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Harriet E. Freeman, White Mountain Conservationist: A Secret Romance Obscured Her Legacy

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In mid-February 1891, 43-year-old Harriet Freeman boarded a train from Boston to Waterville, New Hampshire, with other Appalachian Mountain Club members. This would be her first time snowshoeing, a popular winter recreation. Twenty years earlier, she had vacationed in Waterville as one of the church and family party led by her minister, the Reverend Edward Everett Hale of the South Congregational Church in Boston's South End. She had joined his volunteer staff that same year, 1871. Now, in one of several letters she wrote Hale, who was in California, from Waterville, she reminded him that they had sat together on the outside seat of a stage coach on the last part of their journey: "It was either rainy or very warm," she wrote, "for we held up an umbrella. I held it, & you held my wrist for a better support. I remember even then that"— and she continued in the defunct shorthand he had taught her to conceal their intimate feelings, and which I have translated into English, *"that touch of yours, your hand on mine gave my heart pleasure. That love was in my heart then hardly born. How little we knew then of what was before us [or] where the paths of life would lead us."*

"Have I really been out on snow shoes?" Freeman wrote at the end of her first day back in Waterville. "Yes! I had my first walk this morning with nine or ten others." Awkward on snowshoes at first, she developed the knack by her third and last day and could focus on her surroundings: "Our own party were a picturesque sight as one had glimpses of them filing in & out of the woods. . . . But the quiet, the stillness, the measured tread of our feet, the beauty of the trees, as the snow caught on the long mosses on the trunks, the beautifully rounded curves over all the rocks were lovely beyond telling. We kept on to the cascades, now all frozen & icy, but still beautiful; & the banks of the stream were all lined with snow covered evergreens. So beautiful was it all, that I never once wished for summer, never once said 'how beautiful this would be in summer.'" She would never lose her love of the mountains.

Who was Harriet E. Freeman, and why have we never heard of her despite her adventurous and productive life, including her contributions to trail-building in the White Mountains and her role in the fight for passage of federal legislation to preserve the region's forests? Studying her voluminous 25-year correspondence with Hale for my book *Coded Letters, Concealed*

Harriet Freeman, second from left, greets her cousin Edith Hull, while Emma Cummings and Hattie's nephew Fred Freeman watch. Their weeklong hiking and camping trip started on July 9, 1902. They explored the Presidentials with guide Vyron Lowe. COURTESY OF ALAN LOWE

Love: The Larger Lives of Harriet Freeman and Edward Everett Hale led me to discover more about this remarkable woman. By the time Freeman made this second trip to Waterville, she and the considerably older Hale (1822–1909) had been conducting a secret romantic relationship for seven years. He still was married to the former Emily Foote Perkins, a member of the famed Beecher family. Emily Hale, a petite woman, had given birth to nine children. But Hale had grown away from his wife. Mrs. Hale had suffered various illnesses and was a semi-invalid for the last 30 years of her life and, unlike Freeman, was not intellectual. Sharing many of the same interests—a love of the outdoors, mountains, canoeing, natural history, and travel—Freeman and Hale had fallen in love as close colleagues in his church. As his favorite secretary, she worked with him on the majority of his sermons and many of his books and articles, and was treasurer of the church's ladies' charitable outreach.

At times, Hale worried that Freeman's ambitions and abilities might be circumscribed by her close relationship with him, even though he encouraged her to live "a larger life" that they would both enjoy through her long, descriptive letters. But she paid the price for her illicit relationship with him in that they could never travel alone together, other than covertly, and the true nature of their relationship could never be declared other than to each other. It is also striking that Hale never publicly acknowledged her contributions to his voluminous writings, although his inscriptions in the copies he gave her of those works and his letters indicate his dependence on her gift for description. Ironically, Freeman was influenced by his conservative view of appropriate roles for women, particularly in "Proper Boston."

When Harriet Freeman was born in the North End of Boston on March 13, 1847, her father, William Frederick Freeman, was still in partnership in the Caribbean trade with Elisha Atkins, a family friend who became his brother-in-law. They had been set up in that business by his father, William Freeman, whose ancestor settled on Cape Cod in 1635. William Freeman was the first of generations of Freemans in Brewster to move to Boston to find work, eventually becoming a successful shipping merchant. Hattie Freeman's mother was Caroline Lewis of Pepperell, Massachusetts, near the New Hampshire border.

Two years after his daughter's birth, William F. Freeman left his trading partnership to start his own businesses, purchasing two mills on the Charles River at Watertown, and founding the woolen manufacturing firm of Aetna Mills. Elisha Atkins continued the shipping and trading business while

Photos of Harriet Freeman were rare. Here she is in 1862 at age 15 with her 5-year-old cousin Helen Atkins, the future wife of J. Rayner Edmands. COURTESY OF PHOEBE BUSHWAY

he and his son Edwin acquired a large sugar plantation in Cuba. Elisha became a director of the Union Pacific Railroad during the crucial years of its construction. Thus, her family's business successes provided Freeman, who never married, with a generous income enabling her to fashion an independent and adventurous life.

Before the Freemans, who were devoted Unitarians, became parishioners of the South Congregational Church in 1861, they joined the Hollis Street Church, whose minister was Thomas Starr King. The family was close to King, who must have enthused young Hattie Freeman with his love of the White Mountains. His collected stories were published as *The White Hills: Their Legends, Landscape, and Poetry* (Isaac N. Andrews) in 1859, the year before he moved to San Francisco as the first minister to its newly established Unitarian church. This was the first popular guidebook for tourists to the region.

Following King's departure, the Freemans joined Edward Everett Hale's church close by their townhouse at 37 Union Park in Boston's South End. The 41-year-old minister called on the family in the fall of 1863, just before he published "A Man Without a Country," the short story he wrote to promote the Union cause that made him famous. Hattie was 16 and her brother, Fred, was 9.

Twenty-one years later in 1884, the year they declared their love for each other, Hale wrote Freeman, "How little I knew that the one daughter was to be mine own." After Hale moved his family to Roxbury in 1869, Hattie's mother persuaded Hale to lunch and nap at their house, and he became close to all the Freemans.

Freeman had a lifelong hunger for learning and new experiences, and Hale encouraged her to study botany and geology. Forbidden by her father to attend Vassar College, the serious and very determined young woman found routes for college-level study locally. She was a member of the Women's Education Society of Boston, which sought, established, and underwrote institutions open to the higher education of women, particularly in science. One of these was the Teachers' School of Science, the joint initiative of the Boston Society of Natural History and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Freeman took courses there in mineralogy, geology, and botany. Later, she was a special student in biology and geology at MIT. In addition to her scientific studies, Freeman devoted much time to leadership roles in a number of the women's clubs and organizations pursuing philanthropy and reform in education and human rights.

Harriet Freeman became a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club in 1879, three years after its founding. Perhaps it was she who persuaded Hale to give a talk at the AMC in March 1881 about his and his Harvard college friend William F. Channing's experiences in the White Mountains in 1841 as junior members of the Geological Survey of New Hampshire. They had searched the south branch of the Israel River for immense sheets of mica from Mount Jefferson, after which they climbed Mounts Adams and Washington. Charles H. Hitchcock, who became the longtime professor of geology at Dartmouth College, named Mount Hale in honor of his friend in his *Report on the Geology of New Hampshire* (1878). Hitchcock was the AMC's first councillor of topography, and he was succeeded by J. Rayner Edmands, a Harvard meteorologist and keen mountaineer who married Freeman's heiress cousin Helen Atkins in October 1885. Hale became a member of the club in 1882 and president in 1895.

Several of Freeman's favorite professors of geology were among the earliest members, and some of them were AMC presidents: Alpheus Hyatt, curator of the Boston Society of Natural History Museum and founder of the Teachers' School of Science; William O. Crosby; George H. Barton; William H. Niles; and Nathaniel S. Shaler. Freeman joined field trips led by most of these scientists. Before the AMC had its own quarters, it was given free space in the adjacent buildings of MIT and the Society of Natural History in Boston's Back Bay. These institutions were second homes to Freeman, and the professors with whom she was studying were among the AMC's founding members, so it is hardly surprising that she was drawn into the club's meetings and activities.

As a national leader in the Unitarian church as well as a popular literary figure, Hale was a celebrity, much in demand for sermons and speeches. He and Freeman had managed to spend an astonishing amount of time together under the guise of their working relationship but their illicit affair was extremely risky, requiring mutually agreed rules of discretion and secrecy. They spent most of the summers apart, he with his wife and family at their summer home in Matunuck, Rhode Island, she at her family's country home in Pepperell. Hale provided Freeman with pre-addressed, typed envelopes for her voluminous letters and taught her a then-defunct shorthand that he had learned as a Harvard student in the late 1830s to conceal from unexpected readers of the letters their intense feelings for each other. For the first five years of their correspondence, Freeman insisted that Hale burn her letters. Only following her father's death in 1888 did Hale begin to keep and hide her letters (she kept his from the beginning). Thus, from 1884 until his death in 1909, about 3,000 of their letters survived (hers were returned to her by his secretary). The majority of these were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1969 from Freeman's great-nephew, and a handful found their way via other Freeman descendants to Smith College.

Hale and Freeman's romantic relationship became more intimate and committed in the wake of several tragedies in her family. Her younger brother died suddenly from a ruptured appendix in July 1887, leaving a widow and four young children, all of whom were close to their aunt. Freeman received a telegram with the terrible news after climbing Mount Adams with Edmands. Despite the fact that Hale had just moved his congregation to merge with the former Hollis Street Church in its imposing new building in the Back Bay, he accompanied the grieving Freeman on a secret trip to Bethel, Maine, at the foot of their beloved White Mountains in early October. Following her

father's death the next summer, Freeman sold the Pepperell house she had inherited from her mother and devoted her summers to travel and renting houses in the White Mountains, where Hale would visit her.

Freeman's two-decade-long summer residence in the White Mountains began in 1892, when she rented a cottage in Shelburne, New Hampshire. She was undoubtedly influenced in her choice of Shelburne by the opinion of King, who extolled the beauty of the Androscoggin Valley with its towering views of Mounts Adams and Washington. That September, Hale visited her there for a few days. He wrote in his diary, "We have done more than 40 pages in 2 days," but he also found time to sketch the views from the picturesque village of Gorham, climb a nearby crag with Freeman, and call on friends. But by the early 1880s, commercial logging companies were decimating the luxurious forest clothing the lower slopes and valleys of the mountains, with rampant clear-cutting for the newly invented manufacture of paper from wood pulp. During future visits, Freeman began complaining about the foul smell from the pulp mill at Berlin, a few miles north. Her confrontations with these ugly depredations, which also threatened several important watersheds, converted her into a passionate forest conservationist.

Although Freeman often participated in AMC field meetings and excursions, she made private arrangements for some of her more adventurous trips. For instance, in March 1896, she joined her friends Thomas and Elizabeth Watson on a three-day journey by wagon from Flagstaff, Arizona, to the Grand Canyon. This was thirteen years before the railroad was extended to Grand Canyon Village. Thomas Watson had been Alexander Graham Bell's assistant at Boston University in inventing the telephone and was the beneficiary of one-tenth of the patents, which allowed him to retire before he was 30. He and his wife were special students with Freeman in Professor William Crosby's geology courses at Boston Tech in the early 1890s.

On March 20, Freeman wrote a long and fascinating account of their adventure for Hale from "Cameron's Camp, Grand Canon [sic]," which Hale published in the last issue of his newspaper *Boston Commonwealth*. "Dear Mr. Hale," she began formally, since he was staying with his wife and daughter in Pasadena, "Here we are! We have really accomplished the object of our long travel. We spent last night 2500 ft. down in the canon & have this morning walked up three miles on a burro trail . . . . We are all dead tired at this moment, as we have until within a half hour been half starved." Freeman's account captures the discomforts they encountered and the indomitable spirit of the three explorers. Brief notes and telegrams before and after this

trip catalog Freeman and Hale's plans to spend a day and a night together in Redlands, California, before he headed home.

But Freeman's independent and adventurous lifestyle and philanthropic commitments were increasingly threatened by the severe downturn in business during the economic depression beginning in 1893. The final blow came in 1898, when the bank holding her bonds went bankrupt, and she felt compelled to give up her Boston house, the "home away from home" she had made for Hale, where she housed her natural history collections. She became deeply depressed. Concerned that her family might confine her to the McLean Hospital, a psychiatric facility, Hale recommended her as a patient to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, the well-known Philadelphia neurologist. Freeman spent two monotonous months in Mitchell's clinic in Media, Pennsylvania, before completing his prescribed rest cure in Europe.

Freeman's recovery was slow but, with the return of her income, her house, and her health in 1900, she was impatient to resume her adventures. She threw her considerable energy into independent study and field trips, and, most important, into activist support of forest and wildlife conservation. She had become close to the younger naturalist and ornithologist Emma Cummings, who had proven to be an ideal traveling companion on earlier trips abroad. The women shared a passion for botany and trees. Cummings knew a great deal about ornithology (she and Harriet E. Richards, who served for many years as the AMC's councillor of natural history, published a pocket handbook on New England birds). Freeman's expertise was geology.

By this time, Hale, who had retired from full-time ministry, was too old and lame for strenuous travels and hiking, so Freeman determined to write him lengthy accounts of her adventures with Cummings that he helped publish in *The Chautauquan*. In March 1901, the women attempted to reach Lake Drummond, the large natural lake of unusually pure water in the Dismal Swamp on the eastern Virginia–North Carolina border. They knew the region to be a virtual laboratory of primeval forest and bird and wildlife, but they encountered one roadblock after another in trying to reach Lake Drummond, first from the northwest and then from the south. They were horrified to see that hundreds of the picturesque cypress trees along the Dismal Swamp Canal had been killed by recent dredging.

That summer, Freeman began renting houses on the estate of Daniel and Helen Merriman in the fashionable White Mountain resort of Intervale, New Hampshire. Freeman's life-threatening appendectomy that winter had softened Emily Hale's attitude toward the younger woman and she accompanied

her husband to spend three summer visits (1902–1904) with Freeman and her nieces. From then on, it was Hale's daughter, artist Ellen (Nelly) Day Hale, who accompanied the old man, usually for the month of August. As always, Freeman and her guests were meticulously taken care of by her two Irish American servants.

The year 1902 was a banner one for Freeman. In March, she and Cummings set off for the South Carolina Appalachians for Freeman's long-delayed search for the reputed natural habitat of the very rare wildflower *Shortia galacifolia*. After a 35-mile drive in a "hack" driven by a local boy, with local botanist Frank Boynton as their guide, they spotted masses of the delicately fringed flower with its characteristic leaves at Oconee in the White Water Valley (the plant is now known as Oconee Bells). Three years later, Cummings heard that a Baltimore lumber company had acquired thousands of acres in that vicinity posing obvious threats to the precious plants. Freeman poured out her anger and frustration in the invective of a passionate conservationist: "Will not this invader, Man, spare anything! Has he no respect for anything that has ever been created on this planet, but thinks that everything was put here that he might turn it into dollars & cents."

Edward Everett Hale seated in the garden of Freeman's rented house in Intervale, August 1902.
HARRIET E. FREEMAN PAPERS, HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

Freeman returned from South Carolina in time to attend the grand, ticketed celebration of Hale's 80th birthday at Boston's recently completed Symphony Hall on April 3, 1902. As she prepared to leave for another summer in Intervale, she wrote Hale about her plans for a weeklong hiking and camping trip in the Presidential Range with a cousin, her nephew Fred Freeman, and Emma Cummings. The details were announced in *Among the Clouds,* the Mount Washington newspaper, on July 14, 1902, beginning: "A party of four

visitors from Intervale have been camping for five days at the Perch and making daily excursions among the Northern Peaks under the guidance of Vyron Lowe." Freeman and Cummings wrote full accounts for Hale that they evidently hoped to publish. More than a hundred years later, their hopes will be realized in a freestanding publication with many photographs that Hattie and Fred Freeman took along the way.

Shortly before Hale's visit in August, following another fruitless attempt to find alpine flowers near the summit of Mount Washington, Freeman spent two hours with Frank Burt, editor and publisher of *Among the Clouds*, at his office. She mentioned that Hale had had two White Mountain adventures in his youth that would be worth telling. Burt said that he would be happy to call on Hale at Intervale and take his dictation. "But I told him you had an amanuensis [dictation assistant] engaged for the whole of your stay here," she wrote, concluding slyly, "What a good time I shall have as amanuensis!" During his visit, as they sat outside in the cool of the pine forest bordering her cottage while fragile Emily Hale "looked at the ceiling" indoors, Hale dictated a long article about his 1841 adventure in Carter Notch. No doubt Freeman made important editorial contributions. He returned to Intervale a month later, this time without his wife, so that they could retrace his steps in the same area together. In a note from his diary, Hale wrote, "On Thursday, Oct. 9, 1902, the Ethan Allen Crawford of today rode me and Hatty Freeman to the creek of the house where Stilling my guide in that 1841 tramp then lived; and there Channing and I spent the night before we started. The house is now a ruin . . . . As it was a raw morning, Crawford dressed me in his own coon skin coat, & I was thoroughly comfortable. In 1841, I wore the coat of his great-grandfather Abel, when my own was wet."

Like many who spent their summers in the White Mountains, Freeman observed with increasing distress the devastation wrought on their forests by the unchecked clear-cutting practiced by lumber companies. In between other mountain excursions that summer, Freeman called on the wife of avid mountaineer and AMC member Harold Nichols. Mrs. Nichols told her about the letter she had written to President Theodore Roosevelt, "asking that Congress take the whole Presidential range as a reserve," as they were considering doing with the Carolina Appalachians. Freeman encouraged Hale to call a meeting to discuss steps to further this initiative during his August stay with her. Headlines in the *Boston Herald* summarized that meeting: "To Save the Forests. Dr. Edward Everett Hale's Eloquent Address.

Prof. Edmands of Harvard Also Pleads for Trees. Preserve Presidential Range Theme at the Intervale." It was decided to set up a committee of which Hale was chairman to "present the subject before Congress."

That same busy year, Freeman began contributing to path-building in the White Mountains, undoubtedly encouraged by Edmands. It was reported by the AMC's councillor for improvements for autumn 1902 that the extension of the path from the summit of North Moat Mountain along the range to the summit of South Moat Mountain had been reopened by G.C. Lucy of North Conway, under the direction and at the expense of Miss Harriet E. Freeman. During the summer of 1905, Vyron Lowe cut the 1 3/8-mile-long Glen Boulder Path for Freeman. The club concluded that it was "an exceedingly easy and picturesque route to the summit of Mount Washington, particularly to one coming from the direction of Jackson, so arrangements were made whereby an extension around the Gulf of Slides to the Club's path on Boott Spur was made in the spring of 1906, the expense being born jointly by Miss Freeman and the Club." Freeman explained why these paths were so important, particularly to older women enthusiasts like herself: "I think there never was a person who walked the mountains as slowly as I do . . . to climb really makes me very leg weary & sadly out of breath, & then if there is anything beautiful, & there always is, I will stop to look at it . . . . I asked Vyron if he ever had a party who enjoyed mountain sights so much & he said promptly 'No! Never.'"

It was clear that Hale envied Freeman's adventures and found Boston less than stimulating following the deaths or departures of so many of his intellectual friends. After catching up with leading scientist and inventor friends in Washington that spring, which he described in detail in his letters to Freeman, he was delighted when his old friend Massachusetts Senator George F. Hoar nominated him to serve as temporary chaplain to the U.S. Senate. Now this supremely gregarious man could look forward to spending the winter in the capital's milder climate and cosmopolitan society. He promised Freeman that he would only stay for one session. But his friendship with Theodore Roosevelt—since the latter's years at Harvard when Hale was chaplain to the undergraduates—led to frequent invitations to the White House and conversations with the conservation-minded president. At the same time, he was at the center of potential influence for his interests in international arbitration for peace, education of African Americans, and forest conservation. He continued as chaplain until two months before his death in 1909. This was a bitter pill for Freeman because it was in the winter

months they had spent so much time together. However, this also marked the beginning of their partnership in the cause of lobbying for federal support to protect the forests of the White Mountains.

On the eve of Hale's departure for Washington in late December 1903, he printed in the *Lend A Hand Record* Freeman's letter bemoaning the destruction she had observed of the path to the Cascade camp: "For a mile we walked over a logged area, the pretty forest path simply a mass of mud. Forty men are at work now, and the force is soon to be increased to eighty . . . . Constantly we heard the noise of the dynamite explosions, as rock is being blasted for the construction of roads on which to haul out the wood." In mid-April 1904, as his first congressional season in Washington was drawing to a close and he was not expecting to return for another, Hale wrote Freeman with his characteristic optimism: "We have got the New Hampshire Reservation into the [Senate] Bill . . . if we can get it through our House that will be a great victory. And [he said in shorthand], <*you must count that as one of your triumphs*>." Actually, neither of them could have had the slightest idea at that stage of what a long and bitter struggle it would be to get the combined Appalachian and White Mountain bill passed into law.

Freeman and Hale were both delegates to the American Forest Congress in Washington between January 2 and 6, 1905. Its purpose was, as Hale reported in the *Record*, "to establish a broader understanding of the forest in its relation to the great industries depending upon it; to advance the conservative use of the forest resources for both the present and the future need of these industries; to stimulate and unite all efforts to perpetuate the forest as a permanent resource of the Nation." Freeman represented the Massachusetts Forestry Association and took her youngest niece, Helen, a budding arborist, with her. Representing the Massachusetts Association and the AMC, Hale gave a rousing speech with a resolution for the establishment of a national forest reserve in the White Mountains.

That same year, the U.S. Forest Service was created within the Department of Agriculture with Gifford Pinchot at its helm, and there was an orchestrated campaign to inform and raise support beyond the existing pool of activists for forest preservation in New England. Among its many illustrated articles about the devastated forests, *Forest and Irrigation* honored Hale with a photograph as being "among the very first to advocate the establishment of a White Mountain Forest Reserve." Needless to say, no mention was made of Mrs. Nichols or Miss Freeman.

Freeman's and Cummings's efforts would increasingly be made in the guise of enlisting the support of the women's clubs of America. Among the general announcements at the beginning of the November 1906 issue of *Forest and Irrigation* is one headed "Of Interest to Women." It reads, "On November 13, Misses E.G. Cummings of 16 Kennard Road, Brookline, Mass., and Harriet E. Freeman, of 37 Union Park, Boston, Mass., called at the offices of the Forest Service and the American Forestry Association, in the interest of the White Mountain and Southern Appalachian bill. It is hoped, among other things, they may be able to enlist the women's clubs in this important measure."

Freeman was now convinced, as were many others, that Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon was the real villain holding up the bill. Through the Rules Committee, he controlled which bills came to the floor for debate. In a mid-December 1906 letter, she wrote, "I can hardly control my expression of contempt and vindictiveness towards him [Cannon]. You, as a man, look on both sides, as you say a woman can't, & so have no word of disapproval (that is putting it mild!)." Later that month, on the eve of attending the annual congress of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in New York, Freeman passed on what she had learned about the continuing destruction of the forests during a brief visit to Intervale. A colleague in the Massachusetts Forestry Association had "stated the political side in a clearer way than it had ever been put to me before . . . . The Speaker is steering the Republican Party. Forests, one way or the other, are nothing to him. If N.H. were Democratic & the State was to be won for the Party by buying her Forests, he would do it. But the State is governed by the Boston & Maine. The more logging the more railroad traffic, & the two corporations play into each other's hands."

Congressman John W. Weeks of Massachusetts, who summered in the White Mountains and who had taken up the cause after being appointed by the Speaker to the House Committee on Agriculture, telegraphed "Interview with Speaker Cannon does not indicate likelihood of consideration of Forestry Bill. We have not given up yet, however." "I have," exclaimed Freeman, "& it makes me half sick with unhappiness. The Glen Road & all about Glen Ellis Falls are likely to go this winter . . . . I don't see how you can have one word of justification for Cannon. I think that to all who love Forests,

he will be thought of as much an enemy of his country as Benedict Arnold or Jefferson Davis."

To find that Speaker Cannon and his legislative entourage were on board a Caribbean cruise ship that she and Cummings joined in March 1907 was more than Freeman could bear. She dismissed a talk Cannon gave as "cheap oratory" and said of the suspected principal intent of the Congressional party, "There are men on board who say [they] are going down to Panama 'to kill Roosevelt,' to make an inspection [of work on the canal] which may be unfavorable." As the ship steamed along the north shore of Cuba heading to Havana, Emma Cummings (who was now on the executive board of the Massachusetts Forestry Association) and another woman requested an interview with Cannon. Characteristically obdurate, Freeman refused to join in but overheard Cannon's rejection: "The Appalachian Bill is all up . . . . He cares nothing for forests. He said if this appropriation were made for N.H. all the states would want the same for their forests & for everything else. He didn't seem to know or care anything about water supply, or flow of rivers, or the washing away of the soil."

Although Freeman was certainly the one who persuaded Hale to harness his reputation to the forest conservation effort and who peppered him with updates about the situation during his years in Washington, she herself devoted more and more time and energy to bird and wildlife preservation. Land preservation was another interest. Seven months after Hale's death, she wrote to her naturalist friend C. Hart Merriam, reporting that F. H. Newell, director of the U.S. Reclamation Service, had given an illustrated lecture on "Conservation of Water Resources in the West" to the AMC. "He [Newell] made himself very unpopular, however, with many members of the Club, in approving of the use of the Hetch Hetchy Valley [in Yosemite National Park] as a Reservoir. Last winter we had a public meeting with many forcible speakers, to protest against such use of the Valley, and as a Club, we are pledged to resist it."

But the long battle for the Appalachian–White Mountains Forest Reservation Bill, or Weeks Act, was won at last in early 1911, nearly two years after Hale's death. Now the federal government was authorized to appropriate funds for the acquisition of lands and forest reserves for the proposed 698,000-acre White Mountain National Forest.

Hale's academic son, Edward Everett Hale, Jr., compiled his father's two-volume biography, *Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale* (1917). Although Edward Jr. acknowledged Freeman's help with the biography and was aware of his father's personal relationship with his longtime secretary and old friend, he larded the two volumes with his father's letters to his mother, who had died in 1914. Thus, the story of Hale's extramarital relationship was concealed. Hale's subsequent two biographers apparently did not know about it. Whatever she felt about this, Freeman kept on course, corresponding with her scientist friends, active in her many clubs and philanthropies, and traveling around the world with Emma Cummings. But she held on to the precious letters until she died in 1930.

Perhaps it was Harriet Freeman's somewhat secretive life with Hale that hid her contributions to conservation. But the code has been broken and now she can join her contemporaries and receive the accolades that she deserved.

Following a long career in research and writing for books, exhibitions, and articles, particularly for the Library of Congress, Sara Day is now an independent scholar and writer in Washington, D.C. Her book *Coded Letters, Concealed Love: The Larger Lives of Harriet Freeman and Edward Everett Hale* (New Academia Publishing, 2014) was the product of seven years of research, including finding the Rosetta stone to translating the shorthand that they used to conceal their intimate feelings for each other.

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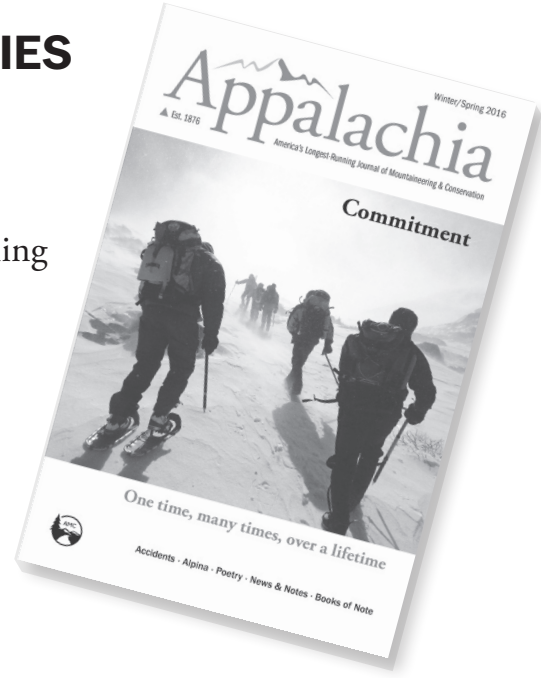

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