

COLD RIVER CAMP CENTENNIAL

NORTH CHATHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Cold River Camp's beautiful location in the Cold River valley sparked the interest of the Appalachian Mountain Club nearly 140 years ago. This was well before the turn of the century, and many years prior to the purchase of the "Ledges" in 1919, which marked the inception of Cold River Camp. (See the Winter 2017 Edition of the LDD for an article on the AMC's early explorations in the Cold River Valley.)

In 1881 the editor of *Appalachia* appealed for more information on the valley's lesser known mountains, such as Speckled ("rarely visited"), and the Royces ("terribly rugged"). During those early explorations, AMC members found two trails from the Chandler's up the Baldfaces, one of which was worn by the quarrying of stone from the face of the mountain. The members also noted the "luxurious ferns" in the valley of the "great Cold River." Interest and appreciation for the area continued to build over the years, including a stay by August Camp in 1913 (campers set their alarms at 4:30 a.m. in order to leave ample time to traverse the Baldfaces and Royces, which together are more than half today's "Skyline").

When an opportunity to buy the "Ledges" arose in 1918, Frank Mason heartily recommended the purchase, and the AMC's newly appointed Cold River Camp Committee worked diligently to secure the property and associated buildings, with a sales agreement signed on May 31, 1919, and "papers passed" on June 27, 1919. With a group effort spearheaded by Mr. Mason, Cold River Camp was able to welcome its first 24 guests for the July 4, 1919 weekend by accommodating everyone in the buildings and in an additional 4 tents. We delight that the Cold River Camp community of today would instantly recognize the handful of buildings that first comprised camp: our beautiful Conant Lodge, "Headquarters" (the current Office), Cox cabin, the present Library, the "Lawrence Tower" (Tower) and the Chapel ("Barracks"). And so began the first one hundred years of AMC Cold River Camp.

The Cold River Camp Centennial Subcommittee has been working for over a year planning the celebration of camp's 100th birthday in 2019, and hope to recognize this important milestone in a variety of ways:

- **Centennial Rocks Sitting Area:** this new sitting area will allow camp to both commemorate its centennial, and create a new gathering spot. We plan to use three locally sourced granite boulders that will be low enough and shaped appropriately to allow for sitting, and will commemorate the centennial by installing a brass plaque on one of the boulders, or in the area. The exact location remains to be determined, and priorities include views and safety.

- **25-Year Time Mailbox:** You of course have heard of a time capsule – this is similar in thought, and will allow multiple generations to share their CRC experiences in a centennial “25-year time repeat use Cold River Camp Time Mailbox.” We hope that this will become a 25-year tradition at camp, with letters and memorabilia from that year safely deposited and locked in a mailbox installed in the Rec Hall. Every twenty-five years, the mailbox will be opened, the contents displayed, and new contents redeposited. We feel this is a wonderful way for children (and adults) to share their CRC experiences with their family and friends 25 years later.
- **Reflections—100 Years of Friendship and Hiking at Cold River Camp, 1919-2019,** a 200+ page book will be available for purchase in the spring of 2019. Contents will include reflecting on the one hundred years of our beloved Cold River Camp and will contain poetry, songs and memories written by our guests as well as many photographs, both old and new. We want to note that our dear friend, Dwight Wilder, was instrumental in taking on this project and with his untimely passing, we thank Bob and Emma Crane for assuming ownership of the book. We anticipate that the book will be available both as a hard copy and electronically.
- **Centennial “Swag:”** We want to provide mementos for purchase to the CRC community in celebration of CRC’s centennial, and plan to offer a special centennial edition T shirt, patch, pin, and postcards, and are exploring other ideas such as copies of the 1919 Prospectus, a mug, water bottle, pewter ornament, poster, whistle, and ball cap.

In addition, we are planning:

- A formal centennial ceremony and celebration, a weekly centennial program, “historical” weekly hikes, and of course, what would be a celebration without weekly CAKE?

Do have other ideas on how to celebrate Cold River Camp’s Centennial? Whether you’re a long-time camper, or new to CRC, we’d enjoy hearing from you. Contact information is available on our website or send an email to John Dean (jdean53a@gmail.com). Thank you. - *Written by Amy Damon Grover.*

