

BOLTON *History* GROUP

LONG TRAIL RIVER BOAT ERA

For about the first 50 years the river boat was the only way to continue to Long trail voyage north or south through Bolton. The Green Mountain Club provided a row boat to stay on the shore and a local farmer or the hikers themselves would row the boat across the Winooski river.

In a book put together by the Green Mountain Club for the 75th Anniversary there is a quote from a hiker in the early 1920's about the ferry crossing.

“CROSSING THE RIVER AT BOLTON IS CERTAINLY INTERESTING. ON OUR TRIP LAST SUMMER, THE ONLY TIME I WAS SCARED FOR MY LIFE WAS WHEN WE GOT INTO THE OLD FLAT BOTTOM BOAT AND ROWED ACROSS BY A FARMER WOMAN TO THE BOLTON SIDE. THE BOAT WAS HALF FULL OF WATER WHEN WE ARRIVED, AND OUR ENTIRE PARTY TIPPED IT OVER AND DRAINED IT OUT. WHEN THE FARMER WOMAN, WHO WAS RATHER STOUT GOT IN TO ROW US ACROSS, SHE SAID “THE ONLY THING THE MATTER WITH THE BOAT, WAS THAT THE BOTTOM WAS WEAK” AS THE CURRENT WAS RATHER STRONG AT THAT POINT, I FULLY EXPECTED TO GO THROUGH THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY ACROSS, ‘WAS CERTAINLY A HAPPY MAN WHEN WE STEPPED ON THE FURTHER SHORE.”

At one point, when the GMC boat was washed away. The May farm on the River road side had a boat and would row hikers across for .25 cents and later .50 cents. Without a doubt an always an exciting ride.

Dann Zwick caretaker at Taylor and Butler lodge form 1938 to 1941 talks about when you would come down from the north to the riverside. There was a makeshift “window” and the hiker would pull down this shade to notify Mrs. May that a ride was needed across the river. If the Mays were ever busy the hikers would have to chance wading across the river or wait. After the river boat, hikers had to walk the Jonesville bridge but after over 100 years the GMC successfully had a walking bridge built.

