

"Good Days On The Trail"

With the University of
Colorado Department of
Mountain Recreation
1938-1942

A four-reel 16mm Kodachrome film designed to make you proud of your Front Range of the Rockies -- and a little unhappy until you hike or "cushion climb" in the foothills and High Country.

"For we know we belong to the land,
And the land we belong to is grand!" ("Oklahoma!")

Reel One: University Campus; Steak and Trout Frys;
Conferring of Mountaineering "Degrees";
Climbs of Mount Audubon and Mount Toll

On every campus there is an autumnal dance of the leaves -- but only on the University of Colorado campus are blankets sunned and sleeping bags rolled up each week of the summer term. Its campus is a place of study. Over the library entrance are the words: "Who Knows Only His Own Generation Remains Always A Child." Its buildings of native stone are of distinctive architecture. Its lake suggests repose; but just to the west, Bear Mountain, the Flatirons below Green Mountain, challenge hikers in summer, skiers in winter. For twenty summers the Department of Mountain Recreation has sponsored hikes in the foothills, followed by steak and trout frys. Students have gone through "the assembly line" for food, and some have indulged in mixed drinks, coffee and cocoa, "jamocho." They have heard the Rudolph Johnsons sing and joined in campfire songs. They have seen trout by the dozen turn a golden brown -- and discovered that the trout were rainbows! Students have climbed to Royal Arch; watched climbs of the Third Flatiron -- this sequence shows the department staff on holiday on the 45 degree Rock. Some students have seen bluebirds in a mail box on Baseline Road, the fortieth parallel; all have seen yucca and the mariposa lily. Many have seen Bruce Snow, guide, rappel at Alamo Rocks. All who have received a "master's degree" have rappelled on Flagstaff Mountain. Starting in 1939, the department has had "commencements" in July and August. Honorary degrees have been conferred on University deans and presidents, distinguished alpinists; students have sung their "doctors' dissertations". Hoods are of rope, diplomas have a seal imprinted with a miniature hobnailed boot. Captain W.H. Jackson, pioneer photographer, seen here with A. Gayle Waldrop, director, was given an honorary "degree" one summer.

Past Red Rock lake, with its panorama of the Continental Divide, students ride for the first High Country climbs of the summer. In late March the cabin, used as a base for June climbs, is a haven for skiers. New boots are seen on the Audubon trail, and as hikers approach timberline they enjoy "the brandy and ice of coniferous air." On the summit they see "pandas" as well as peaks and "sleeping beauties." They laugh as static electricity "raises the scalps" of Julius Johnson, guide, and Henry "Illinois." Back in camp tea is drunk and sunburn is revealed.

Mount Toll is reached after a climb over snowbanks which provide good slides back to an ice-covered lake. At camp, "smoke follows beauty" -- or does it?

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Reel Two: Climbs of Navajo and Arapaho; Walk Along Continental Divide, from Lake Dorothy to Devil's Thumb Lake.

At University Camp, 28 miles from Boulder, geology and biology students live and take field trips, columbines and golden banner color the aspen groves and the glacial moraine. From this base hobnailed boots are tried out as clouds make pictures over Arapaho Peaks and Glacier.

Navajo Peak, reflected in a lake, and then seen above, provided a setting for the world premiere of "zipper jeans," which were brought to Colorado by Amy and Helen "Kentucky." On the trail are King's crown, martensia, bog laurel. After Barbara "Ohio" signs the register, a quick descent is made over a snow field.

From Silver Lake, before taking the trail over Old Baldy, Arapaho Glacier and Peaks are seen over a foreground of shooting stars. Past the "Sea Horse," with a glimpse of Silver Lake below, past Fairy primroses, hikers rise to see a ptarmigan nest, the arctic grouse, to get a ptarmigan's view of hikers, to see the handsome Adonis buttercup. Climbing South Arapaho peak, they find a coney, alpine haymaker, enjoying crumbs from hikers' lunches. Mounting a steep pitch, climbers follow the cirque to North Arapaho Peak. Down the glaciated valley, on the homeward trail, they look back to South Arapaho, and turn to see the necklace of glacial lakes to the east.

Flaming Indian paint brush signal the start of Arapaho Glacier trips made up Fourth of July valley. T-bone steaks were traditional on these campout trips, and will be again some day. Annette "Kansas" unbuttons lettuce, others help with supper, before campfire singing in the moonlight. Next morning flowers color the route, with petals of the glacier lily "flaring backward and upward as though they were six-pointed stars falling and just about to touch the mountain sod." A camp robber enjoys his lunch before we see "the little red elephants." From an old mine shaft house the climbers switchback up and up; past the Big Cairn to the Saddle below South Peak, where the largest glacier in Colorado is seen. After lunch, which includes pineapple juice, all enter a rodeo on the snow, finding the riding down and up equally fast. A slow motion shot shows how to take a snow bath. Following the example of the hikers, a boulder takes a slide.

An August trip to the glacier reveals exposed ice. Glissaders bump along before walking across the chief source of Boulder's water supply. A ten-year old waves his pleasure at being on the glacier. Guides rappel into a large crevasse.

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Reel Three: Climbs of Apache, Lone Eagle; "Cushion Climb"
Over Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National
Park; Divide Walk, Fall River to Longs Peak.

On the Apache climb above Isabelle Lake Graham "Texas" sees "watermelon snow," the color and taste caused by algae. After doing the last rocky stretch to the top, he produces a "coke" to refresh his friends. Bearded Bruce, Majorie Woodard, guides, listen as Guide Julius Johnson names the peaks and ranges. On the down trail the photographer "has a field day" with Parry primroses and other flowers by the alpine stream, before a last look at cone-shaped Navajo and hump-backer Apache.

Lone Eagle, a required peak for all who earn a doctor of mountaineering "degree," involves a hike past Isabelle Lake, switchbacks on the hill above it -- a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points in the mountains -- a climb over the Divide, and descent to Crater Lake on the western slope. After looking up at the cliffs they came down, the hikers jump the creek. Paint brush interests one "shutter-bug" but has no appeal for another. Next morning climbers follow a ledge trail, see Fair Glacier, then follow Bruce down the couloir, on a rope two by two. At the foot of the couloir July 4 there was much snow. The summit is a narrow ledge. After ascending the rope, Madge "Ohio" tells what she thinks of it.

On another Lone Eagle climb clouds put on a show before climbers reached Crater Lake, at its base. Here all relaxed, even Guides "Chuck" Hutchinson and "Bud" Klemme. Then blood was cooled in the icy, 10,000 foot lake. Again we climb to the top, look down on Crater Lake. And the next morning watch Jim Harvey pack duffle and lead out the pack train. As we left, the peak looked this but felt like THIS!

After this strenuous climb, why not a "cushion climb"? We see the Mummy Range above Estes Park, feed ground squirrels at a parking area, drive past a ski course that is used through May, get glimpses of alpine forgetmenots, elk, clouds above the Never Summer Range, damage wrought by a forest fire, the beauty of a timberline tree, an elk calf, a deer fawn, Longs Peak Inn with its background of Longs Peak, and St. Catherine's chapel near the mountain road.

Another Continental Divide walk starts from the Trail Ridge Road, near Fall River Pass, and continues throughout the day toward square-topped Longs Peak. In late afternoon the peak has a nightcap of clouds swirling about it as the shadows lengthen on its western slope.

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Reel Four: Continental Divide Walk Over Mummy Range;
Climbs of McHenry's and Longs; Deer, Elk, Aspen.

Before we walk over Chapin, Chiquita and Ypsilon of the Mummy Range we see sunrise on Sundance Mountain; then the alpine gold flowers. Camp shots include a persistent camp robber, a fat ground squirrel, and a friendly deer. Next day hikers went to Specimen Mountain to see Rocky Mountain Bighorn ewe and lamb; to see Julius rappel down a one hundred foot cliff.

The trail to McHenry's goes by Alberta Falls, where we pause to watch a young ouzel, "dipper," being fed. On the trail next morning we climb over glaciated benches and snow, gain fresh energy from lemon drops, and find that a rope, "once in Colorado the end of a crime is now the beginning of a climb." We see Longs Peak across Glacier Gorge, sign the register, and walk into the sunset. Next morning in camp bacon and eggs are cooked, a shutterbug performs, the rested climbers rise to see a deer in the nearby mertensia.

Longs Peak, 14,255 feet above sea level, is climbed by more persons each year, 1200 to 2000, than any other 14,000 foot peak in the world. At timberline cabin bivouac we hear Isabella Bird's account of her ascent in 1873. Next morning we see two sunrises, for good measure, and have a glimpse of the alpine glow on the peak. Under a low ceiling we start off, to emerge on the Boulder field in bright sunshine, to look down on Chasm Lake, to grasp the cable on the north face and mount to the top, which we gallop over about six hours after leaving the cabin. We go down the Homestretch, along the Narrows, down the Trough, through the Keyhole, past the memorial shelter honoring a mountaineer who lost her life after a January climb, to timberline trees. Clouds over Mount Meeker in the afternoon, clouds below Twin Sisters in the morning, make memorable pictures. A morning walk to Chasm Lake ends, for the hardy, in a plunge, as clouds race across the East Face of the peak.

Selected shots of deer and elk, made at various seasons, and of aspen made in September, round out the film. If you watch closely you will see bull elk bugling their shrill warning to their rivals.

Projectionists will please thread the film carefully, to insure against marring the film, breaking sprocket holes. They will need to watch carefully the framing of pictures, especially in the first reel. The reels should be rewound after being shown and returned to the proper container, ready for the next exhibitor to show.

The "lecturer" will find it helpful to have a preview of the film before showing it.

Exhibitors will receive the film express prepaid and insured for \$250, and will please forward by express, prepaid and insured for \$250. (This is the actual cost of this print, and until war restrictions are relaxed another print cannot be made.)

Books that may be of interest, three of them recent ones: "Meet the Natives," a flower guide, \$1.56, M. Walter Pesman, 372 S. Humboldt, Denver; "Fourteen Thousand Feet," \$1, Colorado Mountain Club, Denver; "Trial by Time," T.H. Ferril; "One Man's West," David Lavendar.