

The Schenectady Force: The Spark that Ignited an Adirondack Wilderness Movement

By Ellen Apperson Brown

Beginning in the 1930s a wilderness lobby existed whose chief mission was the defense of wilderness in the Adirondacks and whose chief tool in that defense was the language of Article 7, Section 7. The activities of this lobby involved arguing before the legislature, convincing voters of the value of wilderness, and insuring that the protections of the forever wild clause were written into subsequent constitutions. The important point is that a preservation lobby existed at all. Before the 1930s, it did not – at least not to any appreciable degree. Yet the existence of the preservationist philosophy is now taken for granted, both in the Adirondacks and nationally.

(Philip G. Terrie – "A Wilderness Esthetic" – Forever Wild: A Cultural History of Wilderness in the Adirondacks.)

Philip Terrie, Frank Graham and a host of other historians and journalists all have identified John S. Apperson, Jr. as the leader of the Adirondack wilderness movement in the early decades of the 20th century. However, no historian has delved into this story in much depth or detail, or tried to explain how an engineer at the General Electric Company, working full time, managed to create a "Schenectady force" and launch such effective political campaigns. They were not familiar with the letters he saved, so they didn't realize that he had left a deliberate paper trail. In his thorough and methodical way, he kept carbon copies of hundreds of letters he wrote, as well as copies of publications he authored, and a remarkable set of films and photographs.

Soon after his death in 1963, a few of his closest friends and associates (Phil Ham, Art Newkirk, and Bill White) took responsibility for storing and organizing the huge collection, moving them first into Phil Ham's garage, and then to the library at Union College. Eventually the collection found a more permanent home in the Adirondack Research Library in Niskayuna, in the beautiful house built by Paul Schaefer. In the summer of 2012, Union College purchased Schaefer's house, along with the entire contents of the Adirondack Research Library. I hope that they will soon find a way to archive the Apperson material properly and make his letters available to researchers and scholars.

As his great niece, I feel a sense of urgency to let the public know about these papers that have been so long hidden from view, and make sure my great uncle's story gets told. I began working on this project more than a decade ago – earning an advanced degree in history, collecting family documents, giving talks and writing papers...all in an effort to write his biography. As a step in that direction, I recently decided to start scanning all the documents I own (including photocopies of most of the letters in the ARL), and have begun posting them on my new website (www.appersonassociates.com).

Using excerpts from his correspondence from 1900 up to about 1925, I'll introduce you to some of the interesting friendships he forged, and let the letters speak for themselves of his wide range of interests, his enthusiasm for every kind of sport and outdoor activity, and his passionate desire to protect the forest preserve and the islands at Lake George.

When John Apperson first stepped off the train in Schenectady in January, 1900, the bustling new city must have filled him with excitement and anticipation. His older brother, Hull, who had gotten a head start by about six months, was there to meet him at the station and make him feel welcome. According to the story passed down in our family, as John made his way north from Virginia, he thought Hull had lined up a job for him...but it fell through, so he had to settle for a much less glamorous position – some kind of manual labor. According to our family "mythology," John soon ran into problems with his first boss, confronted him, and got into a scuffle. He sheepishly made his way back to the office to collect his wages, thinking he had ruined his chances for further employment there, and was amazed, instead, to get a compliment and an offer of a better position. It seems that management had been unhappy with the supervisor for a long time, and they were grateful to have an excuse to fire him. Thus started a career with GE that lasted 47 years!

He gained acceptance into the test program, an exhilarating opportunity for someone eager to learn about the new frontier of electrical engineering. Although he had only completed a few years of post-high school education (at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in Blacksburg, Virginia), he had acquired an impressive practical education, having worked several years as foreman for the construction of a branch railroad. He excelled in the training program at GE and began to thrive in this work environment, with

its promise for advancement, its exposure to the latest technological developments of the day, and the chance to make contact with scores of other young men who shared his interests and his enthusiasm for the out-of-doors.

For recreation, on the weekends, he and the other engineers eagerly explored the local possibilities, including fishing, hunting, hiking and skating. Several photographs survive to document those early outings. These friends would gather in the evenings to plan their next excursions, checking the schedules for trains that could take them up into the North Country, and inviting others to join them. They soon began purchasing skates and camping gear, and by 1905 or so, they were getting serious about the exotic sport known as skate sailing. Eventually they started a little factory, purchasing a sewing machine to make skate sails, tents, and sleeping bags, and ordering spars and fabric from various suppliers.

One of the earliest letters in my collection came from one of those skate sailing enthusiasts. On December 23, 1904, Antony, who had left Schenectady to take a new job in Niagara Falls, NY, wrote:

I was very sorry not to have an opportunity of returning your skate sail to you before I left town – it was lying in my canoe in Yates' boat house – it was very rude of me but I will get it when I return though if you need it you will find it there or Wilkinson will get it if you ask him.

According to one story, in the summer or fall of 1903, he ventured a bit further north, and attended a canoe race at Lake George. He had never seen such a large lake (there was nothing remotely like it back in Virginia) and the mountains...well he was eager to climb them all.

Back in Schenectady, he became acquainted with a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Russell A. Stevenson, and his wife and children. They invited him over for meals, and he became a mentor to the boys - helping Alex set up an electric train, building the family a toboggan, and taking time off on a Monday afternoon to accompany Stuart and Alex to the circus when it came to town. In a letter dated December 26, 1903, Rev. Stevenson makes an interesting comment, saying "Come and see us and tell us of your Lake George trip." By October of the following year, the family had discovered that Mr.

Apperson was becoming a less frequent visitor to their home, and the father complained, "Somehow we are not seeing anything of you this fall."

By the summer of 1905, Hull Apperson, the older brother, had taken his leave of Schenectady and returned to Virginia, marrying a woman from Lynchburg, and accepting a job in Norfolk, for a small electrical firm. In the summer of 1906, John's younger sister, Nancy, decided to come see what all the fuss was about. John invited her to join him on a camping adventure in the wilderness, in the Fulton Chain. The pictures from her photo album document, in fabulous detail, their mode of transportation (a mule drawn wagon), the gear (tents, pots and pans, sleeping bags, and a canoe), and the itinerary (with labels identifying each campsite). We cannot identify the other young man in the photos (besides John), so perhaps he was a hired guide.

We don't have records for all of John's camping trips, but we do know that he made frequent trips into the "Benson Tract," near Northville, which was the last stop on the railroad heading into the Forest Preserve. John made friends with a local man, Seth Wadsworth, who lived in the preserve, and often stayed with him in his camp. Here is a letter Seth wrote to Apperson, in 1909:

Dear Sir i received your Letter of the Feb 11th i will be thar if Nothing happens at the camp to meet you was glad you got in the camp that night if i had known you was coming then i world bin thar When you came but you sed you wer coming in Novemb so i did not look for you so late in the Season Will be glad to see you next Friday Yours truly Seth Wads Worth Northville N.Y.

This letter gives us some idea of the challenges Apperson faced in planning these weekend camping trips. He could hike (or ski!) as far into the preserve as he liked, but he couldn't very well carry in tents and other heavy gear. After making friends with one of the locals, the Wadsworths, who offered him hospitality, he still faced difficulties in making the arrangements, since the postal service was the only means of communication available.

Seth's father, Dan, who had lived in the same cabin for most of his lifetime, began to worry that he might be evicted from his place. When Apperson found out that they had been threatened with a fine for cutting trees near the cabin, he shot off this letter to a state official:

Mr. Edward R. O'Malley, Attorney General

Albany, NY

[date unknown]

Dear Sir:

I am confined to office work and therefore belong to the large class who are vitally interested in the preservation of the state forests. I recently made one of my numerous trips through the Benson track on skees and I found shelter in Mr. Seth Wadsworth's camp and read your letter of Dec. 8th and Mr. S. McDonald's letter of January 7th asking damage for cutting of 28 trees supposed to be used for firewood in connection with the sugar bush.

I cannot believe that you fully appreciate the local conditions and I am taking the liberty of writing you my point of view, more in behalf of those that go in this section, than of Mr. Wadsworth, since he and his aged father have for several years kept the trails open and made it possible for us to visit that section at all times of the year. If any trees were cut in the immediate locality they would be scrub timber since this section has been thoroughly lumbered and as this clearing is the only one for several miles it is of particular value in fighting fires as well as to the average camper and could be made larger to advantage if extended west.

The only trails of any value in this section have been cut open by this man and his father and a number of fires have been put out by them for which they have never made a claim. [J.S. Apperson]

It is interesting to note that he was making trips into this region in all seasons, and that in the colder months, he preferred skiing rather than hiking. His opening statement is perhaps the earliest indication we have on record of his interest in preservation, and of his concern for the forests. Of course this also offers a fine example of his strategy in addressing problems, wherever he encountered them. He loved writing letters to people in charge (of government agencies, organizations, and companies) explaining a concern, and offering them a chance to respond. Often their responses served as a sort of litmus test, giving evidence of their competence and sincerity (or lack thereof). Another letter in the file, from a lawyer (General Counsel for the State Forest, Fish and Game Commission) reveals a rather patronizing tone and considerable ignorance of the issues being raised:

September 8, 1909

Mr. J. S. Apperson
General Electric Company
Schenectady, N. Y.
Dear Sir:

Your favor of the first inst. to Commissioner Whipple in regard to the small camp occupied by Dan Wadsworth on Silver Lake in the town of Benson has been handed to me for attention and I have to say that I have examined the conditions existing there with some care and am entirely unable to find out how a rumor was started that Wadsworth's camp was to be torn down as there have been no complaints in this department against Wadsworth and he seems to be a perfectly inoffensive, fair-minded old fellow who has lived in the woods all his life and wants to end his days there. He is doing no harm to anybody and while we have not given him any permission to stay on the land of the state, and this letter must not be construed as a permission for him to occupy lands of the state, yet, he is not doing any additional building and the forests and streams of the state are open to him and all other law abiding citizens to roam around in if it suits their fancy and so long as they do not commit any depredations there never has been any objection to their occupying such shelters as may be convenient to cover them and make them comfortable.

Hoping that this statement expresses just what I want to say to you and that it will be entirely satisfactory, I am,

Very truly yours,

John Avery

General Counsel

Although this may seem a rather insignificant letter, it served his purposes in several ways, allowing him to learn about the character of the men in authority, gain insight into the legal arguments that were being put forward, and giving him a better chance of preparing his own arguments in future exchanges with state officials. Within a year or so, his letters were getting the attention of the conservation commissioner, James S. Whipple, and of Clifford R. Pettis, the Superintendent of State Forests. The following letter was written in response to one Apperson had sent a few days earlier, suggesting a better placement of the fire tower on Cat Head Mountain. Although Commissioner Whipple tried to be polite, he was clearly a bit irritated, and very dismissive.

Clifford Pettis

Superintendent State Forests

July 6, 1910

Mr. J. S. Apperson
General Electric Company
Schenectady, N. Y.
My dear sir:

Your kind favor of the 4th is received.

It is possible that considerable importance should be attached to your statement of the situation around about Cat Head Mountain. It is also possible that our men have not selected the best point on which to place an observation station; yet today with a meeting of the fire superintendents in my office, the question was taken up and it is believed that the station on Cat Head Mountain will be of great service and is located in as good a position as it would be anywhere except on Blue Ridge.

So far as Wallace Mountain is concerned, any smoke arising from the opposite side would be seen from Cat Head.

In constructing these stations, we have, of course, to consider the question of telephone construction, taking into consideration distances and expense and do the best we can with the means given us. I will undertake personally sometime to look over this particular section; yet those who have done so for the Department are experienced men and know pretty nearly what they are doing – men who are very familiar with that section.

Of course, I know nothing about your personal knowledge of it, how much you have tramped over the country but unless you are a very thorough woodsman and have been there a great deal, I would not want to venture very much on your real, accurate knowledge of the whole situation. At the same time, I thank you sincerely for the suggestion and will either make or have made another investigation of the matter and if the station can be improved by placing it somewhere else another year, we shall certainly do so. I want you to understand that we do most fully appreciate the interest shown by you in writing this letter. That is what we want – co-operation.

I might add, also, that Cat Head was also used as an observation station for the surveyors.

Very truly yours,
J. S. Whipple
Commissioner

Commissioner Whipple must have eventually come to realize that Apperson was, indeed, a very capable woodsman, and one who had tramped through the country, with considerable knowledge of the issues being raised.

Over the next decade or so, Apperson often repeated this same technique, writing letters to various officials and politely asking about one issue or another. For example, he wrote to the D&H Railroad to ask about their policy for checking

camping equipment, and within about six months he had managed to persuade the higher-ups at GE to exert a little pressure, and the baggage restrictions were lifted.

On another occasion he wrote the state game warden and told him a story about a friend who had caught a bull frog (out of season), who was then arrested and fined, even though he was a stranger to those parts, and even though he returned the frog to its natural habitat. In this case, Apperson was suggesting that the game warden could have been a little more flexible and lenient, and that it was a perfect opportunity to educate (rather than punish) the public, and encourage them to want to come back again. This inquiry resulted in a lecture about law and order, an outcome that was definitely not to his liking.

Over time, he and his friends figured out which state officials were doing a good job, and which ones were lazy or dishonest. Eventually, he and his associates learned to seek out powerful allies and legal advisors, and find ways to beat their opponents in the political game.

One of the most important friendships, and a powerful lifelong ally, came in the form of a hiking and skiing enthusiast who arrived in Schenectady in 1910 and soon became one of the leading research scientists at GE – Dr. Irving Langmuir. His biographer, Albert Rosenfeld, drawing on entries from Langmuir's diary, gives a wonderful description of their friendship.

Of the early friends Langmuir made in Schenectady, no one had a more passionate attachment to Lake George and the great Adirondack wilderness than John S. Apperson, who possessed almost incredible powers of endurance, and who, had he lived in the west in an earlier day America would have had Paul Bunyanesque legends spring up around him by the dozen. The first mention of Apperson in Langmuir's diary appears on September 23, 1910. "Saw Apperson about taking a trip up to 'his country.'" Langmuir and a young friend took their trip up to Apperson's country the very next day. Though Irving, a naturally rapid-striding hiker, was in excellent condition, he complained, in his diary, that Apperson went too far and had to keep coming back for them. A later entry reads, "7 men reached the top of Mount Washington yesterday. All but Apperson were frost bitten."

It did not take long for a young Langmuir to start sharing Apperson's concern for the protection of the Lake George – Adirondack area against the encroachments of real estate agents and timbering interests.

Lake George became the primary focus of their attention, due to its spectacular scenery, its endless number of camping sites, and the lure of so many water sports such as canoeing, skating, skate-sailing, fishing, hydroplaning, and even ski-sailing. It didn't take long before Appy, as he had come to be known, had selected a favorite camping spot, Dollar Island (near Tongue Mountain, in the Narrows). Here is one version of the story of Appy's discovery of Dollar Island, in his own words:

My first visit to Lake George was in 1900. This trip was followed by many excursions and these became more frequent when I started camping with my own canoe, July 4, 1907, on Black Mountain Point. After exploring that neighborhood thoroughly I made my base camp in Amphitheater Bay. We landed several times in 1909 on Dollar Island where we observed trees uprooted along the shore and the only harbor of safety in that neighborhood being cut through by wave action. In the spring of 1910 I decided to do what I could to protect the shore of this island with stone and if possible save the harbor by building up the breakwater. After constructing a dock, a fireplace and erecting tents, I loaned the outfit to anyone or group of people who would promise to place at least one stone on the shore each day to protect the soil and vegetation or to reinforce the breakwater. (Memorandum: recorded in 1945)

I have been unable to trace the origins of the term "rip-rapping," but suspect that the technique, especially as applied to the protection of shorelines, may have been an Apperson original. In his job back in Virginia, as foreman of a crew constructing a railroad, he would have had to haul huge rocks and boulders and build walls and road beds. Years later, he described his efforts at Dollar Island this way:

In the beginning most of the stones were brought over from the mainland in our canoe... Large stones were floated over on rafts of logs, and later on my barge, named for that part of the state constitution then Article 7, Section 7, now Article 14, Section 1, was used. This law was adopted and readopted by the people to protect the islands and other lands under the protection of the constitution in the forest preserve. ...The St. Sacramento Camp Girls used this barge to help protect a state island against damage by high water.

After several years' work by many individual campers we succeeded in obtaining a gang of men from the D&H Boat Company. They started work on Watch Island, November 20, 1916, and also did some wall building on Gravely Island. ...After failing to obtain an item in the state budget to continue this work we prevailed on Senator Ogden Mills to introduce a bill, March 28, 1917...appropriating \$10,000...

This rip-rapping project helped stir up wide-spread interest in his efforts and won him introductions to people who would soon play an important role in his emerging dream - of a Lake George Park. He became friends with some of the wealthy land-owners, such as George Foster Peabody, William K. Bixby, and George Knapp, along with several influential politicians, such as Ellwood Rabenold, Adelbert Moot, and Alfred E. Smith (later governor of New York). Another important friendship he developed was with a young man with a genius for marketing and writing, who happened to be Secretary to the Conservation Commissioner, named Warwick S. Carpenter. Impressed with all that Apperson was accomplishing in the islands of Lake George, Carpenter published a story about the rip-rapping, making use of several of Apperson's photographs. Here is the first page of the *Conservationist*, from February, 1917:

THE CONSERVATIONIST

Volume I

February, 1917

Number 2

THE GOOD SHIP, ART. 7, SEC. 7

BY THE FIRST MATE

“SHIP ahoy!”

The hail was stentorian, and rolled out across the blue waters of Lake George in good naval style. It struck the bluff side of Tongue Mountain and echoed onward through the Narrows.

“What sort of a craft d’yu call that?”

“Cargo carrier,” shot back the answer. “Rocks, dirt, mud— anything to make land— no contraband, and strictly neutral. Come aboard and I’ll show my papers and freight.”

The trim launch edged gingerly alongside and made fast to the stocky stanchions of the cargo boat.

“I don’t make out your papers,” said the Captain of the launch.

These two men had much in common and shared similar views about a range of issues. Together, they began to develop ideas about how to educate the public about recreational opportunities and about conservation, and Appy found an outlet for his latest hobby – photography. His early photographs show his sensitivity for beauty, but also an emerging interest in providing documentary evidence of the conditions, especially the eroding shorelines of islands, where high water was causing soil to be washed away, trees to fall down, and islands to disappear. Appy contributed photographs for at least one other Carpenter publication, in 1920 - a pamphlet promoting camping and other forms of recreation at Lake George.



LAKE GEORGE OFFERS ONE OF THE FINEST SKATE SAIL COURSES AVAILABLE

Unfortunately, Carpenter did not have a long career in conservation. His opinions ran up against those of his bosses, leading to his removal from the Commissioner's office, in 1921. An article in the Knickerbocker Press, April 17, 1921, announces:

**CARPENTER BACKS STAND ON HOLDING LANDS FOR PUBLIC.
OUSTED. State Aid 'Would Welcome' Probe of Preserve Deal.
INVESTIGATION IS SEEN. Question of Principle Involved, Former Secretary
Says.**

Dispute over two little lakes, tucked away in the Adirondacks, just west of Mt. Marcy, known only to a few, resulted in the dismissal on Thursday of Warwick S. Carpenter as secretary of the state conservation commission and may lead to an investigation of the activities of the commission with respect to its forest policy.

Mr. Carpenter was dismissed, according to Commissioner George D. Pratt, on account of his stand on the acquisition of Adirondack lands. The little lakes referred to are located within the land on which Mr. Carpenter made his stand. The lakes are Colden, Avalanche and Flowed Lands. Mr. Carpenter contended that the state should take over the entire Colden Gore and furthermore, should include the lakes in the appropriation, and not leave them for the use of interests for private purposes. Private owners tried their best to defeat these plans but Mr. Carpenter won his point.

Mr. Carpenter declared he took his stand on the lakes and land in dispute because he believed the state should not take over the tract with its crags and timber slopes and leave in the very center of the preserve a private domain protected all around by state lands.

For a brief time following his firing, Carpenter stayed in the New York area and continued the fight, publishing a pamphlet for the Adirondack Mountain Club, with this interesting title page: "Mountain Slope Protection; Warwick S. Carpenter; Former Secretary, Conservation Commission; Adirondack Mountain Club at its organizational meeting; New York City, April 3, 1922." It went on to announce:

SPRUCE CLAD MOUNTAINTOPS ARE BEING DENUDED

Proposition No.1 Will Stop it

Throughout all of the earlier lumbering operations the spruce forest on the high mountain tops, which occurs in those localities in practically unmixed stands without hardwoods was neglected. Over large areas it is now falling before the axe. In its place there are left piles of dry slash, veritable tinder for forest fires which threaten to consume not only the few remaining trees upon the mountain tops, but the thin soil of the mountainsides as well. Wherever the soil is destroyed on such mountain tops, the return of a forest cover is forever impossible. So serious are these conditions becoming in many localities that a forest fire once started in them during dry weather would be absolutely uncontrollable until it reached green timber. The damage that it would then cause in the green timber in a season of drought would be tremendous.

In 1929, Apperson wrote a letter to his old friend, Carpenter, then living in Santa Barbara, California, to give him an update on the constitutional battles brewing. He comments:

I do wish you would fall heir to a million dollars right away quick, and come east and help me carry on the fight. Should you fail to fall heir or strike oil or something that would bring this much desired assistance, possibly you know of some person who would like to accomplish a real big, permanent, outstanding achievement for humanity, and who would lend his assistance.

Carpenter was planning a trip east that spring and looking forward to seeing his old friend. Note the bantering tone of his response:

I am sorry to see you have begun to soften. Is this old age that is creeping upon you, or have you, yourself, become affluent so that you look to money for accomplishment, or what is it? You want somebody with a million dollars to help carry on the fight. But when did a million dollars accomplish anything worthwhile in conservation in New York State? I can recall with great clearness one impecunious young man from Virginia who has done more by hard day labor for New York conservation than anyone I can think of with a million dollars. And judging from your letter, he is still at it. At any rate as far as I am concerned I know of no relatives with a million dollars who are likely to leave it to me, nor of any oil wells that are equally hopeful.

It is hard to bring this first chapter of the Apperson biography to a close. I haven't yet mentioned several other very significant relationships he forged, with James Cawley (another publisher, and a member of the American Canoe Association), David Rushmore (Appy's boss at GE), or the Loines sisters (Sylvia and Hilda – who helped him make connections with local land owners and with Brooklyn women's clubs), but I will save them for Chapter Two. I have neglected to mention his campaign to remove squatters from state lands, or of the property he purchased – i.e. Turtle Bay, Huddle Bay, Barber Mountain (Appy Top), Schenectady (Teviot Road), and, of course, Dome Island. Many people have wondered where he found the money to purchase Dome Island, in 1939, or how he was able to buy out the Lake View Hotel property from William F. Dalton, in

1928. These and other questions will be addressed in my next installment... about his dream of a Lake George Park.

Many of Appy's friends and associates from GE ended up moving away from Schenectady and found jobs in other towns across the land. Many of them carried on the traditions established while camping at Lake George, starting hiking clubs or other recreational organizations in their new communities. Many came back to the lake to spend their honeymoons on one of the islands, or in one of the many "camps" Appy acquired on Tongue Mountain (with names like Honeymoon Lodge, Woodchuck Temple, or the Playhouse) and, after a few years, began bringing their children for an Adirondack experience. These men were grateful for the lessons learned while camping and hauling rocks at Lake George, and they carried this legacy on to future generations, as have Appy's nieces and nephews, and their children, too. I'll close this article with one more excerpt from a letter written by one of his close friends and admirers, R. H. Doherty. It captures the sense of wonder and admiration that so many people felt for this man, the heroic leader of an Adirondack wilderness crusade.

An Essay on Apperson

It is very fitting and appropriate that after ten days of supreme enjoyment in camp on Dollar Island I should record completely my impressions of the extraordinary man whose close and very active association with Lake George, with Dollar Island, and through time, with me, has left an indelible imprint of himself upon every blessed thing that comprises this superbly beautiful paradise; so that, to me, whether it is in the soft, musical lapping of waves against the rocks, or the song of the birds, or even in the violent crash and wailing of the elements in a storm – in all of these, the phantom image echoes always "Apperson, Apperson."

I am compelled to respect the persistent urge upon my conscience to pay a tribute to this man's memory, who by a weird genius of marked Machiavellian tendency, and by unbounded perseverance and energy, has not only restored to their natural beauty certain islands which had been stolen and ravaged, but has wrung from reluctant lawmakers and administrators of the State appropriations to save certain islands which had been slowly washing away, and has saved them.

His opinions regarding the administration of state lands are much respected by state officials, not so much out of sympathy as out of a cautious expediency. Further he has conceived the idea of a recreation camp on Lake George for girl

employees of the General Electric Company, has converted the officials, and has thus established such a camp. Such achievements inspired, I believe, by a very genuine love of nature's out-of-doors, must not pass unsung, and I hope that these words may express my own sincere appreciation of them....

...His love of adventure is unbounded. If he had lived in the sixth century, there is no doubt in my mind that King Arthur might have added immensely to the brilliant history of the Round Table by enlisting this man, whose fame as a knight would surely have surpassed that of Sir Lancelot himself.

Unfortunately, however, his lot has fallen in the present century. But even in these times, he has won a peculiar sort of fame among the civilized people, and moreover, has awed the natives of the woods by his extraordinary skill, dash and fearlessness. With the fleetness of a deer, the keen instinct of an Indian and the ambition and courage of Don Quixote, he courts and wins encounters with the elements. The highest waves and the strongest winds of Lake George have complete respect for his canoe and double paddle, when manned by his skilled hand. Mt. Marcy, snow-covered, and shrouded in an atmosphere chilled to zero, makes a moderate climb and a warm bed for this human engine.

... Thus, as the sun falls behind Tongue Mountain, I close this essay with a thought of deepest reverence for the sacredness of this beautiful place, and with a tribute to him whose name the elements have immortalized by their constant song, "Apperson, Apperson, Apperson..."

R. H. Doherty

Dollar Island

Lake George

August 28, 1918