

Then & Now – Summit House #3 – 1908-1970

Top of Mount Wachusett



1916 Summit House 3 & Annex in Background

- 1907 the second hotel (Tip Top House) was closed right after Labor Day, and torn down, and a new one was built in its place, which opened in 1908 under County Commission management and, it had George F. Osgood as its manager.
- Building materials from the old building were reused, whenever possible.
- In 1908 Automobiles were legally admitted from noon till 2pm and 5pm to 7pm - by 1912 five thousand autos were driving to the summit each year.
- In 1910, because of its popularity, the Commission deemed it advisable to build an Annex, comprising a billiard room, laundry and several sleeping rooms.
- Many Lookouts and Pavilions were built along roads and walking trails. See below
- By the mid 1930's overnight stays had dropped considerably, and the building was mostly used as a restaurant, souvenir shop, and observation tower where on a clear day visitors could see over 300 villages and cities in New England.

Commissioner Report Highlights

- 1909
 - Pumping station installed at Echo lake and it pumps up to 400 gals of water per hour to the second floor 2000 gal storage tanks in the Summit House
 - Motor vehicle hours were increased



- 1910
 - Charles Horne leased the hotel.
 - 3 large foxhounds broke into the deer and elk park and killed one buck, and injured to others.
- 1913 new pavilion & lookout was built on Mountain House Trail
- 1914
 - 25 to 30 prisoners from Worcester House of Correction were employed from 5/15 till 12/1 – 1000 feet of the North Rd was built.
 - Land 125 feet square, just below the Summit House was cleared and leveled an croquet court and gravel tennis court were built.
- 1915
 - Ice crop harvested from summit pond, and stored in icehouse.
 - In June a Stone Crusher was used to cover with stone 900 feet of the North Road.
 - The City of Fitchburg enclosed Wachusett Lake with fencing.
 - Enlarging Bolton Pond was suggested.
- 1916
 - 4 elk were born bringing the herd to 13
 - Discussion started about bringing electricity to the Summit House from Princeton
 - Missing Dr. Charles Richardson found in November in a rock crevice after being missing since May.

- 1918
 - Delco battery electric light system installed in Summit House.
 - New windmill was place on the old tower, which was the cheapest way to pump water from Echo Lake.
 - Two Elk bucks were killed and sold venison leaving 10 cows and a large buck
- 1919
 - 25 gallons of maple syrup were made
 - 25 cords of wood were cut and sold in Worcester for a good price.
 - The summit house recorded it best season yet, with the finest accommodations available including modern plumbing, water was pumped from Echo Lake
- 1920
 - Icehouse was filled, and 20 chords of wood hauled for use at the Summit House.
- 1925 Electricity came to the mountain.
- 1930-40's
- Superintendent Needham grew vegetable and his 8 cows furnished milk and cream for the Summit House, his use and teamster living nearby.
- George Hawkes of Holden managed the Summit House kitchen and restaurant.
- Starting 1947, Jack and Mary Connor of Princeton ran the Summit House concession stand for 17 years.
- In 1964, Ralph Meagher of Westminster became the last concessionaire until it closed
- On 12/18/1970 the Summit House burned.

This document was compiled William “Bud” Brooks in 2023-24. Photos used are from the PHS digital files.

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