

The High Peaks of the Adirondacks

By
ROBERT MARSHALL



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MT. MARCY OVER PANTHER GORGE FROM HAYSTACK

“ I know of no two finer prospects than the one over Panther Gorge toward Marcy, and the one over the rocky Gothics ”

The High Peaks of the Adirondacks

By
Robert Marshall

A brief account of the climbing of the forty-two
Adirondack mountains over 4,000 feet in
height by an amateur mountain
climber for fellow amateurs



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High Peaks of the Adirondacks

Introduction This is the first of a series of publications to be issued from time to time by The Adirondack Mountain Club for distribution to its members and for general sale as facts and features are discovered or collected relating to the Adirondacks and deemed worthy of permanent record in this manner. In the present case it is believed that the Club is publishing, in accordance with its policy and its aims and purposes, a manuscript which is of decided interest and value.

The achievement of the author of this article and his companions in climbing forty-two of the high peaks of the Adirondacks is stimulating to the cause of mountaineering in northern New York. Furthermore the piece will occupy a unique place in the bibliography of our New York State mountains, for undoubtedly the Marshall brothers and their guide are the only persons who have stood on the tops of all of the mountains described.

The author is a charter member of The Adirondack Mountain Club, and he is turning his manuscript over to the Club as a contribution to the work of the organization. In granting permission for its publication, Mr. Marshall asked that it be made clear that he wrote only as the scribe and is speaking as much for "Herb" Clark, the guide, and George Marshall, his brother, as for himself.

A word as to the interesting "rating" of the mountains which Mr. Marshall has included in his article. This of course is not to be taken as a standard set up by the Club. It is by its very

nature a matter of personal opinion, and in some cases it is quite conceivable that there would be a very decided difference of general opinion. However, there can be no denying that such a rating is interesting and, furthermore, every effort was made to make it as fair as possible—a “secret ballot” in writing was taken from each of the three in the party, from which a composite rating was reached. To the reader who feels that some favorite peak has been slighted, our only advice is to climb them all and make your own rating!

Most of the illustrations accompanying this article are from photographs by the author. Some of the views are of added interest due to the fact that they perhaps had never before been gazed upon by anyone. The Club is indebted to the Conservation Commission of the State of New York for the three views which were not taken by the author but which admirably illustrate his words.

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High Peaks of the Adirondacks



COLVIN, NIPPLETOP AND DIX FROM ELK LAKE
(Elk Pass to the left, Hunter Pass to the right)
"It would be difficult to imagine a finer view"

Foreword In every mountain section in the country there is a certain elevation, arbitrarily selected, which divides the monarchs of the region from the ordinary mountains. Thus in the Colorado Rockies 14,000 feet is generally chosen as the height which enables a mountain to get on the roll of honor. In the East no peaks rise nearly to that height, and so, of course, the elevation necessary to make a mountain a monarch is lowered. In the Appalachians of North Carolina it is about 5,000 feet; in the White Mountains of New Hampshire it is 4,000; in our own Adirondacks it is also 4,000. Here there are forty-two peaks which fall in this category. But, unlike the other sections, these peaks are comparatively little known and, with a few exceptions, almost never climbed.

Many believe that mountaineering in the Adirondacks is more or less of a joke. They explain that there are any number of Western peaks over twice 4,000 feet high; that the City of Denver is

at the same elevation as the summit of Marcy; and that 600 square miles of wilderness are insignificant in the Rockies or the Sierras. It is true, nevertheless, that the Adirondacks are capable of furnishing worth-while mountaineering experiences.

Of course one cannot find any mountain which rises 8,000 feet above the starting point, as do some of our Western summits. The greatest rise is in climbing Marcy from Keene Valley, and this is but 4,300 feet. However, one who really wants to climb need not be contented with one mountain in a day. Close at hand are many other summits. We started one morning from the foot of Haystack below Panther Gorge, and went over Haystack, Basin, Saddleback and Gothic, and returned that afternoon the same way. Here we had 9,000 feet of ascending and the same amount of descending. But we had advantages over those who climb but one very high peak in a day. We got four different views, we were not so high up that the whole landscape was a blur, we did not have to bother about extreme cold or thin air, and we did not spend most of our time climbing over barren rocks and snow above the timber line, but passed through delightful spruce forests.

The pleasure of standing on a lofty summit where only a few have ever stood before is easy to acquire in the Adirondacks. Of the forty-two high peaks only fourteen have trails up them. On certain summits, I have never seen any signs of man or heard of any one being there. Prob-

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ably some of these had never been climbed before, including Iroquois, Allen, Street, Nye, Middle Dix, Lower Wolf Jaw and South Dix. Others like Nippletop, Redfield, McComb, Sawteeth, Upper Wolf Jaw, Rocky Peak Ridge, Dial, East Dix and Phelps, are probably not ascended more than once in five years. None of the others without trails is scaled oftener than once or twice a year.

In an endeavor to add to the knowledge concerning these mountains, and to encourage nature-lovers to get out and climb them, I have attempted to give a brief description of



MOOSE POND, IN THE PASS BETWEEN STREET AND WALLFACE.
A wilderness lake surrounded by virgin forest

the way up the forty-two high peaks, and the view obtainable from them. In this article I have arranged the mountains in the order of their elevation. In the conclusion I give a rating of them as regards beauty. This, I believe, is the first complete rating of this kind ever made of all the mountains over 4,000 feet. So far as I know, no one else has ever climbed them all.

Mount Marcy This is the highest, most famous,
(**Tahawus**) and possibly most often climbed
5,344 feet of the Adirondack peaks. So far
Rating 9 as is known, it was the first of
the 4,000 footers ever ascended, having been
climbed as early as 1837.

There are six important trails up it. Some of these join. The oldest starts at Tahawus Club, runs up Calamity Brook, by the Henderson Monument, to the Flowed Lands and Lake Colden. Here it branches at right angles to the former course and follows the Opalescent River and Feldspar Brook to the highest source of the Hudson, Lake Tear-of-the-Clouds. Just beyond another trail crosses it at right angles. The left-hand or northeast branch leads directly on to Marcy. Straight ahead is the Marcy Trail which comes up from Upper Ausable Lake. This cuts across Bartlett Ridge and then follows Marcy Brook. It can be reached by two ways. One is from St. Hubert's via Lower Ausable Lake; the other from Elk Lake via Railroad Notch. Another trail up the mountain runs from Lake Sanford through the pass between Redfield and Cliff Mountains and joins the Opalescent at Uphill Brook. One of the most often used trails runs up the John's Brook Valley from Keene Valley, and strikes onto the mountain proper from the head of the brook. From the north there is also a trail, very muddy and running mostly through slash. It can be reached from either Heart Pond or South Meadows. The trails I like best are from Tahawus Club and Ausable Lake.

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The view from Marcy is not so fine as from several lower peaks, yet it is beautiful enough to suit the most exacting. The view I like the best is over the Lake Tear Notch toward those three magnificently wooded mountains, Allen, Skylight and Redfield. The views over the Gothics, down John's Brook Valley, and toward MacIntyre, merely to list them, are also very fine.

Marcy is the only mountain in the Adirondacks from which all the 4,000 foot peaks can be seen.



Mac Intyre
5,112 feet
Rating 5

There are two trails up MacIntyre. The one most frequently used starts at Heart Pond and follows the Marcy Trail a short way, but then turns off for the mountain. It follows MacIntyre Brook a way and then, swinging around the base of Wright Peak, ascends gradually to the summit. About half way up is a fifteen foot waterfall, furnishing the last sure water. There is much slash on either side up to here. By this trail I consider MacIntyre the easiest of any of the high mountains to climb. The other trail starts at Lake Colden, ascends through the hollow between Herbert and the main peak, and then strikes onto the mountain from the southwest.

Though lower and much less often climbed, I think the prospect from MacIntyre far surpasses that from Marcy. At first it is hard to say which of the many views is most desirable. Mount

Colden, with its great slides, backed by the dark and towering Marcy, attracts the attention perhaps most. But then on the other side is Wallace and the Scott Pond country, and it is hard to turn long from this view. Unfortunately during the last few years lumbering has greatly marred this section. Between these opposite views one sees Placid, South Meadows surrounded by lofty mountains, the Gothics, Skylight and Redfield, and Santanoni, all most delightful and inspiring to view. When on top of MacIntyre it is hard to believe that any mountain can surpass it in beauty of view.



Skylight At the four corners referred to in the
4,920 feet Marcy paragraphs one of the four trails,
Rating 13 that which leads to the southwest, was
 not mentioned. It takes a person, after
an easy quarter hour climb, to the top of Sky-
light, third highest mountain in the state.

The view from Skylight is cut off rather abruptly to the northeast by a great wall formed by Marcy and Haystack. Yet I consider this wall in itself the finest part of the entire Skylight view. It is all heavily timbered, except near the top, where timber is crushed out by the high elevation. In the center between Haystack and Marcy is a great gash in the wall, Panther Gorge. This gorge, with the surrounding mountains, form a bit of scenery which nature has wrought to perfection. Other fine views are towards MacIntyre, Santanoni and the valley of Skylight Brook.

Haystack Everyone has his favorite mountain.
4,918 feet My favorite is Haystack. Primarily
Rating 1 because in the whole vast panorama
visible from the mountain there is
virtually not a sign of civilization. Whichever
way you look, save toward a small burned section
near the Giant, there are the forests, the moun-
tains, the ponds, just as they were before white man
had ever set foot on America. It's a great thing
these days to leave civilization for a while and
return to nature. From Haystack you can look
over thousands and thousands of acres, unblemished
by the works of man, perfect as made by nature.

Of course there are individual views of over-
whelming beauty. I know of no two finer pros-
pects than the one over Panther Gorge toward
Marcy, and the one over the rocky Gothics. But
it is the sense of being in the center of a great
wilderness which gives the greatest charm.

The main trail up Haystack leaves the Ausable
Lake-Marcy trail at the foot of Panther Gorge,
and ascends the hollow between Haystack and
Bartlett Ridge. In the center of the hollow it is
joined by another trail from Upper Ausable which
keeps the other side of Bartlett Ridge. From
where these two trails join is a very steep forty
minute climb to the summit. Another trail up
Haystack leads over the whole Gothic Range and
ascends Haystack from the northeast.



Whiteface There are three good trails up White-
4,872 feet face, each starting at a readily access-
Rating 23 ible point. As a result, Whiteface is

climbed more often than any other high mountain, with the possible exception of Marcy. One of the trails starts at the head of Lake Placid and runs up rather steeply to the summit. Another easier, but somewhat longer way, is from Wilmington. This trail runs over Marble Mountain and ascends Whiteface proper from the hollow between it and Estner. The third trail starts from French's old hotel near Franklin Falls, and follows the general course of French's Brook.

The view from Whiteface is one of the broadest in the Adirondacks. Both the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain can be seen. To the south most of the high mountains are visible, while to the west stretches a vast extent of flat lake country. The view over Placid and the one toward the great range are very fine, yet they do not excel the average views from many other mountains. They contain none of that wildness that adds so much to some peaks.



Herbert
(Clinton, Border) 4,855 feet
Rating 4

Somebody once cut a trail from MacIntyre to Herbert, but it is now virtually gone. To get to this peak you must tug, tussle, push and batter your way through as dense a mass of mountain balsam as ever grew. Progress is measured by inches. If you are strong and persevering you may finally get through what as the bird flies is only a mile, but as man travels seems like ten.

The view which rewards you for your effort is

much like that from the main peak, but even finer. Substituted for the view toward Placid and the burned lands toward the Cascade Lakes, least pretty of any of the MacIntyre scenery, is as beautiful and wild a valley as could exist, backed by heavily wooded Iroquois. It is a view which alone is worth climbing a mountain. But in addition, being nearer the center, you get a better view of both Indian and Avalanche Passes. That is why I like this very rarely climbed mountain even better than MacIntyre.



Dix
4,842 feet
Rating 8

There are two trails up Dix. The one now most often traveled starts at St. Hubert's, runs between Noonmark and Round Mountains, crosses the very slashy valley of the Bouquet, and then ascends the mountain proper. It is poorly cut out and is, all in all, the hardest mountain trail I know of in the Adirondacks. The other trail, too, which starts at Elk Lake, has not been cut out lately. I have never taken it all the way, having struck up on it from Middle Dix, but I understand it follows up the East Inlet a long way, and then runs up the shoulder of Dix.

The view from Dix is very broad. One can see from Whiteface down almost to the very southernmost mountains. Lake Champlain and Vermont seem quite near, and virtually all of the high mountains are visible. Perhaps the finest view, one which could hardly be improved on, is looking down toward the wooded valley of Elk Lake, with

the island-studded lakes standing out among the light green trees. Since the valley has been lumbered for softwood, all the darker growth is gone. The view toward the Great Range is another very impressive sight. From Nippletop, directly in front, to MacIntyre in the extreme distance, from Allen on the left to the Wolf Jaws on the right, are many lofty peaks, all over 4,000 feet, virtually unmarred by man, a most majestic looking range. Unfortunately, the Dix view is considerably spoiled by fire slash which runs in a semicircle from Nippletop clear around to East Dix.



Basin This peak is really the central point on
4,825 feet the Gothic Range trail. It can, there-
Rating 6 fore, be approached from two sides,
northeast and southwest. From either
way the trail is very steep and difficult, and one
must proceed with great care. At one place is
an almost perpendicular slide up which you can
only ascend by the aid of a rope which has been
stretched the length of the slide. The course
of the Gothic Range Trail, (All Summit) which
will be referred to again, may as well be
described here. It starts on the road from St.
Hubert's to the Ausable Lakes, runs up over the
Gothics, then over Saddleback, Basin, Little Hay-
stack and Haystack, and finally meets the Marcy
trail at the foot of Panther Gorge. A person
traveling this trail in the direction mentioned
would have approximately 6,500 feet of ascending
and 5,000 of descending.

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What most impresses one from Basin are the three great valleys which surround the mountain: Panther Gorge with its great cliffs, the broad John's Brook Valley, and the great wooded basin to the south, which so impressed Colvin when in 1875 he first climbed this mountain that he named it after the basin. No words can describe a person's feeling as he looks over this enormous hollow and gets perhaps the finest view now possible of the type of forest which once covered all of the North Woods region. Basin, situated as it is right in the center of the great mountains, affords a very fine view of them, and this, added to the valley views, makes it rank high.



Gothic
4,738 feet
Rating 15

There are four trails up Gothic. One, already described, comes over the range and ascends the west side. In the hollow between Gothic and Sad-

dleback it is joined by a trail which follows up Ore Bed Brook. From the east it is approached by the most often used trail which starts, as already mentioned, on the Ausable Lake



SADDLEBACK, GOTHICS AND SAWTEETH FROM UPPER
AUSABLE LAKE

road. An old trail starts at the foot of Lower Ausable and follows a brook for some distance;

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then it strikes the mountain and picks its way among the great slides to the top. Still another trail starts at Upper Ausable Lake.

Looking back toward Marcy is one of the finest views imaginable of deep gorges, rocky precipices and virgin forests, mixed together and displayed on a great scale. Toward Dix is another delightful view looking over the Colvin and Nippletop Ranges. Down toward Keene Valley fertile fields and houses can be seen. The views over John's Brook Valley and to the south are also beautiful.



Colden There is no trail up Colden. We
4,713 feet climbed it from the north approach
Rating 19 to Avalanche Pass. We left the Ava-
lanche trail about half a mile from
the center of the pass and followed old logging
roads and flumes to the end of a very bad slash
which extended well up the mountain. For a short
way came fine woods, but near the top was as bad
a stretch of mountain balsams as I have ever seen.
We had a long mile of tugging through this growth.

Situated as it is between Marcy and MacIntyre, the view from Colden is very restricted. Yet there is much of beauty in it. I like best the view toward the Gothic, but it is also very beautiful looking over Colden and the Flowed Lands. The Opalescent Valley should be the finest view of all but lumbering has considerably marred it. Fortunately it was stopped before the valley was entirely ruined. Perhaps the most sensational view is looking down the great slides. Lower down

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they are so steep that just a corner of Avalanche Lake is visible. Looking still farther, the long MacIntyre range can be seen, badly burned at the north end. A very good view can be had of the great Elba Valley.



Giant
4,622 feet
Rating 21

This was one of the first of the high Adirondack peaks to be climbed and is still one of the most frequently ascended summits. The trail up it starts near the St. Hubert's ball grounds and rises gradually to the top. It is an excellent trail. There was formerly a trail from New Russia, but I have been told that this is virtually obliterated.

The Giant view is more or less of the same type as the Whiteface one, though in a very different section. It is situated at one edge of the mountain region. Thus there is a very good general view of the great ranges to the west. But they are too far off for their individual merits to stand out. To the east many farmlands are visible, both in New York and Vermont. North are some lower ranges. To the south is a very fine sight, Hunter Pass, with its two great walls, the Dix and Nipple-top ranges. Were this view unmarred by fire scars there could not be a more beautiful one. Directly to the west is the valley in which St. Hubert's lies, as pretty a hollow as can be. There is nothing in the whole prospect I like better.



Santanoni
4,621 feet
Rating 2

There is no trail up this mountain, although lumber roads run well up it from the Tahawus side. We climbed

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it from the dam on Cold River, and from this direction found it to be the hardest mountain we ever attempted. First came a very, very long lumbered area. We followed roads a way, but as they persisted in going the wrong way, we soon had to leave them and take to the brush. After four hours of steady climbing came a great flat which seemed to be at the top of everything. By mounting a tree we found Panther Peak, and a thirty minute desperate struggle with the mountain balsam brought us to the summit. We dreaded the mile and a half of balsam between us and Santanoni, but somebody had cut a rough trail between the two peaks, which made the going less difficult.

The view from Santanoni was worth far more than it cost us to reach the top – worth any trouble, in fact, for only Haystack do I consider finer. Whichever way you look, it is very impressive. Santanoni is in the heart of the wilderness, dividing the mountain from the lake region. Thus the view is very varied, with a magnificent panorama to the east of virtually every one of the 4,000 foot peaks, and to the west a heavily wooded wilderness, broken many times by shining lakes and ponds. To the north is the Cold River country, backed by the great Seward Range. Lumbering has affected this somewhat, but fortunately fire has not as yet touched it. One of the finest parts of the mountain view is the excellent profile of many of the famous passes. Through the notch of Indian Pass, far in the distance, is the notch made by Cascade. It seems

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almost like looking through the sights of a gun. Directly below to the east are four dark bodies of water, unusually attractive Henderson, Sanford, Bradley and Andrew. Santanoni indeed furnishes many sorts of beautiful scenery.



Nippletop We climbed this mountain from
4,620 feet Hunter Pass. We had taken the Dix
Rating 3 Trail as far as the big slide, where
we cut into the second growth and
struggled across the badly slashed valley. Once
across it, where the great fire of 1903 had not
touched, we found the going easier. We ascended
the very steep mountain side to the Dial, and
then followed a ridge over two or three interven-
ing, unimportant peaks to Nippletop.

The view as a whole could hardly be excelled. If it were not for the fire which destroyed so much land from Giant all the way to Dix, no peak in the state would be more commanding. But one can forget this desolation as he looks over all the remainder of the horizon. The finest two views are over the two passes which bound the mountain. Over Hunter Pass lies Dix, a mighty precipice for most of its height. Over Elk Pass one sees range upon range of unspoiled mountains. First comes Colvin, with several great cliffs showing among the virgin timber, then Sawteeth, the Gothic Range, Marcy, and finally MacIntyre. To the south is the Elk Lake country, and to the east the farmlands and mountains of Vermont seem very close.

We descended into Elk Pass, following a re-

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cent surveyor's line. We reached the pass just south of the divide and followed it north to the Colvin Trail. We found this course most beautiful, and as the timber was all first growth it was a much easier way than that which we took up the mountain.



Redfield This is another mountain without a
4,606 feet trail. In fact none of the remaining
Rating 7 mountains, unless specifically mentioned,
has one. We left the Opalescent Trail
and followed Uphill Brook for about a mile to
where it branched, passing some good sized
falls on the way. We took the right hand fork



HERBERT, MAC INTYRE, WRIGHT AND COLDEN FROM REDFIELD
LOOKING OVER THE VALLEY OF THE OPALESCENT

and followed it almost to the summit of the mountain. As we tramped along through the glorious, unmarred woods which covered the mountain, we

certainly felt grateful to the State for having purchased this land just in time to save it from the lumbering operations.

The top of the mountain was very flat and heavily timbered, the highest timbered mountain in the State. We had to do considerable searching to see anything, but finally found three places which gave us a complete view. From the first

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we could see all the way from Marcy to Blue Mountain. The day was the clearest I ever had on a mountain, and I don't know when I ever saw so many peaks. We could see Hamilton Mountain at the extreme southern border of the Adirondacks, and hundreds of peaks between it and us. In the direction of Vermont there seemed to be so many ranges of mountains we thought the farthest ones must be in New Hampshire. But finest of all was what lay immediately before us, the deep valley of Skylight Brook, backed by Allen, North River Mountain, and farther still the Boreas Range, all heavily wooded. This view we got from a high rock. From a windfall we could look over the Santanoni and Seward country and the intervening woods, while from another rock we got a magnificent view of MacIntyre, Colden and Marcy,



Wright (North MacIntyre) We climbed this peak from the MacIntyre Trail where it crosses a ravine about three-quarters of the way up. It was a relatively easy mountain to climb, a half hour's struggle through some scrubby balsam and ten minutes on bare rock bringing us to the top. We came down a different way, cutting directly for the waterfall half way up the MacIntyre Trail. By this route we dodged all balsam.

The view was similar to that from the main peak and therefore very fine. However, it was neither as broad nor wild as the prospect from MacIntyre.

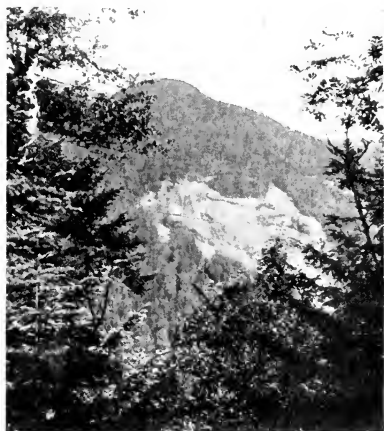
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The only thing it had which the main peak lacked was the view of MacIntyre towering above.



Saddleback
4,530 feet
Rating 24

The Gothic Range Trail, already described, runs directly over this mountain. Thus it can be approached from two sides. The view is somewhat like that from Gothic and Basin, but these two lofty summits cut off a great deal of scenery. Though on the sixteenth highest peak in the State, one feels on Saddleback as though he were in a hollow, so many higher mountains surround him. The top is not entirely bare, which naturally detracts somewhat. What I like best about the view is the Great Basin and the massive, rocky sides of Gothic.



Armstrong
4,455 feet
Rating 18

Where the Gothic Trail comes out at the edge of a big precipice shortly below the summit, we headed into the mountain balsam covering the Armstrong Ridge. Half an hour of a tussling climb brought us to the summit of this mountain. It was mostly covered with balsam, but there was one big, bare ledge which

THE GLIMPSE FROM SAWTEETH, OF WOODED ARMSTRONG, WITH ITS GREAT SLIDE, IS SUPERB

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afforded us a magnificent view back over a wild country of lofty mountains, great slides and awe-inspiring gorges. It was much like the view toward Marcy and MacIntyre from its next door neighbor, but had the advantage of including the Gothic as well. Through the trees one could see toward Dix, Big Slide and the Wolf Jaws. But it is that one great view toward Marcy and MacIntyre which makes Armstrong rank high among the sightly mountains of the State.



Panther
4,448 feet
Rating 10

The route by which we went up Panther has already been mentioned in the Santanoni description. Being so near that peak, the view is of necessity much like it. However, Santanoni cuts off many of those ponds which add so much to the view from the higher summit. The passes do not stand out so well from Panther either. However you can see three peaks from Panther which are invisible from Santanoni, and you get a better view of the upper part of Cold River.



Tabletop
4,440 feet
Rating 39

About six miles from Keene Valley the trail up Marcy divides. One part keeps to John's Brook. The other leaves it and gradually works its way up Tabletop and from there goes to Marcy, joining the Heart Pond Trail.

Tabletop, as its name implies, is very flat, and in addition is heavily wooded on top. As a result,

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one can see almost nothing from it. About the only worth-while view can be had from just off the trail a short way below the summit. Here one can look down the John's Brook Valley to Keene Valley.



Macomb
4,425 feet
Rating 14

We climbed Macomb from Elk Lake. There were logging roads well up the mountain, and these we followed out of the lumberman's slash. Then we cut over to the left to a big slide, which we followed to the height of land of the mountain. Then a half hour's tramp through mountain balsam brought us to the summit.

Macomb, being at the southern end of the Dix Range, presents a view very much like that from Dix. However, being much nearer Elk Lake, the view over its great valley is even finer. As on Dix one gets a magnificent view of the great unmarred ranges of mountains, stretching from Allen to Wolf Jaws. The east side of the summit is not bare, and one can only get views by peering through the trees. To the north is a rather unpleasant looking slash.



Iroquois
(South Mac-
Intyre) 4,411
ft. Rating 12

This is probably the wildest mountain in the Adirondacks. It is all densely wooded. On the whole mountain we could not see a single trace of the presence of any human being, not even an old blaze on a tree.

We climbed it from Herbert, descending between

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precipices to Algonquin Pass, and then ascending through the most luxuriant woods I have ever seen. From the very summit nothing was visible, but we walked around, finding ledges from which we procured surprisingly good views. From one we could look back at the cliffs of Herbert; from another we saw the Scott Pond Plateau; from a third we got a birdseye glimpse of Wallface from almost directly above it; from still another we could look over miles of forest covered hills toward Santanoni. But the best view of all was from the southwest side of the mountain where a panorama stretching from Marcy to Mount Adams spread out. In it all there was not a sign to show that man had ever been there. First came a great mountainside of magnificent timber, then the valley of the Flowed Lands and Calamity Brook, back of which rose the great Marcy Range.

We descended toward the foot of Algonquin Pass, almost as remarkable as Indian, and came out from there into the latter pass.



Seward
4,404 feet
Rating 11

There is an old trail up Seward from near Ampersand Pond. We climbed the mountain from the Cold River side, following lumber roads to the edge of the slash and found it an easy climb.

The view of the lake country is most remarkable from this peak. Long Lake, Lila, Tupper, the Saranacs and Lake Clear can be seen plainly. On the other side the whole range of high mountains is in view, too far off for their individual beauty to stand



FROM SEWARD OVER BIG AMPERSAND POND, SHOWING CLEAR, LOWER SARANAC AND OSEETAH LAKES IN THE DISTANCE

“The view of the lake country is most remarkable from this peak”

out but very alluring en masse. Lumbering operations scar the view toward Cold River. The most attractive part of the outlook I think is over Big Ampersand Pond.



Middle Dix
(Little Dix)
4,404 feet
Rating 32

We climbed this peak from the head of the South Bouquet. We descended what closely approaches a 1500 foot sheer precipice on the Hunter Pass side.

The view, so far as one may be obtained, is very much like that from the main peak, but there is much which the mountain balsam and Dix cut off. The only extra view you get is toward Dix itself. The mountain is by no means worth the trouble of climbing.

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**Rocky Peak
Ridge (Giant's
Wife) 4,375 feet
Rating 30**

We climbed this mountain directly from the Giant. If one is not to be defeated by dense, hard slash, this route is to be recommended, for fire has burned all the territory between the two mountains. In fact, it has burned completely over and around Rocky Peak Ridge.

The view from this mountain is much like that from the Giant, but more slashy. Of course the entire scenery toward the St. Hubert's Valley is cut off. To the southwest a better view can be had. The slides on the Giant are a great addition to the view. What catches the eye most is a little pond just to the east of the summit, almost up to the 4,000 foot mark. All in all, the prospect is not so fine as that from the Giant and hardly worth the trouble to obtain.



**Allen
4,345 feet
Rating 17**

This is in great contrast to the last mountain, being wooded with virgin timber and showing no trace of human interference. We climbed it from Redfield, crossing the broad South Valley of the Opalescent, from where there was an easy ascent to the wooded summit.

This is quite pointed but, unfortunately, there are not many ledges. However, we found two spots from which we got good views. From the one we could see a semi-circle of forested mountains and valleys from Marcy to Boreas. What I liked best about the view was the profile of Panther

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Gorge, looking near the bottom like a bucket, so straight were the sides. The view of the Gothic Range was also very fine. From the other spot we could see only one view, but it was worth the whole climb. It was of the Opalescent Valley, backed by dark green Redfield.



Esther
4,270 feet
Rating 38

We cut up this mountain through some very bad slash from the Wilmington Trail up Whiteface. The view in no way compensated us for the trouble. We could see slash toward Bloomingdale, slash toward the Wilmington Range, slash toward the open fields along the Ausable. We could see some of the high mountains in the distance to the south. The best part of the view was Whiteface, towering up directly to the southwest.



Big Slide
4,255 feet
Rating 27

I understand there is a trail up this mountain from Keene Valley. We climbed it through a primeval forest from the head of South Meadows Brook. Even if there had been no view, the woods alone were worth the climb.

The top of the mountain has been only partially cleared. One gets a very fine, uninterrupted view toward the Gothic Range just across John's Brook Valley, and Marcy, Colden and MacIntyre. On the other side through the trees there are glimpses of the view toward Placid.

High Peaks of the Adirondacks

**Upper Wolf
Jaw, 4,255 feet
Rating 33** We ascended this mountain from Armstrong. The descent from the latter was quite precipitous and we had frequently to work our way along narrow ledges over high cliffs. The climb up Wolf Jaw was quite steep but through very fine woods.

Though the summit was covered with timber, we found some outlook. The best view was back over the range, but it was not so fine as the similar one from Armstrong and Gothic. We could also catch glimpses toward Dix, the precipitous shoulder of Armstrong and the John's Brook Valley.



**Street
4,216 feet
Rating 41** We ascended this mountain from the tote road leading to Indian Pass. The climb was long but there were no very steep places. The top is flat, and for the last half hour we hardly rose at all. The summit is also heavily wooded so that, aside from glimpses toward Nye, Heart Pond and MacIntyre, we saw nothing.



**North Seward
4,215 feet
Rating 26** Thirty-five minutes push through the mountain balsam from Seward brought us to this peak. The view was much like that from the main peak, but not so broad. Only toward Big Ampersand was it better.

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**Lower Wolf
Jaw**
4,175 feet
Rating 25

The descent from Upper Wolf Jaw was almost as steep as that from Armstrong. Both the descent and the climb up the lower peak were made through very fine woods. The only signs of civilization we saw from Armstrong to the

Lower Wolf Jaw was a surveyor's line.

The sight from the Lower Wolf Jaw is, I think, better than from the Upper. The view over the range is much the same, but in addition there is a view toward Giant and Keene Valley and another toward Dix.



DIX AND NIPPLETOP FROM LOWER WOLF JAW
"One of the great individual views of the
Adirondacks"

This latter I consider one of the great individual views of the Adirondacks.



**Phelps (Little
Tabletop,
North Table-
top) 4,175 feet**
Rating 40

I climbed this mountain one dark afternoon from South Meadows. I never enjoyed climbing a mountain so little. There were hours of pushing through terrible fire slash, working up slides and walking

High Peaks of the Adirondacks

logs. Fortunately, old lumber roads led up as far as South Meadows Mountain.

A view over miles of ugly slash toward Heart Pond and a glimpse through the second growth toward Marcy Brook are all one can see from the summit.



Nye
4,160 feet
Rating 42

This is quite an easy climb, or rather mostly descent, through pleasant woods from Street. It is so heavily wooded on top that one can see nothing except the forest he is in.

In descending directly to Indian Pass from here one encounters the worst possible slash. Once through it to the base of the mountain, there is a broad flat to cross before reaching the road.



South Seward
4,139 feet
Rating 35

Three-quarters of an hour of travel through the thick mountain growth brought us from North Seward to this peak. It is quite heavily wooded on top, hence little can be seen. However, there is a better view toward Upper Saranac and Tupper than from either of the other two Swards.



Sawteeth
4,138 feet
Rating 16

We followed the old Gothic Trail by Rainbow Falls to where it crossed the first big slide on Sawteeth. We followed this up a way and then cut directly for the summit.

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We had been told that Sawteeth was so heavily wooded on top a person was a fool to climb it. The first part of the statement was certainly true, but there were also ledges. From these, on the way up we got two superb views, one toward wooded



HAYSTACK, MARCY AND BASIN OVER THE VIRGIN WOODS
OF GREAT BASIN FROM SAWTEETH

" Perhaps the most beautiful single view in the
Adirondacks "

Armstrong, the other toward bare Gothic. But the best view was reserved for the summit. This was looking over the Great Basin, finest stretch of primeval forest in the State, toward Allen, Skylight, Hay-

stack, Marcy and Basin, all heavily wooded save where some great slide had left a white streak. If I were asked to name the most beautiful single view in the Adirondacks, I would be inclined to place this grand prospect first.



South Dix
4,135 feet
Rating 37

We climbed this mountain from Macomb, descending and ascending through terrible slash. We left it by heading through the slash toward East Dix. This is one of the most desolate views I know of — nothing but burned wasted land

High Peaks of the Adirondacks

on all sides. A few fine mountains in the distance could not seem beautiful when seen over the dreary foreground.



Seymour
4,120 feet
Rating 28

We climbed this mountain very easily from our camp at its base on the Cold River side. Old roads took us out of the lumber slash, and from there on there were fine woods to the summit.

A big bare rock enables one to get a great view toward the Saranacs, Ampersand Pond, the Sawtooth Range and Ampersand Pass. From the other side through the trees one can get a good view of the high mountain section. Looking over Ouluska Pass, the Seward Range is prominent.



Cascade
4,092 feet
Rating 29

There used to be a trail up this mountain from Cascade Lake but, like many other Adirondack trails shown on the map, it is no more. We followed the general course of the old trail but saw no trace of it. Lower down the going was very steep, and we had to crawl and pull ourselves along the rocks. Higher up this steepness largely disappeared, and a fire slash was substituted.

The view is quite varied. To the west are the fertile farm lands of North Elba, with Round Pond standing out; north is bare and burned Pitchoff; east and southeast is a most unpleasant

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looking fire slash, culminating in Porter; to the south and southwest are the big mountains.



Colvin
(Sabele)
4,074 feet
Rating 22

There is a good trail up this mountain, starting on the road from St. Hubert's to Ausable Lake. It is above the average trail in beauty. The summit of the mountain is only partially cleared. However, some very desirable views can be obtained from it. The best, and in fact one of the best I have ever gotten, is across Lower Ausable toward the virgin wooded mountains to the west. Not one of those peaks in the Gothic Range have ever been lumbered. We could see far down the valley of the Ausable, and over St. Hubert's toward the Giant. Nippletop cut off the view to the east, though in itself it was well worth while seeing.



Porter
4,070 feet
Rating 36

It was an easy half hour's journey, with little climbing, from the top of Cascade to Porter. Fire had burned up most of the slash, which helped to make the going easy. We descended a better way than we had come up Cascade, striking down to the valley which runs between Cascade and Porter to the west. However, it was by no means easy going.

The view was much like that from Cascade, but even slashier. It was rather sickening to see the burned land on all sides. The view toward the

High Peaks of the Adirondacks

Gothic Range and Marcy, with Big Slide in the foreground, was better than the similar view from the neighboring peaks.



Dial
4,023 feet
Rating 31

The way we climbed this mountain has already been described in the Nippletop paragraphs. The view resembled the one from that peak to a considerable extent but aside from the fact that trees blocked off much scenery, it was considerably less enticing.



East Dix
4,020 feet
Rating 34

We climbed this mountain through very bad slash from South Dix. We followed back the same way for a while, and then cut into the south valley of the Bouquet for Middle Dix.

The view was interesting and very different from any other but badly marred by fire. The part I liked best was looking across the deep valley of the Bouquet toward the side of Dix. Other interesting views were toward the ponds to the east and Macomb to the south.



Conclusion
and
Rating

In conclusion I give a rating of these mountains as regards beauty. It is a composite of the ratings of my brother George, Herb Clark, a great Adirondack guide, and myself. We three climbed all these mountains together during the past two years, and so have had a good opportunity to judge their merits. Of course I realize that ranking mount-

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ains is, at best, uncertain and subject to criticism. Nevertheless, I am offering this rating for what it is worth:

1	Haystack.....	4918*	22	Colvin.....	4074
2	Santanoni.....	4621	23	Whiteface.....	4872
3	Nippletop.....	4620	24	Saddleback.....	4530
4	Herbert.....	4855	25	Lower Wolf Jaw.....	4175
5	MacIntyre.....	5112	26	North Seward.....	4215
6	Basin.....	4825	27	Big Slide.....	4255
7	Redfield.....	4606	28	Seymour.....	4120
8	Dix.....	4842	29	Cascade.....	4092
9	Marcy.....	5344	30	Rocky Peak Ridge...	4375
10	Panther.....	4448	31	Dial.....	4023
11	Seward.....	4404	32	Middle Dix.....	4404
12	Iroquois.....	4411	33	Upper Wolf Jaw.....	4225
13	Skylight.....	4920	34	East Dix.....	4020
14	Maccomb.....	4425	35	South Seward.....	4139
15	Gothic.....	4738	36	Porter.....	4070
16	Sawteeth.....	4138	37	South Dix.....	4135
17	Allen.....	4345	38	Esther.....	4270
18	Armstrong.....	4455	39	Tabletop.....	4440
19	Colden.....	4713	40	Phelps.....	4175
20	Wright.....	4585	41	Street.....	4216
21	Giant.....	4622	42	Nye.....	4160

*Elevation above sea level as given in United States Geological Survey maps.

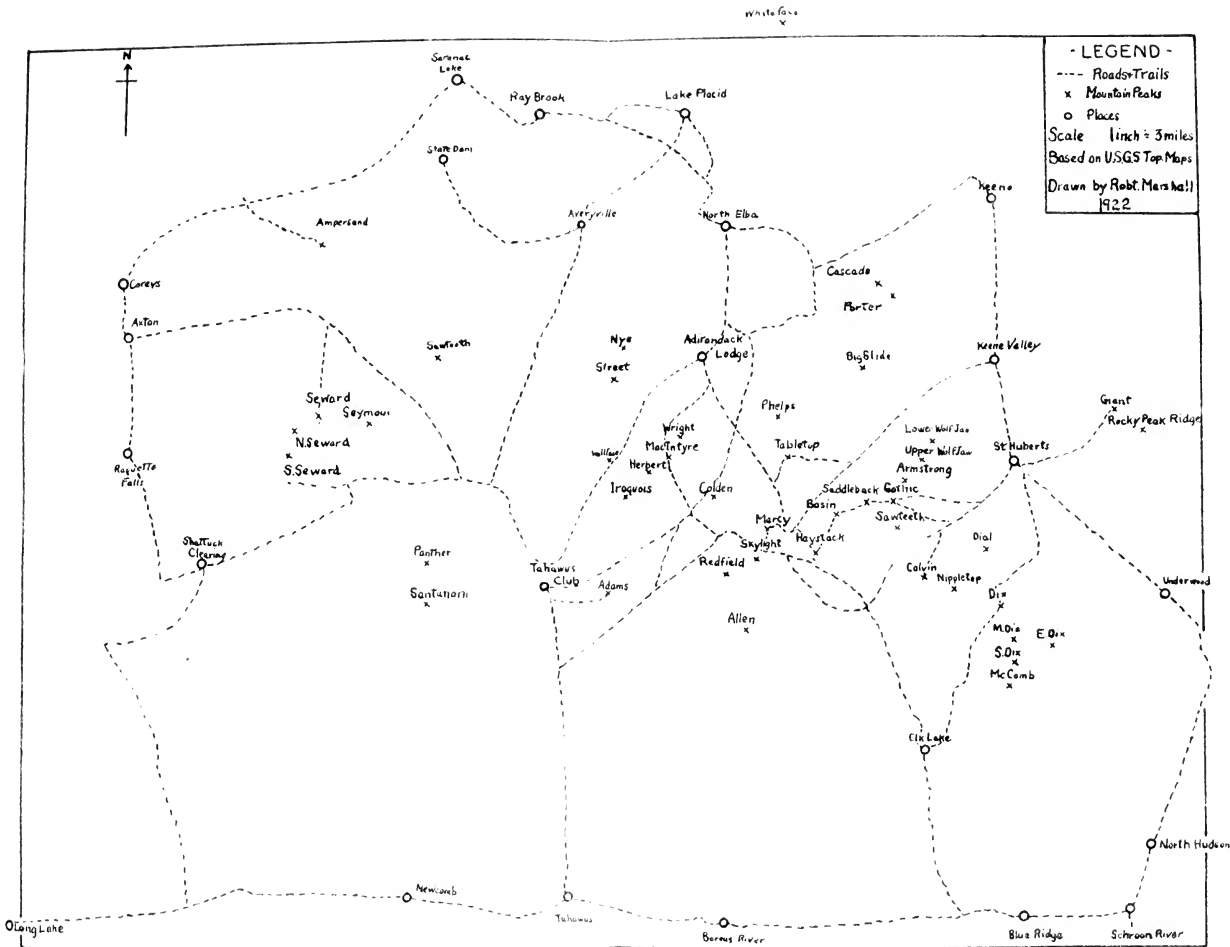


THE STONY AUSABLE—A GATEWAY TO AND FROM THE LOFTY PEAKS



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