

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS  
**Colloquy**  
Spring 2016  
Volume 17 • Number 1



Huggins Hell. Thompson Brothers Digital Photograph Collection, University of Tennessee Libraries.

## Lost in Huggins Hell

On September 2, 1925, newspapers across the country alerted their readers that Paul Adams, a young man appointed to establish the first permanent camp on Mount Le Conte, had become lost in a remote area of the Great Smoky Mountains known as Huggins Hell. Three days earlier, Adams had departed from the Basin Spring camp on the summit of Le Conte with four companions, Will Ramsey, Earnest Ogle, F. B. Morgan, and Wylie Brownlee, to establish a provisional camp near Anakeesta Knob on the Boulevard east of Myrtle Point from whence they intended to explore the outer rim of Huggins Hell. Ramsey and Ogle were young Gatlinburg residents who worked for Adams at the camp on Le Conte, Morgan was a reporter for the *Knoxville Sentinel*, and Brownlee represented the board of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, the organization that employed Adams. The exploration party's objective was to discover the outlet where water draining into the cone-shaped Huggins Hell escapes the basin.

On the morning of August 31st, Adams left his companions at the camp on the Boulevard and in the company of his dog Smoky Jack, attempted to descend



Smoky Jack—see page 3.  
Ilene Jones Cornwell Papers,  
University of Tennessee Libraries.

---

**GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS COLLOQUY** is a newsletter published by the University of Tennessee Libraries. © 2016

Co-editors:  
Anne Bridges  
Ken Wise

Correspondence and change of address:

**GSM COLLOQUY**  
120-A John C. Hodges Library  
The University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000  
865/974-0288  
Email: [smokies@utk.edu](mailto:smokies@utk.edu)  
Web: [library.utk.edu/smokies/](http://library.utk.edu/smokies/)

---



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



Paul Adams and Smoky Jack. Paul J. Adams Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives

into the depths of Huggins Hell in search of a possible roosting site for duck hawks. While inching along a knife-edge ridge, Adams perched momentarily on an unstable rock which suddenly dislodged, sending him tumbling over a precipice and down a steep slope, knocking him unconscious. Nearly two hours later when Adams regained consciousness, he discovered that one leg was badly injured, his glass

water bottle shattered, but Smoky Jack was at his side.

It was late in the day and, with no water, Adams surmised that he had little chance of climbing back to his companions on the Boulevard. With Smoky Jack following, he hobbled on down the mountain, hoping to find water and a suitable spot to wait out the night. When he did not return that evening to the camp on the Boulevard, word was sent to the Basin Spring camp that Paul Adams was lost in Huggins Hell. Three search parties composed of experienced Smoky Mountain guides were immediately organized, and an aerial surveyor was retained to make a flight over Mount Le Conte and Huggins Hell if Adams was not found by the end of the next day.

The next morning Adams and Smoky Jack continued down the mountain in search of an old trail leading up to Alum Cave Bluff which Adams hoped to follow back to the Basin Spring camp. Before reaching the bluff, Adams was pleasantly surprised to see a troop of boy scouts sauntering down the trail. Upon reaching Adams, the scouts explained that they had spent the previous night on Le Conte, and when word reached camp that a man was lost, their scoutmaster sent the boys down this trail on the assumption that

the lost man might attempt to descend in an effort to reach a known trail. Food for Adams had been sent from the Basin Spring camp, but, as the scouts explained to Adams, they had gotten hungry and eaten it all when they stopped for a rest at Alum Cave Bluff.

Although disappointed with the news about the food, Adams nevertheless dispatched the scouts back up the mountain with instructions to send help as quickly as possible as he was having difficulty walking. The boys apparently dilly-dallied on the way back, not arriving at the camp until near nightfall. They reported finding Adams unharmed but that he needed some help getting up the mountain. Will Ramsey and Earnest Ogle set out immediately, only to find Adams barely a quarter of a mile from camp.

From Gatlinburg the next morning, Wylie Brownlee called to inform the newspapers that Adams had been safely found. However Brownlee's call came too late to stop the presses, and the news of Adams disappearance went "viral." Both the Associated Press and the United Press International had picked up the story and sent it to newspapers across the country. Adams's father, traveling back to Knoxville from Arkansas, had stopped in Memphis and picked up a newspaper, where he first learned of his son's disappearance. The elder Adams later confessed that he had given some thought to his son's funeral arrangements. Later that day Paul Adams arrived in Knoxville to join his family and reassure his friends that he was no longer missing.

To this day, Huggins Hell remains a place of mystery, avoided by even the most intrepid Smokies hiker.

Huggins Hell postcard. Postcards from the Great Smoky Mountains, University of Tennessee Libraries



## Hot Off the Press

Do you want to know more about Paul Adams and his exploits with Smoky Jack on Mount Le Conte?

The story of Paul Adams and Smoky Jack's adventure in Huggins Hell is one of many accounts of the early years on Mount Le Conte recorded by Adams. Two new books will bring Adams's stories to the modern reader.

Late in life, Adams recounted memories of his experiences as the custodian of the first permanent camp on Mount Le Conte in a short book, *Mt. Le Conte*, and again later in an unpublished manuscript. The manuscript has been published for the first time under the title *Smoky Jack: The Adventures of a Dog and His Master on Mount Le Conte*. The book, being reissued as *Mount Le Conte*, is due to be released this fall. Both are being published by the University of Tennessee Press.

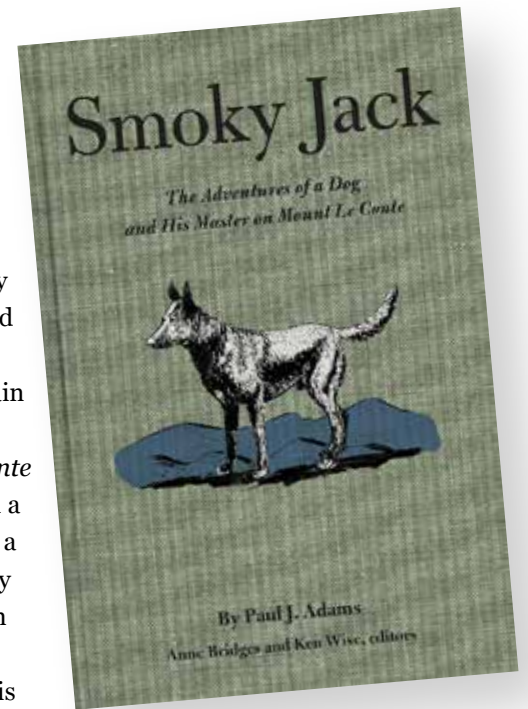
Using material from the collection of diaries and letters in the Paul Jay Adams Papers at the Tennessee State Library and Archives and images from UT's digital photograph collections, Smokies Project directors Ken Wise and Anne Bridges have augmented both books with extensive introductions and footnotes, placing the narrative in context and identifying people and places referred to in Adams's text.

*Smoky Jack: The Adventures of a Dog and His Master on Mount Le Conte* covers the period from July 1925 until May 1926 when Adams, in the company of a very talented German Shepard, established his Basin Spring camp on the summit of Le Conte. Stories of the rugged adventures and unbelievable exploits of

Smoky Jack are intermixed with details of early conditions on Le Conte, customs of the local Smoky mountaineers, and descriptions of trails and mountain geography.

*Mount Le Conte* was first issued in a limited edition as a self-publication by Adams in 1966. In this slim volume Adams outlines his role in the visits from the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission, created to examine and report on possible locations for a national park in the east, and stories from his tenure as custodian of the camp on Le Conte. The reissued edition is prefaced with an extensive introduction illustrated with hand-drawn diagrams and photographs outlining Adams's progress in building the camp.

*Smoky Jack* and *Mount Le Conte* together provide a rich source of information on the most iconic peak in the Smokies at the moment the national park movement was coming to fruition, forever altering the mountain landscape.



LEFT: Outdoor Kitchen on Mount Le Conte. Thompson Brothers Digital Photograph Collection, University of Tennessee Libraries. RIGHT: Frank Wilson, Smoky Jack and Paul Adams, below bulletin board, camp on Mt. LeConte, 1925. Paul J. Adams Photograph Collection, University of Tennessee Libraries.



**GSM COLLOQUY**

120-A John C. Hodges Library  
The University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status. PAN R01-6011-090-004-15

## New on the Smokies Bookshelf

**FICTION**

Avett, Wally. *Rebel Bushwhacker*.  
W & B Publishers, 2015.

Bledsoe, Alex. *Long Black Curl: A Novel of the Tufa*. Tor Books, 2015.

Graves, Paula. *Smoky Mountain Setup*. Harlequin Enterprises Limited, 2015.

Graves, Paula. *Two Souls Hollow*. Harlequin Enterprises Limited, 2015.

Harris, Lisa. *Vendetta: A Novel*. Revell, 2015.

Kirst, Karen. *From Boss to Bridegroom*. Love Inspired Historicals, 2015.

McClure, Holly Sullivan. *Conjuror: A Novel*. Mercer University Press, 2015.

Pullen, M.J. *Regrets Only: A Novel*. Thomas Dunne Books, 2016.

Stepp, Lin. *Saving Laurel Springs: A Smoky Mountain Novel*. Kensington Books, 2015.

Stepp, Lin. *Welcome Back: A Smoky Mountain Novel*. Kensington Books, 2016.

Vass, Vicky. *Pickin' Murder: An Antique Hunters Mystery*. Cozy Cat Press, 2015.

Zurl, Wayne. *From New York to the Smokies*. Melange Books, 2015.

**NON-FICTION**

Bradley, Michael.  
*Death in the Great Smoky Mountains*

*National Park: Stories of Accidents and Foolhardiness in the Most Popular Park*. Lyons Press, 2016.

Driskell, Boyce N. and Robert J. Norrell. *Tuckaleechee Cove: A Passage through Time*. University of Tennessee Press, 2015.

Frye, Jason. *Moon Blue Ridge Parkway Road Trip: Including Shenandoah & Great Smoky Mountains National Parks*. Avalon Travel Publishing, 2015.

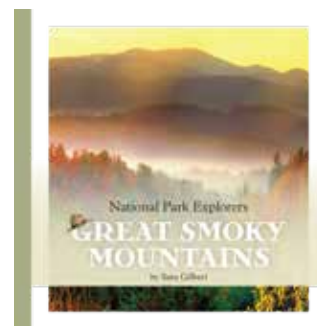
Rodning, Christopher. *Center Places and Cherokee Towns: Archaeological Perspectives on Native American Architecture and Landscape in the Southern Appalachians*. 2nd edition. University of Alabama Press, 2015.

Smithers, Gregory D. *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement, and Identity*. Yale University Press, 2015.

Williams, Michael. *Eastern Sevier County (Images of America)*. Arcadia Publishing, 2015.

**JUVENILE**

Alt, Jeff. *The Adventures of Bubba Jones (TM): Time Traveling Through the Great Smoky Mountains*. Beaufort Books, 2015.



Gilbert, Sara. *Great Smoky Mountains*. Creative Education, 2016.

Hunt, Santana. *Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Road Trip)*. Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2015.

**MAPS**

*Clingmans Dome, Cataloochee: Great Smoky Mountains National Park (National Geographic Trails Illustrated Map)*. National Geographic Maps, 2015.

*Cades Cove, Elkmont: Great Smoky Mountains National Park (National Geographic Trails Illustrated Map)*. National Geographic Maps, 2015.