



# FOUND 1938 YMCA Relay Boy Marcus Moschetto

By **Barney Scout Mann**

Recently, **Marc Moschetto** wrote to the PCTA looking for a gift for his 90-year-old father, Marcus. But the result was the opposite. Marcus had a gift for us all.

The 1935 to 1938 YMCA Relay first put the PCT on the map. Before the relay, the PCT was a crazy dream. Forty different YMCA teams, each with three to five teenaged boys, carried a leather logbook from Mexico to Canada. Each team trekked about 50 miles. There was extensive press coverage when they finished, and forever after the PCT was called an existing and continuous trail.

Marcus was on Team 38. On July 23, 1938, his team handed the logbook to team 39, and two weeks later the logbook reached Canada. Now, 75 years later, Marcus sat for an interview for the first time.

Before Marcus, I'd found four other living Relay Boys. The stories of three were featured in the *Pacific Crest Trail Communicator* in September 2011, titled "The Search for the PCT Relay Boys." After that article, I found a fourth, **John Power**, of the 40th Relay Team. But Power's memories of the relay, and of most of his life, were gone.

Marcus regaled me with stories in a reedy, still-strong voice: "All of a sudden Dick in front of me stopped dead. I started to say, 'What's the matter?' Then I looked around and there was a bear staring us right in the face. Both of us were scared. Then that bear turned and went the other way. Thank goodness!"

**Dick MacMorran** was their leader. He was in his early twenties, married and smoked a pipe. At 15, Marcus was the youngest. In boots he stood barely over five feet tall, but he carried a 45-pound pack, the same as the two older boys, **Bud Doney** and **Dave Barash**.

"I was a little on the heavy side at that time," Marcus said. "I know my parents were really surprised when I got back. My clothes were a little ragged. I had lost a considerable amount of weight, and they thought it was pretty nice."

Team 38 hiked from Stevens Pass to Buck Creek Pass in Washington's North Cascades. Today, Marcus' memory of the difficult route finding is a bit understated: "A couple of places the trail sort of lost its identity."

In the logbook, Dick MacMorran gives a stark description of their search for the Boulder Creek Trail: "Again map incorrect. Map said trail up creek but after one-hour search with no success we decided to try and break trail. We spent three grueling hours of fighting brush up the mountain only to be turned back by sheer rock walls and an 80-foot waterfall. Finally decided to fight our way back to White River which we reached at 7 pm very tired and discouraged. By mutual agreement the first thing we did was to pray - first we were thankful for a safe return to our starting point - then we asked for guidance in the 3 days ahead."

The next morning they "found the long lost Boulder Creek trail. It goes straight up a 40-degree grade. Scenery is beautiful but the trail is heartbreaking especially with a pack."

Marcus' memory of the mosquitoes was the exact same as the logbook. "We camped near a lake and that was the biggest mistake in the world," he said. "The mosquitoes were just terrible."

He still has beautiful photos. One shows him on Buck Creek Pass using the logbook as a pillow, resting between his head and his Trapper Nelson pack. Another records the boys' mosquito misery, the three of them covered in fine white muslin nets.

Marcus had no recollection of writing in the logbook. His entry for the third day, Monday, July 18, described one climb as "hard" and the next one as "terrible." Then Marcus signed off and gave himself one of the earliest PCT trail names, Marcus "Mosquito" Moschetto.

Dick MacMorran made the last logbook entry for their team: "Was a lot tougher than we expected, but when it's all over we will have wonderful memories."



In the end, Marcus received two PCT gifts for his ninetieth birthday. First, his son got him a PCTA membership. Second, I sent Marcus the typewritten text of the original logbook for Team 38. Seventy-five years later, Marcus was able to read what he'd written one more time.

Happy birthday, Marcus. 🍷



Top, left: At Buck Creek Pass in the Cascades, a few miles south of the present-day PCT at Suiattle Pass, Marcus Moschetto uses his pack and the YMCA Relay logbook as a pillow. Next to him are Dave Barash and Bud Doney. Top: Three Relay Boys ward off an attack from mosquitoes at Lake Janus. Above: YMCA Relay Team 38 on a ridge in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, Wash. From left to right, Marcus Moschetto, Dave Barash, Bud Doney and Dick MacMorran. Photos courtesy of Marcus Moschetto.