

# **FIELD NOTES**

**48 Page Memo Book  
Graph Paper / Durable Materials**

THIS FIELD NOTES MEMO BOOK IS PROPERTY OF:

TRAIL NAMES: House + Ball Fro

PERTINENT COORDINATES:

FOR INTERNAL RECORDS:

Start Date:

Location:

8-27-2008 / Asheville, NC

Completion Date:

Location:

9-1-2008 / Fontana Dam, NC

IN THE EVENT OF MISPLACEMENT:

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HENCE, THERE  IS A HANDSOME REWARD WAITING.

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APPALA-  
TIAN TR  
AIL 2008

August 27. Wednesday.

Our trip gets a late start because of hurricane Floyd, whose effects are leaving inches and inches of rain all over our vacation destination. After tending to last minute Winbox + Modern Fabrics business, including letting go of a good client due to the shortage of time, we finally ~~had~~ head out the door at 1PM.

Our first stop is Asheville where James keeps insisting

on opening the first Modern Fabrics store. We visit the Folk Museum on the Blue Ridge Parkway - really nice, and then ~~had~~ park our car in Asheville so we can walk around and check out all the buildings James wants to either buy or move into. The weather in Asheville is spectacular, and we have dinner at the hyped up "Tupelo Honey Cafe". James had a burger which was good and

probably better than my fried green tomatoes and grits. It's not that the food was bad, it was just too hiped up and I expected something much better. Plus I got a stomach ache after and that added to me disliking the food.



After dinner we walked around more and peaked into all the other great restaurants we could have eaten at. We also explored the small



Jamaican section in the back alleys of Asheville, and found a few abandoned buildings James did not yet know about.

Around 9 PM we headed for the Blue Ridge Parkway and drove high up to Pisgah Mountain Campground which was completely empty. Since it was still kind of wet we pulled down the back seats and set up a pretty sweet sleeping lounge in the back of Subie. It really could not have been better especially that it started to pour in the middle of the night. We walk up to this easy

fog with no one else around.



We drove to Waynesville in the morning to get some breakfast, but first we found a laundromat and left Jameses wet shoes to dry, hopefully they will still be there when we return 2 hours latter, otherwise we will have to buy him new shoes.

Breakfast in Waynesville was great, I don't even know what this place is called. James had a lunch as Rubban sandwich, I wish I got that.

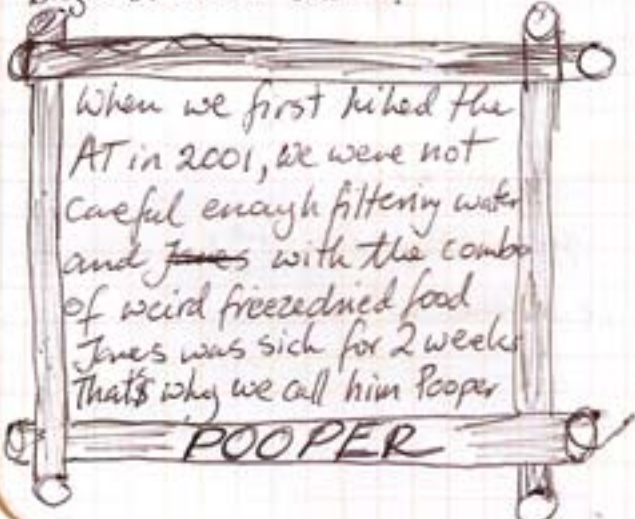


2PM, we pick up James's shoes which are still wet, we tie them to the roof rack and drive thru Maggie Valley - a shit hole, Charrolic - a shit hole, and Bryson City - another shit hole,

to Fontana Dam. We arrive at the Dam around 3:30, and it's absolutely breath taking.



Fontana Dam also brings bad memories as that is the first place we ever backpacked in our lives. And the place where we really got to know each other on the trail - a real trial to hike for two weeks w/ sores + blisters and 50+lb. bags on our backs.



When we first hiked the AT in 2001, we were not careful enough filtering water and ~~James~~ with the combo of weird freeze-dried food James was sick for 2 weeks. That's why we call him Pooper

**POOPER**

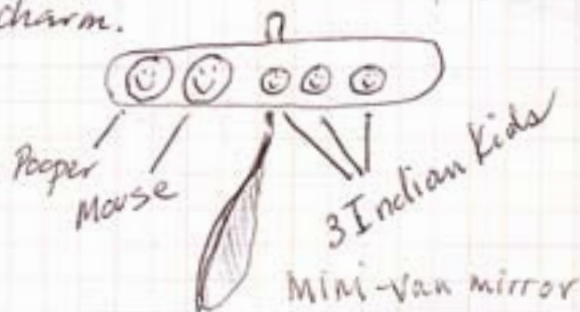
After taking our last shower at Fontana, and finally picking what we think we need, we hitch a ride from a ~~guy~~ and Pico his daughter <sup>from NY</sup> who foolishly stop to ask us for direction. I gave him directions and said, "hey since you're going that way, would you mind giving us a ride". So he did, for about 40 minutes, almost to Brisson City. He even offered to give us some fresh Trout they just caught.

Our next ride came from a local land developer, nice guy even if he is developing the land we

would rather see protected.  
He went out of his way and  
drove us all the way to Cherokee,  
where we had our last official  
meal at KFC. It was  
really resty. We made a few  
last calls to check in w/ the  
family and went back on the  
road to hitch a ride.

This was more challenging,  
no one wanted to stop for  
about 1/2 hour, we were  
thinking of an alternative  
route when an Indian  
woman stopped + asked  
where we were headed.  
We were headed into the

middle of the BFE, and  
obviously not in her direction, but  
out of pure sympathy she turned  
her car around and told us  
to hop in. She drove us 20 miles  
up 441 to Claymans Done Rd.  
She was 1/2 Cherokee and her  
3 kids even sang "Amazing Grace"  
in the Cherokee language for  
us. She had a huge eagle  
feather hanging from her front  
mirror. She was our good luck  
charm.



So now we are at HWY 441  
and Clingmans Dome Rd.  
The wind is blowing Chicago  
style, you can see the smoke  
of the clouds pass right in  
front of you, we put on a  
few extra layers of clothes  
and start hiking up the road.  
By now it's late evening, prob-  
ably around 6:30, and  
we soon realize that the  
trailhead is not for another  
~~15~~<sup>7</sup> miles. Alternative  
plan in progress... ~~where~~  
~~young couple~~ only one car  
passed us going up and they  
swarved out of the way

in order not to pick us up  
even though they were driving  
a huge mini van - ass holes.  
We give them the finger, we  
feel that desperate feeling come  
over us while we still try to  
remind ourselves that this is  
all part of the game. We wanted  
to spend our vacation like this.

Just a few minutes later, a  
young couple pulls over ~~and~~ ask  
us what's up. They turn around  
and give us a ride to the top.  
They are car touring the Smokies  
they are from W.V.

We get dropped off at the farthest  
possible spot. We can't see shit.  
Fog is everywhere and the

amazing Clingman's Dome & views are not for us to see.

It's 7:31, we start hiking. 5 mile straight up a paved tourist trail and then to our left a 2.3 mile A.T. Hike to the Double Springs Shelter.

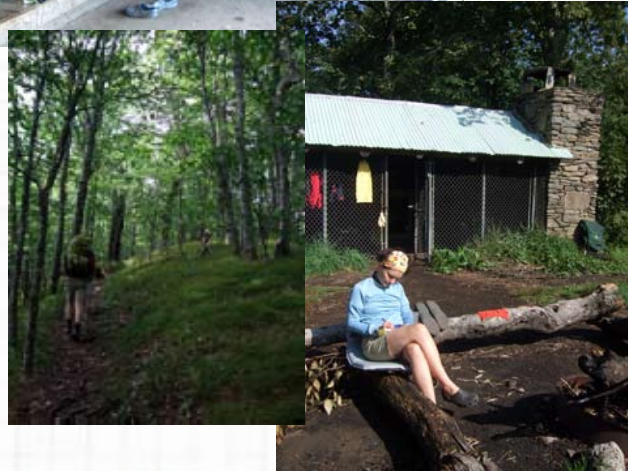
The hike is mostly flat or downhill, but after about a



mile we can't see anymore, the night has fallen, and we turn on one flashlight. James is leading and he informs us when we come upon a ~~rock~~ stump or a rock - we call rocks "Borochs" because tonight Barack o Bama makes his Democratic Convention speech and we wish we could hear it. For the next what seems like forever, maybe 2 hours, we walk really slowly and entertain ourselves with stories of what Boroch will do when he is president, and other stupid political ~~are~~ shit ~~we~~ that we mostly just make up to have something to B.S. about.

At about 10:30 we reach our shelter. It appears out of nowhere in an open field. In the dark it looks like the most beautiful place we have ever seen,

We make spicy Asian Pomen Noodle-  
~~to~~ that shit was HOT! and we hit the sack, locked tight in the shelter. I am awakened several times during the night by James who thinks he sees a bear sniffing around the shelter. I'm like, who gives a shit, I want to sleep. Then I'm awakened by the mice playing ping pong in the shelter, which latter turns out is a squirrel who eats ~~not~~ chestnuts on the tree above the shelter,



This shelter will be rebuilt in 1 week w/ skylights and other fancy things. It has a great water source. Beautiful spot.

~~Aug~~ 29, Double Springs Gap Shlt.  
Morning starts out beautiful  
Sunny, warm. We bathe, have  
great instant Vienesse Coffee,  
Pasta, garlic, sausage. A deer  
and a baby deer come to the  
site and stand about 100ft  
away from us. We head out 11:20  
to the next shelter 2.5 away, or  
to the next one after that 6.5  
away.

9:50 AM

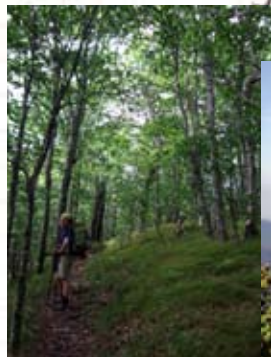
~~Aug~~ ~~Sept~~ 30. Derick Knob. Life can't  
get any better than this. Sunny  
morning, cup of instant coffee,  
after a bowl of hot rommen noodle  
James is trying to call Harry  
to tell him that he just gave  
birth to a tree, but we can't get  
reception here, even on top of

the mountain.

This shelter is the cat's pajamas.  
It has a skylight, awsome benches  
for cooking, great H2O source. No  
Cage which is a bit scary since  
everyone we have been meeting  
is telling us about all the bears  
they have seen. One shelter  
we were suppose to stay at,  
Russles Field is even closed  
due to a violent Bear who tried  
to pric off the shelter fence  
and then the metal roof.



Yesterdays hike from Double Springs to Derick Knob was great. We ate black berries the whole way. It was mostly downhill with a few hills. We spotted a lot of bear poop but nothing else. We got to the shelter around 6 PM, and had an awesome bath in the creek plus some great Chilly which was a bitch to cook on a stove that has only one setting - high.



But as soon as we lay down to sleep, Mantazomas - Chilly ravaage began. The mountain air got really foggy and we were lucky not to have to share the shelter with anyone. I was Ok, but James was not so well. I was only awawened once by Jameses threats of wild animals near by. In the morning we were visited by two hikers who never made it to this shelter.

The song of this trip has been:  
I feel it in my fingers, I feel it  
in my toes, Love is all around...  
except our version goes something  
like this: I feel it in my

bung hole, I feel it in my ball-  
frow..." It goes on from here  
and gets a different inter-  
pretation every time. It's  
from the movie "Love Actually"

I finally got to sit my ass  
in the hammock I have carried  
as my luxury item. We have so  
little time once we get to the  
shelter.

Today we set out for Spence Field  
it will be a hard 6.2 miles, we  
will go over Rocky Top Mt and  
Thunderhead Mt. We should have  
some spectacular views but a lot  
of uphill. Woo Hoo!

Sept. 31, Spence Field Shelter, 8:30 AM.  
Great day yesterday, we ran into "Sweet  
Betty" 30 minutes into our trip, an  
older woman hiking alone, sweating her  
balls off on a downhill. The next few  
miles were uneventful and Thunder-  
head Mt was a bit of a letdown - a  
fly infested, rhododendron overgrown  
peak with hardly any view, but about  
.3 miles down, on Rocky Top and  
the rest of the way to Spence Field  
was the most beautiful part of  
the A.T. we have been on yet. Beau-  
tiful fields of golden grass, blackberries,  
blueberries, open fields. It looks like  
old orchards with a perfect spot for  
a horse stand.



We took our time eating berries and got to the shelter in late afternoon. We shared the sleeping quarters w/ 4 college students, and an army dad w/ his son. They made a big fire and we shared some great trail stories and recommendations of best soft porn flicks w/ top hollywood stars. In the middle of all of that, a guy guided by a flashlight waddled into camp. It turned out that he got booted all alone at his campsite so he walked 4 miles to sit down with us. When we went to sleep, he walked 4 miles back in pitch dark to his camp.

We slept shitty with everyone tossing and turning. I couldn't wait till daybreak. Our companions were early birds, out by 7:30. We woke up after they left and called home - finally had reception.

The water source here sucks, so we are not as clean as we would like.



We go on to Russle Field in hopes of better H<sub>2</sub>O, and then to Molly's Field for the night.



~~Sept.~~ August 31, Birch Springs Camp.

After a quick 2.2 mile hike to Russle field we take our packs off, shoot the shit w/ some hikers and burn some toilet paper from the equestrian riders. (we ran out! it could have been very ugly, and it was not just poopers fault). The water at Russle Field is basically pools of mud, and since bear attacks have recently taken place, the shelter is shut for business. We keep treaching to Molly, 2.3 miles. It's nothing like we remember, we stayed there 6 years earlier, but it could not be any different. Again no water and at this point we have no choice but to keep moving since we have no water ourselves. The

### Daily Food Intake per/person

- Breakfast - 1-2 cups coffee  
1 pack ramen
- Lunch - 2-3 power bars  
- 1 tuna
- Dinner - 1 miso soup  
- 1-2 ramen soups  
or  
1 pasta

### Things we carried

- |                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Sleeping bags       | water + water bags        |
| Sleeping mats       | 1 pillow - janes's luxury |
| Stove + stove gas   | toiletries + towels       |
| 2 spoons            | pen + paper               |
| 2 bowls             | camera                    |
| 2 cups              | cloths                    |
| lighter             | knife                     |
| matches             | rope                      |
| fire starters       | hammock - ewa's luxury    |
| cooking pot         | insect repellent          |
| 1 roll toilet paper | H2O filter                |
| tarp                | H2O pills                 |
| ground cloth        |                           |
| foal-seabae         |                           |

next stop is 5.5 miles away at Birch Springs Camp. It's an up and down hike w/ some tough downhills and we both start having soar knees.

We arrive at camp around 6 PM...

## CAMP BEAR-WITCH

We remember this camp from our first hike to the Smokies as very lively, full of flowing water and activity. It's the first camp you hit after ascending 4.5 vertical miles from Fontana Dam. But tonight this place is DEAD except for us and 2 older guys. Now, it's kind of difficult to explain the fear and emotion of what happened next, except to say compare it

to that movie "Blas-Witch Propet". The 2 guys inform us that a couple was here just an hour ago, and as soon as they set up their tent a bear came down into the camp, ripped a hole in their tent, destroyed their equipment, sleeping pads, water filter etc. So the couple took off down to Fontana with 2 more hours of daylight left.

Now here we are dead tired after hiking 16 miles with only a tarp, no tent. We look up into the hills around the valley and we can literally see the bears watching us. We are completely trapped. Too late to keep going, too far to go back to the last shelter. As we start cooking one of the brave bears starts coming

drink when you know the morning  
is coming.

We packed up really fast, and  
as we were cooking breakfast  
of ramen noodle + coffee we  
once again watched the bear  
start circling the camp. We dashed  
out of camp before the guys  
were ~~we~~ out of their tent, we  
carried a few rocks each in  
our pockets just in case the  
bear wanted some more action.

I have to admit that I was  
scared that night, I felt very  
helpless not knowing what might  
happen. I like to think that  
the bear left us alone because  
we attacked him w/ rocks first,  
but who knows maybe he just  
wasn't hungry that night. I think  
I'm still not afraid of weird

people that we might run into  
on the trail, like Billy, but that  
might have changed if we were  
attacked by a big black bear. I'm  
glad we went. I ♥ HIKING.

Sept. 1st, Labor Day. I just realized  
that all of my entries have been dated  
Sept 28-31, not August, weird! Today  
after leaving the bear infested  
campsite we hiked up to Shade-  
Stone which is an old fire watch  
tower over Lake Fontana



The tower was old, rickety and scary to walk up, but the views were spectacular.

Afterwards we walked the remaining 4.3 miles, mostly steep downhill, to Fontaine Dam. The Dam Lodge even cooler than when we left it just 5 days ago. We scrubbed over dirty ballfows at the Dam Visitor Center Showers (this is the main reason why we wanted to end our trip here - free showers). We talk to the annoying lady at the visitor center for a few minutes, and we hit the road for Nantahala Outdoor Center and a big cheeseburger and a few beers.

-----  
We finished this trip in 2 days less than planned for. I think it was for a few reasons - packing smart and lighter, developing our trail



legs faster because we had less to carry, and having to work around dry wells at Molly, & closed shelters at Rattle. While I could have stayed in the wilderness forever, I think James was itching to get back to reality. Even though he loves the outdoors, I know he is not a loner like me, who one day wants to hike the whole A.T. To me this trip was just a warm up, I was just starting to get my trail legs, hiking 10 mile days, getting my appetite and starting to shit regularly. It's next to impossible to explain to someone why I love to long distance hike. It's so hard at times - you hurt, you can't sleep, you're hungry, you stink, you get scared, but yet you keep going. And

some days the scenery doesn't even change that much, it's only on those odd days that you get to hit spots like Baldy Top & Spence Field. I really can't explain why I love this, maybe it's the sense of accomplishment one mile at a time.



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