

THE GEOGRAPHIC FIREPLACE
OF
KEENE STATE COLLEGE

The stone fireplace at the college recreation camp is unique in many ways. It contains stones from different localities all over New Hampshire, from all the other New England states except Connecticut, also from several states farther away and one from an island in the Atlantic Ocean. There are 374 numbered specimens, 331 from localities in New Hampshire, 21 from Massachusetts, 4 from Vermont, 3 from Maine, 1 from Rhode Island, 4 from New York, 2 each from Florida and New Jersey, 1 each from California, Colorado, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and 1 from the island of Bermuda.

1930-31
The fireplace was constructed in 1931, 37 years ago.

The idea of building a geographic fireplace originated with Doctor Wallace E. Mason, who was President of the college for many years. At that time it was known as Keene Normal School. Under his leadership, money was raised by alumni, classes, and friends of the school to purchase a house and piece of land on the shore of Wilson Pond for use as a recreation area, for school picnics, and social gatherings of different groups connected with the school.

The pleasure that would be derived from a fireplace in the school camp was clear to everyone, and it was suggested that the stones for its construction be specimens collected by students and others from their home towns and important historical sites. The collecting was organized by the science club, then called the Keene Academy of Science, and directed by H. Dwight Carle, the head of the Science Department. The stones were arranged by Walter A. Pierce and Spencer E. Eaton, associate professors in the Mechanic Arts Department. The construction was the work of John Carrol, an expert mason.

An outline of the desired shape and size of the fireplace was first drawn on the floor of the camp, and the important or significant stones were placed within the limits of this outline and their approximate positions were determined. The stones were numbered and the numbers identified with the localities from which they came and with the names of the donors. The numbering and cataloging were done by Merton T. Goodrich, associate professor in the Mathematics Department. During the construction, stones of no special significance were added to fill spaces otherwise vacant. When the fireplace was completed, rough sketches were made showing the location of all the significant specimens. From these sketches, an accurate plan, showing all the stones and their numbers with a front view and two side views, was drawn by Miss Thelma Fitzgerald, a student in the Art Department. This plan hung for years on the wall of the camp beside the fireplace. Copies of the catalog were printed by Clarence DeMar, the famous marathon runner, who at this time was in charge of the Printing Department of the school.

The plan, a framed list of the stones, and a copy of the catalog are now in the Alumni Office, and may be seen by making application to Mr. Fred Barry, Alumni Secretary. The framed list and the catalog contain the number of each significant specimen in the plan, the locality where it was found, and the name of the donor.

In this fireplace there are stones from many different mountains besides Mount Monadnock, including Moosilauke, Cannon, Pitcher, Willard, Whiteface, and Washington. There is one stone from Pike's Peak, Colorado.

There are stones from the birthplaces of Horace Greeley, John Stark, Mary Baker Eddy, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wilson, Franklin Pierce, and Daniel Webster.

Of the two stones bearing the initials K N S, standing for Keene Normal School, as the college was then called, the lower one was carved at the quarry in Barre, Vt., by Joseph Sanguinetti, father of the donor, Vanda. The upper one was carved at Milford, N. H., by John Rizzi, brother of the donor, Paul.

Many specimens of uncommon varieties of quartz, mica, feldspar, and beryl were donated by Mr. J. Alfred Dennis.

Among the many interesting stones, may be mentioned those from (1) Ashland, the geographic center of New Hampshire; (2) Newport, the school to which Mary's Little Lamb followed her one day; (3) Rochester, the first home built between Portsmouth and Canada; (4) Lexington, Mass., the foundation of the first normal school built in America; (5) Gallows Hill, Salem, Mass., where victims were hung for witchcraft; (6) New Jersey, the place where Washington crossed the Delaware River; (7)

The Rest of Korman's Log; (8) Enfield, N.H., the site of the first

(7) The Reef of Norman's Woe; (8) Endicott Rock at the Weirs; (9) Cornish, Maxfield Parish Studio; (10) Peterborough, The MacDowell Colony.

There are rocks from all the notches in the White Mountains.

There are specimens from the Connecticut Lakes, the source of the Connecticut River, from lakes Spofford, Paugus, Winnesquam, Massabesic, Winnepesaukee, and many other lakes and streams.

The question now arises, what shall be done with the fireplace? When we think of its full meaning, and of all the work that went into the collecting and assembling of the stones, it seems that the fireplace should be preserved in some way.