

TRAIL HUT NOW OPEN FOR HIKERS

By RAYMOND H. TORREY.

THE outdoor recreation service provided in the Harriman State Park, in the Highlands of the Hudson, along hundreds of miles of hikers' trails, is being amplified this Fall by the construction of several trail shelters of a new type. Spacious enough for a party of a dozen or more, they are built of rough glacial boulders gathered on their sites, and afford wide vistas over hills and lakes. Shelters are so placed that the longer trail routes across the park, such as the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail of twenty-two miles, or the Suffern-Bear Mountain Trail of twenty-four miles, may be broken into two-day excursions. A hiking party can go to one of these shelters on Saturday afternoon, camping overnight and make the remainder of the route on Sunday.

The first of these new shelters to be completed is on Tom Jones Mountain. The site was chosen for its scenic outlook, a departure from practice in shelter building on trails in the Adirondacks, and northern New England, where the primary consideration is usually nearness of water supply. In a preserve like the Harriman State Park, within forty miles of New York City and northern New Jersey, where thousands of hikers flock on a pleasant holiday, it was decided that if they were placed near a spring or brook, as is done elsewhere, such ground water supplies would soon become polluted.

Major W. A. Welch, general manager and Chief Engineer of the Palisades Interstate Park, of which the Harriman Park is the largest division, determined that it would be no hardship for hiking parties to carry water from the springs along the trails, in canteens or collapsible buckets, for their luncheon or overnight stops. At some of the shelters wells will be drilled to provide safe

First Shelter of Stone Type Is Ready in Harriman State Park

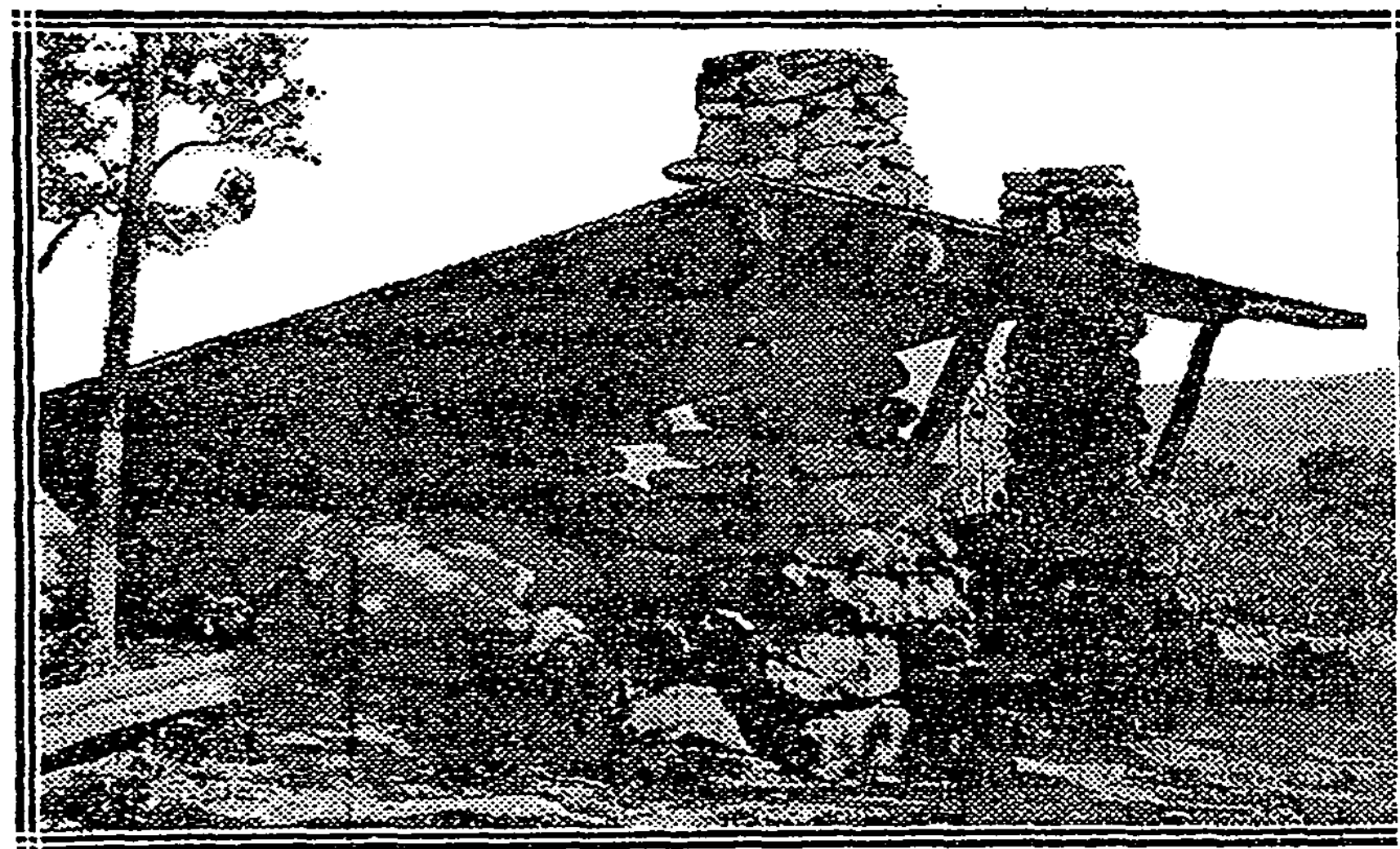
supplies; near others existing springs or water holes will be inclosed in concrete boxes, with a pipe running from them, to insure freedom from pollution and from dead leaves from the trees.

The shelter on Tom Jones Mountain is about 500 feet east of the Tuxedo-Tom Jones Trail, the first of the trails cleared and marked by York City hiking clubs, in 1920. The trail starts at Tuxedo, on the main line of the Erie Railroad, thirty-eight miles from New York. Its beginning is reached by crossing the Ramapo River north of the station, and turning north on the road on the

east bank, where a square metal marker, with a red square and the initials, "TJ-T" is fixed to a tree.

The stone cabin is placed on a broad, flat ledge on the eastern brink of the mountain, with a view of almost 180 degrees, northeast, east, southeast, south and southwest, across the hills. Almost every acre in the view is owned by the State, land set aside for the perpetual outdoor recreation of the people. Four lakes are visible; Little Long Pond and Middle Kanawauke to the northeast, Lower Kanawauke to the east and the west arm of the new Lake Sebago, the largest of the

NEW STONE TRAIL SHELTER



Photograph by Le Roy Davies.

It is in the Harriman State Park, on Tom Jones Mountain.

ten artificial lakes in the park, to the south. A fifth lake will soon be added when the Beaver Pond meadow is dammed. A circle of summits, 1,000 to 1,300 feet high, closes the horizon toward the Hudson.

After plans drawn by Major Welch, the shelter was built by John Tamsen, superintendent of construction, and some old timers who are handy with rocks and logs. It is eighteen feet long, fourteen feet deep, and nine feet high at the pitch of the roof. One boulder that went into its construction weighed six tons. Care was taken to preserve the moss and lichens on every fragment. If any occupant is driven to extremity, he may eat the leathery rock tripe left on the stones, as did Sir John Franklin in the Arctic.

Flat slabs of granite are used for seats in the interior. The roof is supported by rough stone pillars, which are chimneys in disguise. Each has a small cooking fireplace at the bottom, where campers may in comfort prepare a meal when the weather is rainy or cold. Outside, in front, is an open fireplace, with a firebrick back and stone slab seats and tables. Here larger fires for cheer or warmth may be enjoyed. In clearing the site wood enough was gathered to last hikers a long time.

The roof timbers are of chestnut, and the roof is covered with heavy slate. The shelter is hidden from sight by a sturdy growth of young rock oak. Hikers desiring to use it, will see a path turning off the T-TJ Trail eastward just south of the highest point of Tom Jones Mountain. They should follow it, down hill a bit, under a low cliff, and out to the ledge on the eastern brink.

Hiking parties desiring to use this shelter for a two-day tramp, could go in from Tuxedo, allowing about an hour and a half for the trip.