

[Fall of my freshman year, 1900]

LAKE MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Mohonk Lake, Ulster Co., N.Y.

Albert K. Smiley

Proprietor

My dear Family:

I am alive and not a bit tired after yesterday. I never in my life saw such a beautiful place and the experience of mountain climbing was so new that I enjoyed every stone of it.

We left college at half past six with twenty six girls in our barge. When we came to the Hudson the first two horses were unyoked and three barges crossed at a time. We did not cross in a ferry on a cable but went diagonally across. There was a mist over the whole river but you could see the outline of the mts & the view was great. Then we rode on & went through New Paltz & several other old Dutch villages and whenever we came to an apple orchard or village the driver would stop for us. When we were about four miles from the mountain we got out & walked up hill after hill while the barge went around by the road & met us farther up. After that we all piled in again & the horses pulled us up to the top. It made me so nervous that I could hardly stay in, for the nigh front horse would have his foot on the very edge & if he had moved it an inch we would have all gone down the mountain but everyone kept saying that an accident had never before happened etc, but I was nevertheless glad to reach the top. Finally we came to the lake & hotel which is right on the edge and Mr Smiley, the proprietor who gives us the use of the grounds, hotel, dining room etc. was there to meet us. He is a fine white haired old gentleman & the Senior & Freshman class each gave him an immense bunch of La France roses. The hotel is perfectly immense but you cannot get much of an idea of it from these pictures. The inside was beautiful; there were big open wood fires in every corner & lovely big piazzas & parlors with velvet chairs etc. The season closes Wed. but there were lots of swell people still there. By the time we reached there (11.15) it was warm enough to take off our coats, we could not have asked for a better day, so while some of them went rowing on the Lake which is very small & the middle part has no bottom, we went onto one of the big back piazzas & looked over at the Catskill Mts. There was a diagram on the coping which had the names of all the peaks so everything was clear.

Mr. Smiley gave us all the paper & catalogues we wanted & as they have a big post office there most of the girls mailed catalogues home. I sent one to you which I know you will enjoy & I wish I had two thousand dollars to take you all up there next summer. If anything happens that you do not get the catalogue let me know & I will send another. I must close & go to church & will write the rest this afternoon.

It is afternoon and such a perfect day that I am going to stop letter writing & go over to college to see if I can get some girls to go to the orchard. We had the Episcopal service this morning, a minister from Jamaica preached, so the service was not much on a sermon line.

Now I will finish telling you about the Mohonk trip. We had our lunch at twelve o'clock before the rest of the hotel people so had the dining room to ourselves. After

lunch we climbed to the top of the mt. to the tower which you see on the first sheet of paper. It is called Sky Top & you can read about it & the range to which it belongs, in the catalogue. I cannot describe the view or the sensation when reaching the top but hope you can get some idea from the pictures in the catalogue, but father can tell you how it feels to be on top of a mt. & also about the air. At two o'clock we came back & there were baskets of grapes all over the tables with cards on, "Help yourself to grapes." Then in half an hour we were settled in the barges & were all before the hotel door, singing to & cheering Mr. Smiley - The Seniors stood around him & sang songs composed to him, then as each barge drove by we gave our yell (I & another girl composed ours for our barge) (I did not mean to put my own name first here but am so sleepy I cannot think) & tacked something on the end for him.

Coming down there were two men in each barge & as we drove around the curves, they put chains on the back wheels, but we held our breath coming down Eagle Cliff Road. Its altitude is 1245 ft; you can see the picture & notice the wooden railing at the side which is the only protection. Finally we could not stand it any longer so walked about a mile 'though it was not as long as we cut through meadows.

We reached home at half past six & I was not tired the way I usually am but just a healthy tired which I have not known in over a year. I can stand a great deal more now than all summer so you need not worry about my health but take care of yourselves. I enclose some winter green for mother & grandma which I picked from the top of the mountain.

I saw Mrs. Barnard here with Gertrude last night in chapel (you shall be there, mother before I am a Junior). Last Wednesday as I had finished college the messenger girl brought me the enclosed notice. I staid over at college for lunch & saw Dr. Forbes right after. E. Elery was waiting in the parlor to see him & volunteered to show him over the grounds but I told him I had to study so did not go with them. He sat at the Faculty table & seemed to be right in it. Do you suppose he is looking for another position & what did he mean on this card when he wrote, "formerly of Rochester, now of Elmira" ?

I bought a dark blue tam to wear yesterday & will wear that around the campus this winter. Do not make my bloomers with a skirt pattern which you spoke of for I want them as nearly like the gym suits as possible. The bloomers here are a trifle less full than my old ones & are gathered around the waist & button onto it like my old suit. You can button them onto the old waist & make a narrow belt to cover them up If they show. I must close. Write soon & send me the Sunday Democrat & Chronicle.

Lots of love  
Ruth  
Sunday.

[Trip to Lake Mohonk  
Freshman year, fall 1900]

[Ruth H. Crippen, '04]