

*Guy Shorey: Among the White Hills*



# *Guy Shorey: Among the White Hills*

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PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

THE KARL DRERUP ART GALLERY *and* THE MUSEUM OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

CURATED BY PETER CRANE  
CURATOR, MOUNT WASHINGTON OBSERVATORY'S  
GLADYS BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY





Mount Adams,  
Guy Shorey photograph,  
7" x 5"

## INTRODUCTION

Plymouth State University is honored to present *Guy Shorey: Among the White Hills*, curated by Peter Crane of the Mount Washington Observatory's Gladys Brooks Memorial Library.

This exhibition shows the scope of Shorey's work that was so important in recording the people and places, as well as the work and leisure activity in the White Mountains region in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. His business acumen and the success of the Guy Shorey Studios in Gorham, and later in Randolph, ensured the broad dissemination of his work.

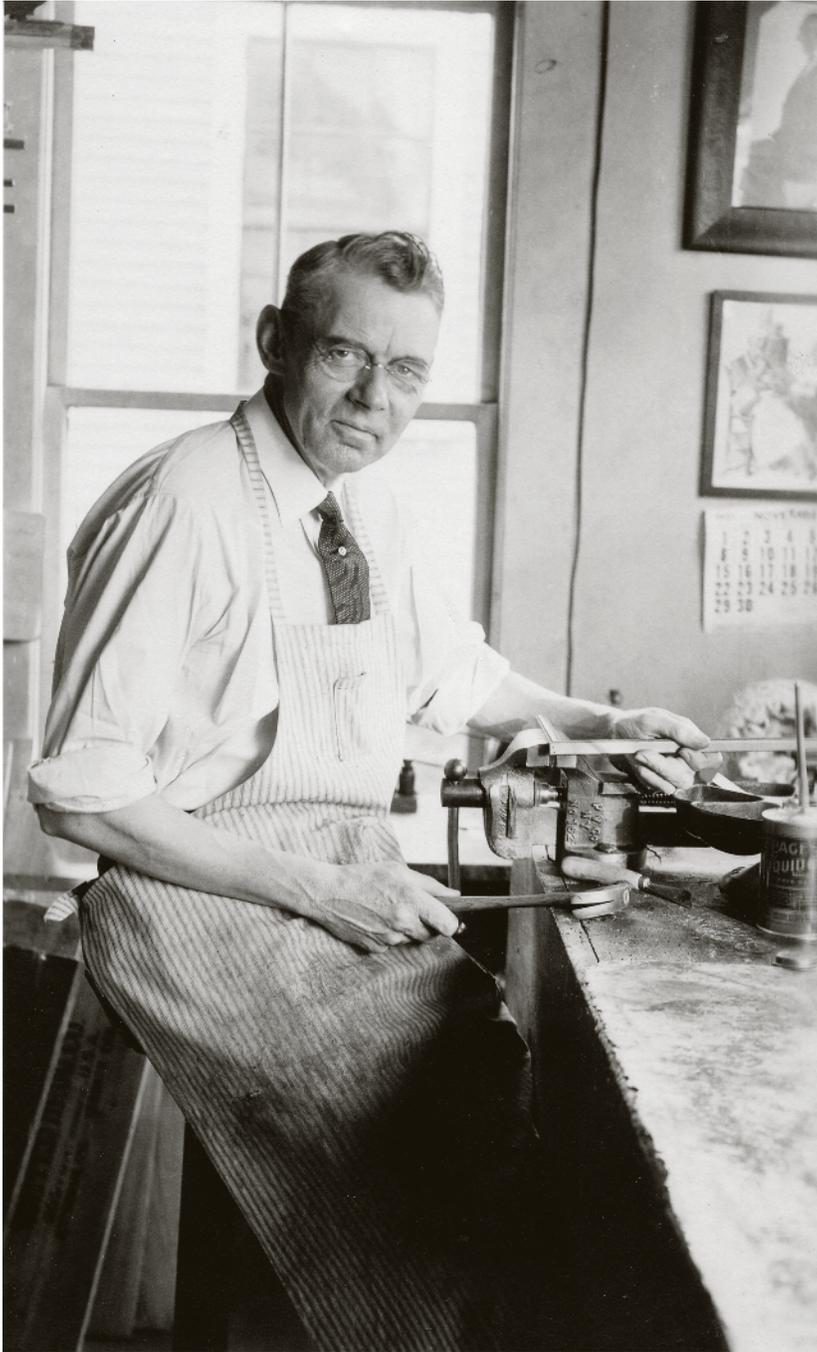
Shorey was bound to the region by his great love of the White Mountains that he hiked extensively and his civic commitment to Gorham. It is this profound connection to the area that makes this exhibition and catalogue a particularly appropriate preface to the future Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State University, which will honor the legacy of the region. Preceded by *As Time Passes Over the Land: White Mountain Art*, this is the second and final exhibition before the museum opens in the fall of 2012.

Guy Shorey's keen observation, artistic vision, and prolific production have been aptly preserved in the extensive collection at the Mount Washington Observatory Museum, part of which is on display in this exhibition.

I would like to thank Peter Crane; Scot Henley, executive director of the Mount Washington Observatory; and the Gladys Brooks Foundation for their support for the Shorey collection over the years. Eric Pedersen of the Appalachian Mountain Club generously loaned the images of the new Madison Hut.

Special recognition should also be given to the Shorey heirs, Sara Glines, Rebecca Boothman, and the late Susan Hawkins, whose appreciation of family and local heritage led them to donate the Guy L. Shorey collection of images, artifacts, and other items to the Mount Washington Observatory. In making available to the public so many remarkable items associated with Guy Shorey, his life, his times, and his White Mountains community, their gift honors their grandfather and the North Country.

Catherine S. Amidon  
Director, Museum of the White Mountains



Portrait of Guy Shorey  
in his studio,  
unknown photographer,  
circa 1931,  
5.5" x 3.5"



## GUY SHOREY: AMONG THE WHITE HILLS

GUY SHOREY MUST HAVE BEEN A VERY BRAVE YOUNG MAN. When he left high school in 1900, he had already chosen what he thought might be his life's work: He would be a photographer. But for a young lad from Gorham, New Hampshire, to pick such an odd vocation must have been courageous indeed.

Certainly the career of photographer was not a typical one for the town of Gorham. Principal industries in the area related to two mainstays: the railroad and woods work, such as logging and its associated mills.

Gorham itself had been a hardscrabble little town at the bend of the Androscoggin, where that mighty river, after flowing southward from Lake Umbagog, veers east toward Maine. Its history was changed when, in 1851, the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad laid its tracks through the town, on its way from Portland, Maine, to Montreal. The A & SL, later known as the Grand Trunk Railway, opened up Gorham, bringing people, jobs, and prosperity.

The positive impact of the railroad was varied in its character. The rails brought tourists to the northeastern White Mountains, especially those seeking to ascend Mount Washington, the region's highest peak. Gorham became a gateway to the mountain, as its railhead allowed a comparatively short stage ride up the Peabody River Valley to the start of the Glen House Bridle Path, which would soon be improved as the Mount Washington Carriage Road, completed in 1861. Gorham, with its Alpine House and other lodging establishments, became an important way station for mountain travelers.



**Above:** Gorham Winter  
Carnival parade entry,  
Guy Shorey photograph,  
circa 1920s,  
3.5" x 5.5"

**Left:** Railway wreck,  
Guy Shorey photograph,  
1916,  
4.75" x 6.75"



Percy Peaks over Upper Ammonoosuc River  
Guy Shorey photograph, 8.5" x 18.5"

The railroad also provided about two hundred jobs to the community, especially given the presence of its repair shops.

The existence of the railroad also helped spur various woods industries, facilitating the movement of lumber and other forest products to market. Gorham and its neighbor Berlin benefited immeasurably from the joint presence of forests and rails. Changes in the technology of making paper from wood would lead to remarkable growth and prosperity for the area.

There was an ebb and a flow in the economic health of the Androscoggin Valley, sometimes due to national conditions such as war or depression, sometimes due to regional or local events or circumstances. When the Mount Washington Cog Railway opened on the western slope of the mountain in 1869, traffic on the Carriage Road, on the eastern slope, declined sharply. Over the ensuing years there was a ripple effect, eventually eroding some opportunities for Gorham. A fire in downtown Gorham in 1879 was devastating, and nearly destroyed the critical railroad buildings. Economic conditions led the Grand Trunk to economize in their operations; they would close their Gorham repair shops in 1902.

In a town that had seen its ups and downs, one might think that a young man would strive for economic security in a steady occupation. In Gorham, if railroad work did not suffice, perhaps work in the woods, or in a papermill in Gorham or Berlin would. But such options did not suit Guy Shorey.

Shorey was born in Gorham in 1881. His grandfather, Urban Shorey Jr., was hardworking and accomplished, having served as a railroad repairman, run a store, and served as town tax collector and selectman, and as a state legislator. His son Charles, Guy Shorey's father, worked for the railroad as a toolmaker, was an insurance agent, and served as a justice of the peace. With such a background, one might think that Guy Shorey would work for the railroad and serve his community in other capacities, and thus prove an industrious citizen and worthy heir to his lineage. Shorey would work diligently, would serve his community, and would be a proud carrier of the Shorey name, but would do so in a way that would also allow expression of his creative nature.





Left: Seven climbers, Guy Shorey photograph, 7" x 5"

Above: Shorey Studio and pharmacy, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, after 1920, 3.5" x 5.5"

Before the end of high school, Shorey had a 4" x 5" Gem Poco camera from Eastman Kodak. He fell in love with photography, and it was a love that would last for the rest of his life. He did work in other fields briefly. His first job was at a bank, and three months at that was enough for him. At one other time in his career he worked at a local hotel to make ends meet. But his zeal for capturing scenes—especially scenes of nature—on plate and on film was so strong that he was determined to make it his life's work.

Shorey's passion for exploring the possibilities of photography, and his enduring affection for his native White Mountains, allowed him to overcome economic challenges as well as physical ones. A bout with diphtheria at age 12 left its mark on him, and arthritis would eventually disable him, but for as long as he was capable of it, he overcame weakness and

even pain to tramp the trails of the Presidentials and other regions, enjoying their beauties and capturing them with his camera to share with others.

When we consider Shorey's long and productive career, there are at least three roles he played, exhibiting some of the special characteristics that made him such a remarkable individual: he was an observer, he was an entrepreneur, and he was an artist. All three of these roles are amply evidenced in his photography.



**Top left:** Sara Shorey, Willard Jewett, and Mary Stinson, Guy Shorey photograph, 7" x 5"

**Top right:** Anniversary of Willey Slide, Guy Shorey photo card from set of 16, 1926, 4" x 6.5"

**Above:** Grange Fair, Shelburne, NH, Guy Shorey photo card from set of 18, 3.75" x 6.5"

**Left:** Gorham baseball team, Guy Shorey photograph, 5" x 7"



Hurricane of 1938, Gorham, NH, Guy Shorey photograph, 1938, 3.5" x 5.5"

Shorey was an observer of his own life and especially of the lives and landscape around him. As is sometimes the case with photographers, many of his earliest images are of himself, his friends, his family, and his immediate surroundings. His earliest experiments in photography were simple attempts to use photography—not a new technology, but new in its personal and commercial possibilities—to put into two dimensions the people, places, and events that filled the Androscoggin Valley. He knew the dimensional paradox of photography; that while you lose the dimension of depth (and stereo photographers challenge even this), you gain the dimension of time, and this persistence of the image and what it represents is one facet of its enduring value.

And so, quite happily, the individuals, the happenings, and the scenes that Shorey enjoyed, in some cases more than a century ago, can be sampled by us today. As with many pictures from the past, identification and documentation of the images are spotty at best—doubtless Shorey carried much of this in his head. Regrettably, there are so many faces we cannot associate with a name, or events we cannot place in their historical contexts. Fortunately, the landscape has not changed so much that we cannot recognize a hillside or a mountain view, and we can compare the prospects that impressed Shorey with similar views that we enjoy today.



**Left:** Beginning of four days tramp over White Mountains, Flash Lights Kitchen of Halfway House, Guy Shorey photo album, 1901

**Above:** Madison Hut no.2 interior, Guy Shorey photograph, 1911, 5" x 7"



AMC Lakes of the Clouds Hut, Guy Shorey photograph and panoramic postcard, circa 1915-1922, 3.5" x 10.75"

Shorey turned his lens to both work and play. Shopkeepers in their stores, loggers in the woods, town streets, mountain trails, parades, carnivals and other grand events, and floods and other calamities garnered his attention. While portraits were not his specialty, people, and people in their natural environments, were of interest to him, so his work includes weddings, family gatherings, and sports teams.

A subject of special significance to him was mountain tramping, the popular term of the times for hiking. The scenery and the camaraderie both appealed immensely to him. He was active in the Appalachian Mountain Club, joining their excursions and volunteering for tasks in the field, and eventually becoming a life member. Among his

photographs are several of the club's Madison Spring Hut, which was first established in 1888 and which grew over the years to serve an ever-increasing demand for high mountain accommodations. The club's Lakes of the Clouds and Carter Notch Huts, and its base camp at Pinkham Notch, also were recorded by him. Certainly it was not these humble hostels themselves, but the shared adventures there and their compelling surroundings that kindled such warmth for them in him and in countless others.





Shorey perhaps did not suspect it when he took his photographs, but many of his humble snapshots have become significant historical artifacts, recording life, work, and play in northern New Hampshire a century ago. We benefit today from his curiosity and diligence.

Shorey was also an entrepreneur. Doubtless he knew he had to be, to be a successful photographer in a small New Hampshire town. While his school records suggest he was an average student, his career demonstrates he had well above average determination and business sense.

An early modus operandi gives evidence of his acumen and energy. He'd enjoy a mountain tramp with AMC members, taking photographs of participants and scenery along the way. He'd then hurry back to his studio, develop



**Opposite:** Crystal Cascades alongside Tuckerman Ravine Trail, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, 5.5" x 3.5"

**Left:** Trampers, Mount Washington, Guy Shorey photograph, circa 1898-1907, 7" x 5"

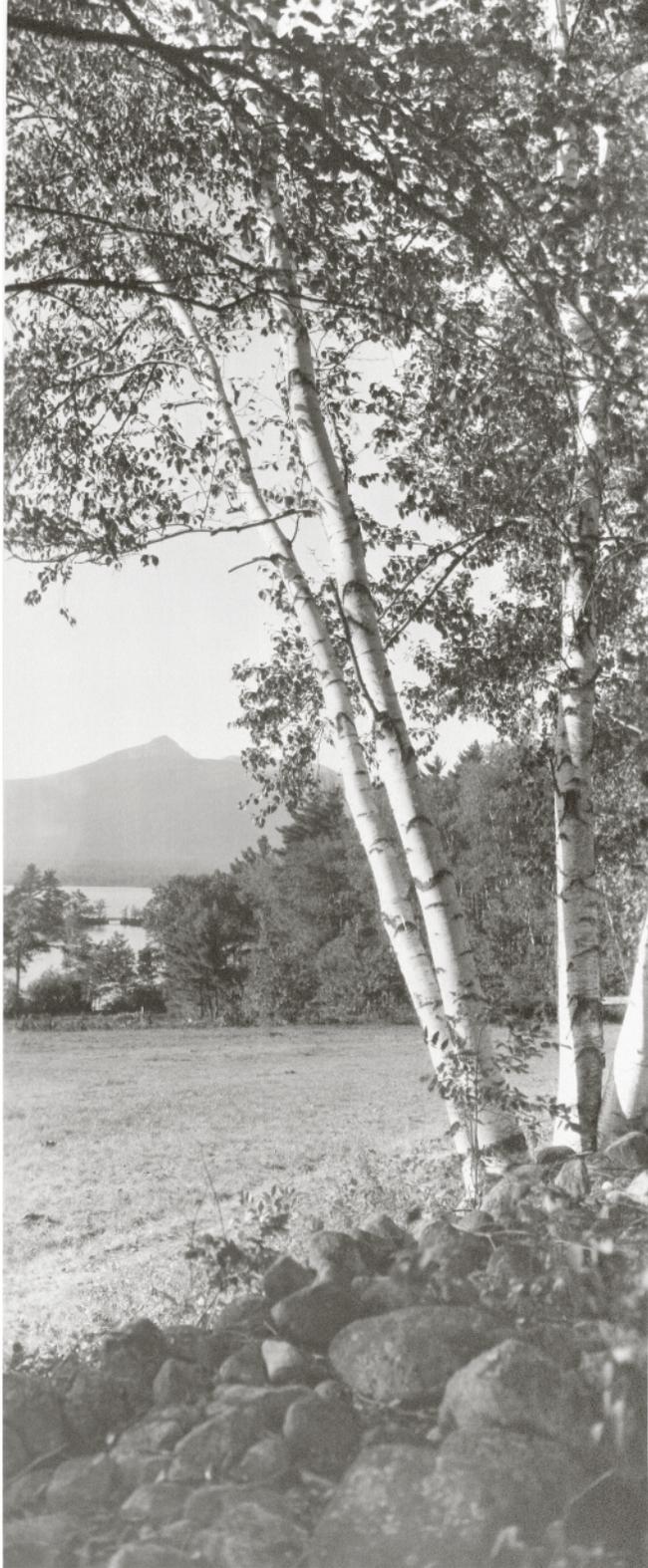
**Above:** On the Mount Washington Carriage Road, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, 1926, 3.5" x 5.5"

film, make sample prints, and meet the party emerging from the woods, ready to take orders for pictures.

As his trade grew, so did his studio. It started as a very simple outbuilding behind his father's house on Mechanic Street in Gorham, which was later moved to the front of the lot for better visibility. The studio was moved to Main Street in 1906, and an addition built to accommodate a growing business in selling and developing film, making prints and enlargements, and in selling prints and postcards.



*Eight Photographs of New Hampshire Beauty Spots,*  
Guy Shorey photo cards, four of set of eight,  
3.5" x 4.5"



A roadside view of Mount Chocorua,  
Guy Shorey photograph, 18.5" x 8.5"

Additional business opportunities arose or were created. In 1916, Shorey opened the Shorey Studio and Tea Room in Randolph, running that in tandem with his Gorham shop for several years. In 1920, Shorey purchased a drugstore on Main Street and ran a combined pharmacy and studio until 1950 when he sold the pharmacy but continued operation of the studio, even as he approached the age of 70.

The selection of items available at the Shorey Studio was impressive. Shorey did not content himself with film and photos. He sought out other items, especially unique photographic items, to satisfy his customers. Offerings included note cards, note pads, holiday greeting cards, photo sets, bookmarks, place cards, and the like. He also produced photo souvenirs for businesses. His illustrations were used in a wide variety of brochures and publications, including those of the AMC.

Postcards were apparently a significant portion of his business, and he sold them from his studio and marketed them to many other outlets throughout the White Mountains. His offerings included more than 1,500 different views. His stock included both standard-sized postcards and panoramic versions, all the better to highlight impressive mountain landscapes.



**Top Left:** Cranmore Skimobile, North Conway, NH, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, circa 1939, 3.5" x 5.5"

**Above:** Spaulding Lake, Mount Adams, and Mount Madison, Guy Shorey photograph, 4.75" x 6.75"

**Center Left:** Dolly Copp Public Campground, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, 3.5" x 5.5"

**Bottom Left:** Allied Nations, Guy Shorey photograph, circa 1940, 3.5" x 5.5"



Gorham, NH from Mount Hayes. Guy Shorey photograph and panoramic postcard, 3.5" x 10.75"

Shorey's business efforts did not stop at his front door. He knew that his success depended in part on the prosperity of his town and of his region. The quality of his livelihood was a function of the economic health of Gorham and of the White Mountains. A thriving Gorham, in tourism and in other enterprises, was a necessity for a thriving Shorey Studio. Plus, he was raised with an innate sense of civic responsibility, a North Country neighborliness where one did what one could to serve one's community.

As a result, Shorey was active in many arenas. He was a founder and long active in the Gorham Rotary. He was a driver in the creation and operation of local events, such as winter carnivals. He was instrumental in the founding of a YMCA in neighboring Berlin, and long served as a director of that institution. He was a stalwart on the State Planning and Development Commission, serving under three governors over 15 years. When, in 1939, his fellow citizens hesitated to open an information booth in Gorham, he established

one out of his own pocket. He created a slide presentation, "New Hampshire Enchantment," in 1938, which he offered to countless audiences, encouraging appreciation of and visitation to the Granite State.

It is no accident that Shorey picked for his studio's tagline, "Among the White Hills." That simple saying branded his efforts and his products as being integrally affiliated with the White Mountain landscape and its heritage. But more than a piece of marketing verbiage, "Among the White Hills" expressed Shorey's own affection and enthusiasm for New Hampshire's lofty landscape, a landscape that, over his long life, he came to know intimately, exploring it under his boots as well as through his lens.



**Left:** On the Air Line Path,  
Mount Adams, Guy Shorey  
photograph and postcard,  
5.5" x 3.5"

**Opposite:** Tuckerman Ravine  
from Boott Spur, Guy Shorey  
photograph and postcard,  
3.5" x 5.5"



Shorey observed his community and his surroundings. By dint of effort and creativity, he made a decent living for himself and his employees, and used his gifts to improve his community. He was also an artist who shared his love of nature with his fellows by capturing and sharing images of the White Mountains that he loved.

Shorey's early relationship with the mountains was clearly up-close and personal, with viewpoints deep within the forests and high atop the summits of the peaks. One of his advertisements promised "White Mountain Views as the Trampler Sees Them," but his hiking days were destined to end comparatively early in his life. In 1921, at the age of

forty, Shorey took his last hike, a slow and painful one, into Mount Washington's Tuckerman Ravine. Arthritis, which had plagued him for so long, was showing its seemingly winning hand. The rough mountain trails that had given so much to him could no longer be traveled. Yet Shorey turned this adversity to opportunity, as he intensified his roadside photography. He could still immerse himself in the mountain landscape, with the proviso that he could access the scenery by car or short walk. No longer having to carry his equipment in a backpack, he could use heavier and bulkier apparatus, and added a 7" x 17" Korona panoramic camera to his arsenal to make impressive images of the White Mountains.



Southern peaks of the Presidential Range,  
Guy Shorey photograph and postcard,  
3.5"x 5.5"

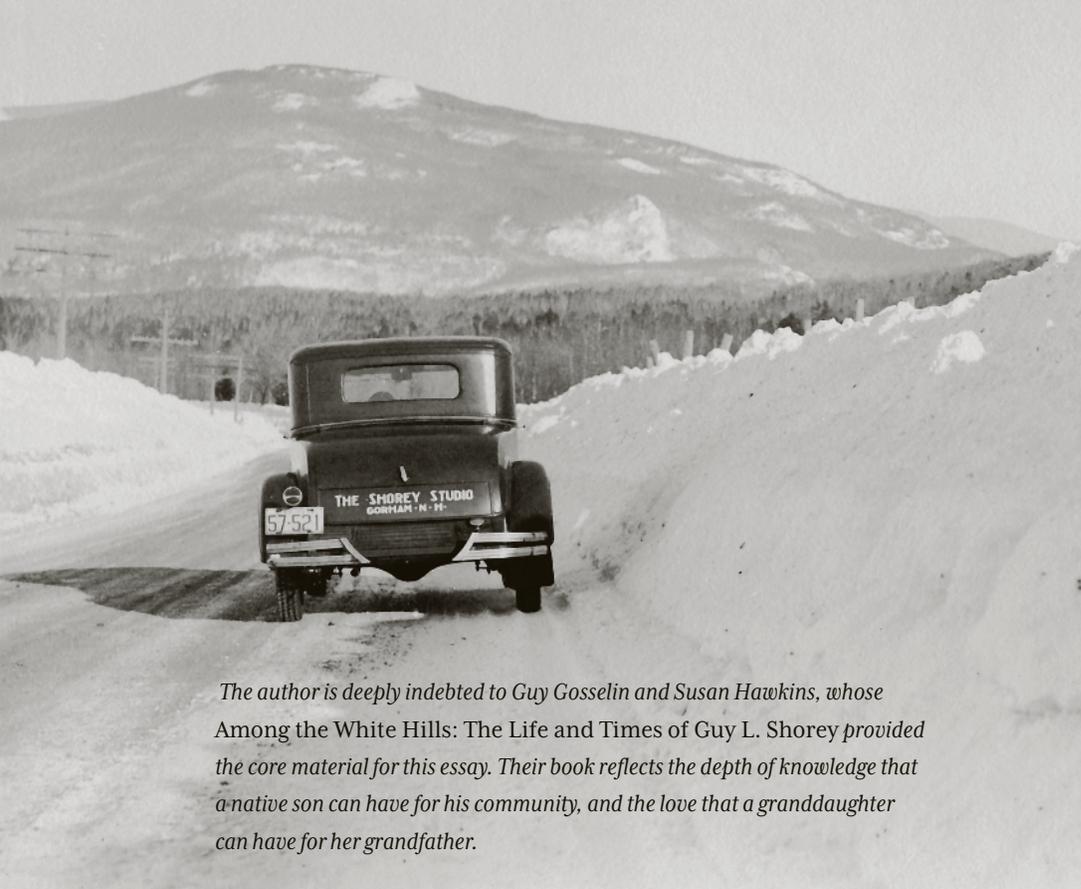


Bradford Washburn, who among his other credits was a renowned mountain photographer, and who used Shorey photographs in his first book, a compact 1926 guidebook to the Presidential Range, firmly believed that big scenery required big negatives. Shorey followed this dictum with his 7" x 17" camera, making more than 350 photographs that portrayed the splendor and variety of the heights and valleys of the White Mountains. These images more than hinted at his personal enthusiasm for the area, and by no accident were also successful commercially. Most were in horizontal format, accentuating the meandering valleys and arching ridgelines. Some were vertical, demanded by the soaring white trunks of birches or deep clefts of rushing waterfalls.

Even in Shorey's earliest personal photo albums, we see hints of the artist—his appreciation for natural shapes, the play of light, and inspiring outlooks. As his technical ability and eye matured, his creativity grew, as did his desire to share his mountain visions with others. His large-format landscapes are perhaps the best example of his photographic skill and his enduring connection to the White Mountains.

When Guy Shorey died in 1961, he left a remarkable legacy as observer, entrepreneur, and artist. Yet these are only a few facets of Guy Shorey. He was also a dedicated family man, with endless affection for his wife, daughter, and granddaughters. He was a loyal citizen who served his town, his state, and his country in many unsung ways. But those are other stories.

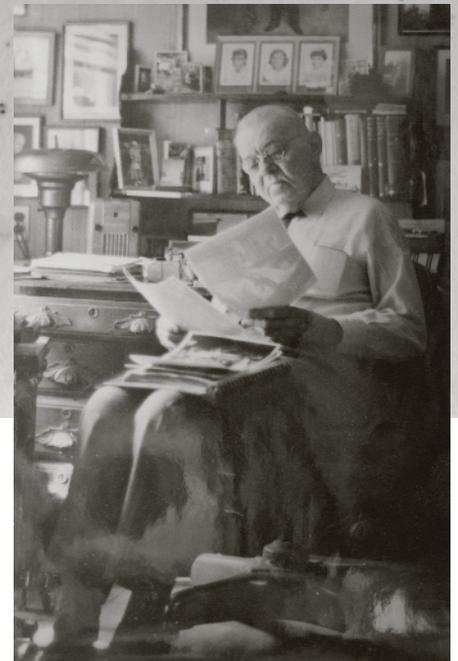
— Peter Crane



On the Presidential Highway, Guy Shorey photograph and postcard, 3.5" x 5.5"

**Inset:** Portrait of Guy Shorey at his desk, unknown photographer, circa 1955, 5.25" x 3.75"

*The author is deeply indebted to Guy Gosselin and Susan Hawkins, whose *Among the White Hills: The Life and Times of Guy L. Shorey* provided the core material for this essay. Their book reflects the depth of knowledge that a native son can have for his community, and the love that a granddaughter can have for her grandfather.*



#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Guy A. Gosselin and Susan B. Hawkins, *Among the White Hills: The Life and Times of Guy L. Shorey*. Portsmouth: Peter E. Randall, for the Mount Washington Observatory, 1998.

Page Helm Jones, *Evolution of a Valley: The Androscoggin Story*. Canaan, New Hampshire: Phoenix, 1975.

D.B. Wight, *The Androscoggin River Valley: Gateway to the White Mountains*. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1967.

#### THE AUTHOR

Peter Crane serves as curator of the Mount Washington Observatory's Gladys Brooks Memorial Library, which features books, maps, prints, photos, and other material relating to the MWO, Mount Washington, and the White Mountains. The collection serves the MWO, its members, and the public as a resource for the history, literature, and science of Mount Washington and the White Mountains.

Crane has lived in the White Mountains for more than thirty years, and served the US Forest Service and the Appalachian Mountain Club in resource management, public information, and educational roles before coming to work for the MWO. He began his MWO career in 1988 as a weather observer, museum manager, and summit shift leader. After three years of summit duty, he focused on the MWO's educational activities, based at its valley office. He served for several years as director of programs before transitioning to his current position. He did his undergraduate work at Harvard College, and earned his doctoral degree in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania; his dissertation focused on the abandoned White Mountains logging town of Livermore. An avid year-round hiker, he is also a volunteer trail maintainer for the Appalachian Mountain Club, is a member of Androscoggin Valley Search and Rescue, and serves on the board of the New Hampshire Outdoor Council.



*Museum of the*  
**WHITE MOUNTAINS**  

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