



**Carolina Mountain Club**

**Since 1923**

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December 2022

## **Kuwohi, Clingman, Mitchell: Memories of a Summer Hike 42 Years Ago**

by Pete Steurer

News reports describe a proposal by the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation to rename Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Cherokee called it Kuwohi. Renaming it would restore the name known for so many hundreds of years.

There is much history here with this peak's current namesake, Thomas Clingman. Over 150 years ago, he and Dr. Elisha Mitchell publicly clashed over who first measured the tallest peak east of the Mississippi. When I read the Cherokee proposal to rename the peak, I thought back to 1980. I just moved to Asheville and was part of a trio of CMC'ers who poached a trail to Mitchell Falls. The Falls are located on a huge tract of land that was and still is a private hunting club. Dr. Mitchell fell to his death there on June 27, 1857.



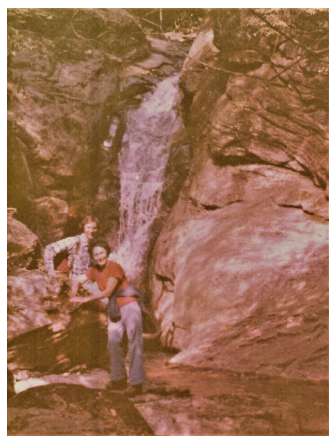
In 1980, I moved to Asheville. I worked with Dottie Goodman in the Grove Arcade Building. She told me about CMC and my first Sunday here I did the CMC hike in the snow to Peach Knob off Town Mountain Road. That summer, Dottie said, "I am going to Mitchell Falls tomorrow with Kent, a fellow CMC'er. Would you like to take the day off and join us?" Dottie, of course!

We met early for the all-day trip. Kent said we would drive to Mt. Mitchell and hike down to the Falls. We parked before the summit and bushwhacked to a gravel road. Kent then said we are on a private hunting club's land now. "It's patrolled. If you hear a vehicle, jump down off the side of the road." Kent, of course!

In today's vernacular we were trail poaching, nice words for trespassing. We walked a quarter mile on the gravel road, and then dropped down a many-mile trail to Mitchell Falls. Maybe it was the same route Dr. Mitchell took on his last day as dark was approaching.

After that 1980 hike, I went to Pack Library and read about Mitchell Falls. It's all online now. Mitchell was on the last of his many expeditions to measure with a barometer the elevation of the mountain that would bear his name. Clingman and Mitchell had a contentious public debate for decades over which of the many similar rocky outcroppings was the highest and who was first to measure elevation. There were no roads then. Just rugged mountains to climb from valleys below. Today, the highest peaks in the Black Mountains are named Mt. Mitchell, Mt. Craig, Balsam Cone, Cattail Peak, Big Tom, Mt. Gibbs, and Clingmans Peak.

Mitchell won public sentiment after his fatal fall as to who measured the highest peak first. In 1858, Dr. Mitchell got his mountain named for him. Losing in the Black Mountains, Clingman turned to the Smokies and incorrectly claimed Kuwohi, or Smoky Dome as it was also called, to be the highest. The Cherokee name, Kuwohi, I sense long forgotten, was renamed Clingmans Dome in 1859.



Never been back to Mitchell Falls and probably never will. It's private land. No one should ever trespass, including me. I understand there are discussions for this property to be preserved and put in the public domain. Our treasures need to be preserved and I hope this happens.

I still look back to that summer day 42 years ago. I had my dad's old grainy Kodak Retina with me. That's Dottie and Kent at the base of the Falls. I am at the top where Dr. Mitchell slipped to his death. Fading pictures keeping my memories alive. I sense this hike began my interest in history and our Club. I was honored years later when asked to be CMC historian, a job for me for almost two decades. Now our 100<sup>th</sup>

anniversary is approaching. A big celebration is planned. Let's all meet on July 16, 2023, at the North Carolina Arboretum and celebrate our legacy.

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## New South Beyond 6000 Awards Patch

by Chris Koebelin



The South Beyond 6000 (SB6K) Challenge Committee has designed a new patch for challenge completers. This design better identifies the sponsors of the challenge - namely the Carolina Mountain Club (CMC) and the Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoe Club (TEHCC). The patch is updated to the latest advanced graphics manufacturing capabilities of the producers. All future completers of the challenge will receive this new patch design.

**Registered completers** of the SB6K challenge may also receive the new patch design. The cost is \$3 each for CMC or TEHCC members. Non-members may also purchase a patch at a cost of \$7 each. The cost includes postage.

Please make the check out to **Carolina Mountain Club** and mail to:

SB6K Patch  
PO Box 15152  
Asheville, NC 28813

Also include your mailing address (if different) and email address in case any correspondence is necessary. Allow 3 weeks for processing.

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## Buy CMC Centennial Shirt and Hat

by Donna Bange

In celebration of CMC's Centennial next July, CMC Leadership Council has decided to have a

- CMC Centennial Shirt **\$20/shirt**
- CMC Centennial hat **\$20/hat**

Note that the shirts come in both women and men's sizes from small to Xlarge for women and small to 2Xlarge for men. The women's shirt is more fitted than the corresponding men's shirt. **Note that a portion of this money will be used to support the Centennial efforts and/or the CMC endowment.**



Christmas is around the corner. You may want to buy a shirt or hat for yourself and/or a significant other. Please note that CMC is not Amazon Prime and we do not offer free shipping. We will need to arrange delivery. If you are interested in purchasing a shirt and/or hat, please contact me at [donna.bange@gmail.com](mailto:donna.bange@gmail.com). Include the gender and shirt size.

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## DON'T FORGET: IT'S STILL BEAR HUNTING SEASON

The 2022-2023 bear hunting season picks back up again from Dec. 12 to Jan. 2

STAY SAFE - Wear an article of blaze orange clothing or tie it to your pack.

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## Carolina Mountain Club in the 1930s

by Danny Bernstein

CMC was formally created in 1923. See the November issue of the eNews for details. Continuing an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *Carolina Mountain Club: One Hundred Years ...*

In the meantime, back in the Northeast, the concept of an Appalachian Trail (A.T.) was brewing. In 1921, Benton MacKaye conceptualized a trail going from Mt. Washington (6,288 ft.) in New Hampshire, the highest peak in the Northeast, to Mt. Mitchell (6,684 ft.), North Carolina, the highest mountain east of the Mississippi. Paul Fink, a historian, hiker and author from Jonesboro, Tennessee and Verne Rhoades are the names most often associated with designing the route through the South. In his later reminiscences, Fink said that the A.T. was being planned by Northerners and that he and George Stephens, who worked for the Asheville Citizen, convinced the ATC leadership that the route should go through the Smokies.



*Tennent with hiking group. He's in the center with glasses on and another pair dangling*

The Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC), now Conservancy, was formed in 1925, two years after the birth of CMC. ATC established the Carolina Appalachian Trail Club (CATC) also in Asheville in January, 1931 with George Stephens as president, even though CMC was already a recognized incorporated club. Stephens was twenty-seven

years old at the time. ATC might have wanted to install its own leaders and keep the club as a chapter of ATC. At the time, CMC focused on hiking and a little environmental advocacy, such as encouraging members to write to their elected representatives.

Stephens had a variety of jobs until he started his own publishing firm, the Stephens Press, in 1936. Along with commercial printing, he specialized in books, guides, and maps about the Smokies and Western North Carolina. Later, Stephens Press would become very important to CMC.

The two clubs, CATC and CMC, merged in December, 1931 and took on the name Carolina Mountain Club with George Stephens as president. Throughout all this history, (and we're only at the end of 1931), there was one person who was a constant presence.

### **Heroes and Antiheroes**

When you work on a project as long as I have, you can't help having heroes and antiheroes. I think I have fallen for Dr. Gaillard Stoney Tennent; yes, that Tennent who has a mountain named after him on the Art Loeb Trail.

Dr. Tennent was active in CMC in all its incarnations. He was involved, starting when the club was a chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, until he died in 1953 at the age of 81. Dr. Gaillard Tennent became the first president of CMC in 1923.

Tennent, an ophthalmologist, was born in 1872 in Hominy Valley.

"He was a familiar figure on the streets as he walked briskly along, sans hat, especially on the route between his home at 207 Pearson Dr. in Montford and his office in the Haywood Building on Haywood Street," an anonymous person described the doctor in a CMC newsletter. Tennent had built a family home in 1909; today some Ashevilleians still refer to it as the Tennent house in Montford. He was secretary of the Buncombe County Medical Society in the early 1900s and wrote medical papers for professional journals.

When the two clubs combined in 1931, Tennent stayed active; the other famous names did not appear again. Tennent served in World War I as a doctor. Since he was too old for the Second World War, he was the mainstay of the club while younger CMC men went to fight. He helped CMC donate war bonds, worked on various committees, led hikes, and edited the newsletter. He was committed to CMC until his death in 1953. He is remembered as the only member of the club with a record of continuous membership at the time.

In early September, hikers look forward to blueberry picking around Ivestor Gap in the Shining Rock area. Dr. Tennent, who was 76 years old at the time, led a ten-mile hike on September 19, 1948. The hike description states, "Our annual huckleberry picking expedition. Berries and bears. This is always one of the most popular so do not miss it."

When Tennent died, there was an immediate outcry for a proper remembrance.



“Dr. Tennent had perhaps a more intimate knowledge of this mountain region than any other of its citizens,” said one letter to the editor of the Asheville Citizen-Times. Now there’s a plaque on Tennennt Mountain.

And what about an antihero? You may have to wait until the book comes out.

### Photo credits

G.S. Tennent - Hikers resting in shade on rocks. William T. Kirkman Photograph Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville

Peter Steurer on Tennennt Mountain. Courtesy of Peter Steurer

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Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to [eNews@carolinamountainclub.org](mailto:eNews@carolinamountainclub.org). Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month. Please limit articles to no more than 1,000 words. You may send up to two photos as jpg attachments.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to : [www.carolinamountainclub.org](http://www.carolinamountainclub.org). Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. For all address and email changes, log in, select "Modify Profile", make changes and click on "Update Member" or email Dennis Bass at [dbass3607@gmail.com](mailto:dbass3607@gmail.com). Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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