

Frank H. Shapleigh, Presidential Range and Ammonoosuc River, near Fabyan's, 1881

ount Washington is the highest mountain in the northeastern United States. Part of the LV Presidential Range of the White Mountains, it was named for George Washington. It was first scaled by Europeans in 1642. Ethan Allen Crawford and his father, Abel, blazed the first trail up the mountain in 1819; today it is the oldest mountain trail in continuous use in the United States. In 1851, the railroad reached nearby Gorham, NH, ushering in the golden age of White Mountain tourism. Just two years later 3,400 visitors climbed Mount Washington, and today, approximately 50,000 people hike the mountain each year.

## "The Loftiest of all Hotels"

The work of getting to the top of the mountain was rewarded as entrepreneurs sought to make it a destination worthy of the effort. In 1852 the Summit House was built to accommodate the growing number of visitors--at its largest it was able to house and feed hundreds of guests. The smaller Tip-Top House, originally built in 1853, was the only building to escape a devastating 1908 fire and it is the only evidence of this era remaining on the summit today. Through the century and a half, a number of other, smaller buildings such as stables, offices and observational towers have come and gone as well.

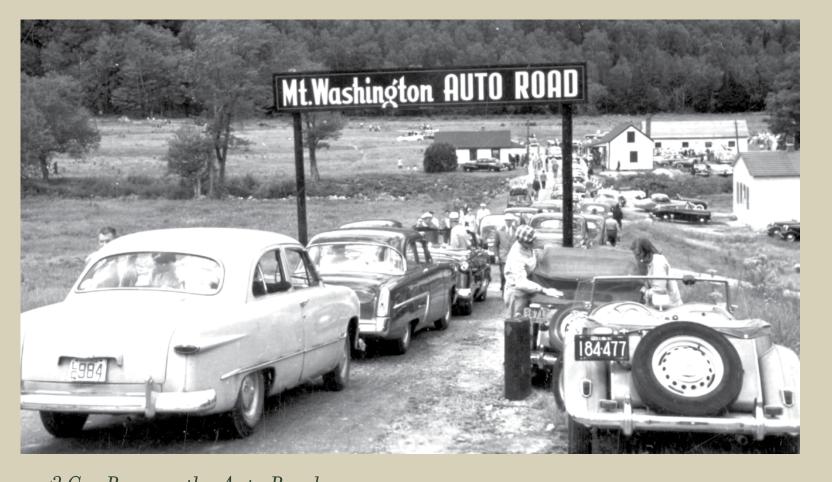


### **Auto Road**



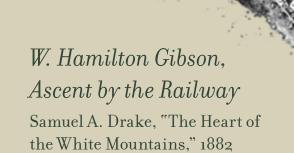


Mt. Washington Carriage Road, c. 1910-1920



## "Making the Ascent by Carriage or Steam Train...."

As the summit became a destination for sightseers of all sorts, improving their journey became the focus. In 1861 a carriage road was completed on the east side of the mountain.

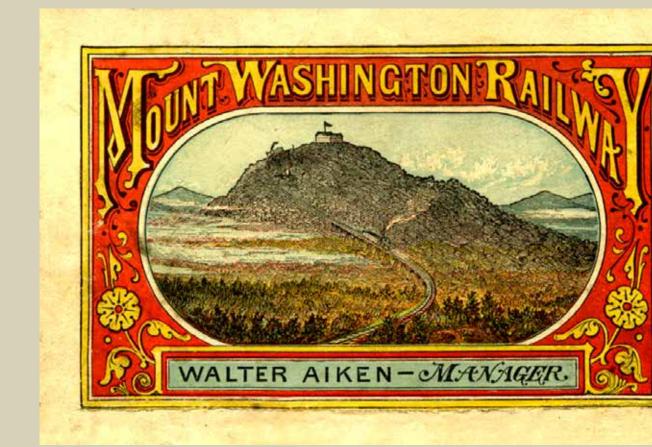


Then in 1869, on the west side, the first mountainclimbing cog railway in the world was built by Sylvester Marsh of Littleton, NH.

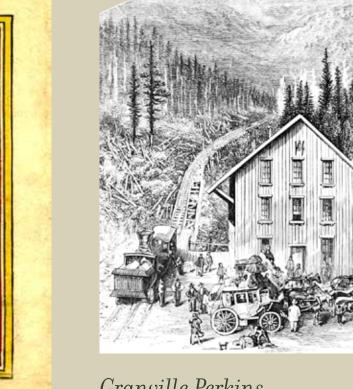
The Mount Washington Auto Road and the Mount Washington Cog Railway are still in use today, conveying approximately 230,000 people per year to the summit of Mount Washington.

# Cog Railway





Cog Railway Trade Card WhiteMountainHistory.org

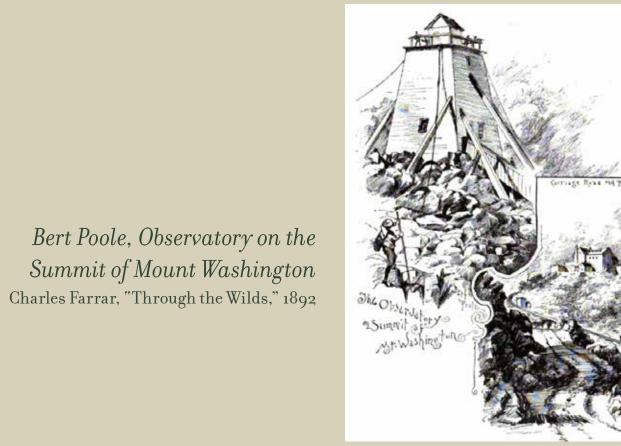


[Mt. Washington-Cog] Railway Station in Staging Times

Samuel A. Drake, "The Heart of the White Mountains," 1882

renowned for its extreme weather. On a clear day, visitors can see five states and Canada, but bad weather and poor visibility are far more common. In 1934, the observatory recorded 231 mile-perhour winds, a world record at the time.

The summit's average temperature is 26° F. Hurricane-force winds are typically recorded 110 days per year, and snow, which can occur in any month, averages 21.2 feet annually. For comparison, the average annual snowfall in nearby Conway, NH is 6.6 feet. Observatories to measure these extremes of weather were built on the summit beginning in the mid-19th century. Today the Mount Washington Observatory continues the tradition in the Sherman Adams Summit Building constructed in 1979.

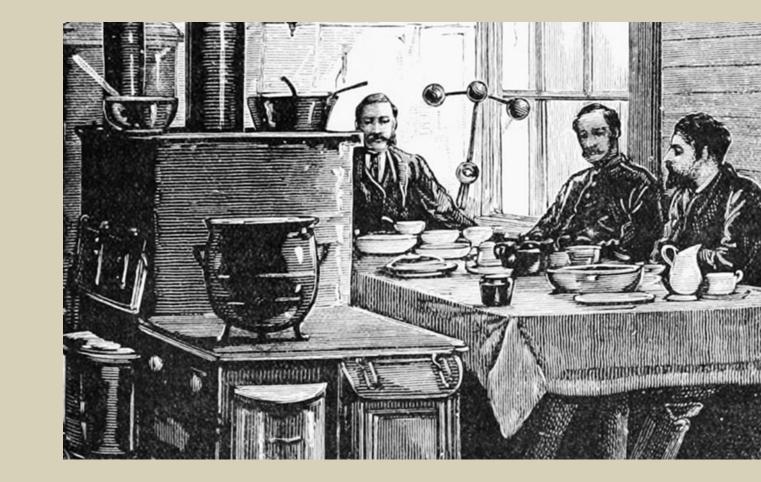




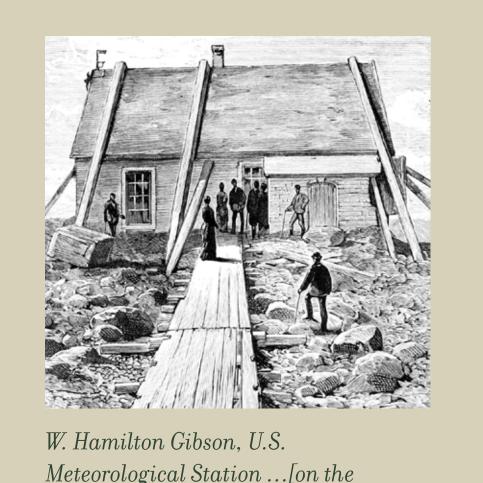
John B. Bachelder, Storm on Mt. Washington, 1858 New Hampshire Historical Society Collection

.... If ten hurricanes had been in deadly strife with each other, it could have been no worse. The winds, as if locked in mortal embrace, tore along, twisting and whirling, and mingling their roaring with the flinty rattling of the snow-grains in one confused din.

From "Three Days on the White Mountains being the Perilous Adventure of Dr. B. L. Ball on Mt. Washington," 1856



Station Samuel A. Drake, "The Heart of the White Mountains," 1882



Summit] Samuel A. Drake, "The Heart of