

Recollections of Bryant Cabin in the 40's

by Polly Goodwin Bartlett

Polly Bartlett, now living in Massachusetts, contacted us via our website to share her memories of 1944 and 1948 ski trips to Bryant Lodge.

I remember, in 1944 and 1945, two trips from Penn State to what we called Bolton Cabin (now Bryant Camp) for skiing. I remember backpacking in the last two miles the first year. The second year Mr. Bryant was good enough to take us in the last two miles by snowcat, with our supplies for 20 skiers for 10 days. We climbed to the lookout on Bolton Mountain the first year in a snowstorm and couldn't see our hands in front of our faces. The next day was bright and clear, so we climbed again to enjoy the marvelous view in the sun.

So glad the cabin is still there, and I hope maybe to climb there with my granddaughter this summer (or maybe in the winter if she scopes it out for us first!) I was just reminiscing about it with her, and since she has been to Bolton for hiking on the downhill trails we wondered if we had been to the same spot. It turns out we think she had hiked Mt. Rikker, but having found Bryant Camp and the real Bolton Mountain on maps now we are looking forward to returning there together. I wonder, is there still a lookout tower on the top of Bolton Mountain? My granddaughter climbed one on the top of the Bolton Ski Area and we wonder if it's the same.

Thank you for your work to preserve and protect the cabin and surrounding trails. Be in touch if you'd be interested in me sharing more stories. I remember a six burner gas stove, and certainly the camp privy.

Ann Gotham responds to some of Polly's questions:

So wonderful to hear from you! I am so very interested in any history about Bolton and Mr Bryant. Unfortunately, the fire tower on top of Bolton Mt is no longer standing. There is a wooden tower above lift #4 Bolton Alpine. Rikker Mt has a cell tower a top of it. I wish so much I could see photos of the area, what the forest looked like at that time, Mr Bryant, and superimpose all the current trails with past trails. To get to the top of Bolton Mt now, from Bryant cabin you head up Birch Loop, connect to Raven's Wind, which eventually hits the Long trail that goes over Bolton Mt. The top does not even have a view. Ralph deslaurier who owned Bolton from the 1960's-late 1990s, let me borrow a log book they found in Bryant cabin. I had it copied and placed it in the history section of our website. Your name may be in it!

(See the very bottom of this article for a link to the log book, and a clipping from it showing Poly Goodwin (maiden name) signing in on March 31, 1948.

Also some notable sign-ins are Mickey Cochran, on 3/47/43, who would later start Cochran's ski area and our very own Clem Holden, one of the original Old goats and founders of Bolton Back

Country signing in on 2/17/45, expressing the same sense of humor he displays today (JBL, Web Administrator)

Polly shares some more recollections:

Thanks for your care and interest in the "Bolton" cabin. It has a lot of fond memories. To answer some of your questions:

* My maiden name was Goodwin. I don't remember a log book but I don't remember a lot of things. Years 1948 and 49. It was Bob Dunlap, a PhD candidate at Penn State who knew Mr. Bryant.

* As I remembered, we put on tire chains at the bottom of the road then drove to a garage of some sort 2 miles from the cabin. From there the six of us packed in our bedding and food for 5 days on our backs. That was March of 1948, the year we climbed in two feet of snow with seven foot hickory skis and Army surplus seal skins only and could not see a thing because it was still snowing. The next day was glorious and we climbed again in this Winter Wonderland. I will always remember it in awe. The second year in February 1949, We drove (as I remember it) to the mid parking place and Mr Bryant drove the 20 of us and food for ten days in on a snow cat.

* The cabin is as you have shown it. The Privy was just off the entry way. The Boys used the outside directly but the six of us girls were allowed to use the privy which the boys then had to dump (somewhere). Your inside picture does not show the propane, 6 burner gas stove which was under the windows facing forward. It was a god send. We had also had to buy food with out any information on the box as to how much was a serving and how many servings there were in a box. Also, there were no such things as plastic bags so often on camping trips, paper bags would get wet and spill the goods over the place. I think we used a stream or melted snow for water. The cabin was equipped with four double bunks on the far wall from the front door. There was also a loft which slept more. I don't know what they had if any as for beds.

I do not remember any other cabins. The Long Trail did not go right by the cabin but was not far away.

I will be sure to contact you when I come up some weekend to visit my grand daughter in Burlington. I am sending this letter to her also since she is the one who asked me about my earlier life.

Good skiing for a change!

Polly Bartlett

A link to the Byrant Cabin log book and a clipping from it are below

Bryant Cabin Log Book 1943-57

Date	Name	Residence
March 26 —		
March 31 — 1948	Morris Jarrett	Jenkintown Pa
"	Polly Goodwin	Wyncote Pa
"	Robert Alenlaps	State College, Pa
	James A Worley Jr	Pittsburgh Pa
March 27 —	"Greenwich Village Patrol" —	not to be outdone
March 31	(see above)	
	Bessie Wilkinson	New York City
	Alan Frank	New York City