

## Chapter Seven

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### THE MAYOR OF PORKY GULCH TAKES OFFICE

**T**HE SHAPE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RANGE IS VERY LARGELY the work of the Laurentide ice sheet, which arrived in 23,000 B.C. The character of the Presidential Range is very largely the work of Joe Dodge, who arrived in 1922 A.D.

The Dodge family arrived on the American shore in 1638. They settled in Salem, Massachusetts, and in the next 260 years they moved only a few miles north to Manchester-by-the-Sea, where they pursued the woodcrafter's trades. Joseph Brooks Dodge made his first appearance on December 26, 1898; as he liked to put it, "I was a great Christmas present." When Joe was a boy the family was still engaged in the furniture business; his own interests, however, had already turned elsewhere.

A strong nor'easter blew up the New England coast a month before he was born and the *City of Portland* sank with all hands off Provincetown, Massachusetts. Disasters always make good story-telling, Joe heard this account over and over again, and it pulled his young attentions toward the sea and also toward the weather. Joe wanted to be a locomotive engineer when he grew up, an urge that is widespread in young boys. He also wanted to go to sea, an urge that is widespread in shore-dwellers.

This second calling was more easily tested, and the summer Joe was twelve he managed to secure an entry-level position on a fishing smack and went as far as the Grand Banks before he was required to resume his career in grammar school. All was not lost, though. There was a great fire in Salem when he was fifteen, and, noting that one of the firemen had not come to work, *Joe alertly stepped forward and filled in for him stoking Manchester's steam-powered fire engine.* This did not lead to a job driving locomotives, so Joe turned to another chance at the future.

One of the central events in every imagination was the loss of the *Titanic* in 1912. Joe had become interested in radio two years earlier and now he was absorbed by the stories of the radio messages that might have averted the disaster, but did not. The first transmissions from the doomed ship had been picked up by a teenager on a rooftop in New York and Joe learned that there was a Marconi wireless station in Wellfleet, out on Cape Cod, so he built a small radio and taught himself Morse code by listening to the Wellfleet traffic.

The first adventure in radio was played out in the Dodges' kitchen. Early radios looked complex, even mysterious, and Joe strung the antenna wires across the ceiling, which was not what most people expected. The very idea of radio was new to most people, and one winter day a relative came to visit and quickly inquired about the unusual utensils in there with the pots and pans. Joe provided a first lesson in the propagation of radio waves and said that the wires would intercept the waves when they came in. The relative, not fully in touch with the new world of electronics, said, "You'll freeze us out when you open the window to let in the waves."

Joe moved on to more powerful radio sets and news of this novelty did not escape wider notice. The Manchester Cricket sent a reporter to inquire and his story ran in the next issue: "Joseph Dodge, who has one of the most complete amateur radio outfits in the country, has achieved some wonderful results of late, and one evening this week gave a startling demonstration in reproducing the voice of a lady as she sang 'solos' in Chicago. The fact of her voice coming from a distance of nearly a thousand miles without the aid of wires and heard perfectly, is almost beyond comprehension. The sound is caught from an antenna and amplified by means of a gramophone horn."

The relative's fears about snowstorms coming through the open window with the radio waves proved unfounded and Joe kept moving. He got his first commercial license when he was sixteen and quickly gained employment on

the *SS Bay State* for the Boston-Portland run, a position that required him to wear his first long pants. Joe telephoned his father to tell of his advancing station in life and was told to come home at once. He didn't. He went on board and told the captain that he was a radio operator. The captain cast off and two days later tied up again at the Portland dock. The senior Dodge met the ship, asked Joe how he'd liked it, and took him home. Nothing more was ever said.

Two years later the United States was being drawn into the World War; Joe quit high school the day war was declared and joined the navy on February 14, 1917. He was assigned as instructor in the radio service at Harvard, then in January of 1918 he was reassigned to the Western Electric laboratories in New York to learn radio telephone and this led to the navy base in New London, where he set up a radio telephone school and research laboratory. One day he was put aboard a submarine for a training mission and, once at sea, the vessel sank. No one on board could find a way to bring it back to the surface and the situation looked grave indeed; then the young radioman stepped forward and, with only a pair of pliers, he found the trouble and effected the repair. The engines were restarted and the ballast blown, and the submarine was soon back on the surface.

Joe mustered out of the navy in 1920 with the rating of Chief Electrician (Radio) and quickly joined the merchant marine. He signed onto the *J. M. Danziger*, an oil tanker under Mexican flag, and made port in Tampico just as Alvaro Obregon's revolution was breaking out. The rebels attacked the ship with machine guns and Joe returned fire by throwing rocks at them. That proved sufficient and the *Danziger* eventually headed into harbor in Newport, Rhode Island. The captain had not picked up a pilot, though, and first they hit a sewer line and then they took thirty feet off the end of the dock. The skipper leaned over the rail of the bridge, spit a cud of tobacco past Joe's ear, and said, "Well, Sparks, I guess we made a grandstand finish."

Thus ended Joe's ocean-going career, but another stone had already been cast. In 1909, he and his father headed north toward the mountains. They followed the usual route of the day: a steamer from Boston to Portland, Maine, a train from Portland to Glen, New Hampshire, and a buckboard from there up the narrow rocky road through Pinkham Notch to take lodgings in the Glen House, the famous hotel at the foot of the carriage road that led to the summit of Mount Washington.

The senior and junior Dodges did not take a carriage. They hiked up the road to 2-Mile, then turned off on the Raymond Path that led to the floor of Tuckerman Ravine. They climbed up through the ravine and spent the night in the old Tip-Top House, hiked down the Southern Peaks on the Crawford Path, found the station in Fabyans and took the train back to Portland, thence home by steamer.

In those days young men were expected to take their place in the family business, and when Joe left the good ship *Danziger* he made a try at the furniture trades, but it didn't work out. He odd-jobbed his way around Maine for a year or so, then in 1922 he learned that an organization called the Appalachian Mountain Club had a small encampment in Pinkham Notch, at the foot of Mount Washington. He remembered that the hiking trip he'd taken with his father had gone right past that place, so he made inquiries. The club had one employee at their office in Boston and he offered Joe a bunk at Pinkham Notch.

That was June 9, 1922, there were two log cabins and several army surplus pyramid tents at Pinkham, and Joe went to work. His first job was to fasten a roof over the outdoor washstand, the better to shelter guests against inclement weather.

Other visitors were both better adapted to the elements and more frequent in their visits: porcupines. These natives were so numerous, and so attentive to the buildings and supplies, that Joe and his partner would kill as many as a dozen in one night. The state game wardens paid a bounty on porcupines, so the noses would be taken to Gorham and redeemed at the rate of twenty-five cents per. Then the hutmen would redeem the coins for strawberries and cream, which they'd take back to the notch and make what they called porcupine shortcake. The recipe for that staple is lost to history, but the name that summer inspired is not—Joe called his new lodgings Porky Gulch.

Bears were also frequent visitors and they, too, were convertible assets. The Cutler River flows out of Tuckerman Ravine and eventually drops into Crystal Cascade just above the AMC settlement beside the Pinkham Notch road. There's a deep pool below the cascade and one day Joe found a dead bear in the water there; as he told a visitor, "Committed suicide, I guess." The late bear was many days gone and quite smelly, and Joe thought that no game warden would want to give him even temporary accommodations, so



Joe Dodge found his life's work when he arrived at the AMC base camp in Pinkham Notch in 1922. Over the next 36 years he'd change the lives of countless hikers and save the lives of many.

he took the bear around the circuit of game wardens and collected the five-dollar bounty in four different towns.

The AMC camp in Pinkham Notch was open for summer use only and Joe kept coming back. In 1925 and 1926 he was chief carpenter in building the "portables," which were bunkhouses to extend the lodging capacity. As the

summer of 1926 drew to a close he proposed a plan that would keep him at the AMC settlement over the winter: he'd care for the cabins there, attend to the needs of what few climbers as might come by, and make occasional trips to the huts at Lakes of the Clouds, Carter Notch, and Madison Springs to see that they were holding out the elements and other intruders who might have designs on them. Joe did not have to wait long for the first real test in the thirty-six years he would spend in Porky Gulch.

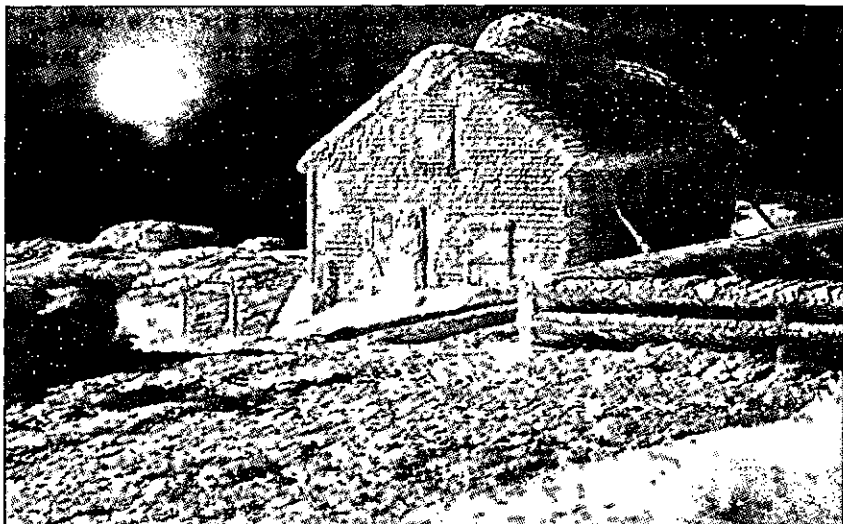
**MAX ENGELHART**  
**OCTOBER 1926**

No warm season ever matched 1926 for cold. The snow arch in Tuckerman Ravine did not fall until September 3, the last snow in the ravine disappeared on September 23, and five inches of new snow fell the next day. The last of the old winter's snow melted on October 4; then on the evening of Friday, October 9, a great storm broke over New England and by morning ten inches of snow had fallen on the AMC encampment in Pinkham Notch and it was still coming down hard. After breakfast the temperature suddenly dropped and a strong wind began to drift the snow. By noon, it was worse.

Joe Dodge was not yet fully rigged for winter and Pinkham froze up. The storm continued; indeed, it seemed to intensify. The AMC had a Model T Ford truck called Ringtail and Saturday afternoon Joe drove fifteen miles down the notch road to Intervale to meet the train. On the way back he rescued a dozen vehicles on the steep northbound grade of Spruce Hill, which had not yet reached the standards of a gravel road; in fact, it wasn't much more than a rocky one-lane track. By Sunday afternoon the weather had broken in the valleys, but Joe could see the cloud base racing across the ridges above Pinkham and he knew that was a sure sign of desperate conditions on the heights.

On Monday afternoon, Joe drove ten miles north to Gorham to borrow blowtorches so he could thaw the water pipes of Porky Gulch. On the way back, he stopped at the Glen House to get some milk and they told him that Max Engelhart was missing.

The two hotels on the summit of Mount Washington had closed in the third week of September, but there were still hikers on the range and if they



"The Stage Office" on Mount Washington housed the first year-round weather observatory in the 1870s. It was used again when observers re-occupied the summit in 1933. Max Engelhart was serving snacks here when a storm overtook him in October 1926.

wanted shelter and found a closed building, they tended to break in. The auto road company had a small building on the summit known as the stage office, so the plan was to keep it open until October 15 in hopes of deflecting people who might otherwise break into the Summit House and the Tip-Top House.

Max Engelhart had been the cookee at the Glen House, the second cook, and he'd been sent up to the stage office. Max was to provide sandwiches and small provisions as needed for hikers or others who might come up by the road. He was supplied with food, water, and firewood, and he was there at the onset of the great storm on Thursday evening.

Two hikers had taken lodgings at the Glen House in hopes of climbing to the summit. They'd arrived with the storm and waited four days for the weather to moderate, then on Monday they started up the auto road. They'd been told that Max Engelhart was living in the stage office and they should tell him to come down with them.

This sentiment was widespread. Dennis Pelquark worked for the summit road company and he wrote, "Much concern had been held out for the man, cast alone on the wind- and storm-swept mountain for two days. The gist

of the talk in mountain camps, hotels and the country-side was about the keeper's danger." The wind was still strong, but the two Glen House guests pushed through the drifts and blowing snow and reached the summit, then they went to the stage office for shelter and found a room full of snow. Max Engelhart was not there.

The hikers brought this news down to the Glen House and Joe stopped by on his way back from Gorham with the blowtorches. The clerk asked Joe if there was a stranger with him at the AMC camp. There wasn't, but Joe knew Max was an old woodsman and trapper from Quebec and his friendly salute was more direct than the road worker's elevated words. Max was, Joe said, "A goddam wild Frenchman."

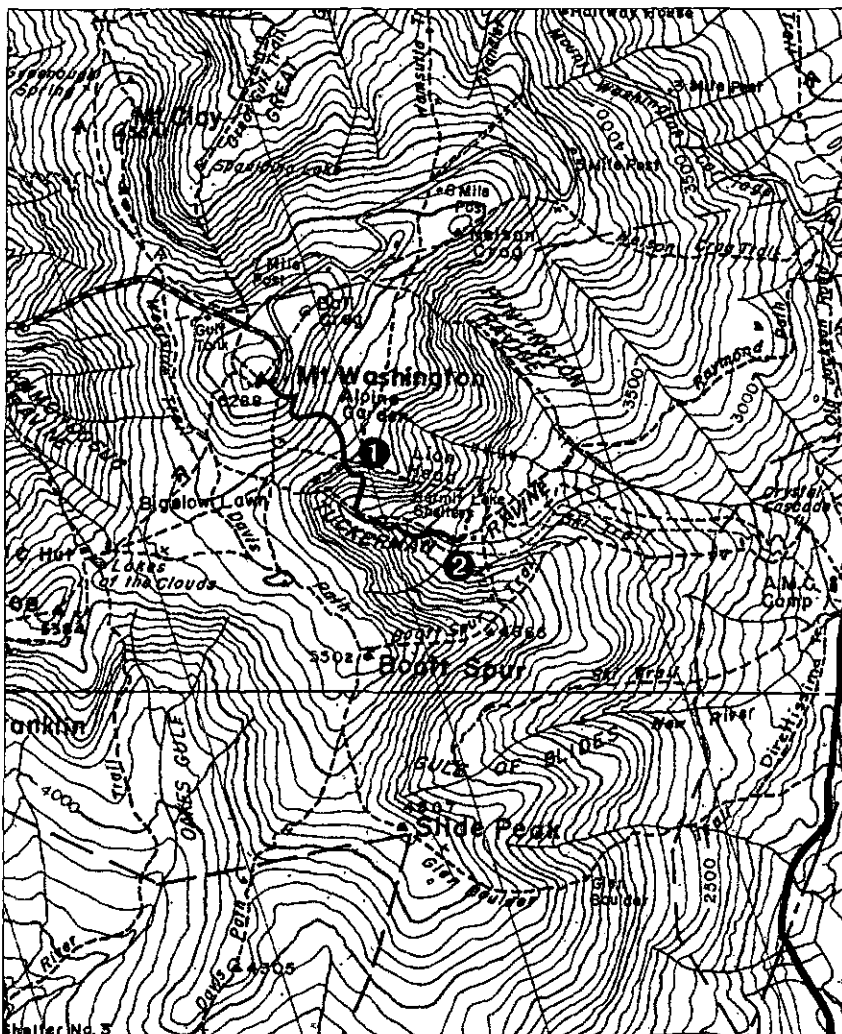
He also knew that Max was fifty-eight years old and although he was very much at home in the woods, he was not accustomed to the rigors of life above timberline on Mount Washington, much less was he equipped for surviving an assault such as the storm just ending. Joe also knew that Max was smart. If life in the stage office became too difficult, Max would surely move a few yards to Camden Cottage, a sturdier building and a well-known fortress against the wintry blast.

The two climbers brought down a note from the stage office: "Laf at 12 for Tocmans Arien—no wood." The Glen House crew thought it might be some kind of code. Joe asked to talk to the climbers and they said there wasn't any firewood in the stage office and there was a six-foot drift of snow that blew in through the cracks. They also reported footprints in the hard packed snow of the auto road about a half-mile above the Halfway House, as the old "Camp House" was now called. They said the track led downhill and they thought it was made by Max, nearing the safety of the woods.

No one could make much sense of this—if Max had gotten that far, why hadn't he come the last, easy sheltered miles? Plans were made to send a search party up the road early the next day. Joe said, "You can count on two of us in the morning." He meant himself and Arthur Whitehead, his partner at the AMC camp, and always called Whitey. The two of them talked it over and, as Dennis Pelquark put it, "they, being of the character of real mountaineers, God-fearing and healthy strong youths, brought to light all their theories."

Other theories were brought to light during Monday evening at the Glen House. Someone remembered that a carpenter named Paul LeClair had been





1. Max Engelhart probably went down Right Gulley in Tuckerman Ravine
2. Found in brook near base of Little Headwall

working on the summit the previous week and he came down a few hours before the storm started on the ninth. His boots had probably cut into old snow and the prints were bared by the wind after the four-day snowfall just ended. That would account for the tracks the climbers saw. The puzzling note from Max could be read: "Left at noon for Tuckerman Ravine."

Joe and Whitey returned to the Glen House the next morning with heavy clothing, a hatchet, a hunting knife, a long coil of rope, a flashlight, food, hot coffee in Thermos bottles, and binoculars. They were joined by five men from the Glen House: Fred Pike, Elliott Libby, Dennis Pelquark, and two others. The news of the missing man was already in the state and national press, but no men came from Gorham, as they had hoped, much less from farther away.

The rescue party started up the auto road in one of the vehicles that were used for the summer trade. These were monumental seven-passenger 1917 Pierce Arrow touring cars with the high sweeping lines of a steel-and-leather prairie schooner. The men put tire chains on the Pierce and got almost three miles up the road before it foundered in the new snow. They knew there was a crew closing up the Halfway House for the winter and they expected them to join the search effort, but those men declined the chance to help, which struck Joe and Whitey as rather callous.

The Halfway House was just below timberline, and a mile farther up the road the rescue party ran into the full force of the storm. They could see only about thirty feet and rime quickly built up on their clothes and hair as they pushed on to the summit through waist-deep drifts and stinging blowing ice. Joe and Whitey and Dennis realized they were stronger climbers than the other four and they went on ahead, taking care to look for places along the road where Max might have tried to find shelter. The stage office was, as Dennis wrote, "a grotto of frost, snow, and emptiness, the remaining coffee in the pot frozen solid, indicating very severe temperatures." Max was indeed missing.

The bed in the stage office was in good order and there was a considerable amount of food on the shelves, but as the men looked through the other effects they realized that there were heavy clothes hanging on the wall. One of the men thought he remembered another bed in the stage office and found its splintered remains in the large airtight stove, charred but not burned. They also noticed that there was no money in the box where Max kept the coins



An observatory crewman climbs the section of the auto road known as Five-Mile Drift in 1935.

he collected for sandwiches and they knew that the keeper had not brought much of a wardrobe up to the summit, so they gathered from the missing money, the failed fire, and the clothes on the wall that Max had probably departed quickly, without intention of returning and without much thought of what lay ahead.

The slower members of the party appeared twenty minutes later and joined in a tour of the summit buildings. Nothing seemed amiss and Camden Cottage had not been used. Back in the stage office, Joe spotted what appeared to be writing on the wall, mostly covered with rime. He brushed it clear and found: "*Je pars, date Oct 11 1925. Poudre de neige; le vent souffle d'une force de 100 miles à l'heure; maisante, temperature très mugir. Max*" (Snowing, wind blows 100 miles an hour, temperature very low.) The caretaker had left the building two days ago.

Joe knew of several non-standard ways of getting into the Summit House and the Tip-Top House, and, thinking that Max might know of them too, he and Whitey looked into those possibilities and also into Camden Cottage, but there was no sign of Max. They considered the situation and reasoned that when Max left the summit there was a very strong northwest wind blowing, so he would almost certainly have gone downwind, to the southeast. Joe

and Whitey decided to continue their search and returned to the stage office to prepare their kit.

During these summit perambulations Joe had been kicking at the frost feathers that formed during the storm, those friable horizontal icicles which build out into the wind and give a sure index of its direction and a good indication of its strength. One fell more heavily than Joe thought it should, so he broke it apart and found a stone inside. Then he knocked loose some of the frost coating the windward side of the stage office and found many small rocks embedded there; the wind had swept them up from the flat graveled area near the cog trestle and hurled them into the ice accumulating on Max's fragile shelter. Now someone remembered that a storm door had been hung on the outside of the door frame and this was gone, evidently torn from its hinges and blown to some distant place. The reasons for his hasty retreat were becoming more clear.

It was now about eleven o'clock in the morning, no sign of Max had been found in the valley, and all the evidence suggested a panicky flight from the summit. Since bewildered hikers tend to go downwind, Max would have gone down the steeper side of the summit cone toward the greater hazards of Tuckerman Ravine. Joe took charge and said that Whitey and Dennis Pelquark should come with him. The others, less experienced, not so well equipped, and apparently more fatigued, should stay in Camden Cottage.

Those four men argued that Joe, Whitey, and Dennis should not continue; they said it was too dangerous to go out onto the unmarked and wind-blasted slopes, and that if Max was still on the higher terrain he was certainly dead. Joe said they were going to do it anyway, and the four announced that they would go back down the road to the valley.

The weather was still severe, with scudding clouds and a strong lashing wind, and Joe and Whitey realized that they were probably searching for a dead man. They stayed thirty or forty feet apart, which was as far as they could see, and as they made their way downslope one or another of them spotted what seemed to be tracks, but each time it turned out to be a trick of the wind-carved snow. They'd see what they thought was a body, but each time it was an oddly-shaped rock. At times they lost their footing and took battering slides down the slope; other times they sank armpit-deep between windbreak rocks.



"Shelter" must be understood conditionally on the heights of the Presidential Range. Here snow blows in through a stoutly sheathed wall. Such conditions drove Max Engelhart out the door and into a ferocious three-day ordeal.

They crawled on all fours to stay on top of the snow and eventually they reached the dwarf spruce near the tops of the ravines. They hoped to find a viewpoint down into Tuckerman Ravine but the going was all but impossible; there were windslab drifts covering the dense scrub growth and they could neither push through the snow nor stay on top of the limbs, so they huddled together for their first rest of the day and considered the situation.

It seemed likely that they'd moved too far to the south, so Joe decided to make a climbing traverse northward across the east side of the summit cone, above the Alpine Garden. It was terribly difficult going; this was the lee side of the mountain and heavily drifted, so again and again they'd break through the windslab surface and sink into shoulder-deep drifts and have to pull themselves out of their sudden prison. Still reasoning that Max would have kept the wind to his back, the three of them pushed on until they'd passed the point at which no downwind line could be drawn from the summit. It occurred to them that, since Max must have had some sense of the shape of the mountain, he might have continued along the lee slope to intercept the auto road above 6-Mile, but still there was no sign of him. They found shelter behind a rock here and took a few minutes for sandwiches, some still-warm coffee, and an eggnog that Joe favored. Then they climbed back to the stage office. It had taken four hours to equal the span of a pleasant summertime hour.

Still not satisfied with the job they'd done, Joe and the other two made another line of search, this time descending to the west of their first track. Max would probably know that there was shelter at the Lakes of the Clouds Hut about a mile away on this heading, and he might have tried for that.

Almost immediately, Dennis found a line of distinct footprints and they followed them with their highest hopes of the day, but the track soon disappeared in a tremendous drift of snow. They struggled back and forth and back and forth over this snowbank, but found no sign of Max. They also noticed that their own tracks, made only a few minutes before, were quickly obliterated by the wind. This meant that there was little chance of finding any tracks Max might have made two days earlier. Now the storm was picking up again, darkness was coming on, and, as Whitey put it later, "the cold came down with almost a crash."

Joe and his two mates hurried back up to the top, had a sip of chilly coffee from their Thermos, and started down the auto road. The wind had risen to such a blast that they had to hold onto each other and push ahead in a kind of stiff troika; they saw white spots on each other's faces where the flesh was freezing and they took off their mitts to wrap on silk handkerchiefs. They hoped to find relief at the Halfway House, and perhaps a little warmth, but when they got there no smoke was coming from chimney and the shutters

were all nailed up. At last they found the normal warmth of October and went slipping and sliding in mud on the lower stretches of the auto road.

They had supper at the Glen House and returned to thought. Joe felt that there was no point in spending more time on the summit cone until the air cleared and the wind abated, but Max might have been able to get down into one of the ravines. They had no snowshoes, but if they could borrow some from the Glen House they'd go up and search Tuckerman and Huntington ravines and the adjacent ridges of Boott Spur and Lion Head. The others thought they were crazy, Max was surely dead by now, but Mr. Libby of the Glen House was persuaded to bring some snowshoes to the AMC camp in the morning, so Joe and Whitey drove Ringtail back home, hung their wet clothes out to dry in the cold kitchen, fed the cats, and went to bed. It had been a dispiriting day, nearly twenty-five miles of hard going to learn that they'd do it all again the next day.

Joe and Whitey were almost numb with fatigue, but their minds kept running away from sleep and they were not much rested when they got up on Wednesday. Mr. Libby did not arrive with the snowshoes until 11:30 that morning; he explained that he'd been on the telephone for several hours, talking to Boston newspapers.

This day's climbing was terribly difficult. The snow line was at Crystal Cascade, only a few minutes above the AMC camp, and they had to put on the snowshoes about a mile up the trail. The improved equipment was not a success. The webbing was good, but neither Joe nor Whitey could get their bindings tight enough and the snowshoes flopped about in the snow and snagged on every twig, so the men plunged this way and that trying to keep from falling. Whitey's binding soon broke, and they had to stop while he made a jury-rig from his moccasin laces.

The snow was drifted thigh-deep on the Tuckerman Ravine Trail but they reached Hermit Lake, two and a half miles above the valley, in a time most people couldn't match on a fine summer day. Now they were within the extended arms of the ravine and there was a Forest Service register at Hermit Lake, so while they were resting Joe improved the time by looking over the entries to see when the last hiker had come through.

It was at just this moment that they heard an unexpected sound. Perhaps not trusting their own ears, neither Joe nor Whitey said anything about it.

Then they heard it again. Then they heard it a third time. Their first thought was that it came from a steam engine; the air was still, trains ran frequently through Gorham, and the sound of a whistle could certainly carry eleven miles up to Hermit Lake. It might also be a cry from some other search party; given the fair weather and the anxiety for Max's safety, another group might have started up the mountain without the AMC men knowing about it.

Realizing that they'd both heard the strange wail, Joe and Whitey yelled as loudly as they could. Several echoes come off the walls of the ravine here, but mixed in with their own resounding voices there seemed to be one that did not belong to them, one that sounded like a long tenuous . . . "Help!" Still not trusting their ears, neither Joe nor Whitey said anything hopeful. Instead, they yelled again. When the echoes died away, they still heard the other sound, weak, but unmistakable.

The sound seemed to come from Boott Spur, which forms the south wall of the ravine. Max could certainly be up there. Given the mindless, wind-driven track they imagined for him, he could certainly be up there on the wall of Boott Spur, but Joe and Whitey both privately hoped he wasn't; bringing him down from those steep and rocky heights would be difficult. By now they were rushing toward the sound as fast as they could on their flopping snowshoes and exchanging calls with the undiscovered voice and suddenly Whitey saw a head through the scrubby spruce and birch. It seemed to be disembodied, just a head low down on the snow. Joe said, "Do you see him?" And there he was.

This was just at the place where the Tuckerman Ravine Trail crosses the newborn Cutler River below the steep pitch known as the Little Headwall of the ravine. The stream had not frozen, so there was open water flowing past a large boulder between high banks of drifted new snow. Max was down on the edge of the channel, clinging to a sort of shelf he'd either made or found. It was 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 14, and he had been out in the weather for seventy-three hours.

Max had no hat and what parts of his clothes that were not frozen solid were soaking wet. He was wild-eyed and his face was mottled with frostbite, his lips were black, his tongue was swollen, and his arms and legs were so stiff that Joe and Whitey could hardly bend them at all as they lifted and dragged him out of the Cutler River channel.





Joe Dodge's search for Max Englehart was greatly hampered by the snow drifts that form on the heights of the Presidential Range.

Max seemed almost incoherent, then he saw that Joe and Whitey were stripped down to their shirts and steaming with effort and he said, "Oh, my dears, put on some clothes before you freeze!" Joe and Whitey arranged their snowshoes to make a sort of bed for him and laid him down; they took off his wet clothes and wrapped him in their own spare clothes, and they gave him some food and coffee with brandy mixed in. These attentions revived Max somewhat and he told them to be careful of his jacket because he had the money from his trade at the stage office, it wasn't really his, and he didn't want it to be lost. Then Joe and Whitey lay down close beside him in hopes of giving him some of their body heat and Max did what he could to make them understand his two nights above timberline on the mountain, then a terrifying slide down Tuckerman Ravine and the twenty-four hours he'd been in the stream channel.

Suddenly the three of them were in shadow. The sun had dropped below the barrier of Boott Spur, the temperature dropped abruptly, and they realized they had to get a move on. They'd found Max about halfway out the long floor of the ravine where the terrain is thick with stunted birch and spruce. Joe tried to carry Max on his back while he pushed through the scrub to the

trail on his snowshoes, but Max weighed fifty pounds more than Joe did, he was an awkward load, and the snowshoes still flopped uncontrollably. Joe fell almost immediately, then he fell again. This kind of carry was also very painful for Max and, to complicate matters, he couldn't keep anything in his stomach.

Joe and Whitey decided to try a litter carry, so they cut two birch poles and rigged a stretcher with their extra shirts and jackets, but their snowshoes kept jamming between boulders or snagging on the broken branches of the stunted trees and the two men couldn't keep in step with each other. Their progress was so slow and tormented that they gave it up after about three-hundred feet and decided to try a drag carry, what woodsmen call a travois.

They'd need to cut a pair of fir trees for this, so they went down the trail to where the growth was larger and Max became terribly agitated, he thought they were leaving him behind. So Joe and Whitey made as much noise as they could and talked loudly to cheer him up. They came back with two fir poles and this seemed to bring Max back to his old self and his better nature. He told them that in his days as a woodsman he'd always found that it helped to shave the bark off the lower ends of an improvised drag to reduce friction, and he showed them how to rig their ropes to best advantage.

Now they'd brought their tools and devices to as great a perfection as they thought possible and they pushed off again. The terrain here is flat, gravity was not helping at all, and it took almost three hours to go a third of a mile through the deep snow with one man between the poles pulling and the other in back pushing. There were places where they couldn't move the drag at all, so they changed Max's position, but that didn't help much. They plunged and staggered along on their snowshoes, then they lifted Max off the drag and helped him crawl along on all fours. This was more difficult and more time consuming than anything else they'd tried, so Max told them how to rig tump lines and hitch themselves in tandem like a yoke of oxen and they struggled on through the snow, lurching and falling every few steps.

By now they were on the summer trail. Or, more properly, over it. The trees grow very densely at this elevation and they could make out the route of the trail by following the hall-like opening through the trees, but they were past the flats now and the trail twisted and dipped and rose again as it followed the lay of the land. There were places where the turns were sharper

than the length of their drag could negotiate and Max rolled off and crawled so they could move the poles around the corner. The snowshoes were a continual agony and Max joined in the volleys of curses directed at them, so they concluded that he was feeling better.

Darkness began to overtake the embattled trio by the time they'd made a half-mile to the good, and there was still a quarter-mile to go before they reached the upper crossing of the Cutler River. By this point the stream was no easy hop-across, it was a full mountain torrent and they'd been dreading the ordeal of crossing even as they tried to imagine a way they could do it. They also realized that their progress with the drag was becoming prohibitively slow, so they left it near the junction of the Raymond Path; one of the men carried all their equipment and the other slung Max over his shoulder and carried him, or half-pushed him and half-dragged him along on the ground.

The stream crossing was worse than they'd feared. They'd gotten across only with difficulty on their way up, and now the warmer weather of the day had added more meltwater to the stream and they faced a flood of freezing water and ice. The summer crossing is a matter of hopping from one rock to the next, but that was out of the question; the snow and ice made the footing far too uncertain and they were burdened with their awkward packs and with the almost helpless body of Max. The only solution was also the most drastic: Joe and Whitey filled in the gaps as well as they could with blocks of ice, then they lay down in the rocks and rushing water and made a bridge of themselves that Max could crawl across.

It was full dark now and, with the crossing behind them and less snow to slow them, they turned on their flashlights and made good time. This also encouraged Max, and he told them his story.

He said that the carpenter Paul LeClair looked in on him just before the weather broke and then hurried on down the mountain. The force of the storm rose quickly and reached a pitch of fury Max had never imagined, and he feared that his shelter would break its bonds of chain and blow right off the mountain. His firewood was soon gone, so he tried to get to Camden Cottage but the storm blew him off his feet and he couldn't even crawl across against the wind, so he broke up what little furniture he had and burned that. By Sunday he was thinking that this must be the onset of winter and, fearing

that he'd be marooned, he decided to make a break for the valley. So, taking only a handful of raisins, he started down at noon.

His hat blew off immediately, then he went slipping and floundering down the lee side of the summit cone until he found the edge of Tuckerman Ravine, but he couldn't find a way down that seemed safe enough to try. He dug a snow cave and let the blowing snow fill in on top of him, then on Monday he broke out and tried again to find a way down, again without success. By this time the uncertain shelter of the stage office seemed more desirable than a snow cave and he tried to climb back up to the summit, but with the storm and the slope against him it was beyond his strength. He hadn't had anything to eat since the raisins the previous afternoon and he believed that eating snow would kill a dying man, so hadn't had anything to drink, either. Thus reduced, he dug in for a second night of full storm above Tuckerman Ravine.

On Tuesday morning Max believed he was close to death, so anything else that happened would not be much lost. He found the edge of the ravine, pitched over into his final effort, and fell until he stopped sliding about seven-hundred feet down the precipitous slope. Finding himself battered but still alive, he set out to find water and reached the place in the brook bed where they found him after his third night in the open.

This halting account filled the time as Joe and Whitey half-carried him down the trail, still carrying their own packs which added eighty pounds to Max's very considerable heft. They'd turned on their flashlights and, stopping to rest at a spot called Windy Pitch, they saw the lights of a car at what they knew was the Darby Field. They signaled with their flashlights, but got no response.

The trail was steeper and rougher now, and they had to be careful not to hurt Max. To complicate matters, his mind was drifting; he thought they told him it was two miles to camp, but he was sure they'd gone sixteen, which meant they'd lost their way.

The last landmark was the lower bridge over the Cutler River, and as they grew near they finally indulged the luxury of planning ahead. Joe would hurry on from the bridge and start a fire in their cabin, then fill the radiator in Ring-tail and let it warm up while he heated some broth to reinforce Max before the long jolting ride to the hospital. Accordingly, Joe took both their packs

at the bridge and started running the last quarter-mile. He fell and broke his flashlight almost immediately and kept running without it.

The parking lot at the AMC cabins was a blaze of light; it was filled with the cars of reporters and curious citizens. Joe said he and Whitey had found Max Engelhart, and they wouldn't believe him. Then, persuaded, they asked what had taken them so long. Then they asked if Max was all right. Joe decided not to pursue this interrogatory any further.

He sent a reporter to the Glen House to call Dr. Bryant in Gorham, then he opened the cabin and began preparations for Max. The reporters kept asking questions and Joe did not fail to note that no one offered to go up and help Whitey. Soon his mate came in with Max slung over his shoulder and they noticed that it had taken seven and a half hours to bring him down from his small refuge in the bank of the stream.

Joe and Whitey got Max out of his frozen clothes, but he was very much concerned about the knife he'd lost during his ordeal. They found it in his boot, which helped. They put him into warm dry clothes, wrapped him in blankets, and got some hot broth into him before Dr. Bryant arrived and started Max on his way to the hospital.

Now, in the first time they'd had to themselves in three days, Joe and Whitey began wondering why no one had come up to help them; even the people parked at The Darby Field had known it was their flashlights moving so slowly on the trail and had not come to help. Not finding any answer, they fed the cats and made a sign saying "Don't bother us, we're asleep!" Then, too exhausted to eat, they went to bed.

They were also too exhausted to sleep. They rolled to and fro in their blankets, but they were still awake when the sky began to lighten so they made breakfast at 6:00 A.M., but they still couldn't eat. They cleaned up the cabin and as they worked they thought how nice it would be to have somebody else do the work. This idea took hold, so they put on their best clothes, fired up Ringtail, and drove twenty miles north to the Berlin YMCA. They took showers there and went on to the Ravine House in Randolph, where the faithful Mr. and Mrs. Bradstreet cooked steaks and vegetables and biscuits for them.

Joe and Whitey read the Boston papers and learned of their adventures and then they went upstairs for a long sleep in a proper room, stayed on for

breakfast and noontime dinner, and stopped in Gorham to have supper with photographer Guy Shorey and the honored guide Burge Bickford to talk over the storm and its consequences. Then they went to Berlin to see how Max was getting along. The toes and heel of one foot had been amputated, and the toes on the other foot, but he wasn't much bothered by this. He told them many stories of the days just past, including how he'd discovered gold in the Cutler River while he huddled by the rock and how he was just about to make some snowshoes out of twigs and branches when they found him, and then he proposed that they come up to his place in Canada and go trapping with him.

Max was kept in the hospital for almost five months. He went home and there was no news of him for many years, then two young women stopped by the AMC cabins in Pinkham Notch. They found Joe and told him that they'd talked to an elderly man in Canada who said that if they ever met Joe Dodge they should tell him that Max Engelhart had a job cooking for the railroad. Nothing more was ever heard of him.