

Recalls Story of Whiteside Cliff Rescue 37 Years Ago

Nobody Has Ever Gone After Liquor Left By Gus Baty

By BILL SHARPE
There's a pint of lick, 37 years old, available to anyone who wants it free. All you have to do is go down where Gus Baty left it and pick it up.

Gus ain't going back for it. He was there in 1911, hanging head-down and looking through thin mountain air at Eternity 1,800 feet below him for an hour or more, the only man who ever fell off the highest sheer precipice in Eastern America.

Gus's portentous plunge made him an ardent admirer of the rhododendron, and cured him of drinking. Also it cured a couple of generations of young bucks of competing to show their girl friends how close they could walk to the edge of Whiteside's precipice.

Gus entered that contest, and won.
In 1911, with some boy and

girl friends, Augustus Baty, then 27, hired a hack and went to Whiteside, a formidable outcrop of granitic rock, for a frolic, a trip popular to this day. The gentlemen consumed some white lick, according to Gus, and started on some factory whiskey. The party later progressed to the highest summit, prophetically called Fool's Rock.

Gus went to the rim of Fool's Rock to scare the girls and inexplicably disappeared. He first fell a sheer 25 feet and landed in a clump of rhododendron, "which", Gus says, "sure was a lucky break for me, because if I had landed on the bare rock, chances are I'd been knocked unconscious right then and there. I tried to grab the branches, but they came off in my hand, I rolled on down."

The granite sloped off then for 150 feet at an angle of about 45 degrees, and beyond that was a sheer drop of 1,800 feet to the valley below.

When Gus focused his eyes, he was looking down on death, some 1,800 feet below. In his fall (and roll) he had broken his right thumb, his left foot, right knee-cap and left shoulder-blade. He stayed for an hour or more.

Above him, the men were hollering, the women crying (one of them promptly fainted), and there were shouts of "go get Charlie Wright!"

When Charlie Wright, a stout lad and the hero of this portentous fall, arrived on the scene, it was said by a reporter at the time that he glanced down at his buddy and "whispered words of encouragement." But Gus was struggling trying to get his shoulders back on the ledge, and in so doing was in imminent peril of taking the bush with him over the cliff. Charlie's words of encouragement, says Gus, ran like this: "Gus, damn your time, you lay still or else I'll kill you."

Charlie, with W. M. Dillard, went over to another part of the cliff and started along a narrow ledge toward the beleaguered Baty. The ledge ended 30 feet above and 30 feet to the left of Baty, and there was only the bare 45-degree rock between. Dillard yelled, "I can't go any further," but Charlie started across the precipice, taking advantage of the small water holes left in the rock. Inching slowly up to Gus, he grabbed hold of the rhododendron bush by one hand, and

Gus's clothes by the other, and very slowly raised him up.

"Funny thing," says Gus, "with me all busted up and the skin all tore off my body, a pint of lick in my pocket was still unbroken. Charlie took that out and laid it in the clump of rhododendron. Then he and I started up the rock together. He put his shoulder under my arm and caught me around the waist. We finally worked up 30 feet. Then we had to go 30 feet to the left where Dillard was standing on that tiny ledge."

Charlie shouted to those above to run back a mile to the hack and bring the check line off the horses. With this they hauled Gus up, and Dillard and Wright followed the ledge back around the mountain as they had come in.

Charlie, now dead, got a Carnegie gold medal and a \$2,000 house, and Dillard got a silver

McGills Mentioned In Drew Pearson's 'The Merry-Go-Round'

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. McGill, owners and operators of the Franklin Lodge, come in for mention in the widely published syndicated column of Drew Pearson, The Merry-Go-Round.

Mr. and Mrs. McGill, in winter, operate the Cassadaga Hotel, at Cassadaga, Fla., and the columnist, in last Wednesday's Merry-Go-Round, tells of a fishing experience in Florida. According to the story, Mr. and Mrs. McGill invited him on a fishing trip—and it proved to be the first time in his life that he was successful as a fisherman.

one and a \$2,000 farm.
"The pint? Its still there, son, and you're mighty welcome to it," said Gus.

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