signed Chapter 707 of the Laws of 1892 creating the Adirondack Park. The Park was born as one step among many in the long discussion of the natural resources that continually envelope northern New York; and in parallel fashion, envelope the nation and the world beyond. This collection of Rob Hall's columns and essays memorialize the one-hundredth anniversary of the Adirondack Park as his previous essay collections reflected on the issues facing the Nation and the world beyond. Robert Hall's timely article on the centennial of the Adirondack Park has been selected by the editors as the keynote essay for this book.

**Dr. James C. Dawson*
May 1, 1992**

***Dr. Dawson was on the Board of Regents of New York State when he wrote this nice “quip” pertaining to “Bob” Hall. He was also teaching geology and environmental science when it was written. He was a member of various boards and associations at the same time and you might say simply—He had his hands full!!**

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CHAPTER 1 BOQUET RIVER RAMBLING

My rambles around the Boquet Valley have had many different goals, purposes and modes. Some have been accomplished on foot, a few via bicycle, but, sad to say, most were taken in an automobile, the transport of choice for many Boquet River ramblers. However, most of my automobile trips have included one or more side trips by foot to see or photograph some of the beautiful scenery or unusual sights. Rambles via each type of conveyance can take on different forms. For example, a ramble can be a leisurely stroll with no particular goal intended or it can be an extended day's hike up into the headwaters of the Boquet River itself. A ramble can be undertaken to hunt the ruins of an old ironwork or just to enjoy the area's unequaled mountain and river scenery. In essence, the ramble itself is a sport as much as reaching the intended goal. Just stopping at a convenient roadside parking area and leisurely heading for the river bank has also yielded many an interesting afternoon. In the Boquet River Valley, rambling for any reason, at any time, can be a rewarding venture.

The writer of this book has taken much pleasure from the woods and waters of the Boquet River Valley. As yet, neither farming nor seasonal property ownership has resulted in the more significant stretches being fenced off and posted. However, the amount of river bank that is posted has reached a level that should concern public recreation advocates. Bradford Torrey, the Pied Piper of a generation of hikers, influenced the movement to open private lands for limited recreational purposes. He coined the phrase, "Rambler's Lease," for situations where an otherwise open trail was posted. Some access for hiking and canoeing is a priority issue for such groups as the Boquet River Association.

For the interested reader, I might suggest further reading of Thomas Miller, who is yet another inspirational resource for Boquet River Ramblers. His writings have encouraged countless generations to get out and walk. He wrote in *Rural Sketches* published in 1849 as follows:

"Every man has his hobby; that is something which he takes more delight in aught beside; mine is love of rambling in the country.... This is a vagabonding kind of life, which a poor author may enjoy without doing himself much injury."

I might add a word of caution to Miller's entreaty, in that one should have a good map and compass for safety's sake and, maybe, an "old" map for reference purposes. Old maps have always fascinated me, and I am quite sure that they interest most of you who will read this as well. I make special reference to the old maps of the Boquet Valley area whether they are in the form of land surveys, road maps, topographic maps or hydrographic charts. I can spend a long time pouring over a map of even the smallest area. I find complete agreement with a favorite author of mine, R. L. Stevenson, in saying:

"I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills

and ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the *Standing Stone* or the *Druidic Circle* on the heath; here is an inexhaustive fund of interest for any man with eyes to see or two pence-worth of imagination to understand with!"

Another of R. L. Stevenson's essays, on *Walking Tours*, is a classic and a personal favorite. Today, no out-of-doors anthology is complete without a quotation or two from Stevenson.

I expect most of my readers will also agree with R. L. Stevenson's quotation about the benefit of maps, and, before starting on a long country walk or hike in the woods, they will peruse a map or two to get an idea of what they may see on the trail ingrained in their mind's eye. For the Boquet River Rambler, reference to Grey's *Atlas of Essex County* is a must. It is a source of wonderful old reference maps and shows the settled areas of the country with all of the detail enumerated above by Stevenson. Most of the actual buildings, mills, and factories have changed but the course of the roads and old place names still persist.

The new, large scale, USGS topographic maps are indispensable companions on almost any trip--especially the ones that provide a record of modern boundaries. An inspiring feature of these large scale maps is that they give the illusion that one is covering the ground more quickly. Using the 1:62,500 map, a Rambler may spend all day in an area represented by no more than two square inches, especially in a mountainous region where the vertical height can nearly equal the horizontal distance traveled. With the new 1:25,000 map, the Rambler can see solid progress in several hours' activity. There is a real satisfaction in this because there is nothing like map following for sheer fascination and concentration. On these large scale maps, I like to follow streams almost as much as obscure trails, and when I find a stream or other feature not shown on the map, it is a time for self-congratulation. If I cannot follow a side stream on the ground, I mentally travel its course on the surface of the map. Maps have always been my favorite literature. Guidebooks are but pale substitutions for a good topographic map. I would always choose to study a map rather than read a guidebook. However, I am forced to admit the unusual excellence of the Adirondack Mountain Club's guidebook series, complete with maps, of course.

Writers in the English speaking world always conjure up quotes from and images of Dr. Samuel Johnson when the subject matter is "Rambling." His serial version of *The Rambler* is filled with striking passages that I would like to quote but space and geography mitigate against such literary larceny. The first *Rambler* was published on 20 March 1750 and it came out on Tuesdays and Saturdays in the form of three folio half-sheets. Since this is a book about the Boquet, I might point out that Dr. Johnson's publisher was one Joseph Bouquet. Johnson's rambles around the English countryside have made respectable such activity and such writings for an untold number of other authors in the subsequent two hundred plus years.

Although the present title "Rambles Around..." was not selected to imitate either the style or content of Dr. Johnson's famous work, a small comparison is presumptive. However, the reader will find little herein that is reminiscent of Samuel Johnson,-- unless it is an underlying curiosity about all aspects of the surrounding country. Johnson was not a true nature writer, but he was responsive to the influences of the seasons and in one edition, he dedicated a whole page just to the

opening of flowers and the singing of birds. I will include much more than a few pages of natural history, but most of this book will be a blend of geography and landscape history.

The implication, for most students of English literature, is that a Rambler is a city person out for a restful tour of the rural countryside with little purpose. However, *Literary Walks of Britain*, written by Donald Veall documents the more serious thoughts of some famous walkers, a few of which will be quoted herein. Among them were John Keats, Thomas Hardy, Charles Lamb, D. H. Lawrence, George Meredith, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Virginia Wolfe, Charles Dickens, William Henry Hudson, and William Hazlitt. One of these notables, W. H. Hudson, wrote that stream rambling might even be called an instinct. In addition, he wrote:

The stream invites us to follow: the impulse is so common that it might be set down as an instinct: and certainly there is no more fascinating pastime than to keep company with a river from its source to the sea.

W. H. Hudson (in "Following A River,"
Afoot in England, 1909)

With such a large number of well known authors offering a goldmine of quotations, I am reminded of a very candid comment made by another Rambler, Robert Louis Stevenson. He introduced his book, *Underwoods*, with:

Of all my verse, like not a single line;
But like my title, for it is not mine.
That title from a better man I stole:
Ah, how much better, had I stol'n the whole!

It should surprise no one that there is a useful quotation to apply to almost any natural feature or social situation found in the valley with such a catholic selection of world authors to quote. For example, Evelyn Waugh observed in an essay titled "I See Nothing But Boredom Everywhere," that homogenization of the modern world had spread everywhere that he traveled. He succinctly observed that if one travels to observe different people, eat different food, etc., then standardization has to be considered the enemy of regional diversity. Even though his words of caution to travelers were written in the 1960's before the spread of the national franchises and wide popularity of television, they have a special meaning to us today. We do not have a Roy Rogers or a MacDonald's in the Boquet River Valley yet; but, it is probably only a matter of time. However, television has become the great leveler of cultural differences in the peoples of the Valley and in this country as a whole. I am sad to say that it is the new that seems to represent the worst that one encounters in the Valley today. Litter, abandoned vehicles and decaying housing are the three horsemen of the Boquet River Valley. Even the most scenic vista can be destroyed in short order for the next Rambler by even small amounts of trash and graffiti. As the stories from our rambles unfold in this book, some of these negative aspects, by necessity, will receive further mention.

A further entreaty against sameness is presented by the authors of *Saving America's*

Countryside wherein:

"As the homogenization of urban America accelerates and vacationers grow wary of the moneychangers who operate our ever-present tourist traps, the lure of attractive small towns may increase as places to live and to visit. Rural areas that raise funds to preserve distinctive architectural and cultural qualities are making investments that will assuredly enhance the future of their communities. Moreover, every small town can plant trees and flowers--or preserve a marsh or forest or riverside park--that will add to its appeal."

It is interesting to note that many towns are now turning to their river fronts to provide a focus for modernization and redevelopment efforts--and, none too soon! Rivers provide an antidote to urban sameness because no two rivers are the same, thus providing planners with an underlying theme.

Jack Kerouac, rambler supreme, born Jean Louis Lebris de Kerouac to a French Canadian working class family in Lowell, Massachusetts, exerted an inordinate influence upon my generation. Kerouac's book of rambles, *On the Road* was published in 1957, the same year that I began college. Both the book and its author were subjects of many a late night conversation in the "greasy spoons" and other late night spots of my small university town. I can still remember the excitement that his written words generated over thirty years ago. Kerouac and the lure of the open road was the equivalent of Raymond H. Torrey's "Long Brown Path" to the twenties generation. I could gauge that the night's entertainment was over when Dale Starnes, a fraternity brother, would find his "dog eared" copy of *On the Road* and begin to read a favorite passage to anyone who would listen.

Since the Kerouac years, so called, of my youth, the most exciting, new travel writers that I have found are Vidiadhar S. Naipaul and Shiva Naipaul, overseas Indians born in Trinidad. They have produced a steady stream of travel related books and novels. The Naipauls' refusal to represent poverty, squalor, and ignorance as wonderful human conditions has led to charges of cynicism or worse; but, their words are filled with the ring of truth. Yet their collective views of the human condition are constantly filled with wit and flashes of real life comedy. I doubt that readers of this work will find any Naipaul inspired passages herein, but reading their work is suggested for a lazy July afternoon when joining the crowds at Split Rock Falls.

Letters from another literary rambler, John Keats, written on his tour of the Lake District are an amazing testimony of the enthusiasm of this slightly built, dying young poet from London.
.....ADD.....

The marching song of the Boquet Ramblers could be taken from Walt Whitman's famed poem, "Song of the Open Road." In fact, Raymond H. Torrey turned the opening of its third line, "The long brown path...," into a theme. Torrey's column, "The Long Brown Path," appeared in various editions of the *New York Post* from 1920 until 1938. Some of his columns contain invaluable Adirondack references and are little known today. I have selected some representative lines from Whitman's poem especially for the Boquet River Rambler because these lines emphasize

the joy of rambling. Excerpts are:

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

...

You air that serves me with breath to speak
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings and give
them shape!
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable
showers!
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadside!
I believe you are latent with unseen existences,
You are so dear to me.

...

I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south
are mine.

...

The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness.
I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times,
Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged,

...

Allons [Let's go]! whoever you are come travel with me!
Traveling with me you find what never tires.

The earth never tires,
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first,
Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well
envelop'd,
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than
words can tell.

...

Comrades, I give you my hand
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

Walt Whitman
(published in 1856)

Whitman gave out-of-doors enthusiasts a wealth of reading material. For years, I have contemplated publishing a special collection of Whitman's works designed for light reading. These would be equally appropriate for reading on the deck of my summer place, The Eyrie, or on the banks of the Boquet.

So, you will see that I have called upon these literary rambles as witnesses in support of perhaps an unnecessary plea for a deeper appreciation of the practice of rambling the landscape around us. Our rambles will include the ordinary places where we live as well as the inexpressibly beautiful nooks where we can retreat to find quiet and contentment. We can take the quoted gems of literature with us, both in mind and in printed form, because most rambles taken on summer's day should involve some time to sun, relax, and read. By this point, it should be clear that anyone can qualify for award of the "Boquet River Rambler Certificate" found in the front of the first edition of this book. You might even think that it is part of a promotional scheme to recruit more river patrons and enthusiasts. It is--because this book is meant to include rather than exclude anyone from a "Rambler's lease" on our valley.

There is so much to enjoy, even in our small river valley! Yet, how little time most of us have to see and enjoy it! The more one looks, the more (magically) that there is to see. There can be no end to esthetic discovery in the valley, because artistic stimuli are as omnipresent here as they are likely to be anywhere. It has taken over four years even to enumerate the few historical and natural elements that I have selected to portray the Valley, much less visit and document all of them. However, the "rushing around" approach to visit even a few of these sights is the opposite of the dictionary meaning of the word "ramble." The etymologist tells us that it is based upon "repeated little roamings," thus, yielding a notion of "leisurely wandering for the sake of pleasure wherever

fancy leads"--but not too far or too fast. Even before we begin the substantive part of this book, I must establish a basic ground rule. To qualify as a genuine Boquet River Rambler, you may begin a ramble when and where you will, and, you may stop when you feel like it. So, how can there be any hobby better adapted to vacation enjoyment or to satisfy historical curiosity? Nor, as the fully packed pages in this book admit, is a Boquet River ramble a vain pursuit because one can gain in both health and knowledge during a series of rambles. It is a participatory sport and the reader is invited to join us on all our rambles, complete with a copy of the Boquet River Association's "Historic Boquet River, Bike Trail--Auto Tour Map," in hand.

Before the Boquet River Association published the Boquet Tour Map, the Boquet River suffered from competition for the visitor's attention with the highly publicized and popular trails in the High Peaks region. Outside of the High Peaks, when many people chose a place to enjoy a ramble, they head for a river bank more than any other place. The Boquet River may not have a trail system to equal those found in the High Peaks, but the scenery is certainly competitive. The Boquet and its headwaters tumble out of the high peaks and wend their way through meadows and forests until it flows into scenic Lake Champlain. Descriptions herein of specific parts of the river will reveal that there is an unmistakable attractiveness to running water that rivals any adjacent mountain trail. In competition with mountain climbing, it helps that much of the track of a river ramble is level; however, before you conclude that river rambling has no challenge, I should point out that some banks and by-passes are as steep as the surrounding mountains.

The Boquet is a fine delight of a river. It was born to travel, wanting to move on, intolerant of restraint and impoundment, natural or man-made. Its waters slow down and speed up according to the gradient and geology of its bed. From its mountain heights, its forest shade, its broad vales and intervalles, its tilled fields, and its vistas of enchanting scenery, the river sends a simple message. It is a message that is exciting and alive with the life of the surrounding hills. It is-- "I am a mountain stream."

The wildlife in, on, and around the Boquet is another part of its attraction. You never know what bird or animal will be encountered near the forested bank of the river. And, of course, there are the fish, insects, and other denizens of the woods. It is a mistake to think that interesting living things can only be seen on parkland. Most wildlife takes no notice of park boundaries and is found where food and shelter can be obtained. There is, for most of us, natural beauty to be found anywhere in the Valley and stored in the mind's eye for later recall. In addition to wildlife and birdlife of many kinds, there are innumerable wildflowers and small living things that one must focus us on to even see. For nature lovers, there is that wonderful sense of peace and relaxation that comes only when we leave the cares of the big city and heavy traffic on the interstate highway system behind us and forsake the trappings of civilization, for even a brief period, in a place that we perceive as being "close to nature." From the Euba Mills, skyward, to its headwaters, there are many places on the Boquet's branches that come close to being "wilderness." Unfortunately, one must hunt out such places, but, when encountered, these places are special and will please anyone who makes the effort to discover their existence.

Those who decry the ever increasing development of our Adirondacks should get out into

the woods and walk. The astonishing fact about the countryside in Essex County is that there is so much of it still undeveloped--and that it remains beautiful. The Boquet River Valley exhibits such an unusual variety of landscape for a small area that so much of the present development is overlooked. Just think of the topographic change from the High Peaks to the rolling agricultural fields of the Champlain Valley Reserve. In the Great Plains one could travel hundreds of miles without seeing even a small stream or other distinctive topographic feature. The Boquet landscape is worlds apart from such sameness because, here, the rule is "change." However, topography and wide expanses of forest can only absorb a certain amount of haphazard development. At some point, planning is essential to maintaining a pleasing landscape.

It is difficult not to try to oversell the participatory approach to local history, but there is always something old and something new to see. Not all of our rambles will be to your liking because that would be asking too much for such a diverse group as my readers. But, that which has no appeal to you may offer a fascinating tour for another reader and a momentary diversion for yet another group of readers. So, bear with the topics and text selected to illustrate and explain the varied aspects of our Valley, both natural and human.

Summer after summer, I return to the Boquet River Valley to visit nature the way some tourists come to my home town of Washington, DC to visit its monuments. In the city, you must keep off the grass and you have to face long lines to visit the attractions. In the Valley, you can walk on the land almost anywhere if you assume a "Rambler's Lease" and you will meet scarcely another person on its small hills and short trails. While you certainly will not be the only Rambler visiting the historical and natural sites in the valley, the low numbers will make it seem that way. Historical research is a necessity to locate and to appreciate almost all of the sites covered herein. In that sense, this book is more than a guidebook; it is an expansion of the excellent effort started on the back cover of the Boquet River Association's "Boquet Tour Map."

Hopefully, this book of rambles will meet a more favorable outcome than that experienced by a river book written long ago by a better known Rambler, Thoreau. His book on the Merrimack River was a genuine box office failure. Henry D. Thoreau was probably not the first author nor will he be the last to get stuck with unsold inventory. However, he documented his plight in words with which all subsequent authors similarly situated can empathize. In his *Journal* for October 28, 1853, Thoreau recorded:

"For a year or two past, my publisher, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon, -- 706 copies out of an edition of 1000 which I bought of Munroe four years ago and have been ever since paying for, and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining two hundred

and ninety and odd, seventy-five were given away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labor? My works are piled up on one side of my chamber half as high as my head, my *opera omnia*. This is authorship; these are the work of my brain.

This was perhaps the most disappointing failure in Thoreau's literary career and it took him years to pay off his debt to the "so called" publisher, Munroe and Company. Hopefully, this book will meet a somewhat better fate because the few copies of my book are targeted to a specific group.

The book is written for the certified Boquet River Rambler--a person who, most of all, can appreciate rambling along the river banks while soaking up its atmosphere and history. No set itinerary is established for our Rambler in this book because it is organized around civil administrative divisions. After a number of attempts to lay out the book in guidebook fashion, this outline was found to be the easiest approach for the author. In addition to describing the obvious geography that one encounters, I placed particular emphasis on the historical and more subtle social changes that have helped to shape the story of this river. Equally, this book is recommended to all persons who simply delight in rambling through wonderful country wherein the river can serve as a directional guide. It is meant to be a book that forms a basis for personal discovery of place, and to form a mental picture of the Boquet River Valley as a unit.

The rambles described in these pages cannot claim to have extended the frontiers of local historical knowledge, but they show that we are dealing with an inexhaustible source of evidence, more than enough for one man's lifetime. Equally, the illustrations and maps herein are a poor substitute for taking the reader and showing them firsthand the old maps and the actual site, but they also must suffice.

Perhaps the best thing about qualifying as a Certified Boquet River Rambler is that you don't need to be any kind of expert to enjoy it. The minimum equipment should include a good pair of shoes, a map and compass, and affection for the landscape of the valley and its mountains. You can just go out and enjoy the river surroundings relatively unencumbered---and even, take the kids because all of the Boquet Valley is suitable for family walking. To encourage everyone to join in, I repeat a verse found in Fred Montague's book, *Rambling*, as follows:

One never knows what one might find
 When exploring a thicket, a sandbar, a creek,
But I've learned that it's hard to discover
 If one doesn't get out to seek.

With this book and a copy of the Boquet Tour Map, you are now ready for a guided tour of the Boquet River Valley and its major tributaries. Even if the printed word turns out to be the only mode of your transport around the Valley, it will be an enjoyable experience. "Perambulation by Proxy" is a winter sport for many of us where the weather drives the Rambler from the woods. However, I am sure that everyone will find something in this book that stirs their curiosity enough

to plan a future ramble. Whatever the mode that you use to follow the route of the river from its headwaters to Lake Champlain or join it at any point in its flow--have a good trip!

CHAPTER 2 INTRODUCTION TO A POWERFUL LITTLE RIVER AND A PLESANT VALLEY

The Boquet is one of several small Adirondack Rivers which drain the irregular surface of the uplifted geologic dome forming the Adirondacks. All of these small Adirondack Rivers are different and beautiful, especially if they touch the scenic high peaks region. Such rivers will compare on the plus side for picturesque beauty with any other group of rivers in America (or elsewhere). The story of the Boquet--in general--could be the story of any other Adirondack river. However, the Boquet is a river that has established its own identity over a period of years and now seeks its own "Mark Twain" to popularize this identity. The river has waterfalls, rapids, elbow bends, and oxbow lakes. There are rare plants, endangered animals, and an unknown number of curiosities that assemble into this natural complex called the Boquet River Valley. It is a wish come true for an author in search of an interesting subject.

I speak of the Boquet as a "river," with some misgivings because it starts out as a large brook and keeps that appearance for much of its course. It is not until it reaches Split Rock Falls in Pleasant Valley that it becomes a small river. The Boquet seems to have trouble deciding whether or not it really wants to be a river, even after it collects all of its tributary streams, it never becomes a large river. So, we must think small throughout this effort.

Smallness has affected even the political and industrial history of the valley. For example, the British had to debark from their flotilla into small craft because of the shallow waters in the river, which resulted in their ill fated attempt to reach Willsboro Falls in the War of 1812. Had the river been larger, history of the valley might have been different. The local iron industry would have been more prosperous if the Boquet could have provided it with cheap water-borne transport. Other bulk goods, such as timber and stone also would have profited from dependable local water transport out to Lake Champlain, and settlement patterns might have been different.

Smallness, in fact, is a source of constant surprise for Boquet River Ramblers because the river, at its longest, only measures 47.7 miles. It drains an area of about 176 square miles, and the 17.0 mile North Branch drains an area of about 104 square miles, making the total basin area about 280 square miles. The river is only thirty air miles in length, but its convoluted course and tributary streams allow it to drain a much larger geographic area.

The Boquet is a stream that both unites and divides its own valley. Like a silver cord, it winds through its valley from headland to lake--yet, a walker always seems to be on the wrong side of the stream when it comes to examining some relic or natural object. With its falls, rapids, and oxbow lowlands, it cannot be called a dull river. It creeps through fresh pastures and frets over a boulder covered bed for miles below Euba Mills before it plunges through a narrow gorge at Split Rock Falls. The river begins at Euba Mills with a double source, picks up several major tributary

streams at Elizabethtown and Reber before it doubles back on its course to flow into Lake Champlain.

Because it is a small stream, following the Boquet on a map is an easy exercise. But, following the stream over the glacial sediments north of Split Rock Falls to the lake is another matter. In laying out the course of the Boquet, Mother Nature took little account of the geometric axiom that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points." It truly rambles, with its course containing several U-shaped curves. The small ones are called meanders and the large ones are just called bends.

From a generally northerly course off the slopes of Mt. Dix and through the rest of its course, somehow, at various places, the Boquet manages to flow in all four directions. From the Village of Elizabethtown to Essex, it flows around several small hills and meanders through valleys composed of unconsolidated glacial remains. Rivers with a north flow are viewed with some suspicion in North America. Even the Indians were subject to this bias. They named a north-facing Pennsylvania River the Youghiogeny, meaning "a stream flowing in a contrary direction." The mystique of a north flow has even found its way into the literature of the area. I just read a book review in the *Champlain Courier* about a new book, *Where the Rivers Flow North*, by Howard F. Mosher. The river is sited in Kingdom County, Vermont and the story takes place in the late 1920's.

From a geographic viewpoint, the Boquet River Valley is an ideal subject for study. It is diverse enough to provide a textbook selection of physiographic elements and, at the same time, compact enough to allow study of relationships and differences between sites which are separated by only a few miles. Within a few miles, one can sample river water that is pure and at another place, water that is polluted. Part of the valley is forested, part is residential, and part is agricultural. From the Alpine region on Mt. Dix to the Champlain lowlands, there is biological diversity for both wildlife and vegetation. Therefore, from almost any scientific point of view, there is much of interest in the Boquet Valley. Some of the natural areas are:

1. The Headwaters - covers the Dix Mountain Wilderness area, the North Fork and the South Fork.
2. The Narrow Mountain Section - covers the marshes below Euba Mills, Split Rock Falls, Giant Mountain Wilderness, Beaver Meadow Brook, Mt. Gilligan, Roaring Brook, Little Pond and Cobble Hill, and finally the Branch Boquet and Hurricane Mountain Primitive Area.
3. The Elizabethtown/Lewis Water Gap - covers the scenic narrow cut through Wood Hill, Raven Hill, Mt. Discovery and Little Raven Hill, Barton Brook, Phelps Brook, and Burpee Brook area.
4. The Black River System - covers historic Nichols Pond, the sand hills, Lincoln Pond, the Black River Forest, and a series of the small ponds draining into Lincoln Pond via Brandy Brook.
5. The Lewis Feeder Streams - covers the extensive feeder streams such as Spruce Mill Brook and the North Branch, the Jay Wilderness area, and Trout Pond.

6. The Westport-Essex meanders - covers a lazy succession of river bends, oxbow lakes, and waterfalls between Wadhams and Coon Mountain.
7. The Champlain Valley Reserve area - covers the Boquet Forest and the Middle Ridge areas of Essex.
8. The Willsboro/Essex Whitewater Run - covers North Boquet Mountain, the 1937 landslide area, Francis Pond, Cold Brook and the Burnham Gorge.
9. River's End - covers Willsboro Falls, the Boquet River Gorge, the Boquet Delta, Brandywine Brook, and Lake Champlain.

Although the focus should always be on the main course of the river, some discussion must be given to the larger feeder streams. This approach allows greater geographic coverage and adds a lot of material to portray the Boquet River Valley. The tributary streams covered are:

1. North Fork Boquet
2. South Fork Boquet
3. Branch Boquet
4. Black River
5. Spruce Mill Brook
6. Trout Pond Brook
7. North Branch Boquet

If there is a definitive part of any river basin, it is at its mouth but even this part must be considered as a general area and not a specific point on the ground because the mouth of the river changes with both lake level variations and sedimentation. Even with the whole area near the mouth of the Boquet subject to lake level fluctuations, the end is usually easier to define than the point of origin. We began with an arbitrary geographic selection wherein we spotlighted only the highest elevation in the basin above one of its tributary streams to serve as its origin--Mt. Dix. However, we could have just as easily selected a point which lay further in distance from its mouth to serve as its point of origin or any other logical point in the geometry of this mechanism that we have defined as a river system. Even before it reaches its mouth, the water of the river has reached lake level which is the end of the river's motive power-gravity. The point where the Boquet reaches lake level is distinctive because no other point in the river basin can be lower. This low point is called "base level" by geologists. Since there is only one low point in its profile, that is its end--by definition. However, the ever changing levels of Lake Champlain can extend its own regime far

into the slackwater of the Boquet floodplain and delta, changing the actual location of the low point. This makes the task of marking the end of the Boquet River a difficult one; however, the end is always Lake Champlain.

For the reader interested in hydrology and the mechanisms of river flow, Ben Bachman in his recent book, *Upstream*, has provided a very readable description. Ann Zwinger in *Run, River, Run* and Edward Abby in his fascinating *Down the River* complete the physical description of a river's anatomy. Ben Bachman defines a river as "less a thing than a process." He develops the concept by describing how a river cuts through the rock that shapes its basin and creates the lowlands that we call a river valley.

Running water in the Boquet Basin has done its predictable work in cutting down to its base level, lake level, over a period of many years. The odd course of the river at its lower end is a result of geology. Here, the change in course of the river is a result of geologic uplift and a continuous cutting of the river through sedimentary rocks. Thus, the banks are steeply sloped along the lower part of the river.

Details concerning environmental statistics for the Boquet River are included in this brief introduction. The presentation of statistical data inevitably seems to demand more data. For example, to be meaningful, stream flow data requires supporting data for rainfall, temperature, winds, etc. Then, the next step requires the researcher to get supporting data for multi-year periods and/or for entire recording periods. At this point, the volume of data requires use of statistical methods and mathematical models for extraction of meaningful numbers, trends, and anomalous situations. Such a course of research obviously requires lengthy explanations; however, the results would lose most of our Boquet River rambler by page three. Succeeding paragraphs will be tailored for the average Boquet River rambler.

The profile of the Boquet River is not exactly as one might expect. The profile of the Boquet River is affected by the geological structure of its basin, and it can be described as rockbound through most of its course. It has been unable to do much with the glacial sediments, over which it mainly flows, because the rock it encounters at the falls near Lewis, Wadhams, Little Falls, Whallonsburg, Boquet, and Willsboro is so resistant to down cutting. The result has been to separate the Lower Boquet Valley into compartments. It establishes a control on the otherwise uncontrolled meanders down the valley and the amount of sediment that it can erode. The following list describes the profile of various stretches of the Boquet stream bed.

1. Below Willsboro Falls - from the mouth to river mile marker at 2.2 miles, the river is at lake level.
2. Below the North Branch - from 2.4 miles to 5.7 miles, the slope per mile is 9 feet.
3. Above the North Branch - from 5.7 miles to 7.0 miles, the slope is nearly flat with almost no drop in elevation.

4. Below Boquet - From 7.0 miles to 8.1 miles is a whitewater stretch where the slope shows a 37 foot drop per river mile.
5. Above Boquet - From 8.1 miles to 11.0 miles, there is only a drop of 1 foot per river mile.
6. Below Wadhams Mills - From 11.0 miles to 18.0 miles, there is a drop of 4 feet per river mile.
7. Below Black River junction - From 18.0 miles to 23 miles, there is a 3 foot drop per river mile.
8. Above Black River junction - From 23.0 miles to 27.0 miles, there is a whitewater section where the river drops 38 feet per mile.
9. Below Elizabethtown, From 27.0 miles to 30.0 miles, there is a 10 foot drop per river mile.
10. At New Russia - From 30.0 miles to 39.5 miles, there is a drop of 7 feet per river mile.
11. To the Divide - From the 39.5 mile to 49.0 mile, there is a steep drop measured in elevation from contour maps with a slope that varies from 120 feet per mile up to 1500 feet per mile.

As noted, the most frequently used word for the unruly Boquet is "flashy." It has earned this reputation because the majority of its catchment basin is on steep, rocky mountain sides that dump their runoff directly into the main river with little opportunity for impoundment. Reference to the profile of the Boquet River clearly illustrates this concept. Steep rivers move at a high velocity and obviously are powerful agents of erosion. However, by meandering, a river on an otherwise level plain can create its own velocity in much the same fashion as a roller coaster. One can almost predict spring floods if the thaw comes too quickly. Most years, spring brings floods and turbid water that covers the lowland meadows and roads. History records a pattern of bridges washed out and property damage. But, this was the price that early settlers were willing to pay for good agricultural soil and power sites. Today, it is difficult for us to realize the premium placed upon water power as a motive source for machines needed in yesterday's rural economy. Planks had to be sawed and corn had to be ground.

In the early valley, water wheels powered a bewildering array of simple machinery. These early mills were primitive, and the dams were small, but a large number could use the water from the same stream. Large dams were unstable in that era and they were easily swept away in a flood. So, our early mill mechanics looked for a good fall of water and built a short raceway to drop the water over an overshot wheel for power. At such sites, the higher the dam, the more water that could be run into a raceway for power. Sites like Willsboro, Boquet, Whallonsburg, Wadhams, Elizabethtown, and New Russia thus became important local mill towns. All six places supported over 100 years of industrial activity.

It was the early settlers who dammed the streams and cleared the banks. The small dams did not change the streams very much or impound a lot of water. They were not only small, but they were picturesque and fitted into the landscape. It was not until the twentieth century that large

electric generating dams were built and the whole concept of water impoundment changed. Now, dams can cover whole towns and whole valleys and they can destroy fragile natural plant/animal communities. We can remain thankful that nothing of this dimension has ever been proposed for our small river.

Early mills were important to the people who lived around them. They were favorite hangouts on a hot summer day, and this role was chronicled by both artists and poets. Since these old mills were such popular features, today the silence is even more profound in places where there was once great noise and activity. One of my favorite poems laments a long idle mill site with:

THE MILL-WATER

Only the sound remains
Of the old mill;
Gone is the wheel;
On the prone roof and walls the nettle reigns.

Water that toils no more
Dangles white locks
And, falling, mocks
The music of the mill-wheel's busy roar.

...

Only the idle foam
Of water falling
Changelessly calling,
Where once men had a work-place and a home.

Edward Thomas

Even though the Boquet has no large power sites, a good dam site is still a valuable resource. Advocates of small hydro-power are actively seeking useful sites. Therefore, the location of former impoundments has been the subject of much legal research. It is not only the availability of the water power that makes these sites attractive, but, the legal argument is easier to make that the use is not a new one in relation to its impact on the natural environment. It is even more persuasive in a legal sense if there are extant remains or even useful structures left on the site from the early electric power industry. After the era of small mills had passed, some entrepreneurs developed many local water power sites for electric power early in the 1900's. These were crude affairs which fed into, at best, rudimentary power distribution systems. Some thrived in the absence of other competition, but competition from larger utility companies drove most of these to sell to the stronger utility or go out of business.

Locally, the Associated Gas and Electric Company had taken over all electric power

distribution in the Boquet Valley by 1929. It was owned by J. G. White interests and covered the AuSable and Saranac River basins. The lines were interconnected with the power plants operated by the International Paper Company and Paul Smiths. The sites suitable for conversion to power generation and the existing power plants in the Boquet Valley documented by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in 1929 were:

1. Willsboro - A power plant located at the 2.2 mile marker. The average head was 25.8 feet for about a 6 foot timber crib dam. The elevation of the crest above Mean Sea Level (MSL) was 129.9 feet. There was one water wheel with 280 horsepower. It was at the Champlain Mills of New York and Pennsylvania Company. There was an abandoned mill two-tenths of a mile up-stream with an average head of 16.5 feet. It was fed from a 7 foot timber crib dam at an elevation of 146.1 MSL.
2. Whallonsburg - At the 11.2 mile mark there was a sawmill with an average head of 13.8 feet. The dam was a timber crib structure of about 11 feet. The elevation was 248.2 feet MSL. There was one wheel of 70 horsepower.
3. Wadhams - At the 18.2 mile mark was the Wadhams and Westport Electric Light and Power Company owned by the D. F. Payne estate. It was a rather substantial establishment with a 6 foot concrete dam. It had an average head of 51.1 feet. The elevation of the crest was 341.1 feet MSL. There was a sawmill operating at the same site. Since it was closer to the dam, the head there was only 30 feet. It had one water wheel at 55 horsepower.
4. Elizabethtown - There was a proposal to build a new power plant four miles below the village. On the Branch Boquet up at Rice Falls was an electric plant owned by the Associated Gas and Electric Company. It had an average head of 155 feet. There was a 10 foot masonry dam with one wheel at 150 horsepower.
5. New Russia - There was a sawmill at the 35.9 mile mark. It had a head of 16.4 feet and a 15 foot rock--filled timber dam. With an elevation of 589.8 MSL. There was once water wheel of 40 horsepower.
6. Kingdom- There was a power plant on the Black River owned by the D. F. Payne estate. Because of a penstock that dropped several miles, the head was 525 feet. The dam was concrete rising from 20 to 45 feet. There were two wheels of 1210 horsepower. (The power plant was actually in Meigsville.)
7. Lewis - There was a power plant on Phelps Brook owned by the Associated Gas and Electric Company. The average head was 62 feet from a 12 foot masonry and concrete dam. There was one wheel of 50 horsepower.
8. Willsboro - The Boquet Electric Power Company, owned by the Associated Gas and Electric Company at 1.4 miles on North Branch. It had a 45.1 foot head because the water was moved from the North Branch to an adjacent stream valley. A 14 foot concrete dam was at

223.3 feet MSL. There was one wheel of 150 horsepower.

9. Reber - A sawmill was located at the 4.1 mile marker on the North Branch. A 10 foot timber dam had a head of 13.9 feet and was located at 311.9 feet MSL. There was one wheel of 35 horsepower.
10. Lewis - At the 11.2 mile mark, there was a sawmill with a 10 foot timber dam. It had a head of 13 feet and the flow was then doubtful due to its flow being diverted. There was still an extensive pond left.

Today, there are many idle sites on the Boquet and its feeder streams. Reference to an old atlas shows their location and names. It is a wonder that the Boquet River supported as much industry for as long as it did in the face of the rip tide of spring floods and the destructive impact of winter ice. In its flood swollen state, the Boquet is forever a mad, ravenous, and destructive river. Everything that man has done along its banks, everything that he will do with concrete and steel at some point will be undercut or be bypassed by the incessant power of its running water. There is ample time for the river to complete its work--forever. Little wonder that we must search so diligently for evidence of former mill or forge sites and that, usually, we find so few remains. Only a few stones and a few artifacts are usually all that remain to indicate the existence of some of our largest industrial enterprises of yesterday.

With so much potential to change and destroy, the story of every river should focus briefly on its mechanical capability. On a continuing scale, turbulence in a riverbed is caused by friction which lifts and supports sediments. It is also caused by rocks and other obstacles. The water rebounds off of the bottom, producing air bubbles or what is known as whitewater. Transport of sediment is an agent of erosion at the lowest level. By such mechanisms, boulders are worn to cobbles, cobbles to pebbles, pebbles to gravel, gravel to sand, and sand to clay. This process takes place in successive movements as the materials move down the course of the river. Most of the material has traveled a long way by the time it has been abraded into clay particles. The particle size decreases as the material moves downstream. Such mechanics apply to material within the streambed, however, running water is a powerful agent in the erosion of its own stream bank. The Boquet is known for its babbling brooks, high passionate falls, and an unbelievable number of cascades that lie between these extremes.

The material in the river bed affects its flow because when a riverbed is made up of rocks of varying sizes, the water usually flows through a series of alternating riffles and pools. Riffle-pool patterns do not form in streams with bottoms of uniform materials such as sand or silt. Riffle bed rivers have riffles located, more or less, every five or seven stream widths. It is unknown why this riffle pattern occurs. The riffle pattern in a stream also produces a greater variety of plants and animals than a more homogeneous stream. The turbulence in riffles sweeps away insects from their shelters, thus providing food for fish as any fisherman can attest. The riffle is important because it allows oxygen from the air to mix with stream water. This provides essential air for the incubation of trout and salmon eggs. The rougher the stream, the more dependable will be the oxygen supply for fish propagation. Thus, fishermen look for productive waters like the upper Boquet.

No story of the Boquet would be complete without some mention of the taxonomy of its name. In the past, there have been at least two acceptable ways to spell the river's name: Bouquet and Boquet. Other less acceptable spellings have been suggested over the years but these have fallen into disuse. Today, there is really only one correct spelling--Boquet--and one correct pronunciation, which usually confounds newcomers and tourists. It is "bow-qwet."

There are many competing interests for the heart of the river. We have canoeists, anglers, swimmers, farmers, and municipal users, each looking at the river from a very different perspective. For sportsmen, the river and its banks offer a unique dimension of recreational experiences. Former Supreme Court Justice William Q. Douglas tried to bring together all of these interested parties for the protection of another river. He said, "Rivers are choice national assets reserved for all the people," (quoted from "My Wilderness--East to Katahdin").

It is not the river course but the use of the river banks that make rivers meaningful. Only a very few river banks in America are especially reserved for public use, which is why a greenway for the Boquet River is such an important concept. The establishment of a greenway can be based upon several concepts. In addition to public use, it could be established to prevent further building in the flood plain of this "flashy" stream. The concept of legislation to support public use is well established for roads and a similar concept is needed now for rivers.

The health of the Boquet is always a controversial subject when any group gets together to talk about it. Mercifully, we must worry mainly about municipal and agricultural waste rather than the more complex factory waste and refinery by-products that caused a recent river fire in Cleveland, Ohio. There will be no river fires on the Boquet; but, the Boquet River Association has a full time job if it continues to monitor pollution in the river.

Critical environmental areas along the Boquet River Valley are protected by the Adirondack Park Agency Act. Reference to an APA zoning map will show the degree of protection for each section of the stream. The problem of preserving wild rivers is relatively new. When this area was first settled, all of the rivers were wild and the problem was effective use, not protection. Today, the problem is protection for the river without causing undue economic hardship on its residents.

On a national scale, Stewart Udall, Secretary of Interior, funded a Wild River Study Team in 1963 which resulted in the Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968. New York State has evinced a wide interest in the Boquet River and its valley and offers protection under the New York State Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Act ().

Recently the National Park Service funded a study of the Boquet River, and the Boquet River Association, Inc. was a part of that study. The Boquet River Study identified four areas along the Boquet River that met the minimum criteria for significance under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542, as amended). The four outstanding segments of the Boquet were:

1. Boquet River. Lake Champlain to the confluence with the North fork (47.7 miles). (N.Y. State

classifies this section as Recreational.)

2. North Branch - Boquet River. From the junction of the Main Branch to Trout Pond (19 miles). (N.Y. State classifies this section as Study River, proposed as Recreational.)
3. North Fork - Boquet River. Route 73 Bridge to Headwaters (6 miles). (N.Y. State classifies this section as Wild.)
4. South Fork - Boquet River. Route 73 Bridge to Headwaters (5.5 miles). (N.Y. State classifies this section as Wild.)

With such exciting stretches of water, a canoe is the proper craft for exploring most parts of the river which lie north of Euba Mills. A canoe trip in spring down the swollen waters of the Boquet is an enjoyable excursion into the past.

According to DEC, the Boquet River ranks in the top 25% of the high quality canoeable rivers in Region 5 of New York State. The Boquet River has a total of 38 miles that are considered canoeable in the spring and fall. These 38 miles offer a wide variety of canoe conditions from white water to family trips. For most readers, this introduction will be their canoe trip downstream, offering vicarious views of this wonderful stream.

The significant waterfowl areas in the Boquet River Valley are:

1. Lower reaches and mouth of the main Boquet River.
2. The lower reaches of the Black River between Brainerd's Forge and Route 9N.
3. North Branch Boquet River north of Reber Road and east of the Northway.
4. The oxbow lakes between Wadhams and Boquet.

At the time of the 1983 Boquet River Study, D.E.C. had obtained fishing easements from property owners on 20 miles of the main Boquet, 7.5 miles on the North Branch, and 3 miles on Spruce Mill Brook. D.E.C. had also developed 12 parking areas to serve fishermen on these streams.

The Boquet River was only one of three streams in New York State chosen to be a part of the initial Lake Champlain Salmonid Development Program. D.E.C. stocks Brown, Rainbow, and Brook trout in the main Boquet and North Branch Boquet. The Brook trout is a native fish but the Rainbow trout is an import from the West Coast and the Brown trout is an import from the British Isles. Both of these trout can stand higher water temperatures than the native Brook trout, thus surviving the summer elevation of water temperature in long stretches of the river where the original forest cover has been cut.

Among local fishing circles, the Brook trout is a clear favorite for sport fishing. However, they are considered "dumb" and strike at almost any bait that is preferred. Intensive angling can depopulate a stream quickly of Brookies which might be one reason that they are favored by fishermen. By contrast, the Brown trout are said to be full of "guile." They are favored because they can grow to enormous size.

Fishing is only one means of allowing people to enjoy the river. Another sport that residents love is "river-gazing," a year round sport. In fact, last summer I even heard someone say that they were going "rivering"--a new term for such activity. The combination of mountains, swift flowing water, and stocking of trout and salmon makes the valley an ideal recreational area for sportsmen, vacationers, river gazers, and nature lovers.

The Boquet watershed is almost all forested, the terrain being so rugged that at least 60 percent is suited to no other use than the growing of trees. In wild rivers, the flow of the river drops markedly as soon as the trees leaf out. The trees send tons of water into the atmosphere through transpiration. Conversely, the leaves shade the river course and the water is cooler than it might otherwise be. Some aspects of the small, verdant tributary streams are romantic and sylvan. Along these branches, hardwoods flourish the oaks and the maples share shelter with the spruce from the north winds. Despite a documented record of forest abuse, the upper Boquet Valley still retains the illusion that it is an unspoiled wilderness. The haunting sound of small brooks splashing over a boulder-choked bed, of cascades falling over succeeding shelves of rock into a basin of pebbles is constantly with the Rambler. On a hot summer day, just the sound of these brooks can cool the overheated Rambler.

The story of the lands along the Boquet River is made up of the things that have served as marks of regional distinction, iron and timber, but there are many more. The history of the Boquet River Valley in comparison with that of larger river might lose some of its significance, but even this would only be a relative matter. The story of this river is peculiarly American and, on a regional basis, its people have both preserved and advanced their place in American history. Other rivers have exported their history over larger geographic regions, but none have exceeded it in the intensity and uniqueness of its interesting historical background.

The Boquet Valley has been a desirable location for a summer vacation since before the Civil War. Several large hotels and numerous smaller guest houses have operated in the valley. The Windsor, Deer's Head, Valley House, and Hunters Home were the largest such establishments. In addition to hotels and guest houses, numerous summer homes have been built in the valley over the years. As one might expect, some of these were on a grand scale such as "Garondah", some were a bit less ostentatious such as "Windy Cliff," and some were unnamed, modest camps of only one or two rooms.

The Boquet Valley was a favorite site for summer camps because the cold air from the adjacent mountain slopes is heavier than the relatively warmer air left in the valley at the end of a summer's day. As night falls, the heavier, cold air begins, slowly at first, then at a greater velocity, to displace the warm valley air. This affected the growing season in a negative manner but it did

serve to promote the beneficial aspects of the Valley for summer residents. The night breezes promoted sleep as well as the use of sweaters and fires in the fireplaces. In the days before air conditioning, this was a very important factor in the development of the upper valley.

Historical accounts of the valley usually emphasize the recreational uses of the river. A quotation that summarizes many early camp owners view of the Boquet Valley follows:

I thank Heaven every Summer's day of my life, that my lot was humbly cast within the hearing of romping brooks, and beneath the shadow of oaks. And from all the tramp and bustle of the world, into which fortune has led me in these latter years of my life, I delight to steal away for days and for weeks together, and bathe my spirit in the freedom of the old woods, and to grow young again, lying upon the brookside and counting the white clouds that sail along the sky, softly and tranquilly, even as holy memories go stealing over the vault of life.

Donald G. Mitchell

It is one of the ironies of the Boquet River Valley that it is the almost total absence of industry that attracts city dwellers for recreation, while at the same time, the absence of industry causes a net outflow of local people. Many young people must leave the land and go far off to the cities for employment. Like the surrounding mountain areas, the Boquet River Valley flourishes upon this very paradox. The existence of cultural extremes within the Valley may be one source of its social tensions. The root causes of this paradox, the problems and promises, run deep into the past. In this valley are old names, old places, and an old, undemanding way of looking at life.

This is the chronicle of a river and its valley where yesterday and tomorrow meet in an odd sort of harmony. Today, the Northway cuts through the Boquet Valley, thus connecting it to the rest of the outside world in a way that the old railroads and steamers were unable to achieve. However, the consolidated school district may have had a more important impact on the early social geography of the valley. Reference to the old maps reveals small, one room schoolhouses every few miles up and down the Boquet River Valley. They represented real divisions on the ground as well as between peoples in the Valley. Today, there are only a few large central schools in places such as Elizabethtown, Westport, and Willsboro bringing together students from large areas. Most of the old one room school buildings have been converted to other uses, but they are still recognizable. They are evidence of a smaller more manageable world. If we measured the Boquet River Valley in terms of rural school districts, it was once a much larger place.

In addition to school districts, the Boquet River Valley is and always has been covered by other divisions. There are political districts, patents, sections, lots, fire districts, agricultural cooperatives, rescue squads, parks, and other lines drawn on a myriad of maps. In addition, for our rambler, among all of these official boundaries lie the self-established nooks and crannies that exist only in their minds. It is human nature to set off secluded places where one feels apart from the rest of the world. John Fowles wrote in *The Tree* that, "Even the smallest woods have their secrets and secret places, their unmarked precincts," which are obviously defined by the observer. Even the

most experienced Rambler, armed with up-to-date maps, will be unable to know all of the boundaries which will be crossed in a trip from Mt. Dix to Lake Champlain.

Smallness is not a measure of importance because the Boquet has become well known among New York fishermen, conservation enthusiasts, and tourists. Smaller than the better known Ausable, it has eclipsed that river in publicity since the formation of the Boquet River Association, Inc. Even with this improved reputation, some fishermen still consider the Boquet to be too turbulent and shallow in its upper reaches. Other fishermen complain that it is impossibly crooked and difficult to fish, even where it flows in still, deep pools. So, this just proves that you can't please everyone.

The written description of the area can be keyed to a map for even greater effort. From a descriptive point of view, places deserving special emphasis are:

1. The Elizabethtown Section: Underwood Club, Euba Mills, New Russia, Elizabethtown Village, Valley Forge, the summer camp settlement on Hurricane.
2. The Lewis Section:.....ADD MORE.....

The building of the Northway added new pressure for the development of the rural land in the Boquet River Valley. Recently, newspapers have contained many articles about the subdivision of farm and forest lands by such larger national companies as Patton Land Corporation and United States Land Corporation, among others. In reaction, various schemes to protect our river assets have been proposed at all levels of government.

Even though the Boquet has never served as a major boundary or navigable waterway beyond its lower reach at Willsboro, it has floated logs, which has provided at least a legal argument for its status as a navigable stream.

The Boquet River has a very distinctive beauty and exerts a powerful "hold" upon the imagination of those who live nearby and know it well. Great rivers, such as the Hudson, cannot be more loved by their residents than is our modest Boquet. My experience suggests that the smaller rivers are really the ones with which one can develop an intimate relationship. Everyone in the Valley knows something about their river from its headwater to outflow. They have a comprehensive view of its valley, the compactness making it easy to grasp in a unity of impression. It is a river that is a well known neighbor.

This small river offers the innovative author at least three possible topical headings, as follows: the industrial history and uses made of its flow; its scenery and beauty; and, the people who have made their living on the river and/or civil history of the river towns. So, what is the story of a river? This is the question that has filled over 25 volumes of a series called *The Rivers of America*, published by Farrar and Rinehart. I have scanned various volumes of this series and found that most of the authors have written about events that took place in the vicinity of their respective rivers, even though most of the events had little to do with the river itself. Almost all of them are, at