

THE
IMPORTANCE
OF WALKING



Aug. 10, 1971
For Ruth and Dudy Hall
With special thanks
to Ruth for your help,
And a wish for good hiking!

Keith

THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING—

by Keith Smiley

—

I Must Walk

A Shongum Myth

Walking into Life

From a Walker's Notebook

A Symposium of Findings

The Shared Wisdom of Walkers

Footnotes for the Use of Walkers

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This booklet came into being through the inspiration and prompting of Garth Cate, friend of mountains and walkers.

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Appreciative acknowledgement is expressed to Ruth Hall and Margaret Pyle for assisting with the text, and to Ruth H. Smiley for photography.

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A TIME Magazine article telling of Albert Einstein during his years at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, describes him as walking home from his study room, refusing rides offered by colleagues, and saying:

"I must walk. I must walk."

You must walk also!

These words are written to help those who want to broaden their modes of walking, as aids to wholeness, and in the process—feel better, find good company, travel with little expense, see new sights on a more intimate basis, enjoy eating without gaining weight, rediscover the natural use of their legs, come close to the earth, and regain balance in life.

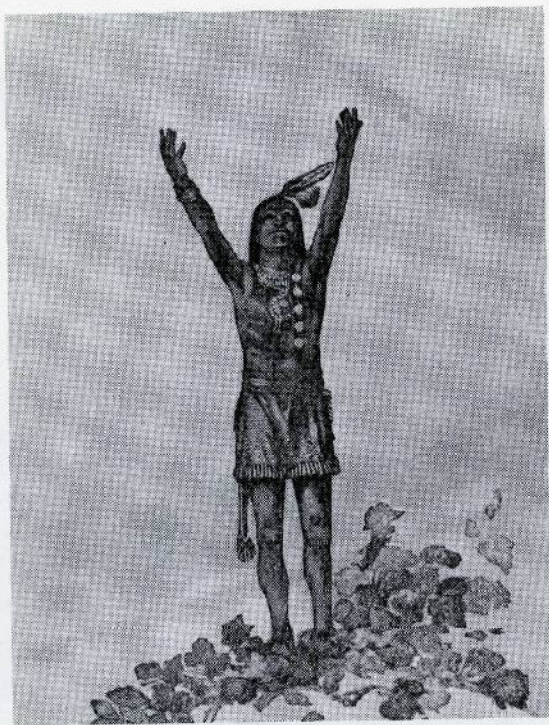
This booklet is dedicated to the walkers and the rock climbers who frequent the Shawangunk Mountains. This Indian name is pronounced "Shongum". The rock climbers have abridged it. They call our mountains "The Gunks". It is a term of real affection, for they have enjoyed many years embracing the face of the cliffs!

May walkers likewise embrace the widest experience of walking in our mountains. To that end, these words are shared.

Keith Smiley

February, 1971
Mohonk Lake, New Paltz, New York





Note: I have written this myth of the Shawangunks to support my own walking experiences, and those of my contemporaries, as I attempt to interpret both together in the following pages. For readers who like to feel that such experience grows with the instinctive guidance of a subtle relationship with those who have walked through these mountains in former times, the myth will have meaning. Other readers may wish to move along to the more contemporary interpretations which follow. —K.S.

Our mountains have seen many chiefs pass by in the valleys. Some were Iroquois leaders in conquest over the Lenape of the Delawares. Chief Shongum may have been a Delaware, but I picture him as above tribes and even above race. If he was of the conquered, his traits were by their nature unconquerable.

This chief of the Shawangunks was widely known for his wisdom. Even when the first white man came up the slopes over three hundred years ago, he seemed old, though his wisdom could not be measured in years. His age was timeless in its quality.

The Dutch colonists respected him. They saw a lithe form, a man fully humbled into kinship with life. In his face they recognized the look of the prophet. As he moved along a trail, settlers and Indians alike took notice.

After settlers came to the valleys, he was not seen for a time. Some said he had died in a cave. Perhaps he was not needed. Perhaps he could rest as long as men *walked* the ridges and sought for game in the hunting grounds of the Shawangunks.

A hundred years ago his sleep was disturbed. Men from the valleys came to the mountains with other motives. They burned forest, they stripped hillsides, and they peeled hemlock bark to sell it for tanning. The chief was restless. Legend tells us that he was seen pacing the hills again.

Some say he stood on Sky Top and prayed to the Great Spirit at sunrise, and that his prayer for a protector of the Shawangunks was answered.

Others say that he appeared in a dream to a man who shared his vision. This man lived across the Hudson. They say the chief guided him and said, "Live in the mountains, as I have lived; let them be kept for those who would *walk* in life." And the man came and his brother came, and they remained, and their descendants also. And the chief went to his cave again. As he disappeared he said: "Keep our mountains for walkers: I have spoken."

Now the chief is said to be walking again. He is a companion on the trail. He is to residents and visitors a special friend, the wise one who walks.



To Learn, to Test, and to Share

From many kindred spirits among the fraternity of walkers, I have learned that there are a goodly number of "recipes" for walking. One selects a "recipe" according to the circumstances and the result which may be desired.

I have tested these recipes through personal participation and complete involvement. I have also observed with care the experience of other walkers.

In the following pages are samplings from my Walker's Notebook.

In addition to my own observations, I have included a collection of writings by walkers whose ability to interpret their love for the art of walking is for me both humbling and inspiring.

The Rock Climber

At the Trapps Cliffs

A rock climber stopped to rest between climbs and while he was catching his breath, I sat with him and indulged in a silent monologue.

Why do you only go up and down. You have many routes up the cliffs but the top is always the goal. There are many ways of going up and several paths to go down. I watch you take the hard way. There are challenges along the way, and many ways of meeting them. But struggle is part of the benefit. By your actions you have spoken.

You say to me, do not look only at the top of the cliff; consider the experiences of the climb and of the descent.

I have come to tell you it is the same with *walking*. Interspersed between your climbing, walk the trails of our mountains. I want you to know that there are many ways of walking and reasons for walking. Begin to learn this truth, in preparation for the glorious autumn of your life when the trail speaks with a fuller message than the face of the cliff.

You ask what are these ways of walking. As you seek for them, I will show you. It is good that the springtime and the summer of your days call you to climb the cliffs—up and down. You will become part of the mountain and its trails will draw you into a broader understanding.

The Rocking Chair Walker

On the Porch

A rocking chair person was on the piazza, rocking. The summer breeze from the lake fanned her. An after-lunch slumber quieted the outward senses. In her dream she was walking by the lake shore and stopped to talk with a passer-by. She heard him say these words:

"It is good to relax as you have been doing, but I speak to you of *walking*. I have tested what I tell you. The men of medicine and science have learned what walkers knew already. They have found the same truth.

"Your natural state is to move on your two feet, swinging your arms. You have only just learned to sit. It is new to you. Your rocker is a compromise between sitting and your natural movements. When you walk, your whole nature is reflected in your walking.

"In former years much of your life and my life required us to walk. In our present bountiful life, in our much-sitting, the temptation of too much food is our companion when we eat. Overweight is our worry. I say to you, walk, and enjoy your appetite and your need to use, rather than store, your food.

"And let your doctor test you. Unless your heart has been injured, it needs the exercise, the strengthening, that walking best provides.

"Walk into life. Walk often. Seek your own speed. Choose your own gait and manner of walking.

"I guide you to zest for life. Walk."

The word "walk" was so emphatic, that she awoke from her dream. And the passer-by had vanished.

The Motorist

Along the Auto Road

I saw a man from the valley stop his car at a lookout point on the road across the ridges. He stepped out to stretch and look around. It appeared that he was not merely seeing the view. He began to look at it. I waited quietly while the Shawangunks absorbed him; while the fields of the valley and the blue shadows of the distant Catskills renewed his soul.

Then I invited him to walk with me on the nearby trail. We talked about valley-mountain relationships.

You live in the valley near the Shawangunks. Many times you have driven this road across their ridges. Often you look to them from your house.

If you would know the message of the hills, leave your auto habits behind you. *Walk* the trails. When you walk you have no travel expense accounts. You dissolve the strains of the highway. Speed limits and seat belts are forgotten. When your feet are on the ground, your quick stops, your parkings, your left turns, are yours to enjoy as you are prompted.

When you walk, do so in simplicity. Let your clothing match the season and your foot-wear be comfortable. Even your lunch, or your knapsack, can be small. On suitable occasions take your lens, or your camera, or your compass. But learn also to be independent, even of these.

Besides economy, let there be balance and resilience in your ways. The foot responds to the softer surface of the trail. Find your natural stride. In so doing you will be freed to respond to your surroundings—the unspoken messages of the trees, of the birds, or of the streams.



The Hikers

On a Shawangunk Trail

Sometimes, when hikers move together, I feel in my imagination, that I am walking with my hand on the shoulder of the leader of the group. When the leader speaks, I support his message with the waves of my thoughts and with my memories.

There is strength in *walking* together. There is the common quest for fuller knowledge of the flora and fauna along the path. The common concern to share the signs of the trail, or the leader's view of the message of life, undergirds the group. There is a breaching of walls, even on the part of those no longer able to bridge the unseen barriers of urban living.

A company of hikers passes me on a mountain path. I am drawn into their midst. The exhilaration of their comradeship runs over and fills my soul. In their friendly competition to be at the head of the group, they carry me back in the experience of former days. I can imagine I am living in an earlier period.

There is strength in the banter of the trail. Walking and cheerfully talking, like honking geese moving southward across the autumn sky, hikers find mutual support. Wet feet, hunger pangs and rough spots are forgotten.

Sometimes, if I am to be the true friend of the way, I must take my position at the front as the leader. I stretch my hands above my head and say, stop, I want to speak to you.

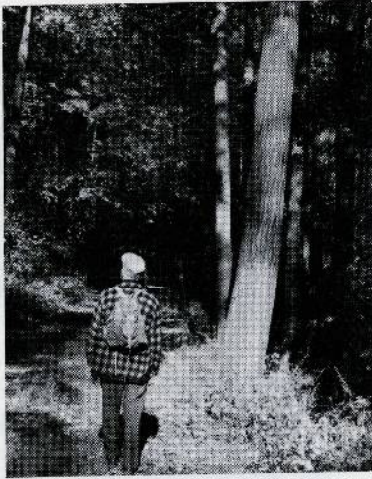
I have been in your midst on the trail. It is good to be with you. But remember that group walking is only part of walking. When there is a group, there is a leader—sometimes several leaders. If you go with a group, it is well to heed the leader. Yet I would not have you go often unless the leader's way of life is in keeping with your own.

I have been a leader. I have learned that it is not necessary to lead at the front of a group. I have learned to express in walking the deepest desires of the group. If you would be a leader, learn to lead from behind, by means of awareness more than by command.

As an illustration, I am adapting a saying of the Indians: "If you would follow a smooth path, find a companion whose moccasins fit like your own." Those who have so walked will know the full truth of this saying.

There is much to be learned in walking with a group. There are also times when more than one companion is too many. The deer does not ask the tortoise to walk with him, even though their paths may cross. If they speak, it is at the Council Ring, not on the trail. The tortoise moves slowly, carrying his home with him, while the deer moves quickly across open spaces, finding a new home in each thicket.

With a single companion, wisely chosen, your walk may be without talk for many paces. Or with your combined watching, your powers of seeing and hearing may be more than doubled. Or—on the smooth path—your talking and walking may merge into new insights along the "trail of life". At such times, walking, like breathing, is a part of one's being, and thoughts of two companions grow together like the ferns and the mosses on the ledges of our mountains.



The Lone Walker

Where the Trail Divides

There come times and places and seasons when even for two companions, the trail divides. And one says: "My path leads on; I would walk alone."

I have walked here in the mountains for many years. Many great hikers in the common search for the wisdom of the earth have strengthened my days and my nights of walking. I tell you there is more. I have walked alone. Be open to times when you, too, may want to walk alone.

When you are alone, in truth you are not alone. I find I am comfortable with the terminology of the American Indians in expressing my feeling. The Great Spirit is there. He walks, circling round you and also within your spirit. He adds to your open-ness until you know His system of trails. When the Great Spirit is with you on the trail, you learn of the trails of other creatures and other men—in the trees, in the sky, under the rocks, in the swamps and along fallen logs, or in the sand at the lake shore. In His web of trails there are many crossings. He sets no absolute right of way. He bids you stop, look, listen, smell, feel, touch and taste—for the place *may* be a snail's crossing—and the path to deeper understanding.

The Family

On Overcliff Drive

I was picking blueberries along the drive and they stopped for a visit. They enjoyed the roadways along the ridges. They were occasional visitors who came only in clear weather. I wanted to help them know more of the magic of *walking*. After learning their walking habits, I ventured to make a recommendation.

There are many seasons and many moods for walking. Park your protectiveness along with your car. Emerge from behind the windshield.

You come to the mountains when the sun is high and the light is bright. Try other times. Test their influence upon you. For some, the most inspiring is the twilight time. For others, it may be discovered in the morning mists.

When you are brought close to the elements, the mind clears. Wind and cold and rain will rub your faces. They also bring a sense of humility, of awe and wonder. Let the elements abuse you. Such experiences nourish you in a good feeling.

In your walking experience, go far enough into the ravines to be without machine-made noises. The life of the woods and fields has accepted the scream of the hawk in its pattern. The call of the cricket has found its place in the symphony of the universe. The machine is still a stranger and you should strive to be free of its influence if you would walk serenely.

The Scientist

At Rhododendron Swamp

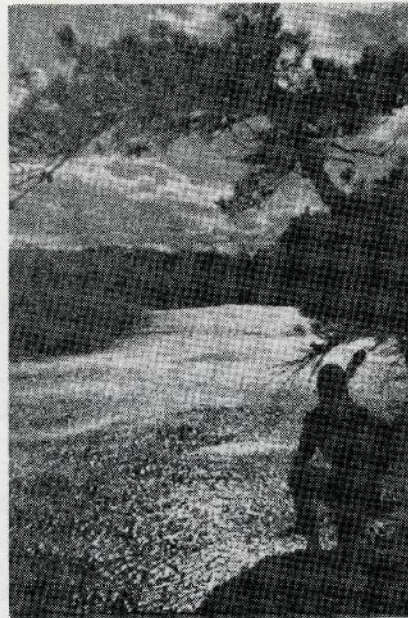
The nature student was finding much to be examined in the swamp. The scientific quest led him into its farthest recesses. Suddenly a place of uncongealed silt enveloped his feet. He struggled back to firmer ground, lest the accumulations of earth's history envelop him. I saw him at the swamp's edge and offered help. After his exertions, the scientist rested on dry ground and was as willing to listen as I was ready to present my suggestion.

I have lived among these hills for many years. I know the fascinations of exploring small ponds and bogs and swamps. As you have discovered, the place has tried to make you a part of its layers and of its life story. I should like to broaden its message for you. I believe it has a message you have not yet learned.

When you walk through wild places, walk with a mind open. Be more than a namer of things seen. Take back more from your walk than specimens in a jar. Do not be satisfied with seeing alone; do not be content with your carefully kept records. Do these things if you will, but let your walks into the woods extend to wider purposes.

When you walk, it is easy to stop in order to look and listen. It is easy to "park" when there are no encumbrances. For the quick, close view, or the side excursion off the road, the walker has many a timely opportunity. He is free to study a nook in the bank, or examine a fern's spores, or to scramble to a high rock off the trail.

These benefits aid your scientific pursuits. Beyond that I would remind you that those with their feet on the ground tune in more profoundly to life's wider relationships. Their trails lead into the country of vision and they come to feel their kinship with all life.



The Messenger

On the High Places

It was the time of full moon on a still summer night. I was walking, deep in thought. In and out of the moon-shade shadows, along one of the high ridges, I moved slowly. At the point of the cliff I stopped to pray, and then to lie on a blanket, gazing at the sky and the bright lights of the valleys.

Into the mind's eye—into the tenderly-tuned awareness—came the image of a messenger. The message was received, not by my ears, but through the inward being. It cannot be fully opened into words. Only dim reflections are here captured:

"It is good that you and I walk and think. Especially is the moonlight walk helpful. Then we may not depend on our eyes alone. More is left to what we hear, and *feel* around us. Thus we may come 'back in balance'. Our senses and our emotions, thus enlivened in the moonlight, stabilize and fortify us.

"The speed of our walking may be fast or it may be slow. Let our movements be in their most unpremeditated state. Let us not think only. Let our fingers neither rub nor scratch, but rather caress, the surface of a rock or a tree trunk. The roughness or smoothness of rocks, evidence of their many experiences with the glacier or of their travels in rivers, gives us a sense of history.

"Let us look out across the shadowed valley. Let it absorb us. Realize others may be looking from their windows at the forms of the ridges. Valley residents possess the mountain view. Walkers on the mountain include the shape of things in the valley in their way of life. How clear it is to the walker that land responsibility extends beyond boundaries defined in surveys. Sound, and sight, and smell, and health and total well-being do not respect fences.

"In the moonlight, or the full light of midday, let walkers not limit themselves to the use of the five senses. The sixth is the most important. It is our whole frame of mind. It operates best with the mind 'open'. It does not project form and substances on every object. It tries to hold a non-identifying, non-classifying, non-judging attitude. It allows all the ingredients of a situation to penetrate our very being. It hesitates to use labels like 'useful' or 'not useful'. It leaves room for our awareness to register fully, or to carry away only a sense of form or an aroma."

Gathered Hikers

At Pine Grove

At my request, the walkers gathered at a later time for a sharing of their findings. Since these were walkers, the meeting was held at the Pine Grove, around the campfire. There was a time for listening. The Great Spirit spoke to all through the wind in the white pines.

Then there was much speaking. The walkers shared their findings. These are the ones heard, as the shadows of twilight joined forces with the night:

The rock climber rose first and said:

I still climb the rocks, but the trails are now mine also. Besides the struggle to reach the top of the highest mountain, which is a value of walking, I am learning other truths about walking.

The piazza sitter, standing near the campfire, said:

I am walking into health. The sign on my path says "greater zest for life in this direction", and I find it is a sign worth heeding.

The man from the valley rose to speak:

I stop often on my way across the mountain to have a little walk. The trails have become a part of my life and my auto no longer enslaves me.

A SYMPOSIUM OF FINDINGS

A walk leader had a word to add:

Though I am leading the hikers to find the trail, my spirit is often spoken to by the spirit of Chief Shongum and others who have gone before me, as I would be open to the needs of those who are following but who must lead me.

Two walking companions rose together and exchanged their thoughts:

First walker: My walking companion's moccasins fit me well. He has become the extension of my eyesight and the sharpener of my hearing.

Second walker: My friend and companion often walks in silence. He teaches me to listen not alone to human sounds, but also to tune in to the universe.

A walker who hiked much alone, stood and raised his arms:

Many things have I learned from creatures large and small. Listen, and the voices of the twilight will speak to you also.

The day visitor from the city had this to say:

My walking experiences have been multiplied. I have discovered that walking, like life, is not only a fair-weather tour.

The natural scientist spoke:

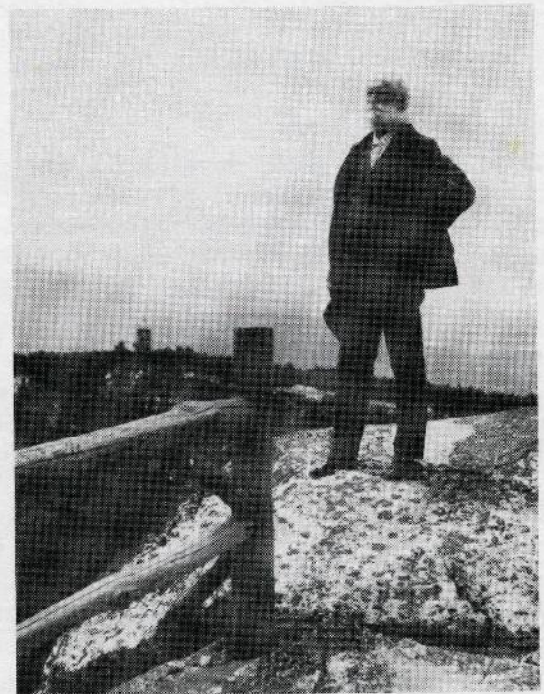
No longer do I plan my trips into the Shawangunks for scientific observation. Rather, I say that I go to understand and become a part of nature.

Before we parted that evening, we all paused to enjoy the singing of the pine trees. Across the wooded slopes came a message. The voice of the horned owl, symbol of wisdom, raised a question for ears a-tune. A repeated who? who? who? Who is listening?

THE SHARED WISDOM OF WALKERS

Through the years, walkers have spoken. Read their words. In doing so, consider carefully that walking offers no plain diet. Look to the variety of recipes for walking.

In ensuing pages are samplings, with emphasis on the older writings. These are a few among the many. They are intended to show the range of viewpoints among those who have written in praise of walking.



John Burroughs on Sky Top

THE SHARED WISDOM OF WALKERS

Excerpt from a letter from John Burroughs, written at Lake Mohonk on July 15, 1903:

"My dear friend. . . I am just back from a walk all alone to Sky-top. I have had nearly two hours all by myself. How wide and interesting the view from Sky-top. Have you ever been there? The clouds were letting down and trailing little thin veils of rain here and there. It is cool, so cool they have open fires here in the hotel. This morning I took a long walk with Mrs. Childs and her mother. Yesterday p.m. we had a long drive. . ."

"Mrs. Smiley has just told me there is a young lady here who is dying to walk in the woods with me, so I must go and save her life."

Letter contributed by Mrs. H. Kelley,
granddaughter of John Burroughs

The feel of the mountains:

"Then, these small duties done, by the time the sun is fairly above the mountaintops I am beyond the flock, free to rove and revel in the wilderness all the big immortal days.

"Sketching on the North Dome. It commands views of nearly all the valley besides a few of the high mountains. I would fain draw everything in sight—rock, tree, and leaf. . . These blessed mountains are so compactly filled with God's beauty, no petty personal hope or experience has room to be. Drinking this champagne water is pure pleasure, while the whole body seems to feel beauty when exposed to it as it feels the campfire of sunshine, entering not by the eyes alone, but equally through all one's flesh like radiant heat, making a passionate ecstatic pleasure-glow not explainable. One's body then seems homogeneous throughout, sound as a crystal."

MY FIRST SUMMER IN THE SIERRA
—John Muir (at Yosemite in July, 1869)

THE SHARED WISDOM OF WALKERS

To really see:

"To see things—really see them—one must use the legs as well as the eyes. Even a vicarious muscular effort sharpens the vision; and a country that is looked at from horseback or a carriage is seen almost as completely and intimately as one through which the spectator has walked on his own feet."

Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row from JESTING PILATE
—Aldous Huxley

On mountain climbing:

"No man has deserved or earned a mountain until he has climbed it and been hosted by it."

Excerpted from THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS
Reprinted by permission of Jonathan Williams,
CRAFT HORIZONS, June, 1966

In praise of walking:

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

Henceforth I ask not good fortune—I myself am
good fortune;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more,
need nothing,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

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

Yon road I enter upon and look around!"
from THE SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD
Walt Whitman

“Walk till the blood appears on the cheeks, not the sweat on the brow.”

Spanish proverb

That noble art:

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks,—who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*: which word is beautifully derived ‘from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *a la Sainte Terre*’, to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed ‘There goes a *Sainte Terre*’, a Saunterer,—a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from *sans terre*, without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea. But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation. For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

“It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearth-side from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return,—prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms.”

“To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order,—not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Ritters or riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust. The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker,—not the Knight, but Walker Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People.

“We have felt that we almost alone hereabouts practised this noble art; though, to tell the truth, at least, if their own assertions are to be received, most of my townsmen would fain walk sometimes, as I do, but they cannot. No wealth can buy the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence, which are the capital in this profession. It comes only by the grace of God. It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker. You must be born into the family of the Walkers. *Ambulator nascitur, non fit*. Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half an hour in the woods; but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretensions they may make to belong to this select class.”

WALKING (1862)

—Henry D. Thoreau

Living to the full:

“La chose que je regrette le plus, dans les détails de ma vie dont J’ai perdu la mémoire, est de n’avoir pas fait des journaux de mes voyages. Jamais je n’ai tant pensé, tant existé, tant vécu, tant été moi, si j’ose ainsi dire, que dans ceux que j’ai faits seul et a pied.”

CONFESSIONS (I. iv.)

Jean Jacques Rousseau

A walking experience:

"When you have made an early start, followed the coastguard track on the slopes above the cliffs, struggled through the gold and purple carpeting of gorse and heather on the moors, dipped down into quaint little coves with a primitive fishing village, followed the blinding whiteness of the sands round a lonely bay, and at last emerged upon a headland where you can settle into a nook of the rocks, look down upon the glorious blue of the Atlantic waves breaking into foam on the granite, and see the distant sea-levels glimmering away till they blend imperceptibly into cloudland; then you can consume your modest sandwiches, light your pipe, and feel more virtuous and thoroughly at peace with the universe than it is easy even to conceive yourself elsewhere. I have fancied myself on such occasions a felicitous blend of poet and saint—which is an agreeable sensation. What I wish to point out, however, is that the sensation is confined to the walker."

IN PRAISE OF WALKING
—Leslie Stephen

Alone in winter:

"I get away a mile or two from the town into the stillness and solitude of nature, with rocks, trees, weeds, snow about me. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. . . . This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort, or boneset, to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible, companion, and walked with him."

JOURNAL (January, 1857)
—Henry D. Thoreau

Walking in the moonlight:

"Chancing to take a memorable walk by moonlight some years ago, I resolved to take more such walks, and make acquaintance with another side of nature: I have done so."

"Night is certainly more novel and less profane than day. I soon discovered that I was acquainted only with its complexion, and as for the moon, I had seen her only as it were through a crevice in a shutter, occasionally. Why not walk a little way in her light?"

"It must be allowed that the light of the moon, sufficient though it is for the pensive walker, and not disproportionate to the inner light we have, is very inferior in quality and intensity to that of the sun. But the moon is not to be judged alone by the quantity of light she sends to us, but also by her influence on the earth and its inhabitants."

NIGHT AND MOONLIGHT
Essay by Henry D. Thoreau

An end in itself:

"That is a pleasant pilgrimage in which the journey itself is a part of the destination."

—Henry Van Dyke

Walk steadily:

"The sum of the whole is this: walk and be happy; walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily and with a purpose. The wandering man knows of certain ancients, far gone in years, who have staved off infirmities and dissolution by earnest walking—hale fellows, close upon ninety, but brisk as boys."

—Charles Dickens

The charms of pedestrianism:

"Then, again, how annoying to be told it is only five miles to the next place when it is really eight or ten! We fall short nearly half the distance, and are compelled to urge and roll the spent ball the rest of the way. In such a case walking degenerates from a fine art to a mechanic art; we walk merely; to get over the ground becomes the one serious and engrossing thought; whereas success in walking is not to let your right foot know what your left foot doeth. Your heart must furnish such music that in keeping time to it your feet will carry you around the globe without knowing it. The walker I would describe takes no note of distance; his walk is a sally, a *bonmot* an unspoken *jeu d'esprit*, the ground is his butt, his provocation; it furnishes him the resistance his body craves; he rebounds upon it, he glances off and returns again, and uses it gayly as his tool.

"I do not think I exaggerate the importance or the charms of pedestrianism, or our need as a people to cultivate the art. I think it would tend to soften the national manners, to teach us the meaning of leisure, to acquaint us with the charms of the open air, to strengthen and foster the tie between the race and the land. No one else looks out upon the world so kindly and charitably as the pedestrian; no one else gives and takes so much from the country he passes through. . .

"Next to the laborer in the fields, the walker holds the closest relation to the soil. And he holds a closer and more vital relation to nature because he is freer and his mind more at leisure. . . ."

THE EXHILARATIONS OF THE ROAD
—John Burroughs

A philosophy of walking:

"It is not the walking merely, it is keeping yourself in tune for a walk, in the spiritual and bodily condition in which you can find entertainment and exhilaration in so simple and natural a pastime. You are eligible to any good fortune when you are in the condition to enjoy a walk. When the air and the water taste sweet to you, how much else will taste sweet! When the exercise of your limbs affords you pleasure, and the play of your senses upon the various objects and shows of nature quickens and stimulates your spirit, your relation to the world and to yourself is what it should be—simple and direct and wholesome. The mood in which you set out on a spring or autumn ramble or a sturdy winter walk, and your greedy feet have to be restrained from devouring the distances too fast, is the mood in which your best thoughts and impulses come to you, or in which you might embark upon any noble and heroic enterprise. Life is sweet in such moods, the universe is complete, and there is no failure or imperfection anywhere."

from the Preface to *BOY AND MAN*
by John Burroughs

"The walking of man and all animals is falling forward."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"After investigating a problem in all directions, happy ideas come unexpectedly, without effort, like an inspiration. So far as I am concerned, they have never come to me when my mind was fatigued, or when I was at my working table. . . . They came particularly readily during the slow ascent of wooded hills on a sunny day."

Hermann L. F. von Helmholtz
from a speech made at his 70th birthday (1891).

Driving away bad thoughts:

"I have two doctors, my left leg and my right. When body and mind are out of gear (and those twin parts of me live at such close quarters that the one always catches melancholy from the other) I know that I have only to call in my doctors and I shall be well again.

"Mr. Arnold Bennett has written a religious tract called THE HUMAN MACHINE. Philosophers and clergymen are always discussing why we should be good—as if any one doubted that he ought to be. But Mr. Bennett has tackled the real problem of ethics and religion—how we can make ourselves be good. We all of us know that we ought to be cheerful to ourselves and kind to others, but cheerfulness is often and kindness sometimes as unattainable as sleep in a white night. That combination of mind and body which I call my soul is often so choked up with bad thoughts or useless worries, that

'Books and my food, and summer rain
Knock on my sullen heart in vain.'

It is then that I call in my two doctors to carry me off for the day."

"In this medicinal use of Walking, as the Sabbath-day refection of the tired town worker, companionship is good, and the more friends who join us on the tramp the merrier. For there is not time, as there is on the longer holiday or walking tour, for body and mind to attain that point of training when the higher ecstasies of Walking are felt through the whole being, those joys that crave silence and solitude. And indeed, on these humbler occasions, the first half of the day's walk, before the Human Machine has recovered its tone, may be dreary enough without laughter of good company, ringing round the interchange of genial and irresponsible verdicts on the topics of the day. For this reason informal Walking societies should be formed among friends in towns, for week-end or

Sabbath walks in the neighboring country. I never get better talk than in these moving Parliaments, and good talk is itself something."

"And the walker, on his side, has his social duties. He must be careful not to leave gates open, not to break fences, not to walk through hay or crops, and not to be rude to farmers. In the interview, always try to turn away wrath, and in most cases you will succeed.

"A second duty is to burn or bury the fragments that remain from lunch. To find the neighborhood of a stream-head, on some well-known walking route like Scaffell, littered with soaked paper and the relics of the feast is disgusting to the next party. And this brief act of reverence should never be neglected, even in the most retired nooks of the world. For all nature is sacred, and in England there is none too much of it."

"I have now set down my own experiences and likings. Let no one be alarmed or angry because his ideas of Walking are different. There is no orthodoxy in Walking. It is a land of many paths and no-paths, where every one goes his own way and is right."

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Longman Group, AND PEDESTRIAN (1913)
Limited. by George Macaulay Trevelyan

The benefit of walking:

"A woodland walk,
A quest of river grapes,
A mocking thrush, a wild rose,
A rock loving columbine,
Solve my worst wounds."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

A renewing experience:

"A trail along a ridge or through a valley or down an old country road is an exciting gymnasium. Most gyms are dingy and crowded, filled with the odor of sweat. The trail leading through woods or across meadows is filled with the fresh fragrance of the outdoors. There are no weights to pull, no bicycles to ride, no oars to exercise. But the ups and downs of the average trail exercise most of the muscles and man ends his hike tired but renewed.

"Hiking or walking is man's most natural exercise. We were biological beings before our intellectual or spiritual powers matured. The cells and protoplasm, the blood vessels and tissues, the muscular and circulatory systems have not changed since the days of the cave man. The veneer of progress and civilization is a thin one. The intellectual man and spiritual man can dominate the animal man. But the animal man needs constant renewal. His health is indeed a prerequisite to complete well-being.

"Hiking or walking is exercise for a whole life span. One hundred and fifty-nine people joined us on a recent back-pack trip of three days along the Olympic Beach in the State of Washington. Of these there were 26 over 60, four over 70 years old and four under 10."

"The subconscious carries a heavy burden of our worries, concerns and problems. On a long hike it functions free of additional tensions and pressures. And somehow or other it seems to unravel many a tangled skein of problems during a six-to-eight-hour hike. The process is a mystery, though I have experienced it again and again."

©1965 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission. from "Animal Man Needs to Hike" NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE March 21, 1965 by William O. Douglas

The Importance of Walking:

"In June when the beauty of the mountains is all about us we must consider how to absorb the most of it, so that when bleaker months come again, we will be well fortified with memories of the 'earth so fair'. If we are to see and really gather into our inner selves the fresh greens and the flower colors and the bird calls, it seems necessary to move among them rather slowly.

"We must therefore, forget the current urge to arrive at a certain place in the shortest time by travelling at the greatest possible speed, even beyond the limits of normal safety. Furthermore, it becomes a matter, at times, of taking the longest way around because it is not the shortest but the most beautiful and enjoyable way home. In addition, we need not use any device of locomotion which gets us 'there' easily but to which we become subservient in the process. We must not be worried about interfering with traffic, nor be dependent on an adequate landing field.

"Thus it becomes obvious that for the sake of slowness of movement and uncertainty of direction, we have been forced to dispense with jets, 'old-fashioned' airplanes, autos, motor boats, trains, and probably even motorcycles! It is possible that bicycles might serve our purpose under certain circumstances. Yet the best way to follow an unplanned course across a soft green lawn to enjoy a bed of peonies is by *walking*. The most satisfactory way to wander among the laurel bushes and gain a lasting impression of their beauty is by *walking*.

"There are those who are unable to walk far or fast, and we are not here thinking of ten mile hikes, but even movements as short as ten feet or ten yards, in places like Mohonk where beauty abounds so close to the door or to the roadway, to which starting point one may ride if necessary. Let us not forget the short stroll which is taken for pleasure along the way rather than for the sake of arriving with least discomfort at the destination."

Reprinted from THE MOHONK BULLETIN of June 11, 1935 by permission

SIT-ITIS:

"America has become the land of the sitting sportsman. Our legs, once used for running and walking, have become cushions. We sit on our legs so much and use them so seldom that we could almost get along without them."

"Doctors have discovered a new disease. They call it restless-legs syndrome. They see it in people who do little exercise. Their legs cry out for a stretching."

"Your brain needs oxygen to make you bright and alert. The pep you lack may be as close as your front door. Walking will do much to spark your spirits and make you feel alive again."

Reprinted From LIFE AND HEALTH (June, 1962)
by permission. by J. DeWitt Fox, M.D.

The need for exercise:

"We are still animals and are meant to use our muscles as well as our brains, each for the benefit of the other. In one or at the most two generations our multitude of labor-saving devices, especially our automobiles, have so altered our ways of life that in order to have optimal health we must substitute planned exercise, most easily in the form of walking, or bicycling if it can be done safely, for the hard physical labor that was a part of the daily life of most of our ancestors.

"There are four clear-cut reasons why our muscles, especially those of the legs, should be used—and used a lot. In the first place, it is simply a matter of physiology. Contraction of the skeletal muscles squeezes the veins and actually helps to pump blood back to the heart against the influence of gravity."

"The second important reason why the leg muscles should be fit and frequently in motion is to avoid

stasis, a sluggish circulation in the leg veins which in its turn favors thrombosis (blood clotting). This is one of the great hazards to life and health because of the embolism—sending bits of a clot that have broken loose to block the blood vessels and seriously to interfere with the function of the lungs."

"The third reason for vigorous use of the muscles (or even less vigorous use under certain conditions) is its very useful psychological effect. Muscular fatigue itself is a better and much safer tranquilizer or sedative than any of the many drugs on the market today, which are heavily overused and often seriously abused.

"And finally, and probably most important of all, an increasing number of scientific researches is confirming the experience of many of us, related both to ourselves and to our patients and friends, that an active muscular metabolism due to physical exercise suited to the individual over the years delays or even prevents any important clinical manifestation of atherosclerosis ('rusting') of certain essential arteries such as those that supply blood to the heart muscle (the coronaries), to the brain (the carotids) and to the viscera and legs.

"Wherever in the world one finds a physically very active population (as well as one not overfed, for diet undoubtedly also enters in), one finds much less atherosclerosis leading to the heart attacks, the strokes, and other such circulatory troubles in youth and middle age, the epidemic in the United States today responsible for more deaths too early in life than any other cause."

"At some very remote time in the future nature may rearrange us to enlarge our brains and to diminish our muscles to suit our way of life, but at present we had better make good use both of the muscles and of the brains we have, in order to maintain optimal health of both as well as of the rest of our bodies."

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Letter to the Editor
NEW YORK TIMES
February 21, 1965
from Paul Dudley White, M.D.

"Of all exercises walking is best."

Thomas Jefferson

Eyes for all weathers:

"A willing acceptance of life itself as 'exercise' can sometimes change the very climate of the soul; at the very least acceptance gives us new eyes. A year or two ago I heard a Friend describe in Meeting for Worship his holiday on the Yorkshire Moors. 'It rained continually', he told us. 'At first I set out each day hoping against hope that the sky would clear, and when the rain still came pouring down, I trudged on, head lowered, shrunk into myself and seeing nothing but the wet road beneath my feet. And then one day I thought: 'This is supposed to be a holiday!' That morning I lifted my head to the rain and strode on through it, finding endless beauties in the rain-washed moors that I had never seen before.'

"Every day can be a holiday, a holy day, as we walk trusting in the Creator of the Universe. . . ."

Reprinted from THE FRIEND
by permission. London, January 15, 1960
by Beatrice Saxon Snell

"Lake Mohonk is especially noted for the large number and great variety of walks. . . . These deviate in all directions. . . . and open up, often in unexpected quarters, many curious, beautiful, and grand views. In most of the paths, the route, in difficult and uncertain places, is indicated by red arrows painted upon the rocks, or a painted hand nailed to the trees. Some of these walks are very wild, and should only be tried by active pedestrians, whilst the greater portion can easily be taken by even delicate ladies. Care has been used in the construction of the walks, not to disturb the wildness of nature more than is absolutely necessary."

from a GUIDE BOOK TO LAKE MOHONK (1875)



"Aren't there any nice walks?"

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On Selecting Locations:

How do you determine the walking resources of a given place—in a park, at a resort, or in another country? A "nice walk" for one person may be nothing more than an appetizer for another. Our definitions are not as well standardized as in our highway systems. There are uncertain, often overlapping, definitions of road, path, walk, trail, or mountain track.

When making inquiry, ask for pictures showing the terrain. Ask also for a trail map. "Nice walks" may prove to be smooth gravel paths, totalling fifty feet, in the flower garden, but if there is a trail system there usually is a map of some kind. And ask how the trails are marked. Some trails are so overgrown that only a "native" can find them.

For your greater satisfaction, look for an area with a variety of different paths and trails—not merely a series of difficult ascents to major mountain top objectives.

References for Locations:

State and National Parks usually publish information on their trail systems.

For comprehensive listings for United States and Europe, see Part II, The Walking Guide, arranged by geographical areas, THE MAGIC OF WALKING by Sussman and Goode. Simon & Schuster, 1967

HIKING AREAS OF NEW YORK STATE by A. T. Shorey. The Conservationist, State of New York Conservation Department. April-May, 1967. Volume 21, No. 5. Includes descriptions of trails and sketch maps.

TURN RIGHT AT THE FOUNTAIN by George W. Oakes. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. Descriptions of walking tours in fourteen European cities.

LET'S TAKE A WALK, published by Schrafft's Restaurants as a special service for World's Fair visitors. Description and map of short walking tours in nine areas of New York City.

NEW YORK WALK BOOK, American Geographical Society, third edition, 1951. A new edition is in process of being compiled.

THE TRAIL WALKER, publication of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, giving up-to-date trail information. (G.P.O. Box 2250, New York, N.Y.)

CATSKILL TRAILS, Recreation Circular No. 9. State of New York Department of Environmental Conservation, 1967.

The following are sources of trail information:

New England Trail Conference, 26 Bedford Terrace, Northampton, Mass.

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, P.O. Box 172, Carmel, Calif.

Appalachian Trail Conference, 1718 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco, Calif.

American Youth Hostels, Metropolitan Council, 535 West End Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10024.

Adirondack Mountain Club, Gabriels, N.Y. 12939.

Sam's Point area. Inquire of Ice Caves Mountain, Inc., Cragmoor, New York.

Trail map of the Mohonk Lake area. Write the author for information. Also, a "find it yourself" guide to permanent plantings of special interest in the Mohonk Gardens.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF UNDERCLIFF ROAD by Daniel Smiley and Frank Egler. Educational Release No. 1, 1968. Descriptions of seventeen stations along the road. An ecological orientation walk. Published by The Mohonk Trust, Mohonk Lake, New Paltz, N.Y.

References in General:

A list of titles on hiking as literature would be too long for this publication. There are many more delightful writings in praise of walking. In 1937 a book entitled THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING was written by Lin Yutang (a John Day book). Those who have read the chapter in it called "The Enjoyment of Travel" will understand why the title of this booklet came to mind.

Keith Smiley