

Chapter 6

Edward Bryant

Edward Bryant's appearance in 1922 in Bolton and his purchase of the 10,000 acres from American Brass Company was a surprise to all Bolton residents. They wondered who would want unproductive land that had been literally clearcut.

Bryant was a conservationist and pioneer ski enthusiast. His plan called for building three cabins - lower, middle and upper - along Nebraska Road, with a skiing area at the top of the mountain. Otto Sneibs, a friend of Bryant, was brought in to help cut some trails.

Bryant was a precise engineer who knew exactly what he wanted for a road and his shelters. Local people were hired and soon found out that he was a perfectionist and rather difficult to work for at times.

As soon as the project was complete, Mr. Bryant began inviting his friends from New York - where he lived in the Union League Club. They would come by train to Bolton and then by carriage to the first camp, second camp, and finally to the upper camp and ski area. Many good times were had by all visitors, but no Bolton residents were interested in sliding downhill on two pieces of wood.

A foundation was laid for a sizable ski lodge near the top of Bolton Mountain, but construction was never completed.

Local hunters were allowed to use the property. It was one of the best hunting grounds in the whole area, with bear, moose and deer in abundance. An unfortunate incident changed all rules - a hunter took a pot shot at Bryant, who became so angry that he immediately prevented any further hunting on his property. This was a shock to the remaining struggling inhabitants of Bolton and Bryant became a hated man in Bolton.

Mr. Bryant allowed no cutting on the mountain during the twenty years he owned the property. However, he did allow the Green Mountain Club to use his trails in their effort to extend the Long Trail from Massachusetts to the Canadian border. Working with Dr. E.G. Twitchell and Ernest T. Smith, the Bolton Lodge on the Long Trail was completed in 1928. Every effort was made to make the shelter resemble a rural English cottage, with a thatched roof. This shelter still stands.

Before he died, Bryant offered to donate all his 10,000 acres to the Town, which refused the gift, fearing loss of taxes. The State had already purchased thousands of acres for Mt. Mansfield State Forest and Camel's Hump Preserve and the Federal Government had acquired land for a firing range.

In 1945 Mr. Bryant died and the property was sold to Plant and Giffith Lumber Company in Jonesville. For the next twenty years wood was again cut from the 10,000 acres and converted into lumber. At the end of their cutting, the land was sold to the Deslauriers family.

The upper camp (see photo) is in good condition and used for summer and winter camping.

