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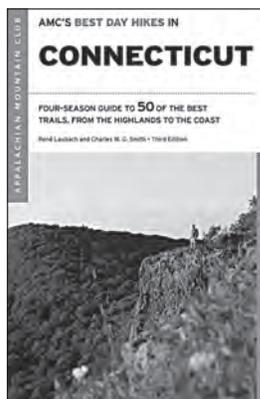
Books and Media

AMC's Best Day Hikes in Connecticut: Four-Season Guide to 50 of the Best Trails, from the Highlands to the Coast (Third Edition)

*By René Laubach and Charles W.G. Smith
Appalachian Mountain Club Books,
2018, 320 pages.*

ISBN: 978-1-62842-070-8.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback).

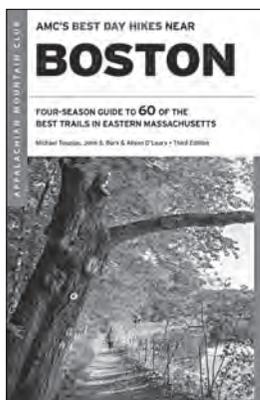


AMC's Best Day Hikes Near Boston: Four-Season Guide to 60 of the Best Trails in Eastern Massachusetts (Third Edition)

*By Michael Tougas, John S. Burk,
and Alison O'Leary
Appalachian Mountain Club Books,
2017, 304 pages.*

ISBN: 978-1-62842-042-5.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback).

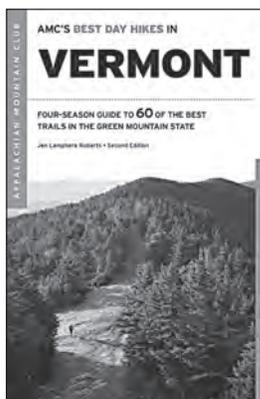


AMC's Best Day Hikes in Vermont: Four-Season Guide to 60 of the Best Trails in the Green Mountain State (Second Edition)

*By Jen Lamphere Roberts
Appalachian Mountain Club Books,
2018, 304 pages.*

ISBN: 978-1-62842-078-4.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback).



ANY OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST WHO HITS THE TRAIL OR SETS OUT FOR a paddle should realize that the only thing better than having Daniel Boone, Tenzing Norgay, or Sacagawea along is to carry an Appalachian Mountain Club guidebook.

For decades these reliable, informative, and user-friendly volumes have led hikers up and down all the major mountains in the Northeast and have helped kayakers and canoeists steer through practically every navigable river and stream.

In more recent years, AMC has branched out to urban dwellers with guides that focus on outings closer to home, appealing to a wider range of adventurers, including families with young children and seniors who may be less inclined to tackle 4,000-footers. Two newly revised AMC guidebooks appeal to these adventurers: *AMC's Best Day Hikes in Connecticut* and *AMC's Best Day Hikes Near Boston*. The third book here, *AMC's Best Day Hikes in Vermont*, includes a few challenging hikes up that state's impressive mountains.

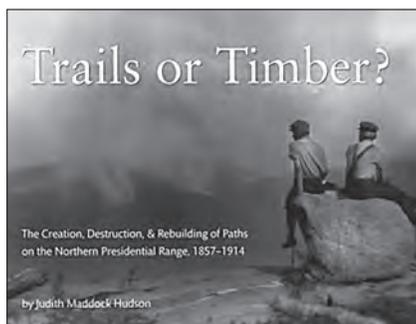
All three include maps, photographs, and historic details, in addition to the useful descriptions we've come to expect; they are worthy additions to the AMC guidebook library and deserve places on hikers' bookshelves and in backpacks everywhere.

As a resident of the Nutmeg State, I was particularly pleased to see that the third edition of the Connecticut guide recommends trips on trails I haven't explored, as well as an old favorite and one I recently hiked for the first time—the peaceful Nyantaquit Trail loop in Lyme's Nehantic State Forest. Armed with this new resource, I look forward to revisiting the traprock ridge of Ragged Mountain and checking out Zoar Trail, Baffin Sanctuary, winding trails up Case Mountain, and more. On a separate note, I'm sad to report that this is the last work by the late Charles W.G. Smith, long a co-author with René Laubach, who dedicated this edition to the memory of Smith, a horticulturalist and excellent nature writer.

I've too often bypassed Massachusetts en route to mountains farther north so am eager now to set out on some of the 60 trails listed in the guide to day hikes near Boston. The Bay State's mountains might be a little gentler than farther north, but the beauty and diversity of terrain more than compensate. Here you find dense woodlands, rolling meadows, crags, and miles of exquisite coastline, particularly along Cape Cod. The hike to Pilgrim Heights on the Cape Cod National Seashore sounds particularly appealing, with its former farm in a kettle hole, panoramic overlooks, and a historic site all in the space of 1.3 miles.

The Vermont guide describes some of New England's best hikes up challenging trails to the spectacular summits of Camel's Hump and Mount Mansfield, and trips along sections of the Appalachian and Long trails. In this second edition, author Jen Lamphere Roberts includes four new peaks: Bald Mountain, Bromley Mountain, Haystack Mountain, and Belvidere Mountain, along with updated information on many other hiking options. With its paths up big mountains, along Lake Champlain, and through rolling forests and meadows, the Green Mountain State offers a cornucopia of options. It's a challenge to limit choices to the 60 "best," but that's why we always welcome the new editions every few years.

—Steve Fagin
Book Review Editor



**Trails or Timber? The Creation,
Destruction, & Rebuilding
of Paths on the Northern
Presidential Range, 1857–
1914**

*By Judith Maddock Hudson, designed
by Allison W. Bell
Randolph Mountain Club, 2018,
40 pages.*

Price: \$20 (paperback). Available from Bondcliff Books and the Randolph Mountain Club.

THIS IS THE FASCINATING AND RICHLY ILLUSTRATED STORY OF TRAILS and their destruction by extensive logging in the White Mountain community of Randolph, New Hampshire. The author is Judith Maddock Hudson, archivist with the Randolph Mountain Club and author of the excellent 2010 history book *Peaks and Paths: A Century of the Randolph Mountain Club* (Randolph Mountain Club). Hudson is well qualified to write the story of the destructive logging from the 1890s to 1914, when the land on the Northern Presidential Range was acquired for the White Mountain National Forest.

Randolph has been a center of hiking and trail building since 1876, when the newly formed Appalachian Mountain Club used the Ravine Lodge as the

base of operations for exploring the White Mountains. Many of the famous early pathmakers lived in Randolph or spent their summers there. With the Northern Presidential Range right there, it is easy to understand why so many trail enthusiasts went to Randolph to explore Mounts Adams, Madison, and Jefferson, along with wild beauty of rugged King Ravine below.

Hudson sets the stage by describing how Thomas Starr King's writings in his 1857 book *The White Hills* attracted visitors and artists to the area. Hudson goes on to describe how a decade later trouble began when New Hampshire Governor Walter Harriman sold off all of the state's remaining forestland in the White Mountains for 15 cents an acre. The arrival of the Boston and Maine Railroad connecting Randolph in 1892 allowed more visitors to arrive by rail. But this same railroad also opened a way to haul out the logs from the virgin spruce forests of the Northern Peaks.

Trails or Timber? documents the extensive logging and forest fires of the 1890s and early 1900s in photos and maps. By 1907 much of the extensive trail system in the Northern Peaks were seriously damaged or abandoned by logging and the resultant forest fires. This loss of trails led to the creation of the Randolph Mountain Club in 1910 and the rebuilding of the trail system, camps, and shelters that remain so popular today.

The book contains 80 historic photos, maps, and sketches, most of which have never appeared in print. The expert design by Allison W. Bell and the high-quality printing by Puritan Press of Hollis, New Hampshire, make it worth the \$20 price for a limited edition book of only 400 copies.

—David Govatski

Henry David Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul

A film by Huey Coleman, with lead scholar consultant Laura Dassow Walls and appearances by Bill McKibben, Howard Zinn, and others
Filmsbyhuey.com, 2017, 114 minutes.

IF YOU ARE NOT YET A THOREAU ENTHUSIAST, THIS BEAUTIFUL, engrossing documentary just might turn you into one. If you already are, it will remind you of the many reasons why. Thirteen years in the making, the feature-length documentary by veteran filmmaker Huey Coleman—who uses only his first name for his production company, Films By

Huey—celebrates in images, interviews, and music the short life and long legacy of one of our great American originals.

With the expert help of Thoreau biographer Laura Dassow Walls, who served as lead scholar consultant, Coleman traces Thoreau's life from his birth in 1817 in a farmhouse on Virginia Road in Concord, Massachusetts, to his death at age 44 in a stately home on the Main Street of his native town. Although a good portion of the film centers on Walden Pond, Coleman does not allow Thoreau's legendary time there to overwhelm the fuller life story, which was more varied, nuanced, and communal than many people realize.

Throughout the film, we are treated to interviews by more than 30 prominent scholars, writers, and activists, among them Robert Gross, Robert Richardson, Howard Zinn, Robert Bly, and Bill McKibben. But we also hear from local Thoreauvians, including Concord's Joseph Wheeler, who was born on the same farm as Henry, and the late Walter Brain, who notes that the correct way to pronounce Thoreau's name is by placing the accent on the first syllable: THOR-eau. There is also an intriguing visit with video game developer Tracy Fullerton, who has created a game that allows players to experience a virtual life at Walden Pond.

As Thoreau did, the film remains mainly in and near Concord but does venture outside its borders to places he visited, including the Maine Woods, Staten Island, and Minnesota. At one point, Coleman visits the site of the Walden Project, an outdoor alternative public education program in Vergennes, Vermont, serving students in grades 10 to 12. As students read from well-worn copies of *Walden*, they show us that Thoreau, so popular among the children of his own time, can still win the affection of today's young. In another significant segment, Coleman interviews members of Maine's Penobscot Nation, one of whom, Darren Ranco, is the great-great-nephew of Joe Polis, Thoreau's guide on his third and last trip to the Maine Woods.

The cinematography, particularly when focused on the natural landscapes, is beautifully envisioned and edited, and the evocative music, coordinated by folk musician and composer Dillon Bustin, was taken entirely from the Thoreau family's songbook.

To view a trailer for the film, purchase DVDs for home or classroom viewing, and find dates for future screenings, visit filmsbyhuey.com. It is well worth the trip.

—Lucille Stott

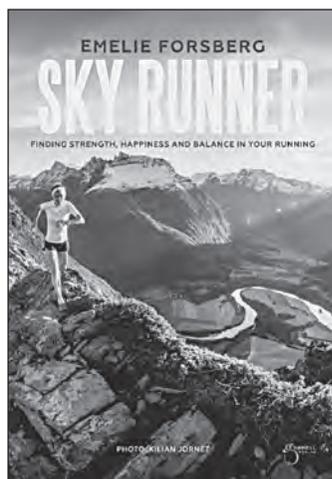
Sky Runner: Finding Strength, Happiness and Balance in Your Running

*By Emelie Forsberg (author) and
Kilian Jornet (photographer)*

Blue Star Press, 2018, 178 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-944515-73-7.

Price: \$29.99 (hardcover).



I LAST SAW EMELIE FORSBERG ON A Christmas Eve in Mendoza, Argentina. She was holding up her then-boyfriend Kilian Jornet by the waist, helping him walk out of a bar after celebrating his run of 37 miles up and down the nearby mountain of Aconcagua, tallest peak in the Western Hemisphere, in just under thirteen hours. I had also just climbed Aconcagua, though it had taken me two weeks with a guided expedition.

That was 2014. Jornet was then 27 years old and had recently appeared on the cover of *Outside* and been featured in *The New York Times Magazine* for his speed-mountaineering exploits. Forsberg, then 28, played a supporting role to him—to literal effect, as he stumbled out of that Mendoza bar with an arm slumped over her shoulder—even though she was the reigning female champion of the Skyrunner World Series, a new sport of running up and down mountains.

I wondered: When will Forsberg be the center of attention? Now seems like a fine time. The Swedish athlete is offering a glimpse into her world with her first book, *Sky Runner*, which adds to the tally of recent memoirs by ultrarunners, including Jornet's *Run or Die* (London Penguin, 2013) and Scott Jurek's *North: Finding My Way While Running the Appalachian Trail* (Little, Brown, 2018). While *Sky Runner* is not the tell-all narrative that I'd hoped for, it offers a lens into the life of one of the world's greatest mountain athletes.

“My hope is that I can motivate others to take their time,” Forsberg writes. “Take time to run. To stop. To choose a life beyond the ordinary.”

Sky Runner is filled with stunning photographs taken by Jornet. The two are now engaged, live on the northwest coast of Norway, and continue

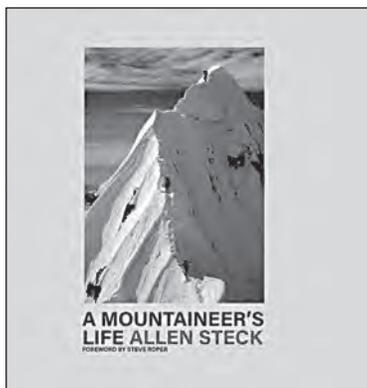
to dominate the world of trail running and ski mountaineering. In 2015, Forsberg set a new record in Alaska's Mount Marathon 5k, considered the toughest 3.1-mile race on the planet, finishing minutes ahead of the next female, who was the defending NCAA Division I steeplechase champion. Forsberg really is that fast.

When I met Forsberg and Jornet at Aconcagua, my curiosity was piqued: *What was their secret?* We all shared base camp. We all waited in line to use a rickety outhouse. (One night the wind ripped its tin door off its metal bolts—the door was reattached, but those sitting inside worried.) I frequently spied their stocking legs protruding from their moss-green tent as they sipped tea inside. They seemed so normal.

Sky Runner divulges few secrets. Forsberg shares recipes, yoga stretches, and training workouts. I never felt as if I got to know Forsberg herself. She's so in the zone that it seems hard for her to explain how she does what she does. On downhill running, she instructs: "In order to have speed downhill, it's important to not look at your feet. You must look ahead of you to be able to plan each step. You can practice this! Try the next time you run downhill!" Easier said.

The book ends in 2017 with Forsberg and Jornet on Cho Oyu, the world's sixth-highest mountain, without oxygen and with minimal acclimatization. Jornet is about to go on to challenge the Everest speed record by summiting in seventeen hours without the assistance of fixed ropes or oxygen. For this moment though, he plays the supporting role to Forsberg.

—*Stephen Kurczy*



A Mountaineer's Life

By Allen Steck

Patagonia, 2017, 264 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-938340-70-3.

Price: \$35 (hardcover).

A good struggle now and then is a tonic, for while it taxes the leg and arm muscles, it tends to relax those in the cranial cavity.

—*Allen Steck*

IN 1940, WHEN ALLEN STECK WAS 14, HE AND HIS BROTHER TOOK A STROLL in Yosemite. Along the way, they completed the first recorded ascent of the northwest ridge of Mount Maclure (elevation 12,900 feet) and were back in camp before dark. Thus began a formidable life in mountaineering.

It's a life few of us lead, and of those who do, even fewer survive to the age of 91 to recall it. In *A Mountaineer's Life*, Steck's writing memory is like the muscle memory he must have needed for summiting Sentinel Rock or the East Buttress of El Capitan in Yosemite: precise and confident. On Sentinel Rock, which he climbed in 1950 when he was 24, he and his partner slept on a ledge so narrow that their shoulders turned sideways. The very image causes a reader back spasms.

The Tetons. The Dolomites. The Himalaya. The Yukon. Steck seems to have traversed the world as lightly as he traversed ice and rock. Many of his stories are bright with humor. After his partner survived a near fatal fall in Cima Grande in Italy, a priest begged them on his knees not to try again (they did). In Pakistan, on the way to Payu Peak, an unwelcoming local asked, "Who is the white infidel?" And on Mount Logan in Canada, from a camp built atop a cornice with drop-offs of thousands of feet, "the view . . . was most peaceful, as long as your eyes were closed."

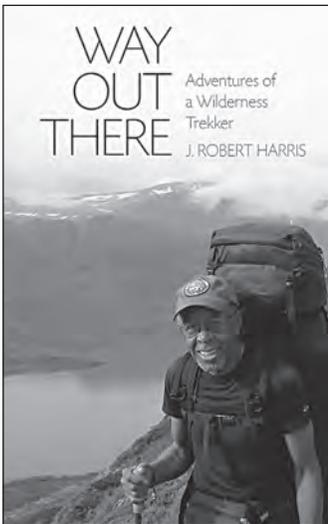
Other stories are dark. Steck writes of carrying bodies down slopes and surviving falling rocks "the size of VW buses." These stories are love letters to victory, loss, and, of course, mortality. Buried at the bottom of an avalanche, "I knew I was dead, and said so out loud." He lived to write the words, though colleagues did not; he lost them through the years to the mountains but also to suicide or insanity.

Steck the writer is deft, and Steck the photographer is glorious. That tenuous camp on Hummingbird Ridge along Mount Logan is so harrowing to look at that I had to close the book and then open it again, to make sure everyone was still safe. I'm awfully glad he took his photos, and awfully glad I didn't.

One of the last chapters has a simple question for a title. Everyone choosing extremity must ask and answer it for themselves: "Is Climbing Worth Dying For?" Steck's own answer is graceful, though misty: "The acceptance of death in mountaineering," he writes, "remains a remarkable psychological conundrum."

As a rule, it's easier to read about mountains than to climb them. As a rule, it's also less satisfying. But rules, like heroic physical feats, are made to be broken.

—*Elissa Ely*



Way Out There: Adventures of a Wilderness Trekker

By J. Robert Harris

Mountaineers Books, 2017, 304 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-68051-120-8.

Price: \$18.95 (paperback)

LIKE MANY OF US, J. ROBERT HARRIS likes to travel. Like some of us, he mostly travels alone. Like few of us, he travels astonishing distances to hike even more astonishing distances.

It began in 1966 when, at 22, he took his first "impetuous road trip," driving a battered Volkswagen Beetle 400 miles a day from New York City to Circle, Alaska. Somewhere during the trip, he realized he was covering the miles without noticing the panoramas. Decades of remedial hiking followed: in Baffin Island (where preparations included reading an eight-page, single-spaced "Polar Bear Information Package" from Parks Canada), along Katahdin's Knife Edge in whiteout conditions, 100 miles across the Continental Divide, 155 miles in Montana's Bob Marshall

Wilderness (here, he comes upon a cowboy, slips him a business card—and gets a call years later).

His goal is straightforward: “an invigorating, drastically simplified existence where all my earthly possessions are on my back.” As he likes fine things, these possessions include a flask of 25-year-old Remy Martin and hand-rolled cigars. Wilderness can’t hold up a quality smoke at the end of the day.

Going solo—“the ultimate detachment” for a man who lives and works in corporate New York City—comes with challenges. Age, though, is the least of them. At 50, he trekked to Tasmania, where “you can be exposed to a year’s worth of weather . . . in a single day.” While there, he traversed the Western Arthur Mountain Range without signposts or trail markers, in the company of leeches, wallabies, and platypi, and weather so difficult it once took ten hours to cover 4 miles.

At 53, he hiked 222 miles along the Canol Heritage Trail in Northern Canada. At 60, it was 140 miles into the Australian outback with friends. No trip comes without quirks, stalls, and complications, which make for some enviable opening sentences: “I’m huddled in an abandoned shepherd hut in Patagonia in a snowstorm.”

The one journey we don’t hear much about is what it’s like to be a black man hiking in areas largely lived in by people who aren’t. A teenager in Alaska assumes Mr. Harris knows Magic Johnson because they share skin color; a chateau manager in the Alps refuses Harris a room in a mostly empty chateau. He relates these anecdotes factually and unflappably, as if they were bad weather sightings.

Here is a friendly writer full of good humor and curiosity. If he is also sometimes a bit too full of detail (we don’t need to know the contents of every meal), it’s because he is so glad to tell his stories. When you finish the book, you will miss his company.

—*Elissa Ely*

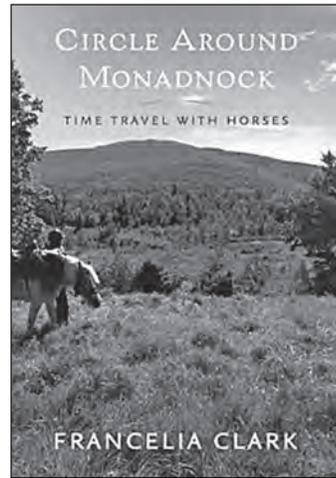
Circle Around Monadnock: Time Travel with Horses

By Francelia Clark, with Pam Godin and Shelley Mozier

Bauhan Publishing, 2018, 143 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-87233-252-2.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback)



OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS SEEKING A nonmotorized experience with mountains typically lace up their hiking boots or strap on skis or snowshoes with a notion of ascending the slopes and hoping to reach the summit. This story of a three-day encounter with Mount Monadnock in southern New Hampshire provides a refreshing alternative on two counts. Rather than climb to the peak, three women circumnavigate its lower elevations. Instead of traveling on foot, they go on horseback.

Joined by two companions, Francelia Clark sets out on her equestrian adventure to explore the familiar in a new way and awaken “a fuller first-person experience with a working animal.” A retired college teacher who grew up in Washington, D.C., she summered with her family for many years in southwestern New Hampshire and now lives in the area. As someone who is familiar with the Monadnock region but spent most of her life elsewhere, she is perhaps ideally suited to see new things in well-known places.

Lavishly illustrated with contemporary color photographs (many by the author and her fellow travelers) and historical images, the text is divided into three main parts, one for each day of the 28-mile, two-overnight ride around the mountain. Beginning on Close Road in Dublin, the clockwise trip mostly follows obscure ancient roads connecting colonial settlements. They slept at a couple of old inns.

Clark ventures out well prepared, not just with gear and equestrian experience, but with a trove of knowledge about the route’s past garnered from reading histories and diaries, poring over maps and pictures, and talking with old-timers and historians. This enables her to coax fascinating stories out of old cellar holes, mill structures, stone walls, fields, and cart paths. Through these narratives, readers get a sense of the hardscrabble lives led by colonial settlers, their tenacity eking a living out of the land, their conflicts and fears.

Clark takes us not just on a trip through a rugged and beautiful landscape with occasional views of Monadnock, but into a countryside measured in centuries that heightens awareness and gives depth and meaning to the places she visits.

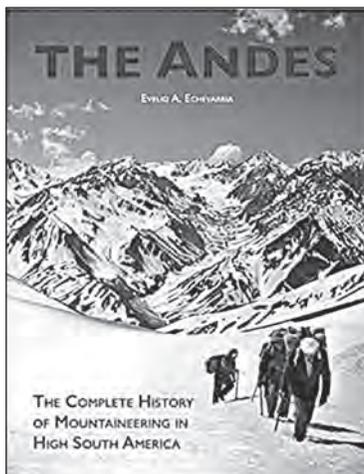
Many of the stories are poignant and personal. Some are vividly rendered beside long ago collapsed fieldstone cellar holes where the subject of the narrative lived. Such an approach almost invests the tales with an evocative séance-like quality.

Clark describes many ordinary people who now seem larger than life. In 1754, for example, 50-year-old Benjamin Dole hunted down a bear that had killed a neighbor's dog, but when he found the bruin, he became so startled that he couldn't fire his gun, and the animal escaped. It was an encounter hard to live down. Abner Sanger carried his son on his back two miles to and from school in deep snow for several days in 1794 illustrating hardiness that seems almost impossible to fathom in today's world. Passing near the 1783 cellar hole of Benjamin and Phebe Mason, we learn that Benjamin hunted wolves and is supposed to have once brought three of them home alive.

These early settlers often journeyed on horseback, so perhaps Clark's mode of travel helps her connect with and enliven the past. "Our horses' performance echoed the role of their forebears," she acknowledges. "They served as shapers of our plan, and then steady companions, and cooperative ones."

Prominently standing alone, the rugged slopes and bare rocky top of Monadnock have long attracted visitors. Anyone who has enjoyed a climb or view of the mountain will delight in this horseback journey and find their understanding of an enchanting place greatly enriched.

—*David K. Leff*



The Andes: The Complete History of Mountaineering in High South America

By Evelio A. Echevarria

Joseph Reidhead & Co, 2017, 840 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-940777-71-9.

Price: \$64.95 (paperback), \$19.99 (Kindle).

SOUTH AMERICA'S FIRST CASE RECORDED in English of competitive mountaineering was between two New Englanders. The year was 1911. Annie Peck of Providence, Rhode Island, and Hiram Bingham of New Haven, Connecticut, raced to climb

the only peak rising above 23,000 feet in the entire Western Hemisphere—or so they thought.

More than a mountaineering rivalry, it was a battle of the sexes. At 65, Peck was more than twice as old as Bingham, a young professor at Yale University who later became a U.S. senator for Connecticut. Bingham believed exploration and mountaineering to be a man's domain. How could Peck, even if she had climbed the Matterhorn in 1895 (becoming the second woman to ever do so), have the audacity to consider stepping first atop Peru's soaring massif of Coropuna?

"There was no chance of joining forces," the historian Evelio Echevarria writes in his new book, *The Andes*. "Bingham would have never accepted shared leadership with another, even less a woman. Nor would this very particular woman accept on her limited means to travel in Bingham's style with his train of surveyors, geographers and even a secretary."

The rivalry of Peck and Bingham is one of many surprises of Andean history found in this exhaustive chronicle of mountaineering in South America by Echevarria, who has also written for *Appalachia*.^{*} At 840 pages, *The Andes* is almost as daunting as the range itself. The appendices stretch nearly 200 pages. The book includes 60 maps. The softcover weighs 6 pounds.

The book was clearly a labor of love for Echevarria, a professor emeritus of Spanish and Hispanic literature at Colorado State University. Born in 1926

^{*}Echevarria wrote about prehistoric mountain ascents in North America for the Summer 2001 issue of *Appalachia* and about early mountaineering in Ecuador for the Winter 1984 issue.

in Santiago, Chile, Echevarria was ticking off first ascents in the Andes at a young age and chronicling his summits for *Revista Andina*, then Chile's official journal of mountaineering. After being drafted into the Chilean army and serving with a mountain regiment as a member of the ski troops, he moved to Colorado to pursue a doctorate. But the Andes kept luring him back. Echevarria estimates he made 60 trips to South America over the decades to do research for this book.

"I knew that no other person anywhere had at hand the enormous amount of historical information I had," Echevarria said in an interview with *Appalachia*. "I also believed that *andinismo*, that is, mountaineering as practiced by the South Americans, deserved a wider international recognition."

The Andes is a hefty addition to mountain literature. For all its pages, however, many times I was left wanting more specifics, be it about the dueling personalities of Peck and Bingham, the two Polish dogs that became the first canines to climb Mount Aconcagua in 1934, or the 300 Norwegian skiers who delivered mail over Andean passes in the late 1800s. In trying to cover so much ground, Echevarria had to skim across much of the world's longest mountain range.

Still, I have to thank Echevarria for putting me on the trail of Peck and Bingham. As the New Englanders raced to South America in 1911, by coincidence they wound up on the same ocean steamer out of Panama City. In a letter to his wife, Bingham described Peck as a "hard-faced, sharp-tongued old maid." The old maid arrived first to Coropuna, raising a triumphant banner atop the summit with the inscription, "Votes for Women."

Two months later, after Bingham had made a side trip to inspect some Inca ruins, he opted for a different route up what he judged to be Coropuna's true summit. The American Alpine Club gave him credit for the first ascent. It was a bittersweet victory.

Coropuna was in fact only about 21,000 feet tall—nearly 2,000 feet shorter than Aconcagua, the true pinnacle of the Andes far to the south. Moreover, neither Bingham nor Peck actually stood on the true summit of Coropuna. The first ascent honor went to an Italian more than four decades later. By then, however, Bingham's fame had already been secured for "discovering" the magnificent Incan city of Machu Picchu in the weeks before climbing Coropuna. He had Peck to thank for motivating him to go to Peru in the first place.

—Stephen Kurczy

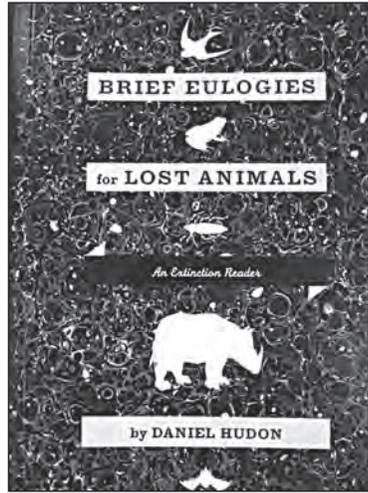
Brief Eulogies for Lost Animals: An Extinction Reader

By Daniel Hudon

Pen & Anvil Press, 2017, 138 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-9916222-8-3.

Price: \$9.67 (paperback).



THIS LITERARY CATALOG OF 100 WILDLIFE species gone extinct reads like a series of odes to living creatures. It covers one-ninth of all the species that have disappeared since 1500, in heartbreakingly lovely language. Humans must face the evidence that the extinction rate has sped up, author Daniel Hudon writes. “These details need to be brought to light to make the species come alive, at least in our imagination, to help bring the enormity of what has and is happening within our grasp.”

Sometimes Hudon addresses a disappeared creature directly: “It isn’t easy being a minnow,” he writes to the longnose dace, “especially when your universe is a single marsh fed by a pair of hot springs in Banff National Park.” Tropical fish introduced to the pools ate all of their eggs in less than 70 years.

Or he describes them with poetic distance. “When the pear tree blossoms, one after another begins to appear just as the sun rises,” he writes of the *Urania sloanus*, a moth last seen in Jamaica in the late 1890s.

He quotes eyewitnesses, another way of bringing these creatures back to life. The sound of passenger pigeons, according to a Potawatomi tribe chief, was “a mingling of sleigh bells, mixed with the rumbling of an approaching storm.”

Or, he gives an excruciating epithet: “One of the tragic habits of the Carolina parakeet was for the flock to sweep repeatedly around a wounded or dead companion, squawking and screeching until they too fell to the hunter.”

The prose is spare and clean. He has studied these animals thoroughly. Two appendices offer scientific details.

It’s a book read in small spurts, like a hybrid poetry book and many-part nature essay. Hudon leaves readers staring into space, dreaming of what could have been.

—Christine Woodside